‘For We Are The Real Owners Of The Land From Time Immemorial As God Create Us Indians In This Territory’

Historical Land Use, Territory, and Aboriginal Title of the Matsqui People

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This project documents the geographic scope and historical continuity of the Matsqui First Nations' central core territory as it exists on the south side of the Fraser River. It does this in order to determine the extent to which Matsqui rights, title, and interests might be impacted by the proposed Trans Mountain Pipeline Project. (Please note, this report does not attempt to document and describe the broader territory to which the Matsqui people may have rights and title on either the south side of the Fraser River or on the north side of the Fraser River. The question of the full extent of Matsqui rights and title is beyond the scope of this report.)

1.2. To accomplish this we have reviewed a large body of published and unpublished ethnographic and historical evidence. We have also worked closely with contemporary members of the Matsqui First Nation to document their traditional and ecological knowledge pertaining to the study region. We are of the opinion that Matsqui core territory south of the Fraser River stretches from Crescent Island on the west to a point midway along Sumas Mountain on the east, and then runs southward to beyond the Canada/US border. As such, the proposed pipeline will pass directly through Matsqui core territory.

1.3. Ancient legendary stories (referred to as sxwõxwiyám in the Matsqui people's Halq'eméylem language) reveal the ancestors of the current Matsqui people to have occupied and used Matsqui territory since time immemorial. These sxwõxwiyám histories not only help to define the geographic extent of Matsqui's core territory, they also provide important insights into the way that Matsqui people (both contemporarily and in the past) regarded themselves and were in turn regarded by others. For example, the Stó:lõ consider that entire tribal communities (such as the Matsqui) collectively inheriting personality traits (or "gifts") from their shared legendary ancestors. Stó:lõ sxwõxwiyám explain that the founder of the Matsqui tribe was a man named Sk-Elê'yitl who, along with his son, was transformed into Beaver by Xá:ls the legendary transformer. They further reveal that it was Beaver who was responsible for ensuring that sockeye salmon were available to all of the Stó:lõ communities along the lower Fraser River; and that it was Beaver who was known for is dispute resolution abilities; and that it was Beaver who was the first to bring fire to the Stó:lõ people so they could cook meat and have light at night;

and finally, that it was Beaver who helped dig the tunnel that brought the original sacred sxwó:yxwe mask from the depths of Kawkawa Lake to the Stó:lõ people.

1.4. Archaeological and linguistic evidence reviewed for this report supports the sxwõxwiyám to confirm that the current Matsqui are the inheritors of lands and territories that have been continuously occupied for millennia.

1.5. Beyond these legendary sxwõxwiyám stories there are the more recent histories, known in the Matsqui's Halq'eméylem language as sqwélqwel, which reveal aspects of the extent and expression of Matsqui land use and occupancy over the past 150 years or so – ie. during the life time of current Elders and the during the era of their grandparents and great grandparents. These sqwélqwel speak not only of trapping and hunting and fishing activities, but also of sites of spiritual significance (known as xá:xá in Halqemeylem) that are located between the Fraser River and the Canada/US border. In this report we have mapped these spiritual sites along with the Matsqui transformer sites so as to provide readers with a sense of the breadth and range of these sites. But we have done so in a way that protects the precise locations from being identified to outsiders. That is to say, we have used symbols on our maps that are nearly one kilometer or larger in diameter so that non-Matsqui people will not be able to use these maps to find and visit these locations. In addition, we are aware that due to the confidential nature of these locations and due to their associated spiritual powers, that not all of the sites have necessarily been identified for this report. In other words, some Elders and community members have likely chosen not to share the locations of certain sites. But we believe that the sites that have been shared and subsequently plotted on our maps are sufficient to indicate the extensive use and familiarity that Matsqui people continue to have with their core territory despite the fact that non-Native property ownership, development, and government regulation has alienated the majority of that territory from them.

1.6. Sqwélqwel histories that were collected and analyzed by an earlier generation of scholars reveal that the Matsqui are part of the broader Stó:lõ Coast Salish community and as such have in common with their Stó:lõ neighbours and relatives a history of a highly structured and organized system of governance for regulating people's behaviour and for managing resources and territory. The current generation of Matsqui people have inherited the land and resources of

their ancestors and feel a strong connection to these resources and a commitment to maintaining them in a manner that will protect the interests and rights of Matsqui generations living in the future.

1.7. Supplementing both the sxwõxwiyám and the sqwélqwel histories carried by Matsqui people are the historical records found in various archival collections. For this project we accessed records in the BC provincial archives in Victoria, the federal archives in Ottawa, the American National Archives in Washington DC, as well as records held in local and regional archives in the Fraser Valley area. These sources have, for example, enabled us to:

- date the first smallpox epidemic that swept through Matsqui territory carrying off up to 90% of the population in 1782 (as discussed in the journals of Cpt. Vancouver);
- to learn about a prominent chief and community (that may have been Matsqui) and aspects of their governance system and relationship to the fishery (as was documented in Simon Fraser's journal in 1808);
- to learn about the network of trails, settlements and resource management sites that linked the Matsqui settlements near the mouth of Matsqui Creek to those close to Noo-kó-kum Lake or Mill Lake and then to the site now known as Matsqui IR #4 (as revealed in the Boundary Survey Commission Records);
- to learn about the extent of the original colonial-era Indian reserve that was demarcated for the Matsqui and that covered much of the territory now located between the Trans-Canada highway and the Fraser River (as revealed in BC colonial records);
- to learn about the efforts by Matsqui people to assert and exercise what they regarded as their salmon fishing rights (as revealed in various records including those by the department of Indian Affairs and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans);
- to learn about the extent to which the Matsqui worked to protect not only lands and resources associated with traditionally male activities such as hunting and fishing, but also lands and resources related to what were historically predominantly women's property and activities such as those associated with cranberry fields and harvesting (as revealed in the colonial-era petition to the government);

- to learn about the extent to which non-Native economic developments and regulations (such as those associated with the creation of dykes, the creation of fee simple title holding, and the regulation of hunting and fishing) curtailed Matsqui people's ability to use and manage all of their resources in their territory (as revealed in provincial and federal government agency records).
- to learn that despite government actions that reduced their reserve land base and curtailed their ability to conduct certain activities on some of the lands outside of their reserves, that the Matsqui continued to travel throughout their territory including making use of land and territory on both sides of the Canada/US border (as revealed in DIA annual reports and testimony given before the McKenna McBride commission).

1.8. Relatedly, the records associated with the US Boundary Commission reveal that when first presented with the challenges and opportunities associated with such developments as the 1858 gold rush, that the Matsqui remained committed to traditional activities. Unlike some of their neighbours, for example, who abandoned their contracts to take more lucrative work as guides for miners, the Matsqui proved reliable guides, labourers, and packers for the surveyors. But the survey team also note that it was difficult to engage the Matsqui when the salmon season commenced as fishing was their first priority.

1.9. Another insight that has emerged from our research relates to the historical context for the contemporary apprehension that Matsqui people feel toward non-Native corporations and government. It is clear from the historical record relating to such matters as the establishment of the US/Canada boundary, the creation and subsequent reduction of their colonial-era reserve, the non-consultative manner in which dykes were introduced to their core territory and reserves, and the curtailment of their salmon fishing activities, that the Matsqui people have sought to work with, and accommodate, corporate and government activities, only to have been repeatedly spurned and betrayed for their efforts. As a result, they are rightly suspicious of, and reluctant to trust, government and corporate representatives today.

1.10. Finally, our research confirms and extends the analysis and conclusions of earlier scholars such as Wayne Suttles who observed salmon is considered by Coast Salish people as the

key wealth item. Salmon are not merely valuable in terms of cultural importance, but also in terms of economics. That is to say, salmon have been, and remain today, one of the top concerns and priorities of Matsqui people. Salmon remains a key and preferred source of food; salmon fishing sites are inherited and transmitted within families; salmon are revealed as central to many Matsqui sxwõxwiyám; salmon are a symbol of status and wealth that are shared within the community; salmon are a source of economic well being and wealth; salmon remain a primary concern associated with environmental protection.

