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TAHLTAN HIGHLAND ROUTE

In the study of alternate access routes to the Schaft Creek site, four routes were reviewed (Mess Creek, Raspberry Pass, Artic Creek and Ball Creek). The preferred route was the Mess Creek Route as this route provided an access that had reasonable grades, minimal environmental impacts and did not impact Mount Edziza Park.

A fifth alternative route (Tahltan Highland Route) was presented to Copper Fox by another party; during meetings discussing the route selection. This route accessed the Artic Lake Plateau from the Galore Creek Road at approximately km59, travels along the plateau through Mount Edziza Park, then returning to Mess Creek north of Artic Creek.

This route was modified to avoid crossing through Mount Edziza Park. A scoping level design utilizing trim data was developed and the drawings are presented in Appendix B; the Mess Creek Route drawings are presented in Appendix A.

The Tahltan Highland Route was proposed to provide the following advantages:

- Avoid the avalanche areas of the Mess Creek Route
- Reduce the possibility of encountering archaeological sites
- Reduce the possible impact on fisheries habitat.

Items of concern for this route are:

- Arctic Lake Plateau is a relatively flat barren expanse, which is highly exposed due to minimal vegetation.
- The road leaves the Galore Creek Road at an elevation of 1045m and rises to 1530m on the Arctic Lake Plateau before dropping back down to Mess Creek at an elevation of 830m.
- The Tahltan Highland Route would involve an additional 4km of construction compared to the Mess Creek Route.
- Winter operating conditions will be difficult due to the high elevation and openness of the terrain along the plateau.
- The possibility of closing this route due to safety concerns will be increased over the route through the valley.
- The requirement for four switchbacks within a 3km section of the road. Reducing the grades to 8% or less, which is the recommend maximum for switch back areas, would require one or two additional switchbacks.