

# Baseline



archaeological services ltd.



556 Harmston Avenue Courtenay B.C. V9N 2X5 Phone: (250) 897-3853

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Baseline File: 08020-3

Mark Hart  
Park Planner  
Comox Valley Regional District  
Email: [mhart@comoxvalleyrd.ca](mailto:mhart@comoxvalleyrd.ca)

## Re: Archaeological Site Potential Assessment, Maris Estates, near Merville BC

This letter presents the results of an archaeological overview assessment (AOA), conducted by Baseline Archaeological Services Ltd. (Baseline), as defined in the *British Columbia Archaeological Impact Assessment Guidelines* (1998). Maris Estates occupy Lot 3 and Lot 4, Plan VIP62463, Section 25, Township 6, Comox Land District, PID 023-303-921 and PID 023-303-930. The properties are situated on the east coast of Vancouver Island, between the cities of Campbell River and Courtenay, near the communities of Merville and Williams Beach (Figure 1). The study area is located within the consultative boundaries of the Homalco First Nation, Kómox First Nation, Nanwakolas Council, Tla'amin Nation, Wei Wai Kai Nation, and Wei Wai Kum Nation.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) requested that Baseline undertake an AOA in order to assess the archaeological potential of the study area and to make recommendations regarding the need for any further archaeological work. This report is concerned with identifying any known archaeological sites in conflict with the study area and making management recommendations on how to proceed if archaeological resources are at risk of impact through ground disturbing activities. This report is also concerned with determining the potential for any unrecorded archaeological sites. This report does not address any First Nations traditional use activities or areas. As such, this report does not comprehensively document all First Nations concerns in the study area. The study was conducted without prejudice to First Nations treaty negotiations, aboriginal rights, or aboriginal title.

The study area is located in an area covered by the *GIS Modelling of Archaeological Potential for the Northern Nuu-chah-nulth Hahoulthees*, produced by Baseline (2007). The model indicates the study area occupies an area classified as moderate to high potential for culturally modified trees (CMTs), and moderate archaeological potential for other (non-CMT) resources (Figure 1). A background file search indicates that there are no previously recorded archaeological sites located within 4 km of the study area.

A site visit of the study area was conducted January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in order to discuss the proposed development with the proponent and view the terrain within the properties. Relatively level and undulating terrain was observed along the shoreline, while a gently sloped terrace occupies elevated terrain above the shoreline (Figure 2). Exposures were examined for cultural remains, though none were observed. The properties been previously logged, with very few old

growth trees present. The old growth timber that remains consists of Douglas fir and the field visit confirmed that the study area has low potential for CMTs.

The CVRD's plan for the study area is to keep it largely intact as a natural area. Long term development plans may include projects that improve public access to the lands, and may include the clearing of vegetation, improvement and maintenance of trails, and the construction of roads and parking spaces.

The threat of impacting any CMTs within the study area is considered to be low. The scarcity of old growth trees or tree species commonly associated with cultural modification contribute to this assessment. The potential for the presence of unidentified archaeological resources within the study area is moderate to high due to the study area's proximity to the shoreline of the Strait of Georgia and the presence of relatively level terrain.

The construction of trails is expected to include the widening of existing trails and the placement of fill material. The capping of existing trails with imported fill may render potential cultural deposits inaccessible through conventional subsurface testing, and the use of heavy machinery for construction has the potential to impact any potential deposits. Due to the potential for identifying subsurface archaeological resources within the study area, an archaeological impact assessment (AIA) is recommended before any ground-altering activities occur. The CVRD may undertake vegetation clearing and hand falling of timber within the properties provided no machinery is employed.