1.11. In sum, we are of the opinion that the proposed Trans Mountain Pipeline project will pass directly through Matsqui core territory on the south side of the Fraser River and that as a result the Matsqui have legitimate concerns over the potential impact of that pipeline project.

2. **Matsqui Traditional Territory**

2.1. The Matsqui are one of two dozen First Nations along the lower Fraser River watershed who identify as Stó:lõ -- literally, "People of the River." As such, the Fraser River and its tributaries are central to Matsqui identity, as are the fish and animals that live in, and migrate through, those waterways. Salmon, in particular, remain at the heart of Matsqui social, ceremonial, and economic life. As will be discussed in detail below, the Matsqui retain oral histories that reveal them to be the descendants and inheritors of the ancient occupants who first used and governed the resources of their territory in time immemorial. Today, contemporary Matsqui Elders emphasize that unlike the Canadian newcomers who have come to Matsqui lands from other parts of the world and who may one day decide to relocate elsewhere, the Matsqui are Matsqui because of where they are; they are anchored to their territory and cannot exist as a collective anywhere else. This sentiment is an ancient one as is illustrated in the words spoken by Chief Charlie of Matsqui before the Indian Reserve Commission one century ago in 1915: "I did

not come here from another country or from other nations - I was always here and always will be."[1]

2.2. As a part of the broader community of Fraser River Coast Salish nations, the Matsqui have interests in lands and resources throughout the lower Fraser River watershed downriver of Sawmill Creek. Contemporary Matsqui people cite their historical land use activities, as well as their connections to both living relatives and deceased ancestors, as securing to them rights to hunt, fish, gather, perform ceremonies and engage in other activities throughout this broader territory. [See Figure 1]

Figure 1

2.3. Indeed, contemporary members of the Matsqui First Nation have additionally explained that they have rights to, and interests in, lands well south of the US/Canada border stretching to the Nooksack River; territory to the westward of what we have identified as their core territory to take in portions of the Township of Langley, British Columbia; territory to the eastward of their

[1] Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of B.C. – Meeting with the Matsqui Band or Tribe of Indians on Monday, January 11th, 1915. (Complete transcript available through the Union of BC Indian Chiefs web site - http://gsdl.ubcic.bc.ca/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=royalcom&l=en&w=utf-8)

core territory that includes hunting and fishing lands reaching all the way to the Fraser canyon; and territory northward to include lands north of the Fraser River in the District of Mission.

2.4. In addition to these broader interests and rights, the historical and ethnographic records reveal that ancestors of the current members of the Matsqui First Nation occupied and managed a core territory that was of particular interest to the Matsqui. For the purposes of this report we have only been concerned with defining this core Matsqui territory, and then only as pertains to the south side of the Fraser River. As such, nothing in this report should be taken to imply that the Matsqui do not have interests in, and potentially rights and title to, lands and waters and resources on the south side of the Fraser River that are beyond the boundaries of what we have defined here. Nor should anything in this report be taken to imply that the Matsqui do not have interests in, and potentially rights and title to, lands, waters and resources on the north side of the Fraser River.

2.5. The Matsqui, like all Coast Salish tribal communities, have a core territory that is defined by watersheds. For the purposes of this study, it is our opinion that the territory that was central to Matsqui rights and title on the south side of the Fraser River are those that are anchored around (but not restricted to) the system of creeks and trails that linked the Fraser River through Matsqui Prairie to Sumas Lake and to the Nooksack River. Their winter homes and settlements were primarily (though not exclusively) located along the waterways of Matsqui Creek/River (aka McLennan Creek), Matsqui Slough (aka Kwaa-chem Creek), Bertrand Creek (aka Ko-kwum-nes-tum and Seh-ko-mekl Creeks) and Pepin's Brook (aka Hoo-kutch-uk-sun Creek or Noo-Kope Creek). [See Figure 2]

Figure 2

2.3. As will be discussed in detail below, this historical core territory is remarkable for the extent to which it generally coincides with the parameters of the first Indian reserve that was demarcated for the Matsqui Nation back in 1864 under the authority of Governor James Douglas [see Figure 3].

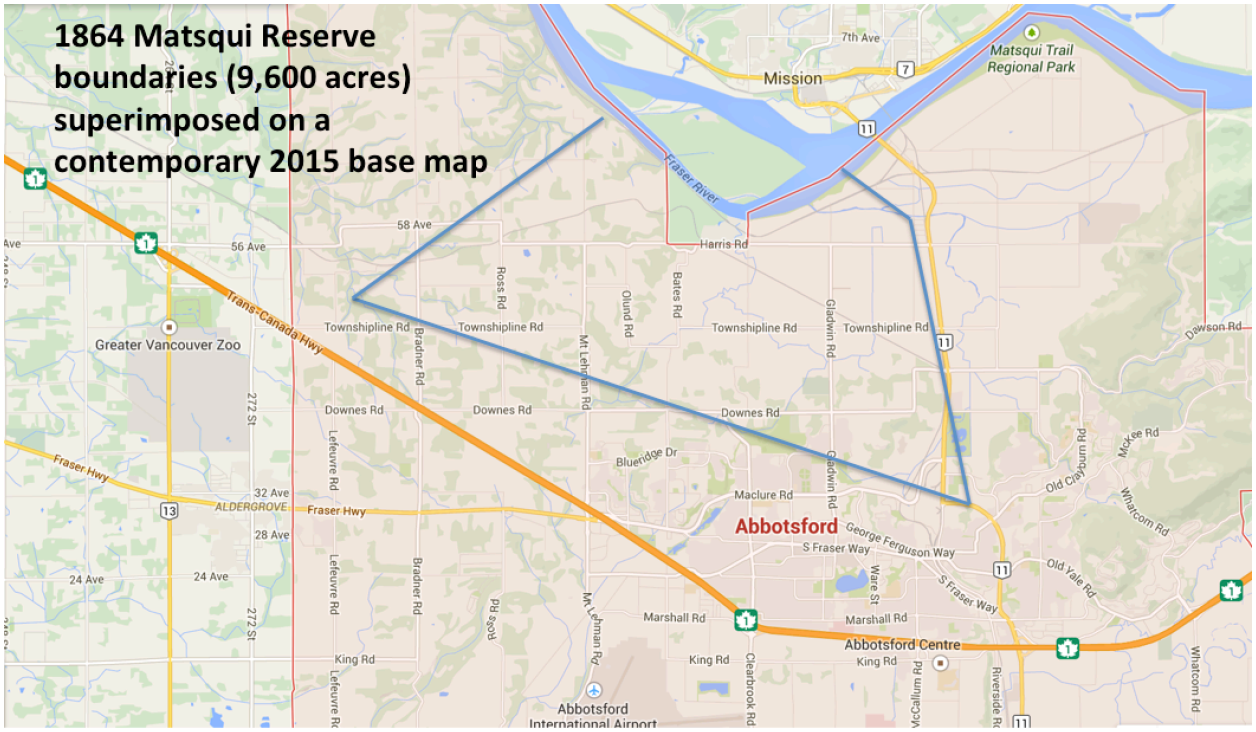

Figure 3

2.4. Thus, as will be detailed below, it is important to situate current and recent Matsqui land use and occupation activities within a deeper historical context. While areas within, and in close proximity to, the current four Matsqui Indian Reserves are the areas of the most extensive contemporary use and occupation, they do not reflect the breadth and scope of the deeper historical land use and occupation patterns; nor do they adequately reflect or accommodate contemporary land use activities or needs of the Matsqui people. Put succinctly, colonial forces associated primarily with newcomer settlement and resource development have worked to constrain and compromise Matsqui land use activities over the past century and a half.

