

An aerial photograph of a forested landscape. The top half shows a dense, dark green forest with white contour lines overlaid. The bottom half shows a residential development with houses and roads, also with white contour lines overlaid. A white rectangular box is positioned in the upper middle section, containing the title text.

# Modified Landscapes

**Reconciliation + Recreation**

## Modified Landscapes

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*Bachelor of Design in Industrial Design  
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Graduation Project  
Final Report

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Architecture in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Architecture Program

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Genevieve Poirier

December 21st, 2021

*Name*

*Date*

*Signature*



(above) Portrait of the author, biking the trails in her "backyard" in Squamish BC., in the traditional, ancestral lands of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw.

## Acknowledgements

Land acknowledgments.... what do they mean? what is their purpose? While doing the research for this project I felt like they lost meaning, the words felt empty. We put acknowledgments in our email signatures, read them out before presentations, I see them in the syllabi of our university courses. What do these acknowledgments mean beyond words?

I acknowledge that I live, work, and recreate in the traditional territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, and many other nations across BC. I acknowledge that in around 150 years, my settler ancestors unequivocally disrupted and nearly obliterated the way of life of a people that had occupied this land for over millenia. This disruption took many forms, including disruption of a language, land, and an entire culture. Disease wiped out the majority of the population, while residential schools, reserves, trauma and abuse suppressed the rest.

I acknowledge that as a white, well educated woman, I grew up next to a people that I never fully understood. I took the ferry to school every day with the Penelakut People. They sat on one side of the

ferry while we sat on the other. I never understood why the children from Penelakut Island never finished high school, why I was taught I wasn't allowed to go to that island, because it was dangerous. This is how I grew up, never fully understanding a people and a culture I lived right next to, so close that when the tides went down, our two islands touched. Neighbours, yet so far apart.

I acknowledge that I am trying to better understand how to approach reconciliation after learning about the disruption of a people that took better care of the land than my ancestors ever have. The work of moving past this recognition is uncomfortable, disconcerting, and sensitive, a subject easily brushed off and considered overwhelming and inconvenient.

I believe that reconciliation involves collective understanding and mutual respect. In order to reconcile relationships between Indigenous peoples and their traditional and ancestral territories, we must turn acknowledgment into meaningful action.

# Abstract

What does it mean to move past land acknowledgments towards meaningful reconciliation? Many recreation networks in BC are built within the remnants of colonial practices of land modification, somewhere that was clear cut. These old cut blocks leave behind access roads where seemingly a-political and somewhat exclusive recreational activities take place, perpetuating a rhetoric of ignorance towards the traditional and ancestral lands of indigenous peoples. Situated within a network of trails in Squamish BC, this project navigates the meaning of reconciliation within the realm of recreation and forest management. With different approaches at varying scales, this work visualizes how to move towards meaningful action through processes, signifiers and suggestions. Focusing on the entrance of the trail network, these interventions bring attention to juxtapositions of land modifications. It should also be acknowledged that none of this work could be done without proper consultation of the local Nation and follow through from the community.

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"If you're going to understand our language,  
and understand our people, then you have  
to start with wanaxws, with respect."

*- Uncle Louis, Squamish Nation Community*

## Introduction

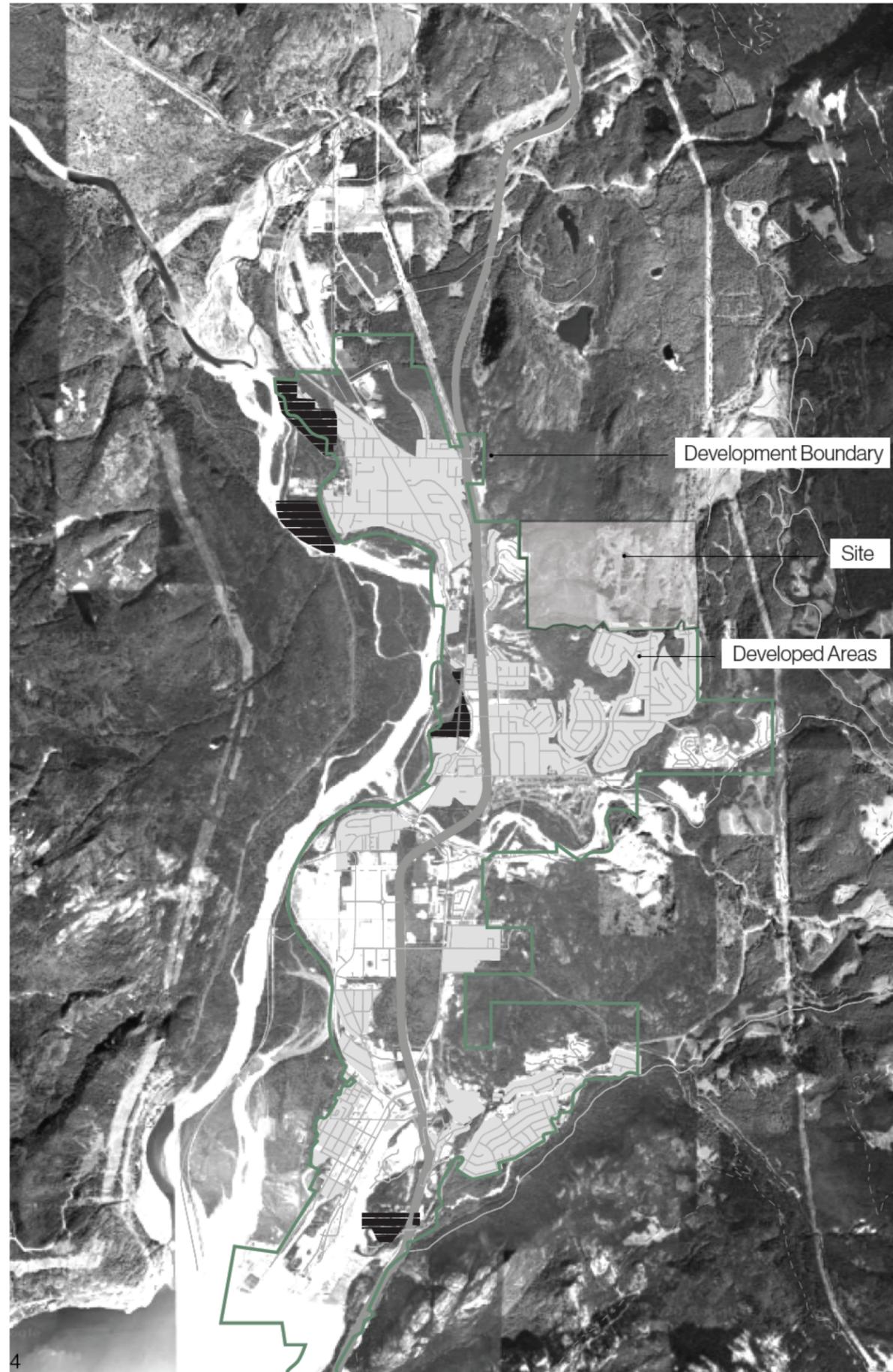
This project began with a personal vendetta against a developer who wanted to turn an iconic trail network into another residential development. When considering those who had a vested interest in this property, whether subconsciously or not, I chose to include little about the Squamish Nation in my preliminary research. I was concerned with the sensitivity of the subject, so I chose to ignore it. This exclusion perpetuates a rhetoric of ignorance that exists within settler society and is exemplified in recreation networks. Recreational landscapes in BC are often assumed as a-political, a place where we can escape our busy lives and focus on our health and wellbeing. It's a space we occupy where we don't want to consider or think about the "ethics" of our actions. The reality of our presence within these landscapes is a complex narrative of ownership and access.

This project investigates the impacts of colonial residual effects of modified forests in recreation networks. Many accesses to these 'wild' backcountry landscapes are the remnants of clearcut logging practices, where deactivated logging roads remain, cutting across hillsides through replanted forests. While many trail networks exist on

Crown land, some networks exist on private land or First Nations territory. This project has been a considerable process of discovery for me. It is about my understanding my place and responsibility as a settler designer and recreator in the broader context of reconciliation through a local project in a forest in Squamish BC.

Squamish has witnessed dramatic change over the past several hundred years. From the arrival of settlers, to a logging and mining boom and bust and a surge of expensive real estate and recreational tourism. For a population hovering around 20,000 and growing rapidly, there is a broad range of economic and social demographics that currently occupy this land. Rapid development, overcrowding and rising costs of living cause high tensions and clashes between different groups of people.

How can a forest facilitate meaningful reconciliation between settler and local First Nation Communities? Situated in a network of trails in Squamish BC, this project aims to foster relationships between the land, the local Nation, the settler community and the broader community through a framework of signification and collective authorship.



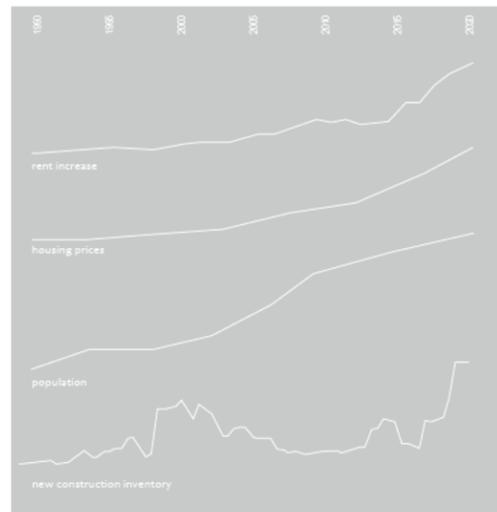
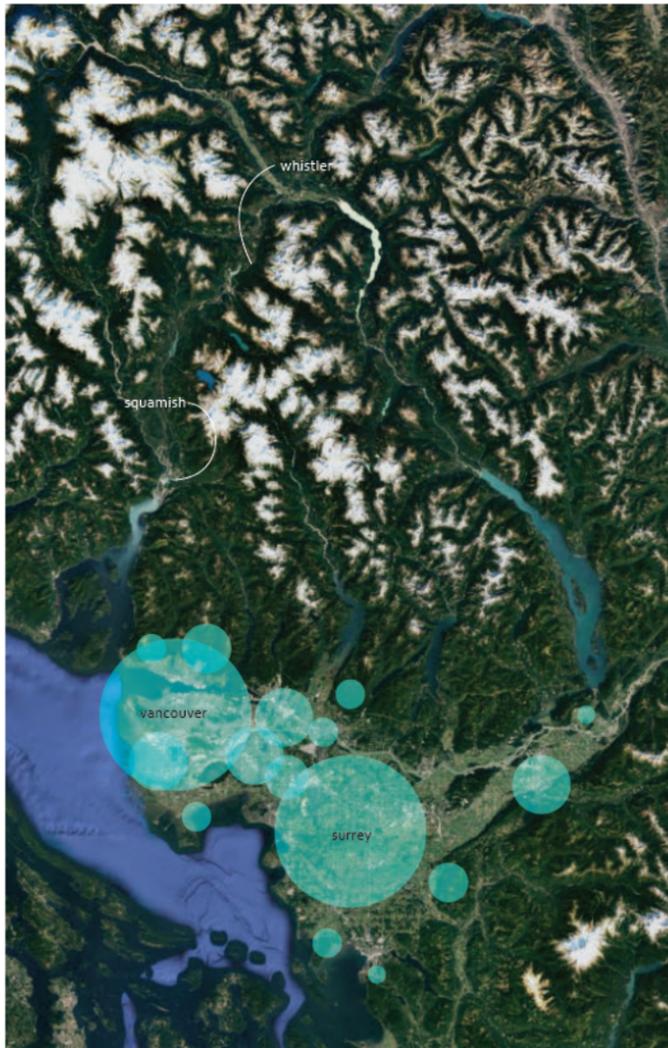
## A Brief History of Squamish

Squamish, or “mother of the winds”, has been occupied by the Skwxwú7mesh People for over 5000 years. Located at the end of the Howe Sound and situated at the mouth of the Squamish river on a salt water marsh, the land provided a plentiful nourishment of cedar, shellfish, and oolichans. A sense of stewardship and fostering the landscape in common for future generations was embedded at the core of the Nation’s relationship to the land (Mclane). After contact with European settlement, the territory was never formally ceded. An influx of European settlers seeking possession of land for industrial scale uses began dividing up the landscape without the Skwxwú7mesh People’s consent. By 1892, 35 families were living in northern Squamish, farming, mining and logging (Mclane).

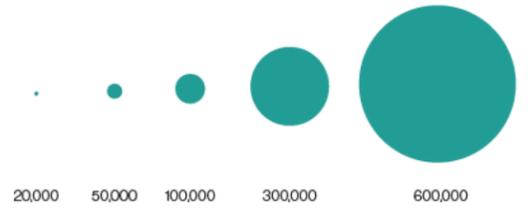
Squamish was isolated from the lower mainland until 1959, when the highway and rail-line was completed connecting Squamish to Vancouver. In 1966, Whistler Mountain opened with hopes of winning a bid for the 1968 Winter Olympic Games (Whistler Blackcomb). It was not until 2010 that this Olympic dream came true, and with major improvements to the winding, dangerous highway, the Sea to Sky was now much more accessible by car. Climbers, mountain bikers, mountaineers and all-around recreation seekers have been drawn to this area since the 1960s, but it wasn’t until the improvements of the highway, along with the 2010 Olympic coverage, that Squamish was really put on the map as a desirable destination.