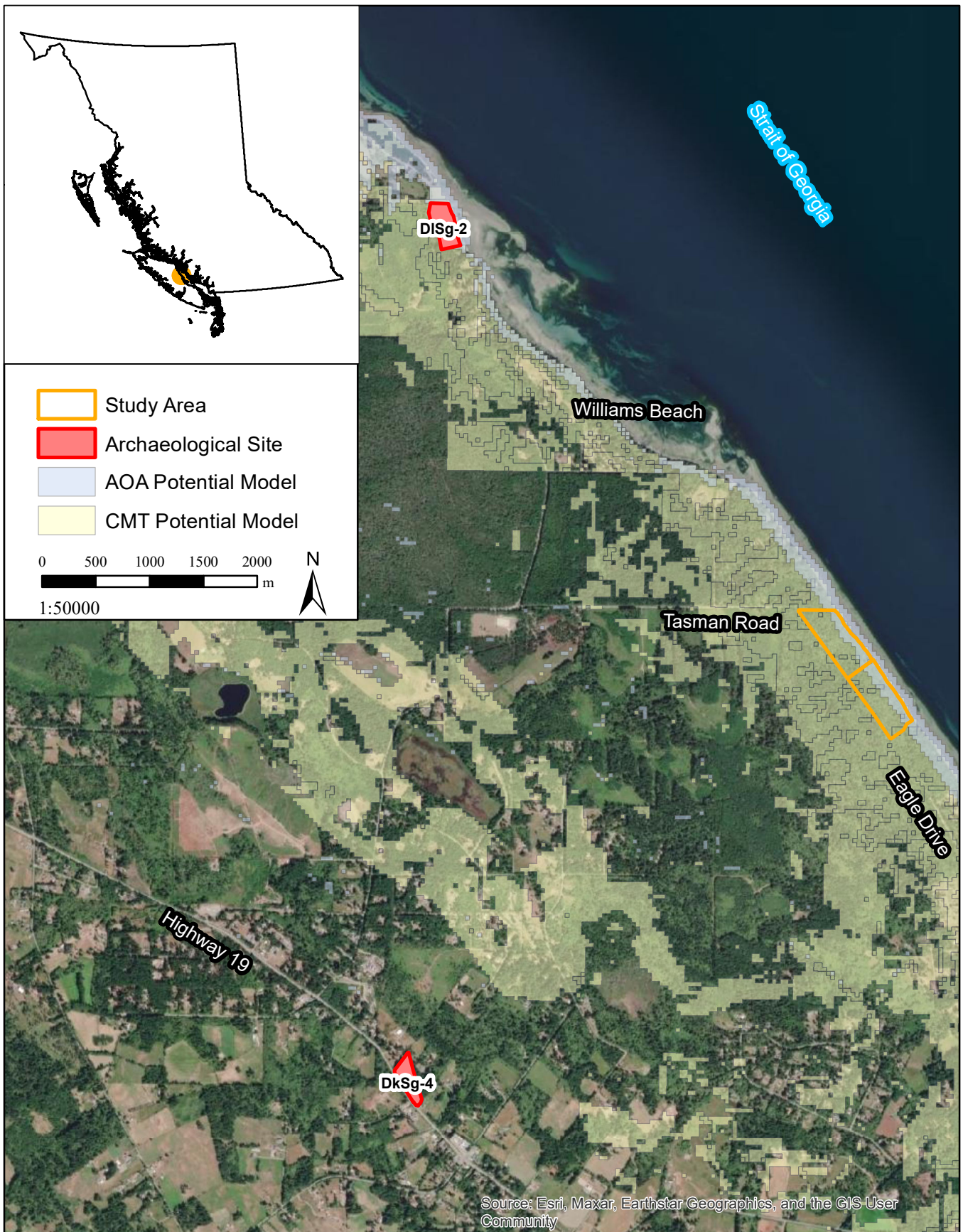
Developers and operators should be made aware of the potential of undiscovered archaeological remains in any surveyed or unsurveyed areas. Archaeological resources are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act* and require all development activities in the vicinity of archaeological remains to be halted as not to threaten these remains, and to immediately notify the BC Archaeology Branch. Directly notifying the appropriate First Nations is also be recommended.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this archaeological assessment.