3. Project Overview

3.1. This report provides a summary of the data collected and methodology used for the Traditional Land Use Study (TLUS) conducted for Matsqui First Nation.

3.2. The primary objective of this TLUS is to conduct ethnohistorical research and analysis in order to provide evidence-based mapping to effectively inform the National Energy Board hearing process for the Trans Mountain Pipeline project. This report deals only with the data collected and the methods used. It does not attempt to provide an assessment of the likely effects of any proposed projects.

3.3. The study involved documenting the past and present hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering-of-plants areas, as well as areas where sites of cultural significance were and/or are located. This portion of the study also involved developing maps that depicted the specific areas of land use.

3.4. The study traces the historical use of land, water, and resources by Matsqui ancestors in traditional territory, and includes detailed written narrative explanation of the changes to land and resource use and Matsqui territory over time.

3.5. All mapped values are based on the use and knowledge of Matsqui First Nation members or information derived from historical sources. Interpretation provided herein is based on the understandings of the author, and is not intended as a complete depiction of the dynamic and living system of use and knowledge maintained by the elders and members of the First Nation.

3.6. Absence of data does not mean absence of use or value. Nothing in this submission should be construed as to waive, reduce, or otherwise constrain the rights of the First Nation within, or outside, regulatory processes. Nor should it be construed as to define, limit, or otherwise constrain the aboriginal use or rights of other First Nations or Aboriginal peoples. This report is specific to the NEB Hearing for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Project. It should not be relied upon to inform other projects or initiatives without written consent of the participating First Nation.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

4.1. To record areas of land use and occupancy on the part of Matsqui Nation, and to identify sites of cultural significance, record oral histories, and to synthesize archival and

published materials for the purpose of determining the full scope of the past and present use and occupancy of the Matsqui within their territory;

4.2. To determine the members' past and present traditional land, water, and resource use activities in terms of hunting, trapping, fishing, and harvesting of plants;

4.3. To document past and present land, water, and resource use practices through interviews and map biographies;

4.4. To depict the results of the interviews by using regional maps and aerial photos to illustrate the scope and extent of traditional land, water, and resource use activities;

4.5. To collect and share accurate information to inform the Crown and industry about how they should engage with Matsqui when they propose projects or other activities in Matsqui territory, and to inform protocol for consultation obligations.

5. Study Limitations

5.1. Additional studies are necessary to fill information gaps regarding the participating First Nations' knowledge and the resources, criteria, thresholds and indicators necessary to sustain meaningful practice of rights related to land water, and resource use into the future.

5.2. This study considers only the results of use and occupancy mapping interviews completed for the project, and a limited number of contextual or harvest survey interviews. Interviews lasted approximately 3-4 hours and data collected for each land user is limited to what the participant was able and willing to report in that time. Documentation of oral histories or other forms of traditional knowledge beyond use and occupancy were outside the scope of the study. As well, maps and written documents can only provide a limited snapshot of the rich historical and contemporary use and knowledge of space by a First Nation's community and frequently cannot convey the deep meaning and emotional import that is integral to indigenous connections to lands and waters. We have attempted to address this limitation through:

- Archival research
- Review of published and unpublished ethnographic materials

- Analysis of past studies (ie. Past claims, TLUS, Archaeological and Environmental Assessments conducted for, with, or by the Matsqui First Nation and its members)

6. Methodology

6.1. Framework

This study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to produce a map-biography that captures Matsqui Traditional Knowledge as it relates to the historical and cultural use and occupancy of the study area. This approach supplements quantitative geographical and GIS data with qualitative data obtained through interview and archival ethnographic research.

6.2. Method

The chosen method of data collection uses semi-structured interviews. A set of standard map survey questions and map categories were developed and administered to study participants. In addition, a set of key activity codes, or valued components, were identified early in the study.

Traditional information types sought in interviews and through background research are organized into twelve (12) main categories, as follows:

- Hunting areas
- Trapping areas
- Aquatic Harvesting areas (including fishing)
- Terrestrial Harvesting areas
- Sxwõxwiyám (stories of first people and Transformers) places
- Xa:Xa (taboo or spiritual) places
- Ceremonial Practice areas
- Management of Resources activities/areas (e.g. burning berry fields, plantations)
- Travel Routes
- Habitation Places
- Material Culture (e.g. archaeological sites)
- Halqeméylem Place Names

6.3. Study participants were chosen in consultation with Matsqui leadership. A total of 10 Elder and current land use participants were identified and participated. Participants were presented with a standard set of questions that focused on first-hand information, although the line of questioning was at times allowed to evolve throughout interview in order to complement map-biography survey. Interviews were conducted with small groups of participants. The interviews were electronically recorded and are transcribed.

6.4. Baseline data collection for the study involved scoping of issues, document review and gap analysis, and use and occupancy mapping and harvest interviews. Background information, including project documents, previous studies, and other existing information was reviewed and initial scoping and methodology design meetings were held with Matsqui representatives.

6.5. Between November 2014 and March 2015, semi-structured use and occupancy mapping interviews were conducted with 11 participants from the Matsqui First Nation [See Appendix I]. Verification interviews, data processing and map creation were completed January 2015-May 2015.

7. Study Area

A set of base maps were developed in order to capture interview information and document use and occupancy data (Appendix III). These study areas are:

a) Local Study area:

b) Regional Study area:

Throughout the interview process, maps were marked using the standard marking conventions established through the activity codes. Participants dated and signed each map. Appendix I contains a list of participants.

8. MATSQUI HISTORICAL LAND USE AND OCCUPANCY

8.1. The name "Matsqui" (Máthxwi) is a Halqeméylem language word that appears to be derived from má:th – a word for a root plant that grows in large flat marshes. As such, má:th is associated with wide open wetlands – landscapes that are relatively easy to travel through. Máthxwi is often translated as "easy portage," which refers to the ease with which people could travel through Matsqui territory. In this case, the easy travel refers to the system of trails and streams that link the Fraser River through Matsqui Prairie southward to Sumas Lake as well as to the creeks flowing into Nooksack River, Washington. The Matsqui, therefore, are 'the people who live in the big opening that is easy to portage through.'[2]

8.2. Over time, the Matsqui have defined themselves (and been defined by others) in various ways. It is our opinion that they are first and foremost an ancient socio-political collective who, prior to contact with non-First Nations, consisted of several interconnected settlements primarily located along the waterways linking the Fraser and Nooksack Rivers and Sumas Lake, but also located on Matsqui Island and on the mainland across from Matsqui Prairie in the north shore of the Fraser River. The residents of these settlements (and especially the elite members of the upper status, high class, families) traced their ancestry back to a legendary community founder known as Sk-Elê'yitl (a man who was transformed into a beaver by Xa:ls).

8.3. The Matsqui are also a "band of Indians" in the sense that the British Columbia colonial government and then the Canadian Dominion government recognized that the residents of the Matsqui tribal villages were a collective who for administrative purposes would be treated as such under various pieces of legislation that in 1876 became known as the "Indian Act." While acknowledging the correctness of the government's decision to recognize the Matsqui people as a collective, the Matsqui leadership has also resisted the assimilationist goals behind the Indian Act and the compromising position into which the Indian Act places Matsqui leaders. That is to say, under the Indian Act the Chiefs of

[2] See Brent Galloway, *Dictionary of Upriver Halkomelem, Vol. 1* (Berkeley California: University of California Press, 2009), 365. Note too that the name of the neighbouring Sumas tribe (Semá:th or Smá:th) is also derived from the same root word, má:th. Both tribes, therefore, share a version of the same name. Perhaps this accounts for anthropologist Franz Boas listing the name of a settlement now commonly associated with the Sumas tribe as a Matsqui village (see discussion below).