The settler history of Squamish is rooted in its history as a logging town. The history of Squamish’s forestry industry was underlined by the steady operation of the Woodfibre pulp mill. There is a deep ceded history of logging within the older Squamish community, celebrated each summer with the Logger Sports Festival. Logging is still a significant industry in Squamish and it is still characterized by this history, with an active log boom and mills throughout the valley.

(left) Map of Squamish, BC. Indicating development boundary, developed areas and site location



(above) Current trajectories of population and housing prices in Squamish BC.  
 (right) Squamish and Whistler's proximity to urban areas.



# Urban Adjacent Community

In 2019, Vancouver was marked the second least affordable city in the world, after Hong Kong (Crawford, 2019). With major improvements to the Sea to Sky highway, it is now possible to commute to the lower mainland for work. This has caused urban-adjacent, regional real estate markets to link with urban markets, which Squamish is currently feeling the repercussions of. Between 2015 and 2018, the price of real estate in Squamish nearly doubled, where property values increased by 98% (Zuvelek).

and amenities support the needs of the community" (Squamish OCP Bylaw 2017). The new population growth is young, one of the youngest in BC, with 60% of residents under the age of 40 (Zuvelek). The town's rapid transformation is not without it's growing pains: problems with parking, amenities dated from decades previous, crowded recreation sites to name a few. The optimism reflected in the OCP is not the case for many locals currently being priced out of the housing market.

Squamish is an urban-adjacent community experiencing significant growth and significant market influence from it's urban neighbor, Vancouver. From 2011 to 2016, the population grew by 13.7%, over double the provincial average (Squamish OCP). In the OCP projections, Squamish could see 24,000 new residents in the next 15 years, and a need for 9,600 new units, or 480 units per year. This need for new housing has caught the interest of developers, as hundreds of market driven housing is erecting everywhere within the Squamish Development Boundary. "Squamish is highly livable, with a vibrant small-town feel. Diverse local employment opportunities exist, bringing a balance between well-paying jobs and affordable and diverse age-friendly housing options. Development is sustainable managed and financed to ensure adequate services

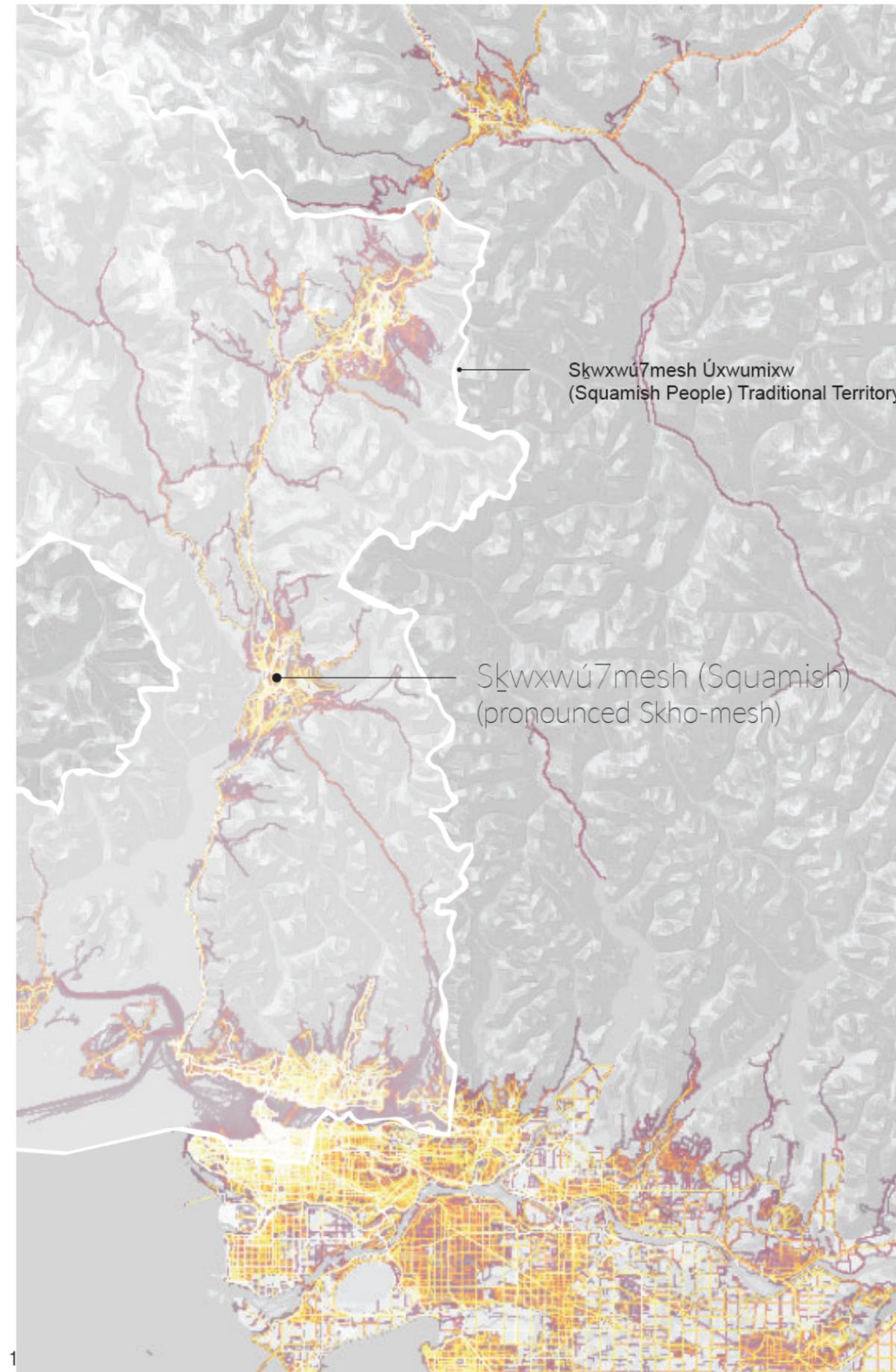
## “Hardwired for Adventure”

When the pulp mill shut down in 2006, a big piece of Squamish's identity was lost, and before the 2010 Olympics, the town was struggling. (Zuvelek). As resource sectors in parts of BC continuously shut down, tourism is a major component to fill the economic voids of many of these communities. An increasingly growing segment of both the domestic and international tourism markets are seeking “experiential” tourism products (BC Rural Centre). Tens of thousands of visitors flock to Squamish every year to capitalize on the recreational playground that local residents have built over the last few decades.

In 2015, an estimated 615,000 visitors came to Squamish, up almost 300% from ten years prior in 2008 (Squamish Tourism Sector Economic Impact Analysis). As this type of tourism demand increases, the challenging impacts on the environment and the community become evident. In 2017, Joffre Lakes Park saw record breaking numbers of day users, resulting in a new wave of bylaws and backlash from the public (Csenge). It is evident that unsustainable growth in tourism will have serious implications on the local environment and community.



(above) Image courtesy of Matt Bolton, this image epitomizes the level of extreme sport in the Squamish and Sea to Sky Corridor.



## Unceded Territory

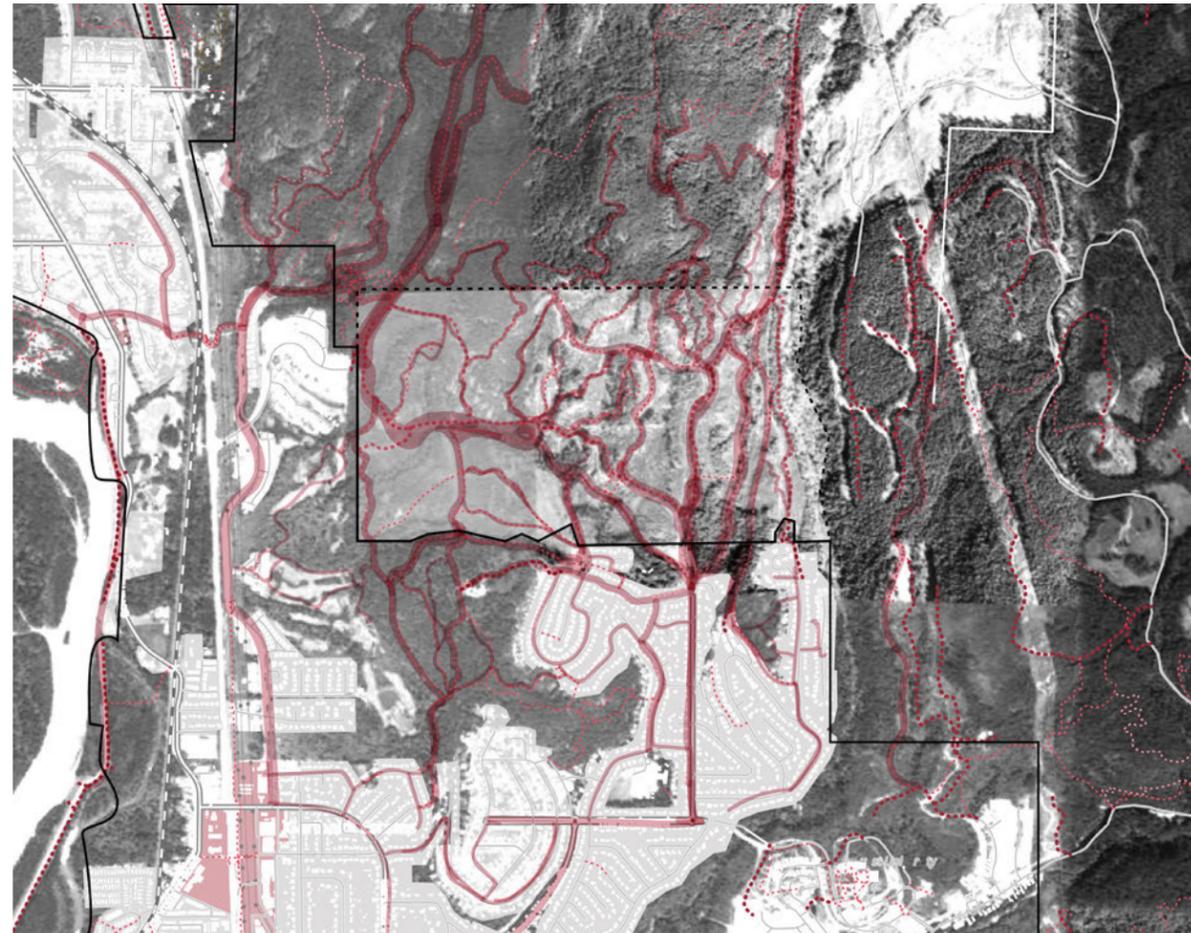
Squamish is located within the traditional and ancestral lands of the Squamish Nation. The territory of the Squamish People includes the Burrard Inlet, English Bay, False Creek, and Howe Sound watersheds. The current areas that exist within these lands are the North and West Vancouver, Port Moody, and all of the District of Squamish and the Municipality of Whistler. Prior to 1923, the Squamish People were socially, politically and economically organized into several communities of uxwumixw (villages) in this territory but now are organized as one government as the Squamish Nation. Of about 4000 members, around 10 percent of the Squamish Nation's population live in communities along the Squamish River (Squamish Nation). One thing was shared by all of the people living in these various kinship communities is a commonly spoken language called the Squamish Language (Coast Salish History Project).

Peoples did not practice agriculture, the government deemed their land not being "used" and therefore had no owner. The government had no regard for the preceding Indigenous concepts of land ownership and land use. Up until the early 1900's, Squamish people had dual residencies within their territory and changed residences with the seasons. Because of the creation of reserve lands and Indian Bands, people were now tied to single reserves. This eroded the established practice of alternating residency between the Burrard Inlet and the Squamish River, which had been a traditional practice with the seasons since their creation stories. By the 1920's, this part of the Squamish way of life was broken for the vast majority of Squamish People (Coast Salish History Project).

In 1874, The British Columbia Lands Act restricted the acquisition of lands by Indigenous Peoples, and land that wasn't demonstrably in use was claimed by the government as Crown lands. Because Coast Salish

(left) Strava Heat Map indicating recreational occupation within the Squamish Nation traditional territory

## Recreation + Colonialism



(above) Strava Heat Map indicating extensive trail use around this site. This recreation network is widely used by the recreational community

An article by John Ried-Hresko and Jeff Warren, two white male settlers called "White Settler Canadian understandings of Mountain Biking, Indigeneity and Recreational Colonialism" explores how White settler mountain bikers in BC understand their relationship to recreational landscapes on unceded Indigenous territory. Through qualitative research, they indicate White settlers' rhetorical strategies of ignorance, ambivalence and acknowledgement to negotiate their place within these geographies. Recreational landscapes are often positioned as apolitical, where people go to exercise, have fun, and be outside in nature. Intentionally or unintentionally, it is a space people don't think about issues around land use or politics of power and possession. Mountain biking and other recreational activities in Squamish are becoming increasingly popular and are positioned as economic drivers for the community. These activities and their economic indicators are becoming an important factor in land use decisions. Outdoor recreation, land modification, and park designations of traditional Indigenous territories are indicators of advancing settler colonialism.