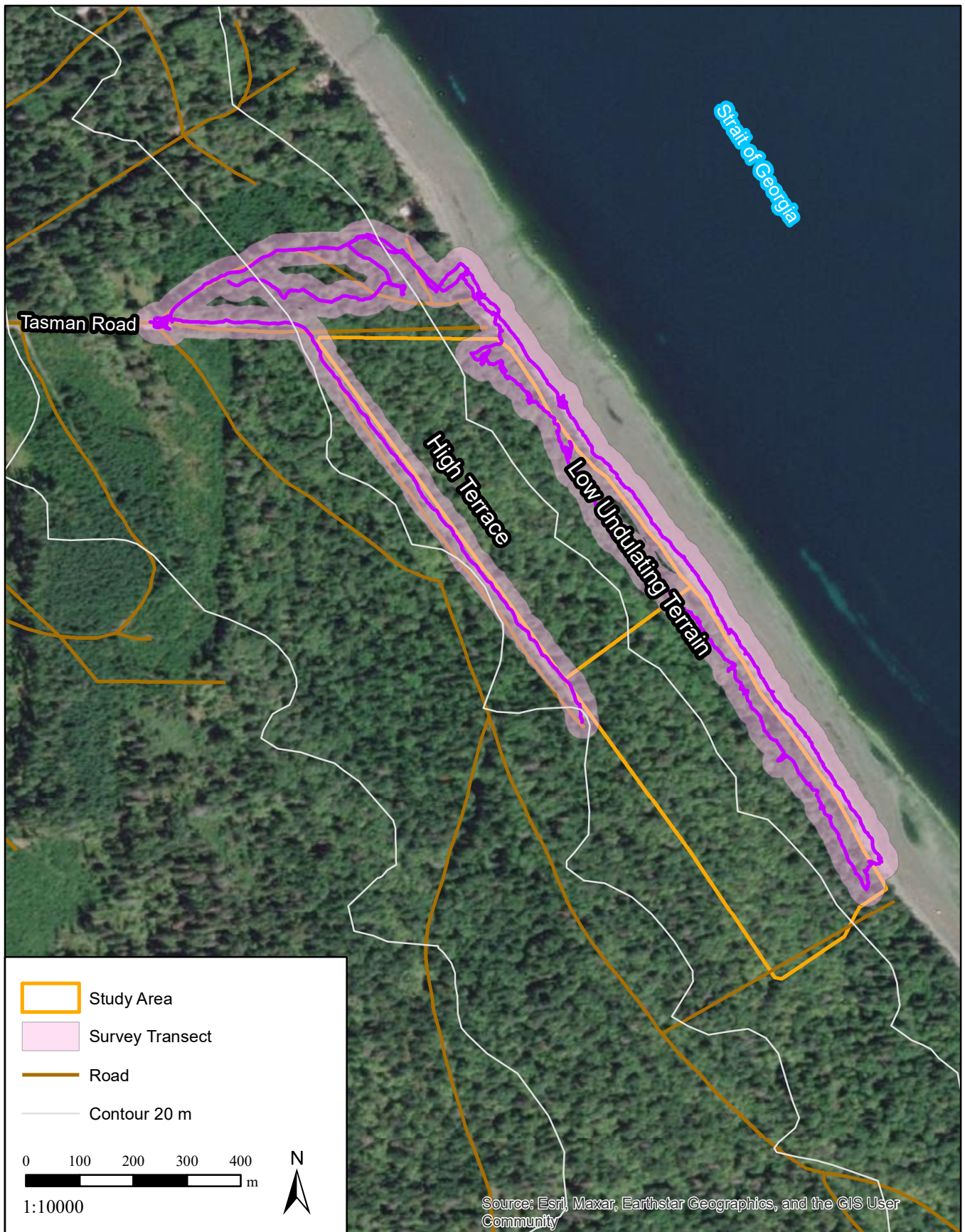
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Ross', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Michael Ross, BA  
Archaeologist



**Figure 1. Study Area Overview**



**Figure 2. Detailed Results**