Matsqui have been representatives of their community to the federal government but they have also been defined in the Indian Act as agents of the government whose job historically has been to administer aspects of the Act to their community. As such, the Matsqui community in recent years has asserted that they prefer to be known as the Matsqui First Nation – a statement that formally forefronts their own indigenous identification as a political entity derived from their own history rather than as an administrative unit created by government fiat. With this assertion have come parallel efforts to re-assert Matsqui self-governance as a means of escaping the Indian Act.

8.4. Thus, the three collective expressions of the Matsqui people (tribe, band, First Nation) are all historically contingent. And while each may be thought of as being somewhat distinct, the three are, in the minds of the Matsqui people, one and the same and part of a historically continuous expression of indigenous self-identification.

8.5. In addition, the members of the various families who make up the Matsqui community are part of a larger network of extended families that formally integrate the Matsqui community into a larger Stó:lõ (lower Fraser River), Nooksack (located in northern Washington) and even larger Coast Salish collective. The Matsqui continue to participate in regional social, economic, and political activities with recognized rituals. These activities included in the past: arranged polygamous marriages among elite families where elite males tended to live within the tribal territories of their fathers and grandfathers (patrilocal residence); potlatches to assert and have recognized intergenerational transfers of property (including fishing sites, wapato sites, and berry sites); participation in the winter dance ceremonial; and participation in the sxwó:yxwe masked-dance fraternity; etc. With the exception of polygamy and formally arranged marriages (which were outlawed and discouraged by colonial authorities), these and other customs continue to define Matsqui people's relationships with one another and the land and resources of their territory as well as their relations with other Stó:lõ, Nooksack, and Coast Salish communities within the larger Coast Salish social-political continuum.

8.6. Notably, the Matsqui are one of only two Stó:lõ tribal communities who historically were known to be bi-lingual Halqeméylem-Nooksack language speakers (the other being

the Chilliwack tribe). This bi-lingual heritage did not merely emerge from the close communication between the Matsqui and the Nooksack. Rather, the contemporary Matsqui First Nation consists of the people who are descendants of both the original Matsqui people and the Nooksack-speaking Ska-leih-hes tribe who, prior to the demarcation of the Canada-US border in 1858, lived in settlements that straddled both sides of the medicine line in the area around Bertrand and Pepins Creeks. The Matsqui and Ska-leih-hes appear to have had close and friendly relations prior to their amalgamation and shared an overlapping territory that incorporated much of what is now known as Abbotsford and Aldergrove Canada and parts of Whatcom County USA. According to oral traditions collected by local Whatcom County historian P.R. Jeffcott in the 1940s, members of the Ska-leih-hes tribe under their leader Ska-leel relocated across the international border into Canada "where they originally came from."[3]

9. **Archaeology**

9.1. Geological evidence reveals that approximately between 15,000 and 13,000 years ago all but the tallest mountain peaks within the area now known as the Lower Fraser River watershed in the vicinity of the contemporary Matsqui First Nation were under a thick sheet of glacial ice known by geologists as the Cordilleran Ice Sheet. So heavy were the ice sheets that they literally pushed the earth's crust downward by as much as 200 meters. Any evidence of pre-glaciation human occupation that may have existed was destroyed as the massive Cordilleran ice sheets slowly moved across the land.

9.2. Drawing on a heavy corpus of peer-reviewed archaeological scholarship that he himself has contributed to, David Schaepe has summarized the analysis from archaeological sites at the Miliken site (near present-day Yale) and at the Glenrose Cannery Site (in present-day Richmond) to reveal a history of human occupation in the region that dates back roughly 9,000 years.[4] By 5,000 years ago the climate of southern British Columbia stabilized and the sea level (which at one point had earlier risen by as much as 200 meters) settled at its current position. From this point onwards (and especially over the

[3] P.R. Jeffcott, quoting early Whatcom settler G.A. Bremner, in his local history *Nooksack Tales and Trails* (Sedro-Woolley Washington: Sedro-Woolley Courier, 1949), 41.
[4] David Schaepe, "The Land and the People" Glaciation to Contact," in Keith Thor Carlson, et. al., *A Stó:lõ Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 12-19.

past 3,000 years) an increasingly consistent and recognizable Salish artistic expression has characterized artifacts, suggesting cultural continuity and permanency. Schaepe's most recent scholarship examining household archaeological evidence argues that the resident population led a sedentary lifestyle and had social structures that were increasingly complex and hierarchical such that by c.1450 (approximately 500 years before present), the region was characterized by a population where a small elite held significant political authority.[5] This is consistent with what the earliest documentary records reveal for the indigenous occupiers of the territory at the time of European contact (as will be discussed below). Collectively, the archaeological evidence indicates long-term continuity in First Nations land use and occupation in the region.[6]

10. **Linguistic Analysis**

10.1. Corroborating this archaeological evidence for long-term continuity, anthropologists Wayne Suttles and Dale Kinkade have independently conducted linguistic analysis and concluded that the territory between the Lower Fraser River region and the Skagit River region is the geographic homeland of the entire Salish language family, making the indigenous people of this area (which included the Matsqui) among the Northwest Coast's longest and most stable indigenous populations.[7]

11. **Conducting Ethnohistorical and Oral History Analysis**

11.1. The following discussion of evidence relating to Matsqui land use, occupancy, and title, contain a mixture of information derived from both documentary sources and oral histories. The latter consists of what non-First Nations observers have typically classified legendary or mythical information. Such a classification fails to fully appreciate the indigenous understanding of narrative and history and spirituality. In the Halqeméylem language of the indigenous people of the lower Fraser River watershed

[5] Ibid., Also David M. Schaepe, "Pre-Colonial Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Community Organization: An Archaeological Study," (PhD Dissertation, UBC Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, 2009), ii-iii, 15, 59, 66, 255, 259-265.
[6] See David Schaepe, PhD Dissertation.
[7] Wayne Suttles and William Elmendorf, "Pattern and Change in Halkomelem Salish Dialects," *Anthropological Linguistics* 2 (7): 1960, 1-32; Dale Kinkade, "Prehistory of Salishan Languages," in *Papers for the 25th International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990, 197-208.

there are two forms of oral history: The first, called sqwelqwel, represents a body of historical knowledge/memories that generally consist of information about past happenings to which the speaker has some direct connection – events that happened to the speaker or to someone the speaker knew or knew about. Among the most important are family histories and genealogies. The second type of historical narrative, called sxwõxwiyám, are typically set in an age when the world had not yet been put in its permanent form, when people and animals could speak to one another, and when miraculous transformations were not uncommon.

11.2. These types of historical narrative are not mutually exclusive. Sometimes sxwõxwiyám contain elements of sqwelqwel, and vice versa. What is important is that both forms of historical narrative are generally regarded by Aboriginal people within the study area as being true and real histories.

11.3. In our opinion, oral histories provide important information relating to the territory and governance of the Matsqui tribe in the years leading up to, and following, the assertion of British sovereignty in 1846 (and the subsequent demarcation of British/American territory in that region in 1858). But we know from conversations with other non-First Nations that there exists within Canadian society questions over the degree to which oral histories can be relied upon to be consistent descriptions of past happenings especially when they are passed across generations. In our presentation and analysis of the oral evidence presented below, as with the documentary evidence, we have sought to account for bias and to factor out or qualify information that we perceived might have been, for whatever reason, unreliable. We have used the sorts of methods and techniques that all properly trained historians are expected to apply (ie. seeking external secondary corroboration, comparing and contrasting various versions of an event or occurrence, looking for indicators that the person who spoke or recorded information was not being influenced to alter the evidence, etc.). But there are factors that are sometimes culturally specific, and that are therefore not necessarily apparent to people from outside the culture group, that shape not only the way information is shared, but the way it is adjudicated for legitimacy. As ethnohistorians, we are keenly interested in discerning these matters, for we are not only seeking to understand what happened in

the past, but also how people come to know what they know about what happened in the past.

