



2024 Fisheries Monitoring Program

Overview

In 2024, the Department of Environment, in collaboration with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, commenced a multi-year fisheries monitoring program in response to the heap leach failure at Victoria Golds' Eagle Gold Project. This program is designed to detect acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) changes to the freshwater fish populations within the Haggart Creek watershed.

In 2024, we assessed fish populations and habitat at 42 sites across the watershed (Figure 1).

Program objectives

The Fisheries Monitoring Program was designed to achieve five goals in 2024:

- Assess the freshwater fish population;
- Assess the current availability of fish habitat;
- Compare our results to the prior environmental baselines;
- Commence a multi-year population estimate; and
- Collect samples for contaminant analysis.

Fish species present

Our surveys documented seven fish species within the Haggart Watershed survey study area, including:

- Arctic grayling;
- Slimy sculpin;
- Round whitefish;
- Burbot;
- Northern pike;
- Arctic lamprey; and
- Chinook salmon

Based on our findings, this watershed plays an important role in supporting an abundant Arctic grayling population. This includes providing habitat for both juveniles and adults.

Fish habitat

The fish habitat assessments throughout the watershed indicated potential fragmentation, with several culverts and beaver dams potentially blocking natural fish migration routes.

Tagging

Throughout the Fisheries Monitoring Program, we successfully tagged over 200 Arctic grayling. These tagged fish will help us determine the population size, as well as migration patterns in future years.

Contaminant sampling

This program also collected fish tissue samples to help us establish a baseline amount of potential contamination. Over time, this data will help us detect any changes related to the heap leach failure and assess its impact.

For detailed information, please see the full Haggart Creek Watershed: 2024 Fisheries Monitoring Program Report on [Yukon.ca](https://www.yukon.ca) or contact fisheries@yukon.ca.

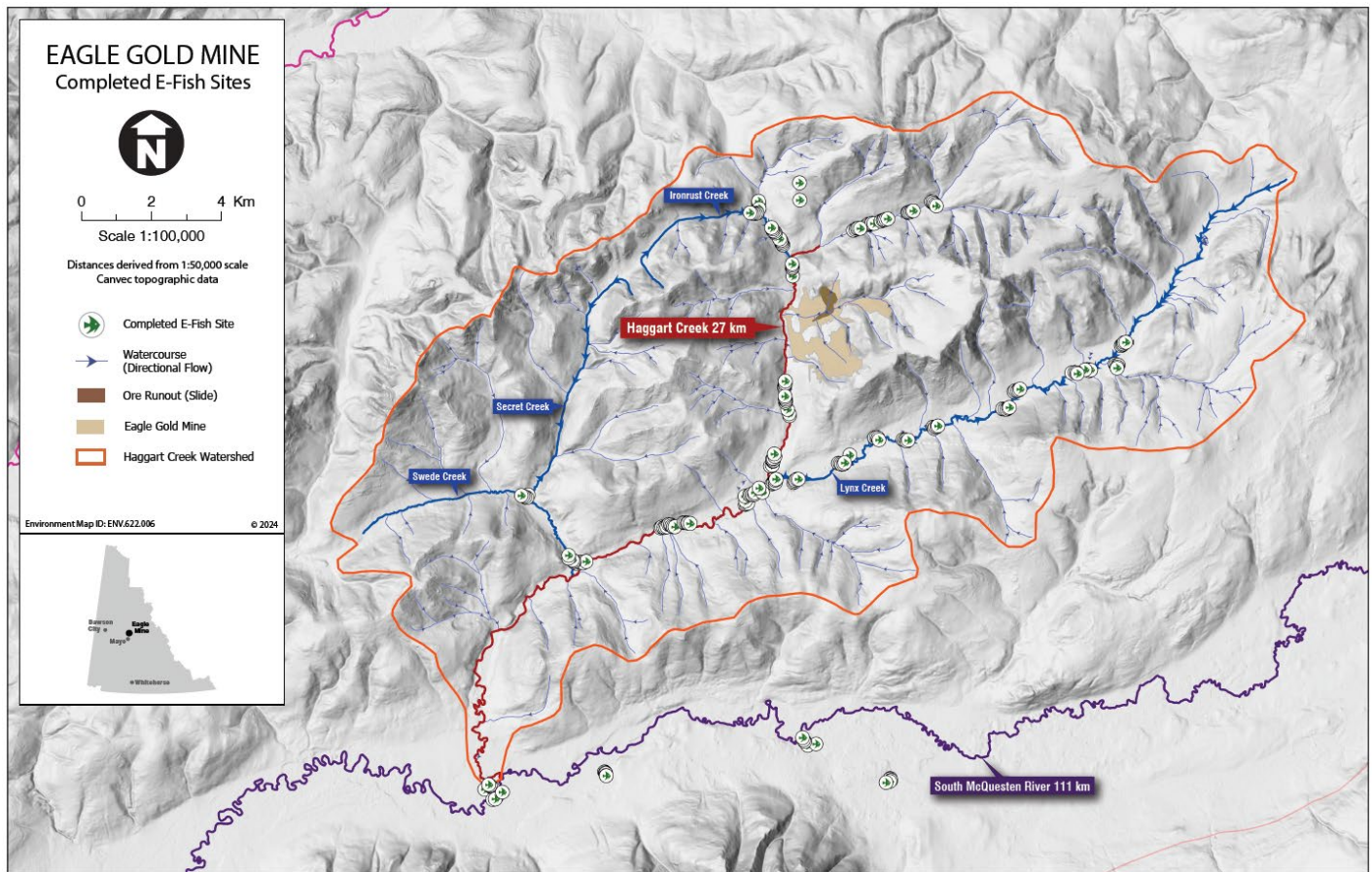


Figure 1. Locations of fisheries assessments completed in the 2024 Fisheries Monitoring Program

Next steps

2025

In 2025, the Department of Environment, in collaboration with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, will replicate our 2024 surveys to provide us with more information on fisheries population size, abundance and distribution. We will also initiate our tagging program for Arctic grayling, focusing on determining their migration timing and movement patterns throughout the watershed.

2026 & onward

To detect long-term changes, the Fisheries Monitoring Program will continue beyond this coming year's surveys to build a robust dataset that will help us assess potential impacts.