

## Section 11

## Cultural and Historical Environment

### 11.1 Historical and Current Land Use

Historically, the Maud Creek project area has been used for mining activities, which commenced in 1890 and continued intermittently whenever profitable (Dames and Moore 1998). The land tenure is pastoral lease, known as Maud Creek Station. It is privately owned and currently operated as a buffalo and cattle grazing property.

There are no active Aboriginal land claims over Maud Creek Station. However, across Maud Creek in a detached part of Nitmiluk National Park, inaccessible to tourists, there is a site known as “Snake Dreaming” that is culturally significant to the local Traditional Owners, the Jawoyn people. The Jawoyn people exercise their traditional cultural attachment to the land in this area of Nitmiluk National Park, known locally as ‘Little Tasmania’. Jawoyn people want to ensure there is no disturbance to these areas and that they will have continued access. The Jawoyn people have strong custodial connections to both land and water outside of the National Park and would be concerned by any contamination of Maud Creek or Katherine River.

Although Maud Creek Station is a freehold pastoral property, Terra Gold acknowledges the Jawoyn people as traditional owners of some of the the land in this area. Terra Gold has met with the Jawoyn Association and with people from Jodetluk Camp on Gorge Road, the nearest Jawoyn settlement to the mine site, to discuss the recommencement of mining activities at the Maud Creek mine.

The high rate of unemployment and social disorder in Katherine is of concern to leaders of the Jawoyn community and consequently, the community leaders welcome the opportunities offered by mining companies, particularly jobs and training for their young people.

### 11.2 Archaeological and Historic Sites

A number of archaeological surveys have been conducted over the Maud Creek mine lease and areas around the leases. These surveys were commissioned by mining companies interested in the gold deposit and include the following studies:

- A survey of the southern half of MLN 1978, conducted by NTU Archaeological Service in November 1994 (Guse and Gregory 1994, see Appendix I for full report). This is the area where the pit is located, and where mine infrastructure is proposed to be constructed;
- A survey of the northern half of MLN 1978, conducted by Heritage Surveys in July 1996 (Heritage Surveys 1996);
- A survey of an area south of MLN 1978, currently covered by MCN 4218 to 4223, conducted by Quaternary Archaeological Surveys in January 1999 (Guse 1999); and
- A survey of the alignment of the proposed new haul road from the Maud Creek mine site to Stuart Highway, conducted by Begnaze Pty Ltd in May 2007 (Begnaze 2007, see Appendix J for full report).

Archaeological and historic sites located in these surveys are described in Table 11.1, and shown in Figure 11.1.



**Section 11****Cultural and Historical Environment****11.2.1 Aboriginal archaeological sites**

The most common forms of prehistoric Aboriginal sites and artefacts found in the Katherine region are artefact scatters, stone quarries, knapping locations, stone arrangements, and art sites (Guse 1999). Artefact scatters contain flaked or ground artefacts and hearthstone and occur as surface scatters of materials or as stratified deposits where there have been repeated occupations (Guse 1999). Owing to the high levels of disturbance in the Maud Creek project area, the spatial integrity of the artefact assemblage is likely to be moderately disturbed (Guse 1999).

Sixteen Aboriginal archaeological sites have been identified during field surveys in the Maud Creek project area (see Table 11.1, and Figure 11.1). The sites include 14 stone artefact scatters and three stone quarries (one of these quarries is associated with an artefact scatter). Eight artefact scatters are located on stony rises or slopes, three are adjacent to creeks and three are located on the alluvial flats and plains. The stone quarries are located on a stony ridge and on a low rise with low rocky outcrops, where quartz and quartzite or fine-grained basalt have been extracted (Guse and Gregory 1994, Heritage Surveys 1996, Guse 1999).

The archaeologist surveyors discuss the significance of each site in their respective reports, with regard to the rarity, intactness and chronology of the site. In most cases, a simple rating of “high”, “moderate” or “low” significance is allocated to each site. However, in Guse and Gregory’s report (1994), specific ratings are not given, although many of the sites they located are described as having “significant archaeological value” – for the purposes of this EIS, these sites have been interpreted as “high” in archaeological significance. More detailed descriptions of these sites are provided in Appendix I.

Consequently, of the sixteen artefact scatters identified at Maud Creek, eight have been assigned “high” archaeological significance, three have “moderate” significance, and five have “moderate to low” significance (see Table 11.1). Also, two of the three stone quarries were described as highly significant, due to the rarity of quarries appearing in the Maud Creek area and their potential to contribute to further research (Mitchell 1996).

Over 240 isolated stone artefacts were identified in the four surveys of the broad project area, including at the site of the proposed access to the Stuart Highway (Figure 15.1). Of these, 162 were identified in the survey of the southern portion of the mining lease (Guse and Gregory 1994) and three were identified in the survey of the access and haul road route (Begnaze 2007). Full descriptions of these isolated artefacts are provided in the archaeologists’ reports (Appendices I and J).