11.4. Elsewhere I have published on the subject of how Fraser Valley Aboriginal people adjudicate good oral historical information from less good oral historical information.[8] It is clear to us that among the Coast Salish people there are strong cultural dictates governing oral narratives as pertains to historical accuracy and in particular as concerns the sacred historical narratives that explained tribal origins. One of the best examples we have found that explains the protocols pertaining to oral history within Coast Salish society comes from the writings of the anthropologist Sally Snyder who observed and recorded in 1963 that even among even her "acculturated" informants were people she described as being "compulsive about telling stories "right." As Snyder discovered,

> If a story was imperfectly recalled it was wrong for … [people] to 'guess,' meaning to pad, improvise, paraphrase or omit. It was better not to tell it at all for it was dangerous to omit scenes and to shorten myths. Nubile women in the audience might then give birth to deformed children, incomplete or malformed like the abbreviated or truncated story. And shortening of myths would shorten the lives of all listeners.[9]

11.5. The information recorded by Snyder highlights how among the Coast Salish the wilful conveying of inaccurate history is considered to be pregnant with dangerous potentialities for both the teller and the listeners. During my fieldwork over the past two decades I have at numerous informal and ceremonial occasions observed Stó:lõ people clearly and forcefully articulated the conviction that it is wrong to modify or alter, even slightly, stories about the Creator or the actions of the transformers and the origins of

[8] Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflection on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," in John Lutz., ed., Myth and Memory (Vancouver; UBC Press, 2005), 45-68; See also, Keith Thor Carlson "Orality About Literacy: The 'Black and White' of Salish History," in Keith Thor Carlson, Kristina Fagan, and Natalia Khanenko-Friesen eds., *Orality and Literacy: Reflections Across Disciplines* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), especially 57-59.

[9] Sally Snyder, "Skagit Society and Its Existential Basis," (Unpublished PhD dissertation,Washington, University of Seattle, 1964), 21–22.

the tribal people. Good tribal historians, people explain, use oral footnotes to legitimize their knowledge in the eyes of their audience; they explain to their audience from whom they acquired their information and how. And while Stó:lõ people seldom chastise a person to his or her face for telling a story "wrong," it does occasionally happen – especially in the context of formal naming ceremonies and potlatches. More commonly, and especially when it occurs in a less ceremonial context, people speak about the offending individuals within their circles of family and friends as someone who comes from a "low status" family (that is "worthless" because they have "lost" or "forgotten their history"). In this way people work to undermine the legitimacy and authority of both the person telling the improper or inaccurate history, and the improper or inaccurate historical narrative itself. It is unlikely that such people will be called upon in the future to share their stories in formal public forums, and moreover, they will acquire reputations as poor historians and their personal and family status will diminish.

11.6. Old Pierre of Katzie explained that prior to the imposition of non-First Nations laws banning the potlatch (the potlatch was illegal between 1885 and 1949), whenever a dispute arose as to the proper form and content of an historical narrative it became necessary to "summon two old men who belonged to different villages but were both well versed in local histories" to discuss and reconcile the different historical interpretations.[10] Severe differences in historical interpretation, Old Pierre maintained, such as arose in the case of a dispute over the hereditary right to use a name, required the defender of a particular version of history to enlist two additional "lawyers" to plead his case, after which, as anthropologist Diamond Jenness recorded, the adjudicating "old men retired to consult in private. Whatever decision they reached was final."[11] Likewise, in my own fieldwork I have recently encountered two elderly, fluent Halqeméylem-speaking women who, in discussing the matter of the integrity of historical narratives, explained that in the past there were people who were recognized as the keepers and

[10] Diamond Jenness, "Chapter VII: Community Rituals," in *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,(*Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955), 77.

[11] Ibid., 78.

communicators of sacred histories. Such a person, typically a man, was referred to as sxá:sls, meaning 'One who keeps track of everything.'[12]

11.7. Regarded in this light, it is difficult to imagine a context in which a Coast Salish person who had remained culturally integrated into his or her community could or would, intentionally modify a historical narrative pertaining to ancient transformations and tribal origins and history. It is even more difficult to imagine a context in which the community would passively allow such to happen. Indeed, as I have documented elsewhere, I am aware of one relatively recent case where an Aboriginal person from the Central Fraser Valley did manipulate historical information only to find that the community moved to discredit and silence that individual. I had, using classic historical techniques already determined that the individual's information was inaccurate, but the community determined its inadequacies primarily because the individual did not cite his oral sources, because the information had not been heard before in other context from other individuals, and because the person did not come from a high status family with a recognized tradition of oral history keeping.[13] As such, within this cultural context, in this report we have sought to relate and interpret oral histories that not only can be corroborated in whole or in part by outside non-First Nations records, but which are also regarded as conforming to Coast Salish standards of accuracy and quality.

12. **Watershed-Based Tribal Identities**

12.1. As mentioned above, watersheds form the fundamental basis of Coast Salish tribal identities. This is not to deny that many other shared identities bind groups of Coast Salish people together in ways that sometimes cut across tribal affiliations (such as extended families and ritual fraternities).[14] But as fur trader and colonial governor, James Douglas discerned more than 150 years ago, the most meaningful expressions of Coast

[12] Rosaleen George and Elizabeth Herrling, personal communications, on more than one occasion between 1995 and 2001.
[13] Carlson, "Reflection on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," 56-60.
[14] Elsewhere I have discussed in detail the antiquity of indigenous communities' use and occupation of the lower Fraser River watershed. See in "Chapter 2, Economics, Geography, Environment, and Historical Identities" and "Chapter 3, Spiritual Forces of Historical Affiliation" in Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 37-57; 58-77.

Salish social unity and political authority was that associated with watershed-based identities – "tribes."[15] The next outsiders to appreciate the significance of watersheds to Coast Salish tribal identity and political authority was the ethnographer and surveyor James Gibbs in the 1850s. Then, in 1945, Columbia University professor Marian Smith provided the scholarly analysis to verify and refine the views and interpretations provided by Douglas and Gibbs.[16] Her work was followed and enriched by anthropologist Jay Miller in 1999.[17] My own peer-reviewed research confirms the importance of watershed/river-based systems as central to the most meaningful and sustained expressions of political identity and authority.[18]

12.2. At the time of contact, each watershed-based tribal collective, such as that within the Matsqui tribal drainage system, consisted of several extended families and what anthropologists have termed "corporate kin groups" or "family corporate groups."[19] Tribes and familial groups sought social economic and political relations beyond their watershed and settlements in order to maximize access to the broader region's diverse ecological niches where certain prized resources were only available seasonally, and sometimes in multi-year cycles.[20] That is to say, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the people of the lower Fraser River watershed were divided into numerous distinct tribal groups but with interpenetrating memberships, so that together

[15] In 1838 Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) Chief Factor James Douglas commented that the Puget Sound Salish were "without a doubt ... one and the same people, deriving a local designation from their place of residence." Douglas explained that river-based "community" or "society," "appellations," corresponding with what the earlier HBC employee T.C. Elliot had described as "tribes" or "nations" such as "Squaly amish, Puce alap amish, Sino amish, Sina homish, Skatchet, Nowhalimeek ... were regarded as the source of an imaginary line of demarcation, which divides the inhabitants of one petty stream, from the people living upon another, and have become the fruitful source of the intensive commotions, that so frequently disturb the tranquility of the District." See James Douglas, Fort Vancouver, to Gov. James Simpson, 18 March, 1838, in E.E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLaughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee,* First Series, vol. 4, 1825–38, Appendix A, 280–1 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1991). Also, 'The Journal of John Work, November and December, 1824,' *Washington Historical Quarterly* 3/3 (1912): 198–228.