The construction of trails on Crown land or otherwise forms strong notions of ownership and place-based attachments by those who build them. Trail builders and riders who frequent this area consider this land an extension of themselves. There are commonalities between the connection to the land that the recreation community and the local indigenous community share. The challenge for settler recreationalists is to understand the impact of colonial presence on indigenous territory, and how that presence has altered the land and way of life. Continued presence without a lack of acknowledgment and understanding will perpetuate a rhetoric of ignorance within this community.



*exchange of knowledge*



*learning through making*



*experiencing your own work*

# Truth + Reconciliation

## TRC Calls to Action

In 2015 - The TRC issued 94 calls to action to promote reconciliation between settler Canadians and Indigenous communities. Of the 22 categories, one is entirely dedicated to sport and recreation. Items 87-91 specifically address sports and reconciliation. Item 90 calls for culturally relevant anti-racism awareness in sport, education in sport, funding and access for communities in sport.

## Language and Place Names

Language and place names are an important part of understanding the history of the Squamish People and can be an entry point for reconciliation (Squamish Atlas). Learning and acknowledging historical place names to the the places around us could spark new questions and challenge conventions of what we know. "What does the original place name tell me about this place?" "who changed the name, and why?" These questions could commence discussions about local geography and colonial history and our relationship to land and place. Connecting language to place is an important part of Squamish Nation cultural values. Settlers that live in Squamish also feel a deep connection to a sense of place, as many move people move here because the appreciate and admire what this land has to offer.

## Trail Building + Reconciliation

There are several recent projects throughout BC where settler trail builders are working with local indigenous youth to build trails as a means to reconnect them with their land. Patrick Lukas, a registered professional planner, has started an Indigenous Youth Mountain Bike Program. It is a provincial initiative that works with First Nations youth to build trails, ride, be outdoors and connect with nature (Reconciliation Canada). The aims of the initiative are to help youth improve mental health by connecting with the outdoors and engaging in physical activity, while also connecting them with their traditional territories. Trail building instills a sense of ownership, stewardship and leadership within their territory through an exchange of knowledge, learning through making, and experiencing their own work.

A popular cycling brand RaceFace created a film titled Hwuy'xwet Pune'luxutth. The film follows an ally trail builder Riley McIntosh to Penelakut Island, where he works with youth to establish a trail network within the community. The film brings to light different perspectives about what a trail building initiative can mean for a community to reconnect with their territory. It illustrates how trail building can create a sense of accomplishment, responsibility and pride for the participants as they learn a new set of skills and reconnect with the outdoors.

*(left)* Stills from Hwuy'xwet Pune'luxutth (Opening Penelakut) A trailbuilding initiative on Penelakut Island in conjunction with the Penelakut Elementary School

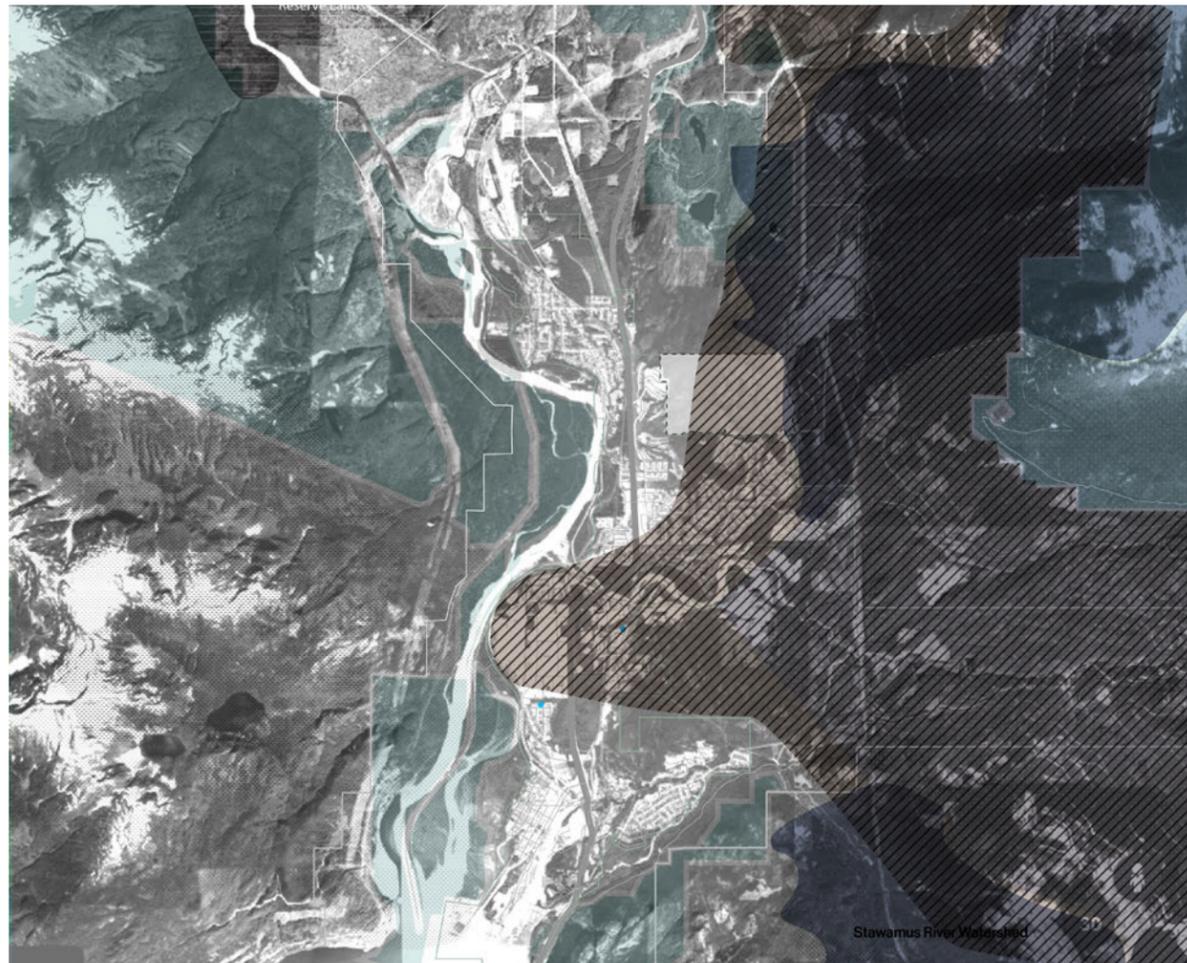
# Xay Temíxw

## Squamish Nation Land Use Plan

In order to move anywhere with this project, it was critical to understand the perspective of the Squamish Nation in relation to recreation and forest management. The Xay Temíxw is a land use plan that was developed by the Squamish Nation as a result of colonial activities. The Squamish Nation land use plan is for the forests and wilderness of the Squamish Nation traditional territory. The first draft was published in 2001, with the purpose of determining and describing the community's vision for the future of the land, forests, and wilderness of the traditional territory. It describes how the community wants the Nation's traditional territory to be protected, managed, and utilized for the benefit of present and future generations.

The plan was produced within the context of a landscape already dramatically altered by its colonial settlers. The current plan aims to deal with what is left after decades of development, and reflects the current situation. The plan intends to restore health to areas that have been degraded by impacts of development including industrial logging, erosion and pollution.

Areas of the plan include the boundary of the traditional Squamish Nation territory, already protected areas, wild spirit places, restoration areas, wildlife rehabilitation areas, sensitive areas and Indian reserves. The areas that overlap on the subject property are restoration and habitat rehabilitation areas, as well as two watersheds.



(above) The Xay Temíxw highlights watersheds, specific land use areas, wild spirit places and places of cultural importance within their territory.

## Values + Protocol

The Squamish Nation culture is inseparable from physical places in their traditional territory. The following principles are outlined in the Xay Temixw and are tied to stories about special places passed on through oral tradition. These oral histories tell the Squamish about their place in the universe and who they are. Language is an especially important part of this culture, and one that is on the brink of extinction. Many of the words used in the Squamish language are ingrained within the values and protocols they hold as a community. The words listed on the right are outlined by the Nation to embody their cultural values and protocol through language.

### **Úxwumixw**

“Nation; Village [Houses and Inhabitants]; Community; People”

*Community | Temixw | Chenchenstway | S7ekwitel Chet*

### **Stélmexw**

“Indigenous Person; Human Being; Human People”

*Collective | Membership | Us*

### **Nexwniw**

“Advice; Teaching; Upbringing; Instructions; Ways; Fashion; Manners”

*Pride | Ha7lh Skwalwen*

### **Wena’xws**

“Treat with respect; Believe; Honour”

*Empowerment | Respecting Others*

### **Siyar’nin**

“Area belonging to a Siy’a’rn; Responsibilities related to the role of a leader”

*Leadership | Chenchenstway | Everyone has a role to play*

### **Snewi’yelh**

“Advice; Teachings; Cultural Knowledge

*Culture | Tradition | Resilience | Foundation | Teachings and Knowledge*

## Strategic Vision

The following excerpts from the Squamish Nation Land Use plan pertain to areas of inquiry for this design project.

### **External Relations**

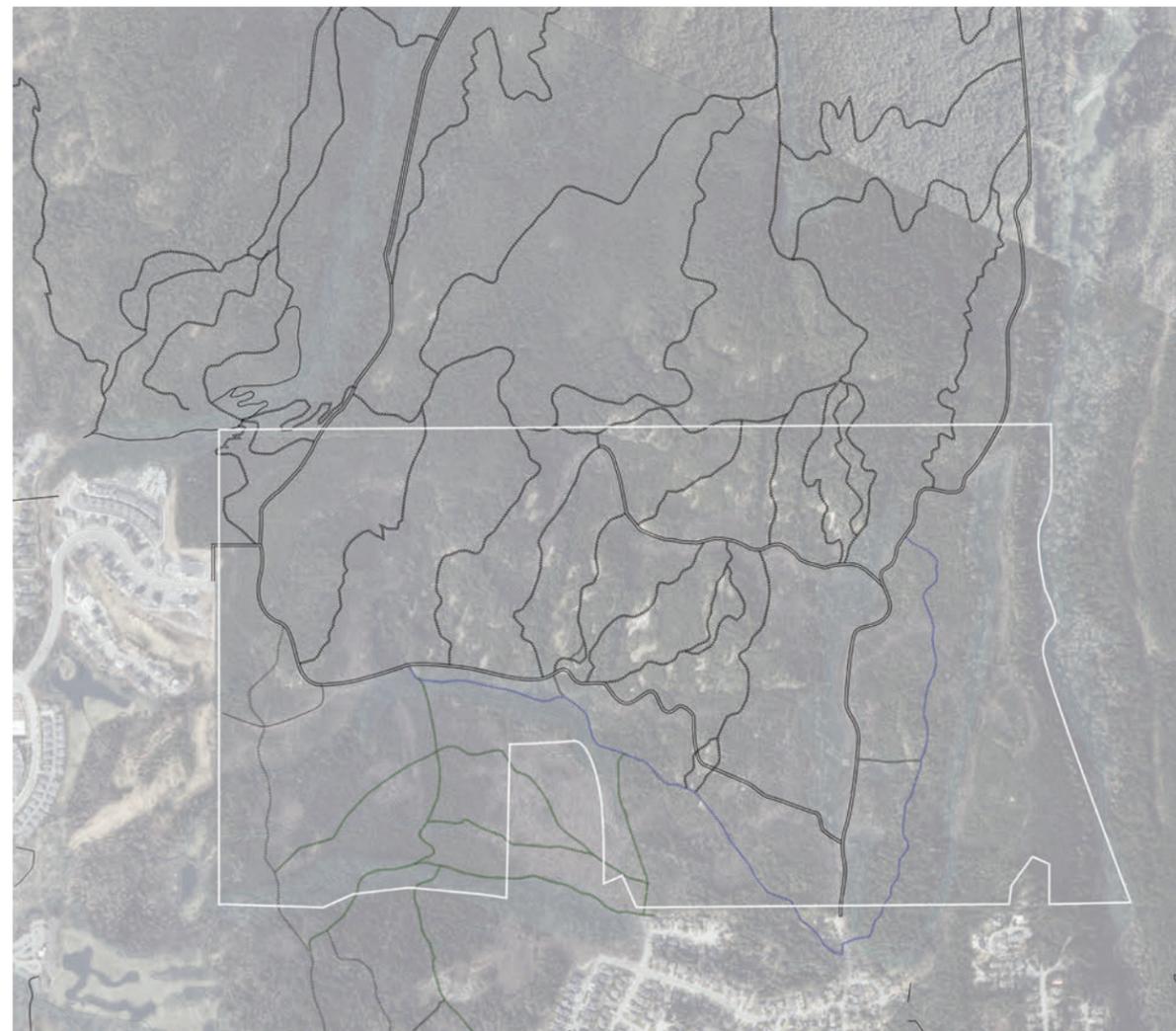
- Building on current and past protocols and relationship agreements, the Squamish Nation will strive towards nation-to-nation relationships with all other levels of government, including all Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments, including our neighbors, which are based on mutual respect, collaboration, equality, and meaningful engagement.
- Asserting rightful place at the table. Base these relationships on joint decision-making and measurable commitments that move beyond a paternalistic relationship and tokenism..
- Increase our visibility on our territory to ensure newcomers know whose lands and waters they are on.

