

## Plant Baseline Studies

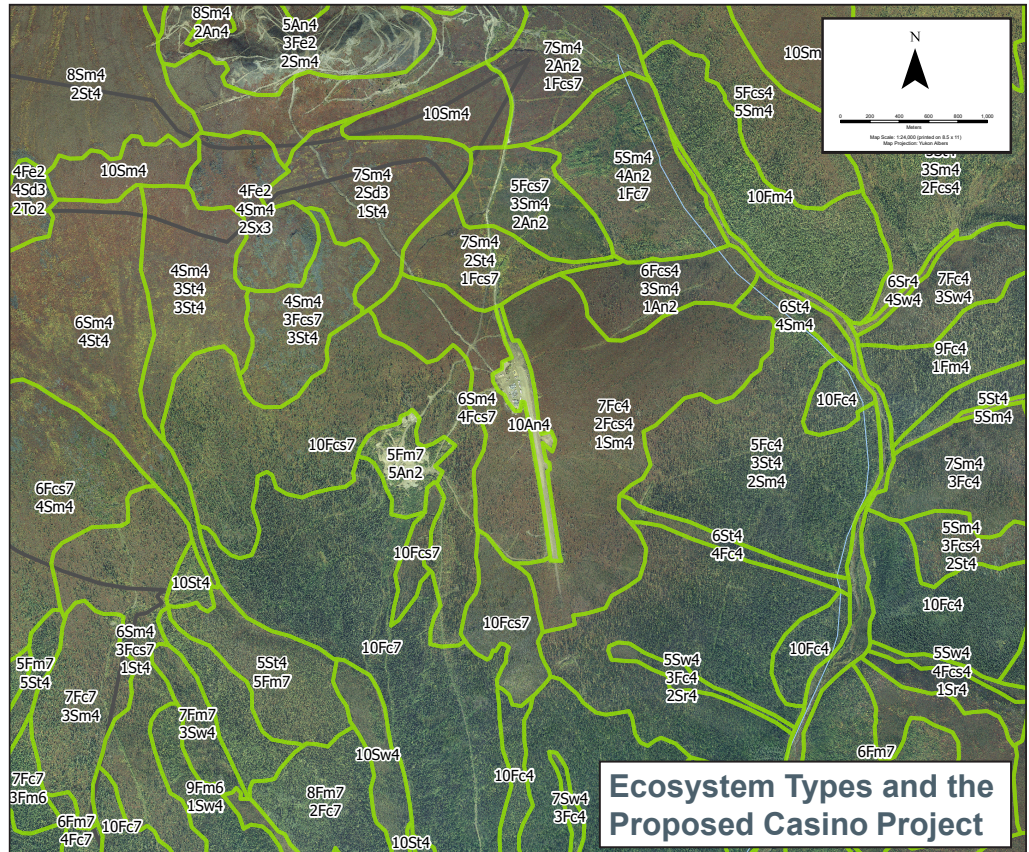
Casino hired Environmental Dynamics Inc. (EDI) to study rare plants and plant health. The information presented here reflects a large amount of research from numerous studies within the area surrounding the proposed Casino Project. The area includes all parts of the proposed Casino Project, the proposed access road with a 1-kilometre buffer, and the watersheds of Britannia Creek, Canadian Creek, upper Dip Creek, and Casino Creek.

EDI's plant surveys summarize the plants currently on the landscape. The surveys include looking at invasive, rare, cultural, and medicinal plants; EDI's work also integrates Traditional Knowledge that has been provided to Casino. This information will inform Casino's future actions to monitor, protect, and manage plant life.

## Plant Surveys

EDI conducted plant surveys in 2010, 2012, and 2022. EDI made maps to understand plants found in the area. First, satellite images were examined to identify areas with similar types of plants. Then, each mapped area was labelled with an ecosystem type such as sloping grassland, coniferous forest, riparian shrub, etc. After classifying ecosystem types, EDI finalized the map and then verified it by sending scientists into the field to confirm if each ecosystem type was mapped correctly.

During surveys, the field team recorded information on any rare, culturally significant, medicinal, or invasive plants that were seen, as well as ecosystem types and forest age. The final field verified maps are an important tool which are used in predicting how and where different types of wildlife use the areas around the proposed Casino Project.



### Vegetation Codes

An	Anthropogenic	Fe	Felsenmeer	Ro	Rock Outcrop	Sx	Mid to High Elevation Dry Shrub
Fbr	Riparian Broadleaf	Fm	Mixedwood Forest	Sd	Dryas/Sparse herb	To	Tors
Fbw	Moist Broadleaf Forest	Fmr	Riparian Mixedwood	Sm	Subalpine Moist Shrub	Wb	Open/Shrubby Bog
Fbx	Dry Broadleaf Forest	Gb	Gravel Bar	Sr	Riparian Shrub	Wbc	Coniferous Treed Bog
Fc	Coniferous Forest	Lx	Sloping Grassland	St	Tall Shrub	Wf	Shrubby Fen
Fcr	Riparian Coniferous	Ow	Open Water	Sw	Mid to High Elevation Wet Shrub		
Fcs	Sparse Coniferous Forest	Rl	River				

## Invasive Plants

In 2022, EDI surveyed already-disturbed areas around the current Casino camp. That survey included the airstrip, the weather station, the incinerator, and the trail from the current Casino camp to the Yukon River. No invasive plant species were found.

Invasive plants are plants that people have brought to new areas where they do not naturally grow. These plants can spread quickly and take over, often causing problems for local plants and ecosystems. Companies make sure to monitor invasive plants so they do not grow and spread. Companies also monitor for invasive plants in order to get rid of any existing invasive species as they build out a project.



White Sweet Clover



## Cultural and Medicinal Plants

Cultural and medicinal plants are important to First Nations and have cultural significance. These were identified from Traditional Land Use studies provided to Casino by First Nations. Twenty-four plant species with cultural or medicinal purposes were observed within the study area. Some plant species observed include Labrador tea, yarrow, low brush, cranberry, wild rose and willow.



Lowbush Cranberry



Yarrow



Labrador Tea

## Rare Plants

In 2010, 2012, and 2022, EDI surveyed area for rare plants. Habitats that support rare plants tend to be very steep and dry slopes which usually support the growth of grass and leafy flowering plants. Rare plant habitats include open gravel bars, which may experience flooding, rock outcrops, and disturbed sites, including placer waste rock and old roads. A total of eight rare plants were discovered during the surveys. According to protocol, each plant was reported to the Yukon Conservation Data Centre. No rare plants listed as "At Risk" under the federal Species at Risk Act were found in the survey area.



Lady's Slipper



William's Catchfly



Purple Fleebane



Larkspur-leaf Monkshood

## What's Next?

EDI and Casino will continue with rare plants and vegetation health work for the proposed Casino Project including updating plant surveys along the Freegold Road and better understanding current conditions. Understanding the current conditions is important to knowing how rare plants and invasive plants will interact with the proposed Casino Project, and how to manage any plant-related risks. This work will include updating the plant surveys along the Freegold Road. Understanding current conditions is important to characterize rare plants and the potential for invasive plants that will interact with the proposed Casino Project. That information will ultimately inform Casino of how to manage risk to plants.

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