[16] Marian Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 4.

[17] Jay Miller, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanistic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 19.

[18] Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, 39-40.

[19] Carlson *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, 51-52; See also David M.Schaepe, Pre-colonial Sto:lo-Coast Salish community organization: an archaeological study (PhD Dissertation: UBC, 2009).

[20] Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, 42-49.

they formed a cultural continuum where political and economic power was nested in tribes and extended families.

13. **Social Structures**

13.1. At the time of European contact in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Matsqui were part of a larger network, or continuum, of Coast Salish people. As such while they were a distinct tribal community with a defined territory, they operated within a larger Stó:lõ Coast Salish world where rules, protocols, systems of ownership, status, and spirituality were commonly shared. Indeed, the intermarriage, communication, exchange and other forms of engagement between Coast Salish communities necessitated such commonalities and shared epistemology.

13.2. Stó:lõ and neighbouring Coast Salish tribes were hierarchically arranged with a strata of nobles at the top: smelá:lh (literally high class people / worthy people) in the Halqeméylem language spoken by the Matsqui, with the very elite known as siyá:m (literally "Sir/Madame," "respected leader / person of property"). These elite owned and regulated access to the tribe's various resources (salmon fishing sites, cranberry bogs, sturgeon weirs, wild potato fields, isolated islands where female dogs were kept while in heat, hunting territories, etc).[21] These elite also negotiated relations with elite members of regional neighbouring tribes. Inter-tribal marriages were arranged to secure the widest possible access to food resources. For example, one needed to secure good relations within one's broader familial networks in order to access foods that were only seasonally available within one's own tribal territories (such as clam gardens, oyster beds, Fraser canyon salmon fishing and wind drying sites, etc). Marriages were also arranged among the elite to bring an end to inter-tribal and inter-family conflicts.[22]

13.3. Coast Salish tribes typically had one principal hereditary leader who often represented the entire community in its relationships with other tribes. This person was generally regarded to have been descended from the mythical ancestor who founded the tribal community. As early ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout recorded, among the Stó:lõ

[21] Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*. ibid.
[22] Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, 41-42.

this leader was referred to as the "Yewal Siyam" or "first going chief."[23] Among the Matsqui, as documented by the renowned anthropologist Franz Boas, the principal hereditary leader carried the name Sk-Elê'yitl (which is derived from the Halqeméylem word for beaver).

13.4. Not all people who were smelá:lh were necessarily siyá:m.[24] Moreover, the Yewal Siyá:m had no way of enforcing his will on others. He led by good example and through persuasion. Family groups within the tribe, therefore, acted semi-autonomously but deferred to the broad leadership of those who carried hereditary titles. That is to say, individual Matsqui families controlled their own hereditary fishing and gathering sites but contributed to the potlatch system of governance led by their tribal leader. Tribal hunting territories, as with large communal projects (for example sturgeon and salmon weirs), were considered to belong to the entire tribe, and their use was coordinated and directed by the hereditary leaders.

13.5. Beneath worthy people were two classes of lower status people, the first known as s'téxem – those who had "lost or forgotten" their history. These lower status people either did not have hereditary properties, or they had lost them, or they were in other ways unable to legitimately claim elite hereditary privileges and connections. Within this group were illegitimate children of high status women as well as children born to unions between male elites and their female slaves. Beneath the s'téxem was the lowest status people – the skw'iyéth (slaves). These people had either been captured in raids as children, purchased, or were the products of unions between two existing slaves.[25]

14. **Sxwõxwiyám (Legendary Foundational Stories) Pertaining to Matsqui Territory.**

14.1. While watersheds provide the geographic basis for tribal identities, it is the legendary narratives found in sx̱wõx̱wiyám that provide the social and cultural glue that bind Coast Salish tribal communities together over time. Sx̱wõx̱wiyám are stories set in the distant past during a time when the world was somewhat chaotic and dangerous. The sx̱wõx̱wiyám stories describe this ancient world and explain how it came to be

[23] Charles Hill-Tout, "The Tcilqeuk (Chilliwack)," in *The Salish People, The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout, Vol. III: The Mainland Halkomelem*, edited by Ralph Maud, Vancouver, Talon Books, 1978), 44.
[24] Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, 49, 136, 140.
[25] Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, 136.

permanently fixed into the recognizable form we see today. Sx̱wõx̱wiyám consist of miraculous transformation stories. Typically, they describe either a tribal founder who fell from the sky or an earth-born tribal founder who was permanently transformed after engaging in a magical contest with Xá:ls (the transformer). In a functional sense, sxwõxwiyám anchor particular Coast Salish tribal communities in their landscape and waterscape, helping them to distinguish themselves from neighbouring tribal communities. Likewise, the interconnected nature of sx̱wõx̱wiyám (which sometimes describe ancient events that occurred over a broad multi-tribal geographical landscape) enable these stories also to serve as the basis of broader regional collectives. That is to say, sxwõxwiyám described the origins of individual tribal groups, but do so as part of a larger historical narrative that emphasizes the interconnectedness of Stó:lõ tribes. Elsewhere I have described sx̱wõx̱wiyám and their place within Stó:lõ society in detail.[26]

14.2. The earliest recordings of a sx̱wõx̱wiyám pertaining to Matsqui's core territory are found in the unpublished March 1858 journal of George Gibbs, a Puget Sound pioneer who worked as a surveyor on the US Boundary Commission. Traveling up the Fraser River by canoe with a guide from the neighbouring community of Sumas, Gibbs reached a spot just past the east end of Matsqui Prairie where Sumas Mountain touches the Fraser River. There he was shown a bolder and told that is was a man who had been catching sturgeon when he lied to Xá:ls by saying he was not afraid of the strangers who were coming to the territory. As punishment Xá:ls transformed him into stone.[27]

14.3. Three decades later, in 1886, the talented and thoughtful ethnographer Franz Boas recorded and documented a version of the central Matsqui sx̱wõx̱wiyám describing the ancient origins of their tribal founder. Boas is today widely regarded as the father of modern North American anthropology. His ground-breaking anthropological work on BC's west coast is recognized as having been directly responsible for undermining the widely held nineteenth century's anthropological assumption that the world's cultures were hierarchically ranked and that North American indigenous cultures were less evolved expressions of European culture. To counter these ethnocentric and racist attitudes, Boas conducted research and analysis to demonstrate that the notion that

[26] Ibid., 63-69.
[27] Gibbs' account of this story is quoted in full at a later point in this report.

"culture" was learned behavior and that each culture needed to be seen within its own historical context and not compared to one another where one culture's criteria was used to adjudicate another's. That is to say, his rigorous ethnography resulted in a new and deeper appreciation of the now accepted fact that cultures need to be understood within the context of their own local historical circumstances, and not evaluated according to criteria that reflect particular (European) sensibilities and priorities.[28]

14.4. In interviewing Chief George Chehalis and his wife (from the Stó:lõ Chehalis tribe on the Harrison River) Boas was told the origin stories of all the tribal communities along the lower Fraser River. These were shared to Boas in 1890 as part of a comprehensive story that followed the travels and adventures of Xá:ls as he journeyed through the world conducting transformations. These stories innumerate the tribes along the lower Fraser starting at the river's mouth and then moving upstream. In this way Boas' recordings place each of the Stó:lõ tribes within a specific geographical location that recognizes their traditional tribal territory. In his resulting 1895 publication Boas identified the Matsqui as the fourth tribe on the Fraser – locating them upriver from the Kwantlen and the Katzie (McMillan island and Pitt River respectively) and downriver from the Chilliwack. The original Matsqui ancestor was Sk-Elê'yitl:

> The Mâ'çQui [Matsqui]. Their ancestor Sk-Elê'yitl (derived from sk-Ela'o, beaver), had a son whom he dressed completely in beaver skins, just like himself. When Qals [Xa:ls, the transformers] came, they fought by standing opposite each other and trying to transform one another. Finally Qals defeated him. Sk-Elê'yitl jumped into the water and thrashed about wildly. He and his son were transformed into beavers.[29]

[28] For a good overview of Franz Boas' approach to anthropology, and his impact on the discipline, see Regna Darnell, *And Along Came Boas: Continuity and Revolution in Americanist Anthropology* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia, Penn.: J. Benjamins, 1998).