### **Recreation and Tourism**

- Provide opportunities for Squamish Nation members to participate in tourism development, particularly cultural tourism and ecotourism.
- Provide opportunities for Squamish Nation members to participate in outdoor recreation activities.
- Ensure backcountry recreation tourism development does not negatively impact on traditional uses or affect cultural and heritage sites.

### **Forest Management**

- The Squamish people take a holistic view of the forest, knowing what they give to the culture physically, emotionally, spiritually and culturally. They recognize that the diversity of habitats and species in the forest is vital. Silviculture to replenish the forest is very important and is an important source of jobs for Squamish members.
- Produce a long-term, ecologically sustainable supply of timber and other forest products.
- Restore forest ecosystem structure and function across harvested landscapes, particularly in riparian and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Conserve all native species and their habitats within their range of natural variability.



(above) Site plan indicating trail difficulties. This site features mostly advanced or expert trails, with two main access roads that are unmaintained but well used.

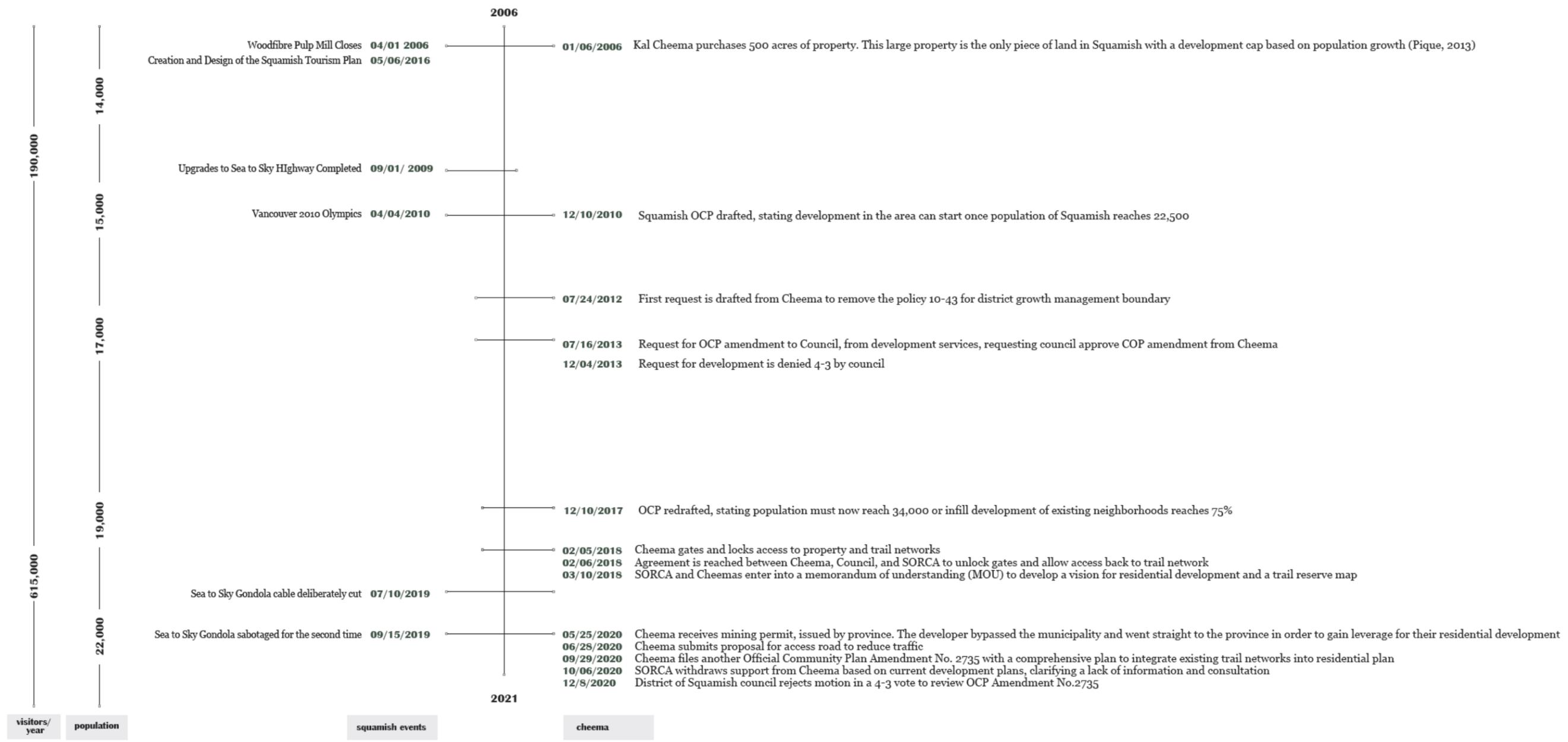
## Site

The site for this project is a piece of private property that has been a front and center issue of the trail user community for many years. This parcel of land is home to one of Squamish's most iconic trail networks, bringing thousands of tourists from around the world every year to experience "Squamish Granite". Located in between the Alice Lake Provincial Park and an existing single-family residential neighborhood, the Alice Lake Trail Network is a complex mix of provincial crown, Squamish First Nation, and privately held lands that contain irreplaceable recreational and economic benefits to the community (Norman).

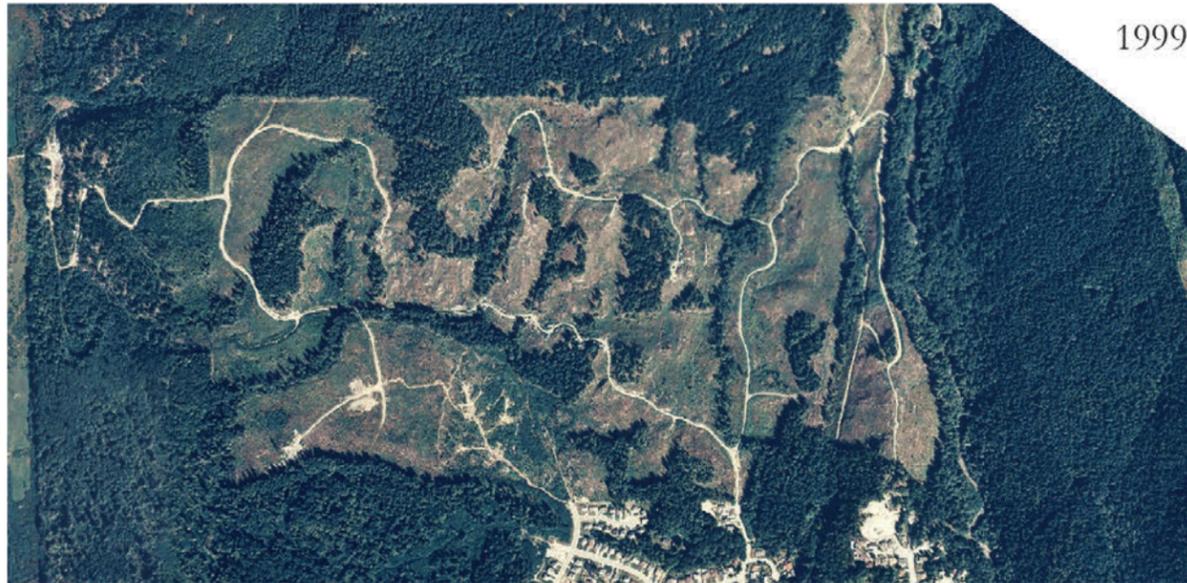
The land was originally purchased for a low price, due to holding neither zoning for logging or development (Osborn, 2020). The parcel of land currently sits outside of the development boundary, and over the last 15 years the owner has applied to be included within it. Changes to the development boundary require a population to reach 34,000, and 75% of all land within the development boundary to be developed before the boundary can change. This caused the developers to retaliate, building chain link fences to all access points, blocking access to the globally renowned trail network and to Alice Lake Provincial Park (The Squamish Chief). With the help of a powerful local governing body, the Squamish Off Road Cycling Association, the trail network remains open, for now. After engaging in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop a vision for

residential development and a trail reserve map, the Squamish Off Road Cycling Association and the developers of the Cheema property have had a tumultuous relationship. SORCA is an important governing body within the community. With almost 10% of the current population of Squamish being registered members, this passionate community of mountain bikers and trail users is invested in protecting these lands. During a Squamish OCP community engagement session in 2018, the single largest return on comments were in relation to recreation access and assets (District of Squamish).

In a recent letter to the Mayor of Squamish, SORCA solidified their position on the current development status by stating that "We cannot provide support for any proposal to proceed down the path to development of District Lots 509 and 510 without certainty on preservation of the trail network, including the trails themselves, as well as the character of the trails and surrounding forest. It would be inappropriate, in our view, to designate lands that contain such iconic trails as slated for Residential Neighborhood development" (Norman). The association further states that SORCA has sought to establish a working arrangement with the Proponent, and set out details of a "shared vision" for the preservation of the trail network, that would benefit the community as well as the economic interests of the developer.



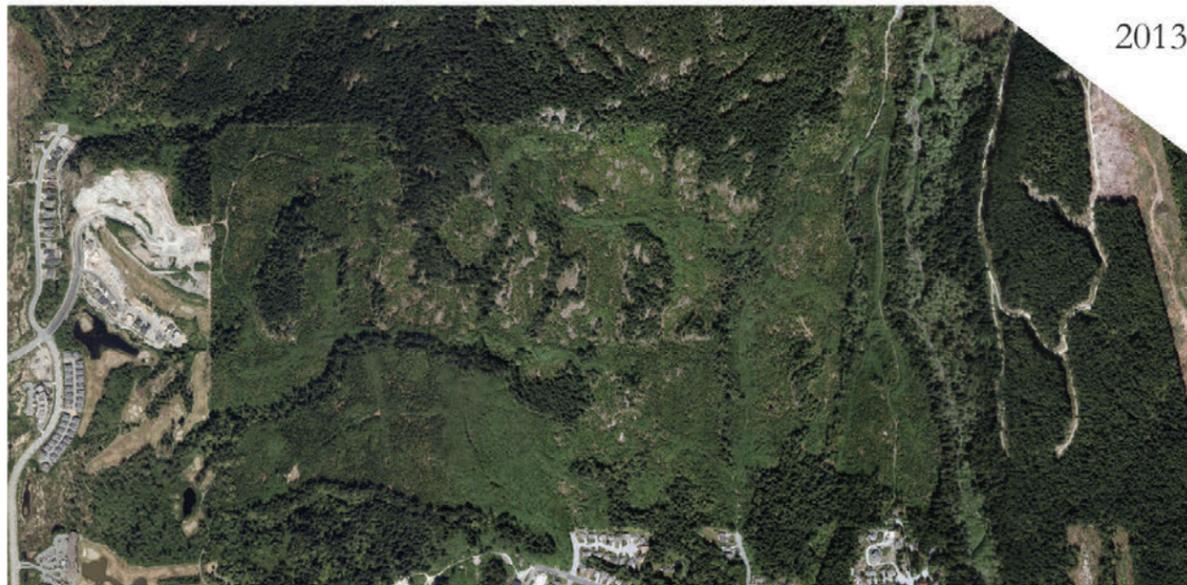
(above) History of land ownership and land use since 2006