[29] Franz Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America* [A translation of Franz Boas' 1895 edition of *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas*], edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy; translated by Dietrich Bertz. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2002), 101. The editors of this translation draw on subsequent publications by Wilson Duff (1952) and Wayne Suttles (1990) to locate the Matsqui as having "occupied the south bank of the Fraser River between Sumas Mountain and Crescent Island, and the inland area between Abbotsford and Aldergrove, and south" (see footnote #47, p. 101).

14.5. In an English language publication that presented much more of the ethnographic information than his German publication but few details on Stó:lõ sxwõxwiyám, Boas reported that the Matsqui had two villages, the first known as "Ma'mak'ume, above Langley on the left bank," and the second known as "Kokoae'uk, on Sumas Lake."[30] Ma'mak'ume [Mómeqwem] is the village that is located on what today is known as the main Matsqui reserve (IR2). The name Mómeqwem is a geographical descriptor that refers to the fact that groenlandicum (a plant prized for making what Stó:lõ people call meqwem tea (aka "swamp tea or Hudson's Bay tea") grows there in abundance.[31] The second village, listed as Kokoae'uk is a rendering of the Halqeméylem name for Sumas Mountain (Kw'ekw'e'i:qw) and is also the name now generally associated with the Stó:lõ village at Upper Sumas IR6 (commonly known in English as Kilgard after the nearby industrial brick plant). Whether Boas' informant meant that the village now associated with the Sumas village at Kilgard was originally a Matsqui village, is uncertain. What does seem clear is that the Matsqui occupied a village on the west end of Sumas Mountain near Sumas Lake. Perhaps this is a reference to one of the Matsqui settlements near the south west end of Sumas Mountain known to have been occupied in the 1850s.

14.6. Boas' informant George Chehalis was not the only Stó:lõ person of the nineteenth century who shared legendary stories about Beaver with outsiders. A decade later the Abbotsford-based local ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout recorded the story of how Beaver was the one who originally brought fire to the Stó:lõ people of the lower Fraser River. According to Hill-Tout's informant, there was a time in the distant past when the Stó:lõ people lived in darkness and had to eat raw food. But Beaver, who travelled up and down the Fraser River heard of a people who lived far off to the north who had fire. Beaver determined that he would steal fire from these people and bring it back to the Stó:lõ. So beaver devised a plan. Working in partnership with his brother Eagle, he first swam downriver to the ocean where he acquired a clam shell so he could hold the fire safely. Then he swam upriver (while Eagle flew overhead) into the distant northlands

[30] Franz Boas, "The Indian Tribes of the Lower Fraser River." In *64th Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* for 1890, (1894), 454-463.
[31] Sonny McHalsie, Halq'eméylem Placenames in Stó:lõ Territory," in Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *A Stó:lõ Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001),139 & 144.

and then, through a series of clever tricks and deception that involved building a dam and hiding the clam shell beneath his beaver skin, Beaver secured a sampling of fire and with Eagle brought it back to the lower Fraser. Beaver then showed the Stó:lõ people how make fire of their own by using a drill; he showed them that cottonwood was the best wood for starting fires; he demonstrated to them how to weave a rope called patlakan from the inner bark of the cedar trees and how to light one end on fire and then keep it smoldering for several days so fire could be transported between camps and villages. The patlakan rope was coiled around a person's shoulders when traveling. According to the Stó:lõ man who shared this story with Charles Hill-Tout, the Stó:lõ people so greatly appreciated this gift that from that day onward Beaver was usually referred to as "'our head brother' because of his wisdom and goodness.'" [32]

14.7. Additional stories of Beaver recorded in the mid-twentieth century speak to additional instances when his wisdom and goodness served the Stó:lõ people. Chilliwack Elders Robert Joe and Dan Milo related how once during a famine the Chilliwack men from Sowahlie near Cultus Lake acted selfishly and refused to share the salmon they had caught with the women, children, and elders of their community. As punishment Xá:ls the transformer turned the men into birds. Afterwards, it was Beaver who swam up the creek and gave the salmon the men had caught to the women of the Soowahlie village.[33]

14.8. A longer version of this story recorded by Norman Lerman explains how Beaver not only created reconciliation between the angry wives and the selfish husbands of Soowahlie, but how he also brought sockeye salmon to all the other hungry and starving people living throughout Stó:lõ territory by taking Sockeye's diapers and throwing them into various places along the Fraser River. Henceforth, sockeye salmon would come to those places to feed the people.

14.9. These remarkable legendary stories describing the actions and adventures of the wise and good-hearted Beaver provide insights into how the Matsqui people and their

[32] Hill-Tout, "The Tcilqeuk (Chilliwack)," 100-103.
[33] Jody Woods, "Coqualeetza," *A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 75.

Stó:lõ relatives and neighbours would have thought about the founder of the Matsqui tribe. And when regarded through the lens of Coast Salish culture (where people are not only considered to inherit certain characteristics from their ancestors, but where each generation's' carriers of a hereditary name are expected to live up to, and honour, the stories associated with the original carrier of a name) one can begin to appreciate the status and prestige that contemporary Stó:lõ people recognize among the descendants of Sk-Elê'yitl, the original Matsqui man, whom Xa:ls transformed into a beaver.

14.10. Of course, not all sxwõxwiyám legendary stories describe tribal origins; some describe miraculous happenings from the distant past that help to explain how people should behave, or more generally why things are the way they are. Such are the stories collected by folklorist Norman Lerman from Matsqui informants for his 1952 master's thesis "An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians, British Columbia."[34] Lerman recorded a total of eight stories as being from Matsqui. Mrs. Agnes James told six of these narratives, and together Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas and Mr. Cornelius Kelleher told the others. The existence of 8 distinct Matsqui versions of Lower Fraser stories provide evidence that Matsqui was (and is) a distinct First Nation with connections to other Fraser River groups. These are Matsqui-centered stories of Raven, Wren, Seagull, Grizzly Bear, Mount Baker, and The Flood, and while at times they discuss activities that occurred over a broader landscape and characters and happenings that are common to stories shared by other neighbouring groups, they are nonetheless significantly distinct from other tribal versions of the stories that Lerman recorded (such as those records from informants in Nooksack Washington or from informants living on Harrison Lake).