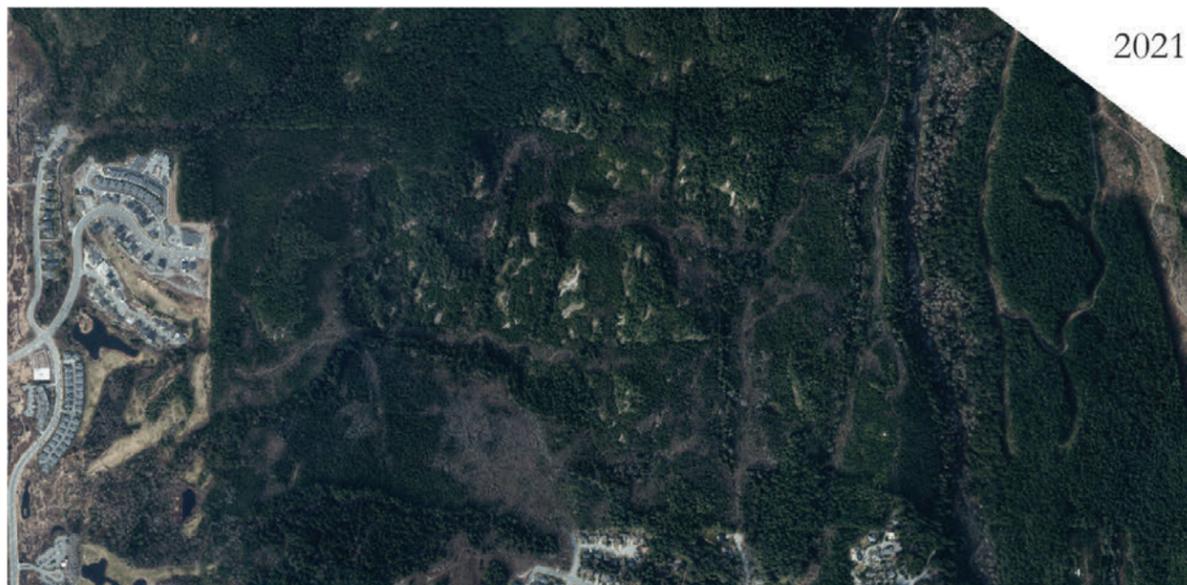
1999

## A Modified Landscape

These aerial photos indicate the history of the forest on this site. This forest was given the Crown land designation of "recreation/resource" by the BC government. The earliest available aerial imagery shows a dramatically modified landscape due to resource extraction that happened some time in the 1990s. The site was then replanted, and as it regrew over the next 30 years, the community built trails through these new forests. The legacy of this forest after it was "disrupted" involves human occupation, finding use in what was left behind. The community built trails, improving the recreational value of this land after the logging company stripped it of its resource value. They carved trails through the diverse ecosystems that still remained: granite slabs, small patches of mature forests, cut blocks with young, replanted saplings. Old skid roads used for hauling logs became the main arteries of access from the neighborhood to the forests beyond. Those who frequent this forest, building and experiencing these trails, feel a sense of ownership over this land and how it is used, even though this forest is private property. The economic value of this land is now not only resource, but recreation as well.



2013



2021

*(left)* Aerial imagery of this site illustrating the forest modification from 1999-2021

## Land Use

This site is an intersection of a developed and undeveloped area. Surrounding this site is an old golf course, which is currently being developed into a park and a new development. Directly to the south is an older existing residential single family neighbourhood, where the average price of a home is currently around 1.8 million dollars. To the north of this site is Crown land designated as "recreation / resource." As part of the LNG Impact Benefit agreement with the Squamish Nation, part of this Crown land is proposed as part of a "land back" initiative, meaning that the land between this site and the small Provincial Park (Alice Lake Provincial Park) would be back in control of the Squamish Nation.

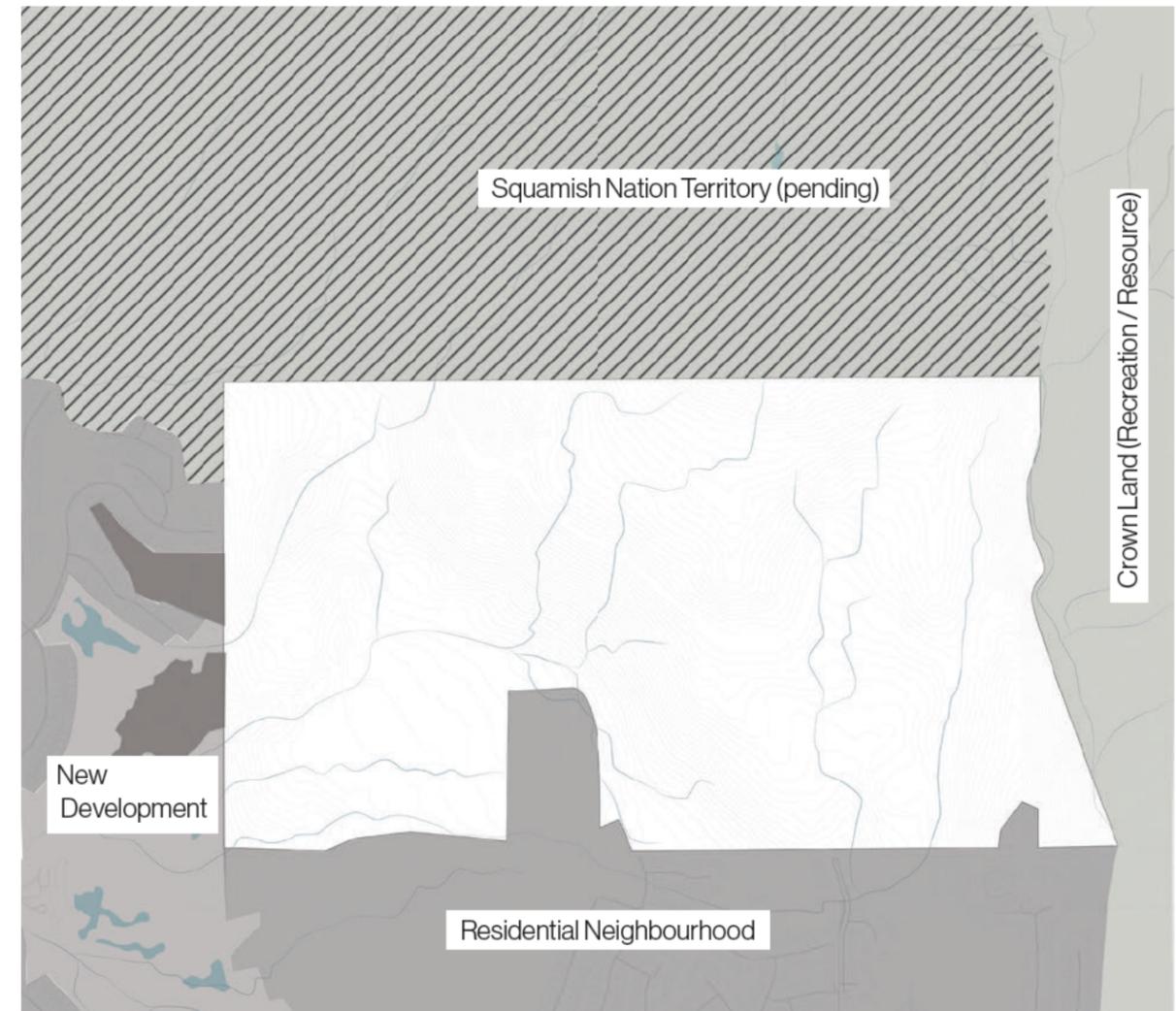
## Recreation / Resource

The trails that exist within this site are unique and extremely difficult. Most trails are rated advanced or expert, built exclusively for those with the ability to ride them, along with the expensive mountain bikes needed to make it down the trail in one piece. These trails epitomize the peculiar land designation of "recreation / resource", indicating that recreation couldn't really exist here without the resource extraction that happened there first. This sequence

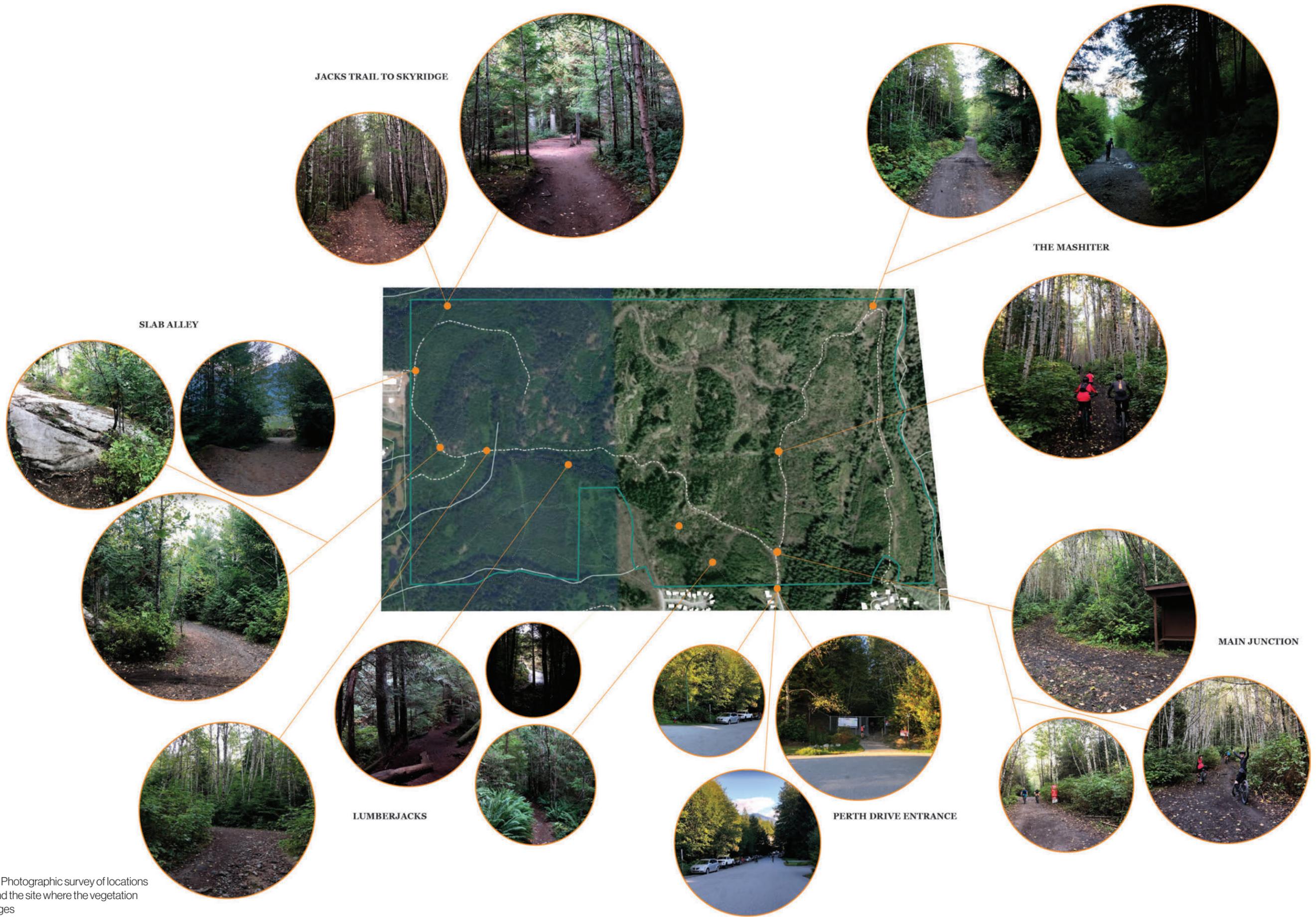
of events is rarely discussed within the recreation community or even the broader community, as these landscapes are meant to be a-political and freely accessible.

## Interstitial Space

The forest on this site is a transition from a human built environment to a naturally built environment. Within this transitioning space, there are many indications of human presence. This site could act as a conversation place between communities, a mutual handshake. When the land north of the site is returned to the Squamish Nation, the site could act as an intermediary between an existing settler community and the traditional territory of the Squamish People. This property has the potential to be a space for dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect. The current status of this site is one of settler occupation, but this narrative could be developed into one that speaks to an intersection of two cultures and two people, paying mutual respect to each other and the ways in which they occupy and use the land.



(above) Land designations around site



JACKS TRAIL TO SKYRIDGE

THE MASHITER

SLAB ALLEY

MAIN JUNCTION

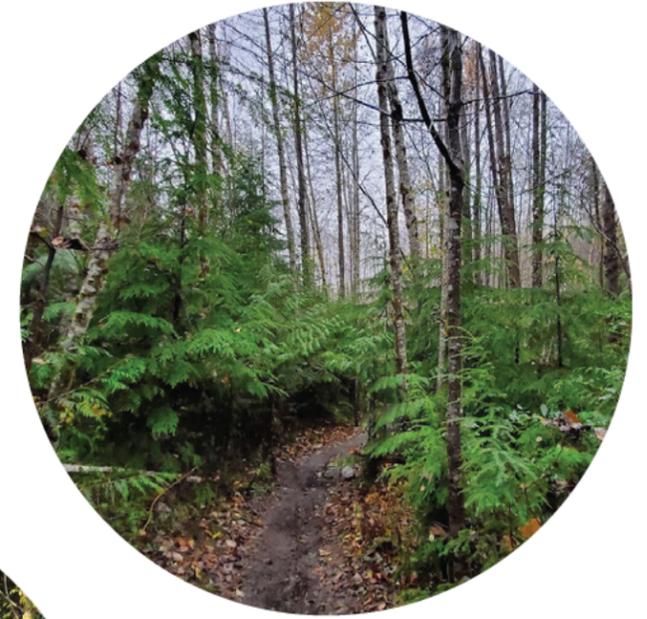
PERTH DRIVE ENTRANCE

LUMBERJACKS

(right) Photographic survey of locations around the site where the vegetation changes

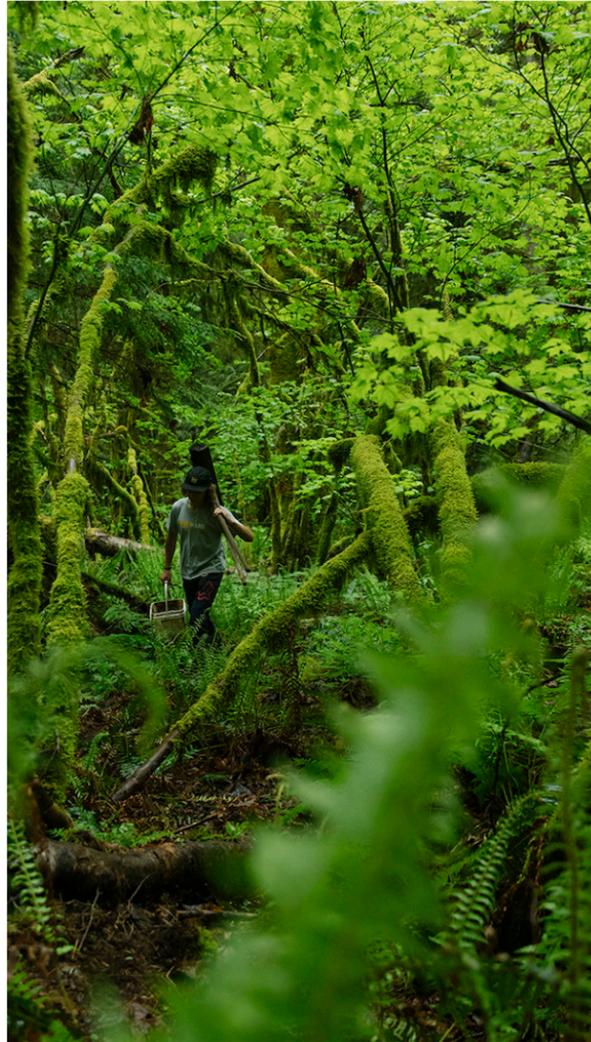
## Existing Conditions

The existing access trails to this site are unruly and unmaintained. Fast growing alders and cottonwoods shade out slower growing conifers, resulting in a dense, unproductive forest. The site entrance from Perth Drive is currently gated off, with plenty of signs to tell you that your presence is not welcome, although the trail network remains open. The two main connector trails that were once old logging roads act solely as access from one exclusive area to the next. These trails are afterthoughts, used for their convenience and the fact that they were already there.



(above) Entrance to site from Pia Road  
 (left) Entrance to site from Perth Drive  
 (bottom left) Section of entrance at Perth Drive  
 (bottom right) Long section of entrance from Perth Drive





## Guiding Principles - *Wena'xws*

### **The Role of a Designer**

Throughout this process I questioned whether a design project here was appropriate. There have been moments where I navigated the concept of guilt, the role of the architect, the role of an educated settler designing something within a community context who have rarely been included in the conversation. I moved forward considering *Wena'xws*, which means to treat somebody with respect, believing what they say, and honor them. I moved forward carefully, focusing research and my own lived experience into guiding principles for this project. My focus was how a project could recognize colonial impacts in a positive and meaningful way.

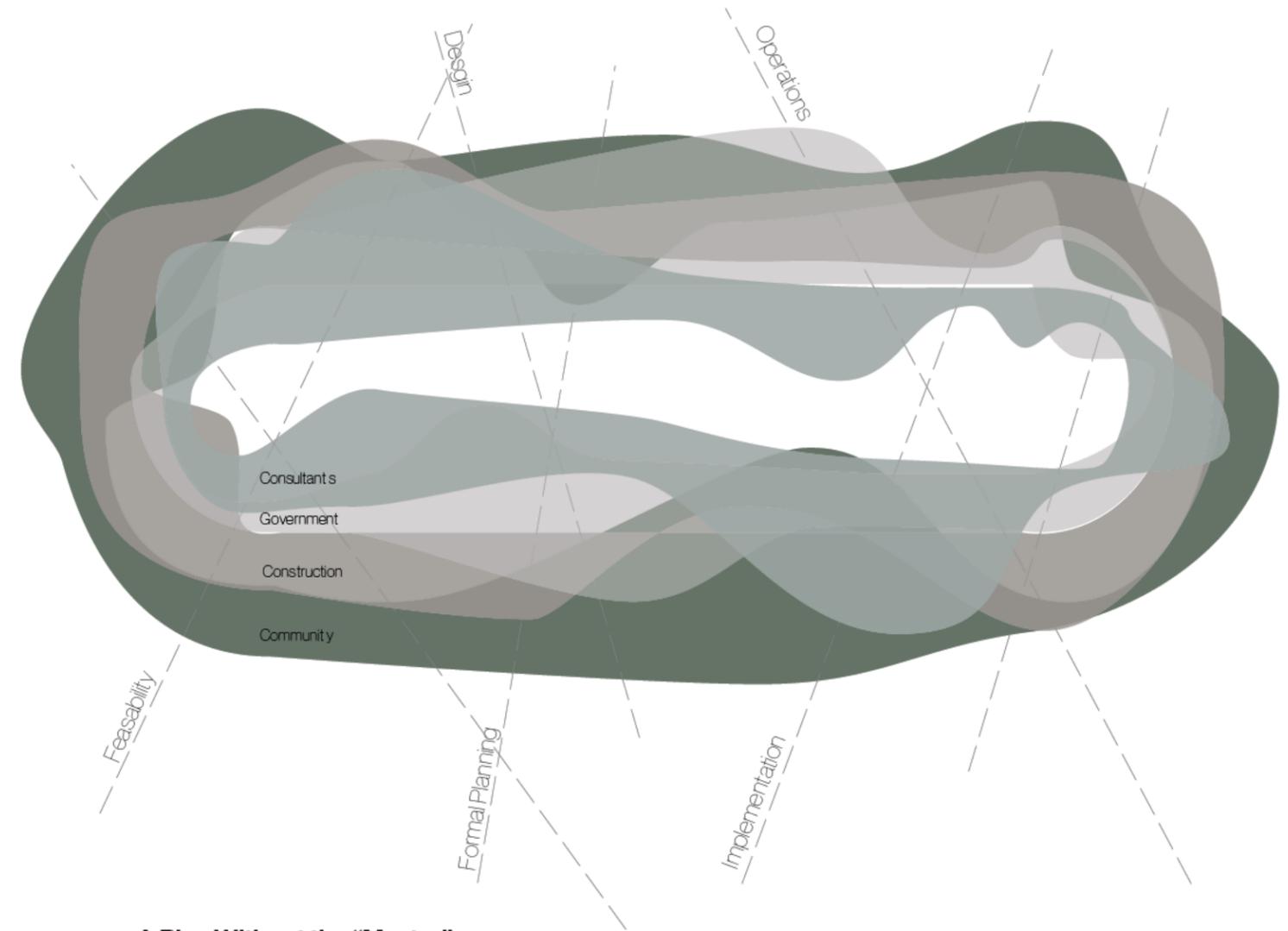
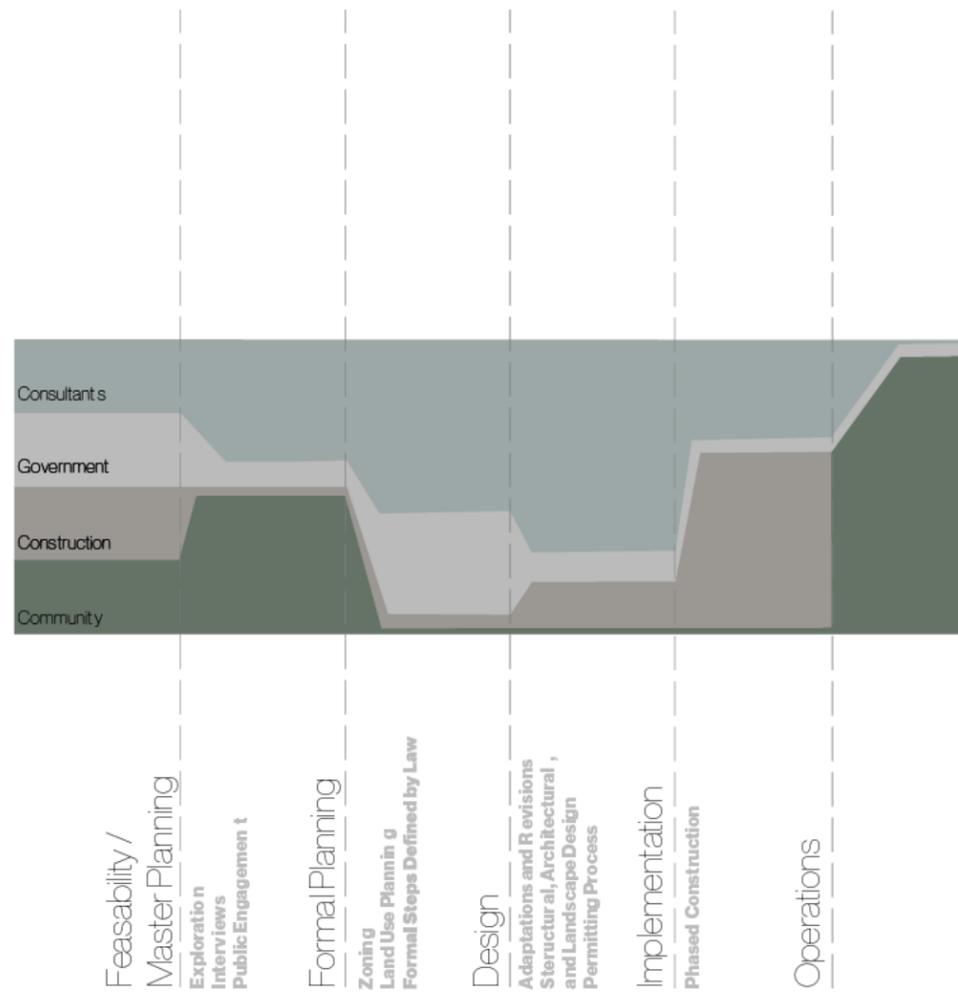
### **Recognition + Respect Through Truth and Visibility**

The first part of reconciliation is truth, bringing to light and coming to terms with the history of colonial settlement. In the context of this project, that meant to bring attention to what happened to the forest in order for a recreation network to exist. The goal is

to acknowledge the history of the forest in a truthful, meaningful but also positive way.

### **Meaningful Engagement Through Collective Authorship**

A commonly shared value within the Squamish community and the recreational community is that the land is an extension of ourselves and how we connect to the world. *Wena'xws* within the Squamish community means to treat the land as you were to treat a person. An important step in the process of this project is to consider how the design process itself is structured and how / in what capacity it includes the local First Nation community. It is critical to consider the role of an educated settler architect within a project involving Indigenous peoples.



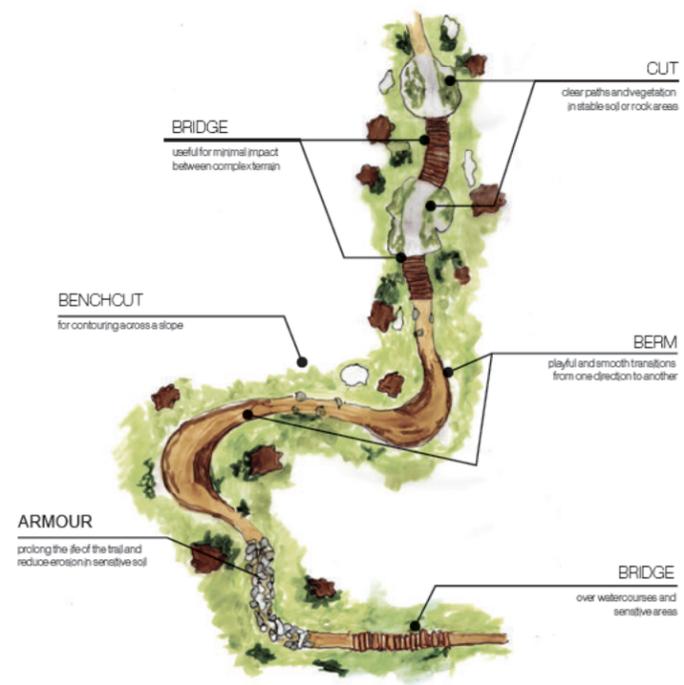
### The “Master Plan”

To consider how a designer could approach a project around reconciliation, we must first analyze the traditional model of planning and public participation. The “Master Plan” alludes to a top-down, exclusive approach even in its title. It suggests community involvement, but only in a conveniently placed fashion. The traditional model of planning includes consultation and it is even required across many disciplines in architecture, design, planning and engineering. The critique of this inclusion

is there is often lack of follow through and accountability, considering the public participation is only involved in one part of a much larger process. Consultants and experts are also brought in and out as they are deemed necessary, rather than staying involved and informed from the start, finish, and continuation of a project.