14.11. There are several geographically explicit references within the Matsqui stories: to

[34] Norman Hart Lerman, "An Analysis of Lower Fraser Indians, British Columbia," (unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Washington, 1952). For Stories from Matsqui see: Raven III First Version (Matsqui) Mrs. Agnes James p. 50; "Story about Wren" (Matsqui) Mrs. Agnes James p. 97; Raven VIII Bungling Host (Matsqui) Told by Mrs Agnes James, p.?; Grizzly Bear II (Matsqui) Mrs. Agnes James p.?; Seagull Story (Matsqui) Mrs Elizabeth Thomas p.?; Story about Wren (Matsqui) Mrs. Agnes James p. 185; Mount Baker Tale – 2nd version (Matsqui) Mrs. Agnes James; Flood Story II Story of Harry Joseph of the Chehalis Tribe, S. G. (Matsqui) told by Cornelius Kelleher P. 245

Tomohoy Mountain (Mt McQuire[35]) in the central Chilliwack River Valley (in the Wren stories), to camus patches in Sumas prairie (in the Grizzly Bear story), to Chilliwack Mountain and Mount Baker in the Mount Baker Story, and to the Chehalis River and Sumas Mountain (in the flood story). All of these places are within the broader Matsqui world, but with the exception of the camus beds of Sumas Prairie which is on the edge of the border between Matsqui and Sumas tribal territory and Sumas Mountain itself which is shared between the Matsqui and the Sumas, all are outside of what we have defied here as Matsqui's formal core tribal territory. In this regard, they are signifiers of Matsqui people's connections to, and interest in, the broader regional territory. [see Figure 4]

[35] Contemporary Canadian and US government maps show Tomyhoi Peak roughly one and a half kilometers south of the international boundary line at a point due south of the junction of the Slesse and Chilliwack River. They also show Mt.McGuire seven kilometres northwest of Tomyhoi peak located on the Canadian side of the border. My research among Stó:lõ Elders suggests that Mt. McGuire is the actual Tomyhoi mountain and that European cartographers confused the peaks. The word Tomyhoi (T'amiyehó:y) is derived from the Halqeméylem name for the bird Wren (t'ámiya) which in legendary stories is associated with hermaphrodites. Mt McGuire is regarded to be a transformer site of a hermaphrodite. A small lake on the back side of Mt. McGuire is also described in oral histories as a site where in the past Stó:lõ people brought hermaphrodite babies and abandoned them.

Figure 4

14.12. It is not surprising that Matsqui storytellers over 60 years ago do not explicitly make reference to Matsqui core-territory specific geographies in these sxwõxwiyám. We are confident that Matsqui listeners at the time would have understood the un-stated geographical context of the stories and been familiar with the Matsqui-centred characters and locations. It would have been the more distant locations within the territories of neighbouring tribes that required specific geographic references. In this way, silences likely indicate assumptions that these storytellers made about their territory – assumptions that they did not need to explain and that took for granted a geographic understanding that is now, over sixty years later, lost to an untrained listener/reader of transcripts. Furthermore, Norman Lerman, as a folklorist, was primarily interested in the uniqueness of the text vis a vis stories from informants in neighbouring communities, rather than in fleshing out the storyteller's interpretations of where their particular versions of stories were geographically located.

14.13. On a similar note, in the Wren stories, Mrs. James explains that Wren sang in the Nooksack language. It is clear that earlier folklorists and amateur anthropologists such as Lerman and Wells were quite interested in the special relationship between the Matsqui and the US-based Nooksack tribe. This suggests a moment when the storyteller was noting the unexpected, while much that Matsqui people at that time knew about Matsqui likely remained unstated.

14.14. Despite the value of their scholarship and observations, none of the early ethnographers discussed above sought to create a comprehensive inventory of Matsqui sxwõxwiyám. As a result, there are within Matsqui core territory additional sxwõxwiyám that do not appear in their writings. One is associated with the large transformer stone located on the eastern edge of Aldergrove Regional Park. This site, know to the Matsqui as "Méqel" (which translates as "nose"), is associated with a Xá:ls story that describes a man who started sneezing when enemies were drawing near. So impressed was Xá:ls with this talent/skill that he permanently transformed the man into the stone nose.

14.15. Additionally, there are several transformer sites on Sumas mountain that are important to the Matsqui. The contemporary Matsqui explain that they have met with Elders from the neighboring Sumas tribe to discuss tribal boundaries. Ray Silver of Sumas confirmed for them that half of Sumas Mountain belonged to the Sumas people and half belonged to the Matsqui. Near the east/west middle of the mountain close to its northern end is a small lake known today as either Lost Lake or Chadsey Lake. According to oral traditions first recorded by George Gibbs in March 1858, this lake is the home of Thunderbirds who have a house on a rock in the water. To the southward closer to the Sumas Kilgard community are caves and a stone known as Thunderbird Caves and Thunderbird Rock. [See Figure 6]

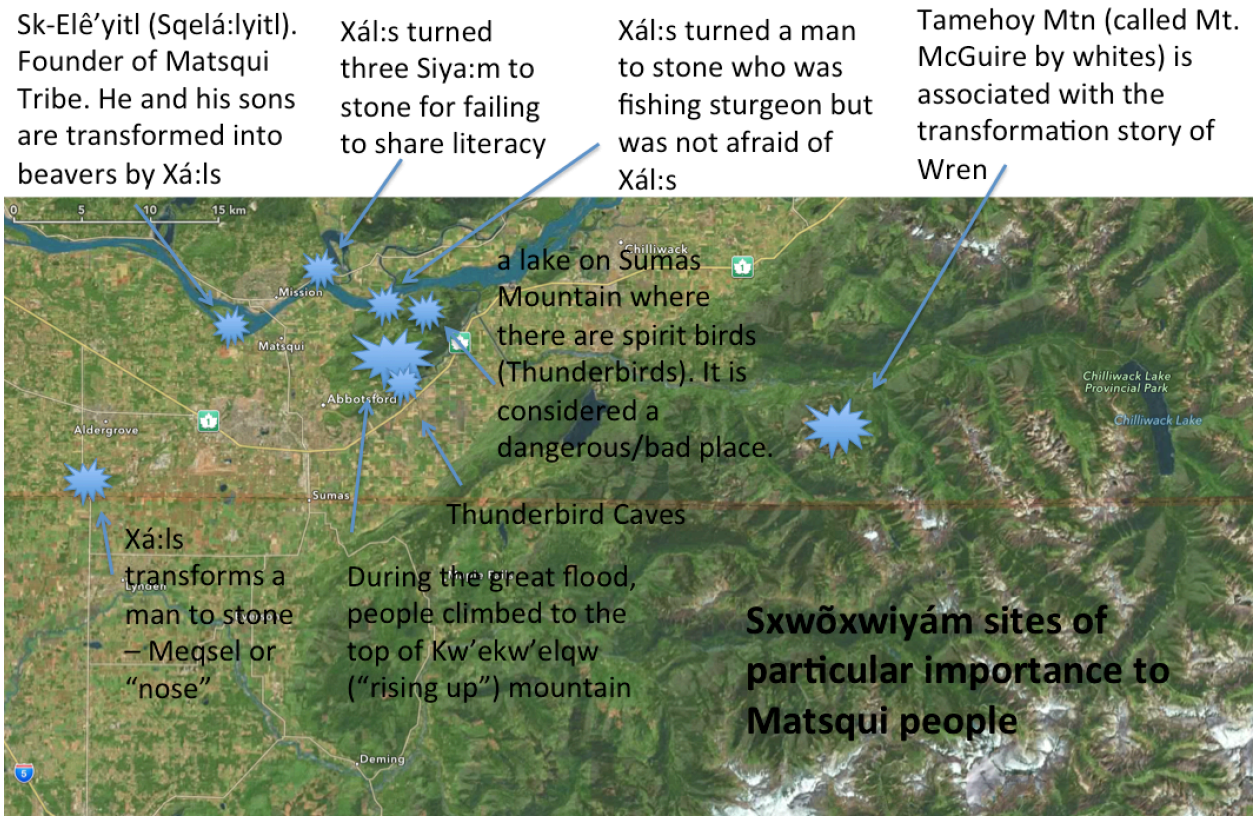

Figure 5

15. **Food Resources and Placenames**

15.1. The Matsqui prairie was formerly rich in food sources which remain important aspects of their history and their contemporary cultural identity. Place names recorded for the region and mapped by Sonny McHalsie in the *Stó:lõ Historical Atlas* (p.139) indicate that several important plants were gathered here including Mómeqwem (medicinal tea leaves), Xoxá:q'wem (leaf stems of cow parsnips), ska:la (huckleberries), skunk cabbage.

15.2. As well, the Matsqui prairie has numerous place names that were designed to assist travelers know when they had reached certain locations during their travels throughout the tribal territory. This indicates that the area was heavily used and that the Matsqui people had an intimate knowledge of the waterways, trials and resources of the