### A Plan Without the “Master”

What if each member of a design, implementation, and operation process of planning and community projects was involved throughout the entire process? What if each member of their own lived experience had a vested interest in the process and follow through of a community project? Would this change the outcome? The idea to remodel the planning and implementation process for this project considers the outcomes of when a community exchanges knowledge, learns through making and experiences their own work.



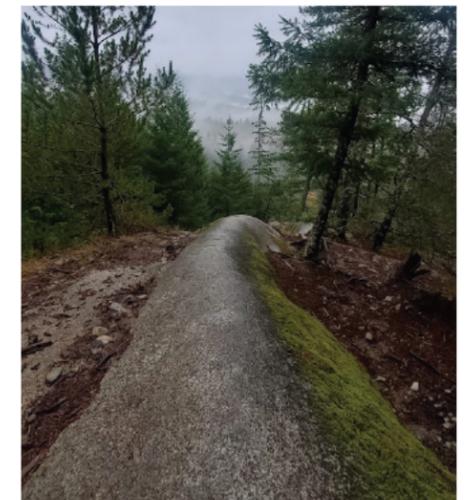
I considered how you could reimagine community planning through the process of trail building, how a community could come together and pilot a new planning process in a trail building project. The timeline above illustrates the effects of colonial forest modification from when it was logged and replanted to its current status as an unmaintained, dense forest. I imagined how a community intervention could help reestablish a managed forest where decisions are driven by the local First Nation and a broader community voice, directed by multiple experts of lived experience. This could be a combination of elders, trail builders, designers and government officials working together in a cyclical nature, as the needs of the land and the community adapt over time.



Benching Technique



Bridging Technique



Cutting Technique



## Signifiers

The driver of the design portion of this project focused on signification in order to bring attention to the timeline of colonial disruption at the entrance of this trail network. The most obvious way to signify certain things is with a sign, expressing through written language the importance of a place or object. Signs are already used within forests to bring attention to significant instances like place names, cultural sites, or traditional medicinal plants.

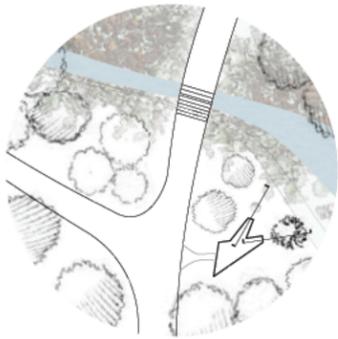
What are the other ways to signify moments in a forest? I explored these ways, juxtaposing different types of modifications together.



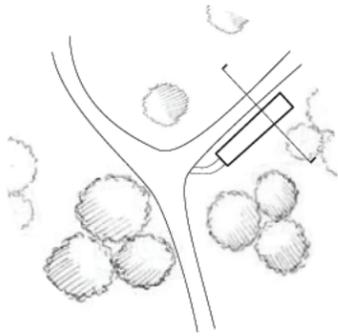
- 1. Colonial Cedar Harvesting
- 2. Coast Salish Cedar Harvesting
- 3. Trail Building
- 4. Logging Road Construction

- 5. Trail Armouring
- 6. Bridging
- 7. House Posts
- 8. Signs

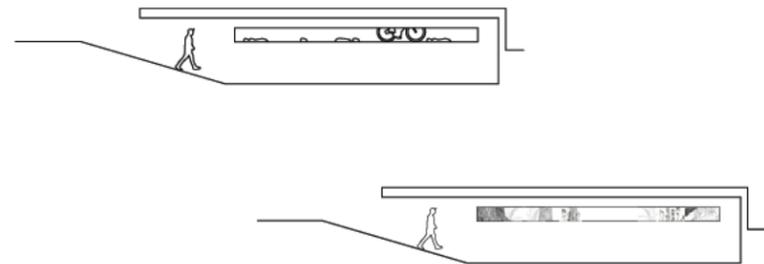
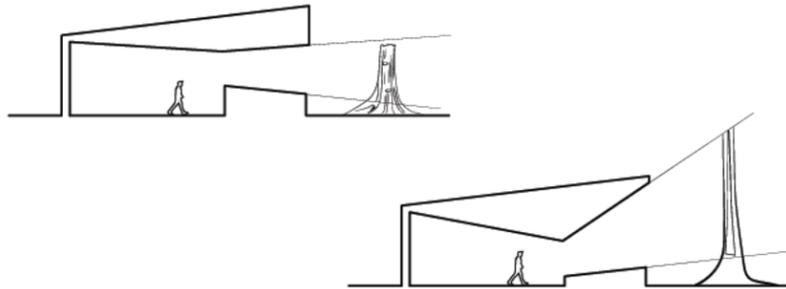




Comparing colonial cedar harvesting with Coast Salish cedar harvesting.



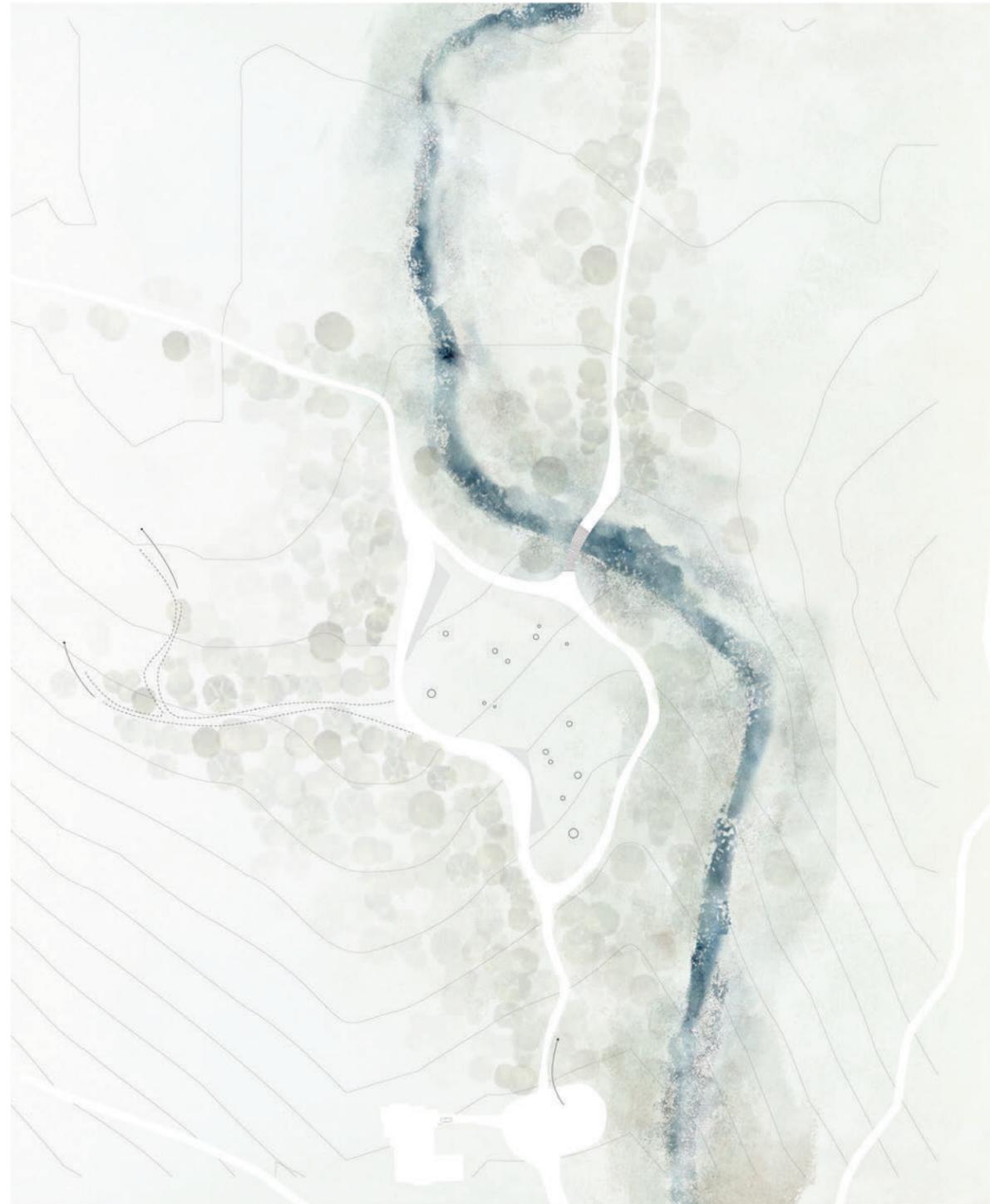
Comparing the ground plane of a bike trail and a salal forest



(above) Framing modified landscapes through juxtapositions.



(above) Old growth stumps reveal themselves through the trees

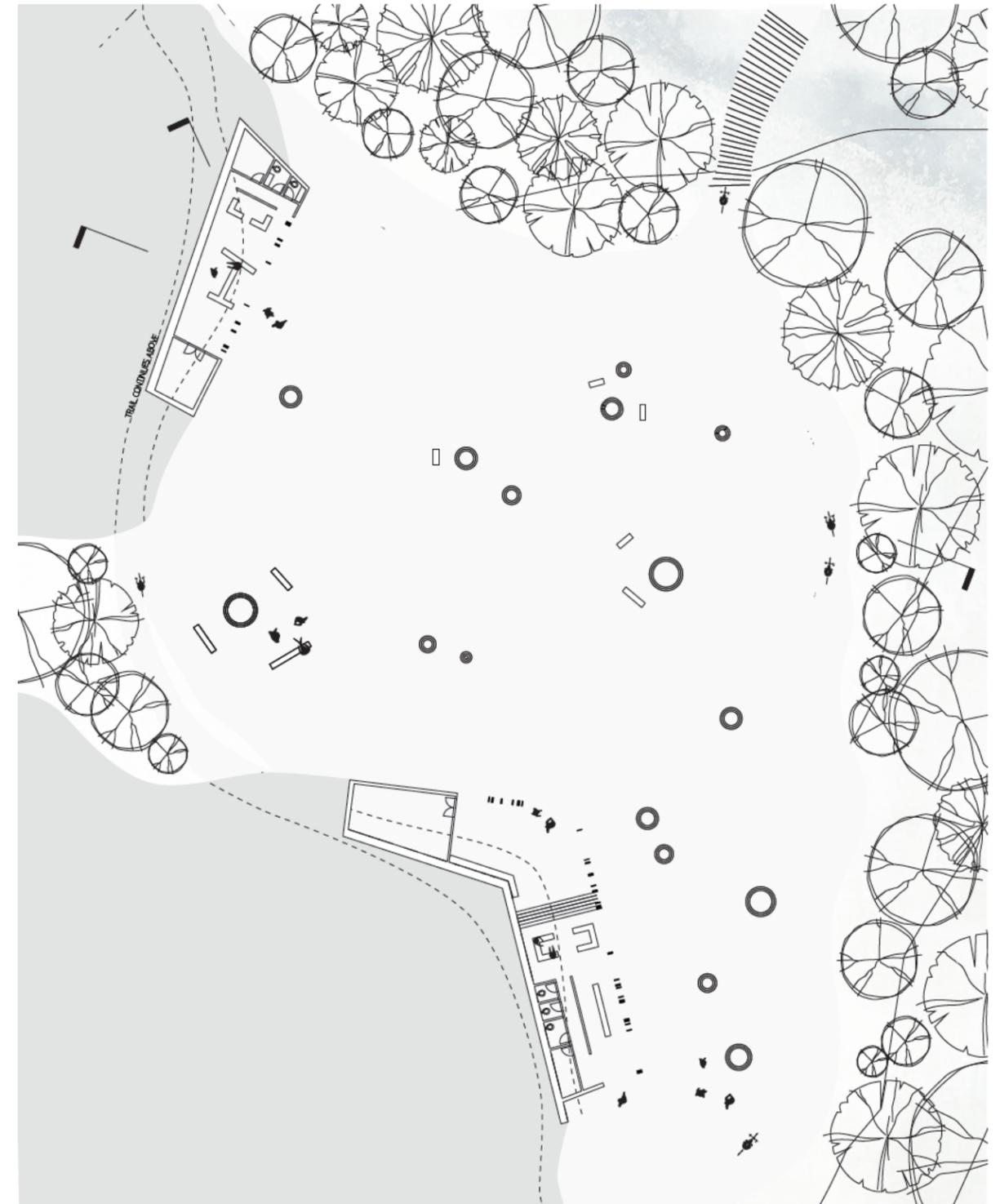


## A Moment in Time

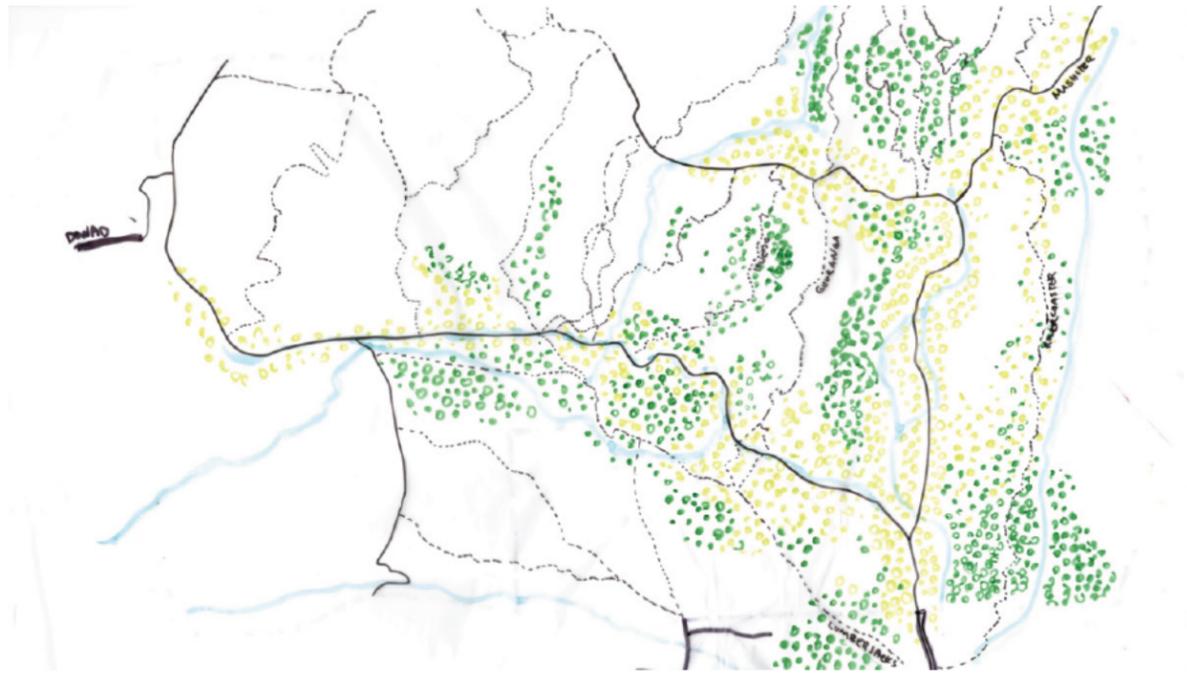
## A Moment in Time

I chose to design a moment in time for the process of this project, as the full process of this design would require consultation with the local First Nation. It focuses on a clearing at the entrance of the trail network. Clearing the smaller, younger trees of an unproductive forest would reveal the stumps of the old giants that were there before. Around the perimeter of the building would be supportive programming useful for a trail entrance, like washrooms, storage facilities, water, waste. The focus is inward, towards the centre, creating a space for gathering and open dialogue about what the trail network and the land means to different groups of people. The intention is to bring the conversation of colonial forest modification into the fold of recreation, to bring attention to what has happened to the forest without the local First Nation's consent in order for a recreation network to exist. It is meant as a catalyst to start a conversation, to bring awareness to a subject many settler recreationalists tend to avoid or know little about.

For this moment, the focus was on education for those who would visit, to bring light to a broader audience about how colonialism has informed recreation networks.



(above) Floor Plan

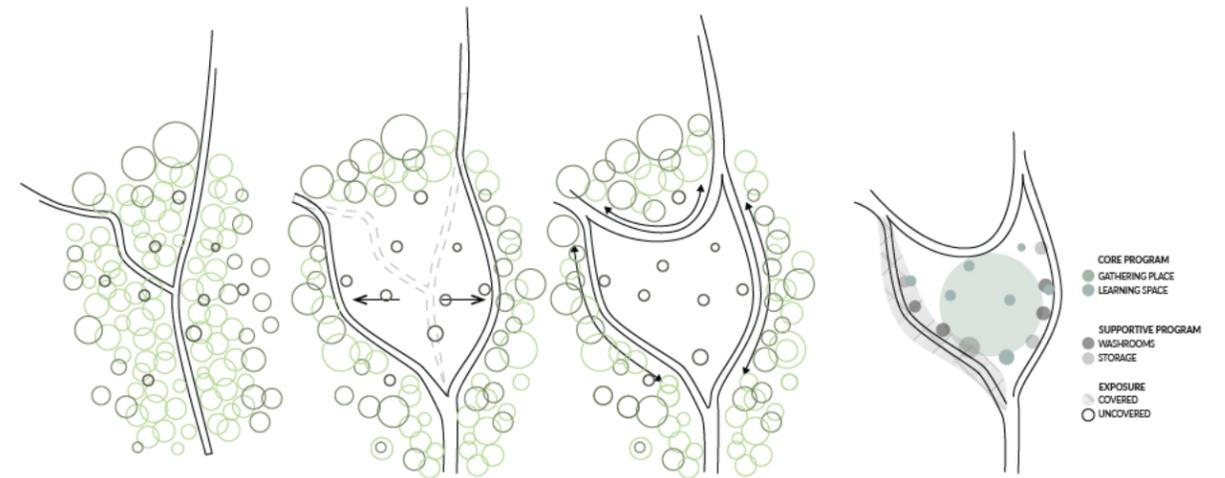


### Strategy

This design proposes lifting the current trails above the ground plane, creating a series of covered and uncovered spaces oriented towards the center, where the old stumps have been revealed. These shelters act as extensions of the existing trail network, expressing a moment of contemplation, before continuing into the forest beyond, to challenge the settler understanding of recreation on Crown land in BC



(above) Survey of tree types in the area, fast growing coniferous trees were located around old logging roads  
 (left) Initial concept plan visualizes an intervention at the main entrance of the trail network  
 (bottom) Diagram illustrates an opening in the trail intersection for a moment of contemplation at the entrance of the network





### Beyond “Park Access + Expert Only”

I explored other land uses that could be encouraged on this site besides its current status as park access and expert only. Creating a space for people to congregate could entice staging for things like further indigenous-led trail building, or youth mountain bike programs. This type of programming could lead to access to a broader range of recreationalists. This space could also host indigenous-led cultural activities, local artist representation, or medicinal

plant procurement, with the aim of providing better access to the local First Nation community, in order to aid in reconnecting people with their territory. Activities like nature school, seminars and knowledge exchange could provide cross cultural education and awareness. This space could provide a hub that considers other uses for the land, beyond just recreation.



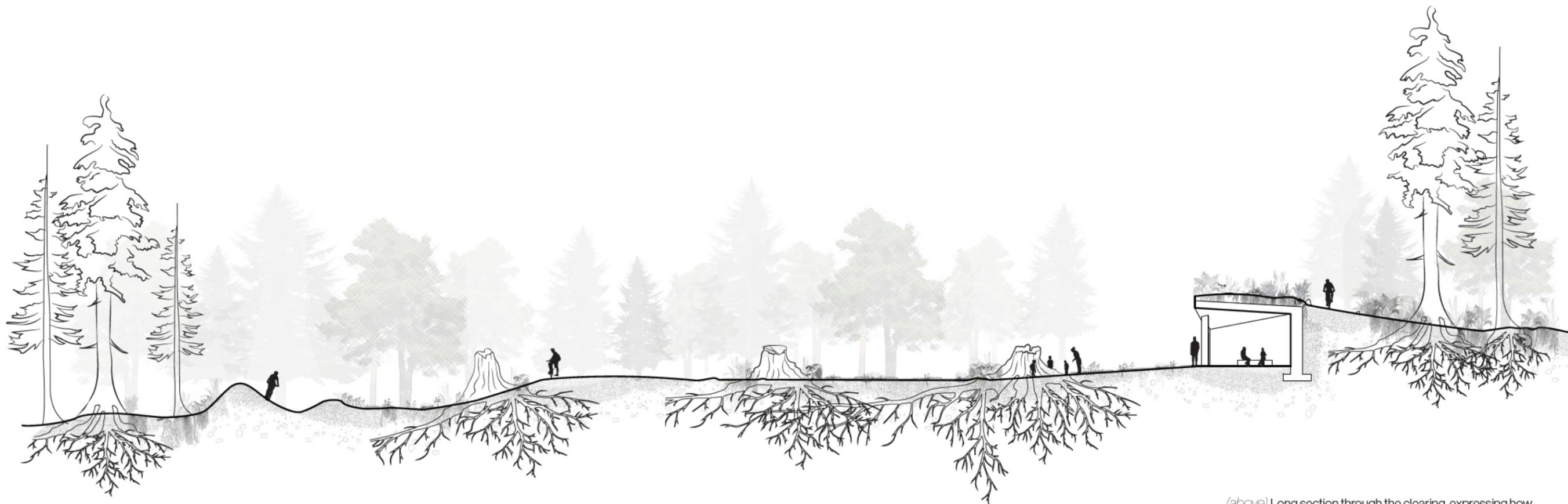
*(left)* As you walk up the hill from the neighborhood, you approach this clearing flanked by tall trees on either side. This sparks the question, what has happened here?

*(below)* For this moment of the design my focus is on education for those who would visit, whether residents or visitors, to bring light to a broader audience about how colonialism has informed recreation networks.





(above) Long section through the shelters, revealing what is happening above and below the trail network



(above) Long section through the clearing, expressing how the trails and tall trees flank the perimeter, focusing towards the centre, where large stumps are revealed.



(above) Trail users pause to observe the clearing and the happenings within

(below) Intentionally under-designed spaces prompt a larger conversation about the role of the community and designer within a process of a built community project.

## The Role of a Designer

I intentionally left these spaces under designed, like a blank, or a starting point. These “suggestions” of buildings are meant to prompt a conversation about the role the community should play in the process of a design and development of a community project. They are meant to act as suggestions for what could happen. It is a gesture towards reconciliation through an idea, a design process, a position on my place as a designer within a new approach. It is meant as a moment in time of a project and a much larger process. A process that would involve many hands, where an architect could act as a facilitator for a design of a community project





## Afterword

This is my idea, but I cannot speak to the validity of this instance without the direction from the local First Nation. If given the opportunity, I would love to continue this work with the Squamish Nation to gain more perspective on how this approach could be implemented into the community. I chose this site to exemplify the privilege we have to occupy it. I look at this forest and all recreation networks differently after the process of this project, and my goal is for others like myself to do the same. Truth and Reconciliation is a process, it is about acknowledging what has happened as well as finding meaningful ways to move forward. It is not something we should shy away from because we find the work paralyzing, but rather consider this work as something that can make our community stronger. Reconciliation may look differently for different people, there are no simple solutions for how to reconcile our relationships with the land and the Squamish People. The solutions require listening, reflection and contemplation. I am grateful for the opportunity to work through this process of discovery and understanding for this thesis work.

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# Appendix

## Precedent Research

The following work is research that supplemented my journey throughout this project. It is documentation of the different approaches explored throughout my process, relating to formal and programmatic approaches.

## Bukkajera Rest Area

*Morfeus Arkitekter*

The Norwegian Scenic Routes project is a selection of 18 drives throughout the Norwegian landscape. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration commissioned architects to create attractions and facilities / rest stops along the roadways. Many of these buildings function both as a facility and an architectural expression of the surrounding landscape.

The Bukkekjerka rest area is positioned between steep mountains and the sea, offering a range of views from dramatically different landscapes. The area is near a cultural monument connected to the heritage of the Sami people, where the rock forms a natural altar and pulpit where offerings to the gods were once made. This area is now used for open air church services. The form making and materiality of folded concrete was informed by rugged, jagged terrain of the surrounding landscape.



## Hose Bridge

*Rintala Eggertsson Architects*

This bridge is another stop on the Norwegian Scenic Routes. This long Corten steel bridge connects the town of Sand with a popular recreation spot for local residents with the Suldalslagen River rushing beneath it. During the design process, inhabitants of the town were invited to vet early designs with the architects.

An enclosed steel volume is clad with mesh so users can look out at the landscape and cause the bridge to glow when lit at night. The design process focused on how to capture the power of the river running underneath the bridge. The steel grate along the bridges floor and walls create an acoustic space and visual connection to the raging river below. The design for this bridge aims to establish a horizontal reference line to the landscape, and emphasize the undulant and organic shapes of the bedrock with a juxtaposition of orthogonal members and materials.



## Moses Bridge

*RO&AD Architecten*

The West Brabant Water Line in Halsternen is a defense line for a series of fortresses and cities in the South-Western Netherlands. The Fort de Roovere lies in a recreational network of cycling and hiking, and an access bridge across the moat was needed. The architects decided it was improper to build a bridge across a moat of defense works, so they designed an invisible bridge embedded within the moat. The bridge lies like a trench in the fortress, shaped to blend into the outlines of the existing landscape. Although the “existing” landscape was human made in the 1700s, the architectural intervention aimed to minimize further disruption to the landscape through more development.



## Arcana

*Leckie Studio*

Arcana aims to bridge the gap between urban life and the wild. Their goal was to offer innovated experiences and educational content to enable people to easily access the restorative powers of nature. The 275-square-foot cabins located in northern Ontario are clad in reflective polished stainless steel, that are almost invisible, and reflect a distorted version of the deciduous forest they are surrounded by.