**Section 11**

**Cultural and Historical Environment**

**Table 11-1 Archaeological and historic sites identified in surveys at Maud Creek**

Survey	Site No.	Type	Description	Location	Significance
Guse and Gregory, 1994	1	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	Moderate-Low
Guse and Gregory, 1994	2	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	High
Guse and Gregory, 1994	3	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	High
Guse and Gregory, 1994	4	Archaeological	Quarry/knapping area	Outcrop	High
Guse and Gregory, 1994	5	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	High
Heritage Surveys, 1996	MC7	Archaeological	Artefact scatter/quarry	Low rocky rise	High
Heritage Surveys, 1996	MC8	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Gentle slope	Moderate
Heritage Surveys, 1996	MC10	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Alluvial flats	Moderate
Heritage Surveys, 1996	MC11	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Gentle slope	Moderate
Heritage Surveys, 1996	MC12	Archaeological	Quarry	Low rise	High
Guse, 1999	MC13	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Low rise	Moderate-Low
Guse, 1999	MC14	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	Moderate-Low
Guse, 1999	MC15	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	Moderate-Low
Guse, 1999	MC16	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Creek bank	High
Guse, 1999	MC17	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Creek bank	High
Guse, 1999	MC18	Archaeological	Artefact scatter	Stony rise	Moderate-Low
Guse and Gregory, 1994	6	Historic	Historic mine/diggings	Gentle slope	High
Heritage Surveys, 1996	MC9	Historic	Historic settlement	Gentle slope	Moderate

**11.2.2 Historical sites**

Permanent European presence in the Katherine region followed the construction of the Overland Telegraph in the early 1870’s, and the first pastoral lease was taken up at Springvale in 1876 (Begnaze 2007). An influx of Europeans into Katherine occurred in 1926, when the railway from Darwin was installed (Begnaze 2007).

During the 1880’s European and Chinese gold miners were working in the Maud Creek area (Begnaze 2007). French and Browne set up a battery at the junction of Maud Creek and Fourteen Mile Creek in 1888 for public crushing, however the charges were exorbitant and much of the gold was lost in the tailings; the battery was closed in 1891 (Begnaze 2007). The area was mined again for a short period in the 1930’s by Jones and O’Shea (Begnaze 2007).

No sites registered on the Australian Heritage database occur in the project area. However, two historical sites have been identified during surveys of the Maud Creek project area:

- 1) Guse and Gregory, 1994, identified a series of historic mine diggings located on a stony hill on the eastern side of the project area (Site 6, Figure 11.1). This site is a collection of gold mine alluvial diggings spread over a 200 x 200 m area. Approximately 25 to 30 pits were observed ranging from 2 to 5 metres in diameter. The site was described as having “significant heritage value” and has therefore been allocated a “high” significance rating, for the purposes of this EIS.
- 2) Heritage Surveys, 1996, identified the remains of an historic settlement on a gentle slope to the north-east of the project area (Site MC9, Figure 11.1). The historic remains consist of a raised stone hearth and a foundation made from cement, gravel and earth and edged with cobbles of rock, distributed over approximately 150 x 100 m. A variety of other artefacts were also identified, including shards of stoneware and fine earthenware, preserved meat tins, tobacco tins and matchboxes. The archaeologists suggest that further excavation could identify more artefacts, which would increase the



## Section 11

## Cultural and Historical Environment

significance of the site. Based on what was recorded, however, the site was allocated a “moderate to low” significance rating.

### 11.3 Potential Impacts of Mining

As shown in Figure 11.1, there are three sites of archaeological interest located close to the proposed mine footprint; namely Sites 1, 5 and MC13, which are all aboriginal artefact scatters and are located near the existing or proposed access roads to the mine site. These sites are protected under the Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act and require Ministerial approval to disturb.

Up to 165 isolated artefacts could be disturbed by the proposed mining project. These artefacts do not constitute official archaeological sites, but Ministerial permission is still required to disturb these before mining commences.

### 11.4 AAPA Certificates and Site Clearances

In July 2007, Terra Gold was granted a clearance certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) for the mining lease and proposed new haul road, confirming that no Aboriginal sacred sites exist in the area proposed to be disturbed (see Appendix K). The area is not covered by any Native Title claim.

### 11.5 Mitigation of Impacts

Terra Gold commits to applying for Ministerial permission to disturb or destroy the background scatters and the three archaeological sites located within the mining footprint (Sites 1, 5 and MC13). Other, archaeological sites located in the close vicinity of the mine site (Sites 2, 3, 4 and 6) will be protected with temporary fencing and signage, in accordance with the recommendations of the surveying archaeologists.

The local Traditional Owners, the Jawoyn people, have indicated previously that the archaeological heritage of the Katherine region is of great cultural importance (Heritage Surveys 1996). They have expressed interest in the continued preservation of archaeological sites and have requested that any developments in the Maud Creek project area should include fencing and signage around archaeological sites so as to prevent interference (Guse 1999).

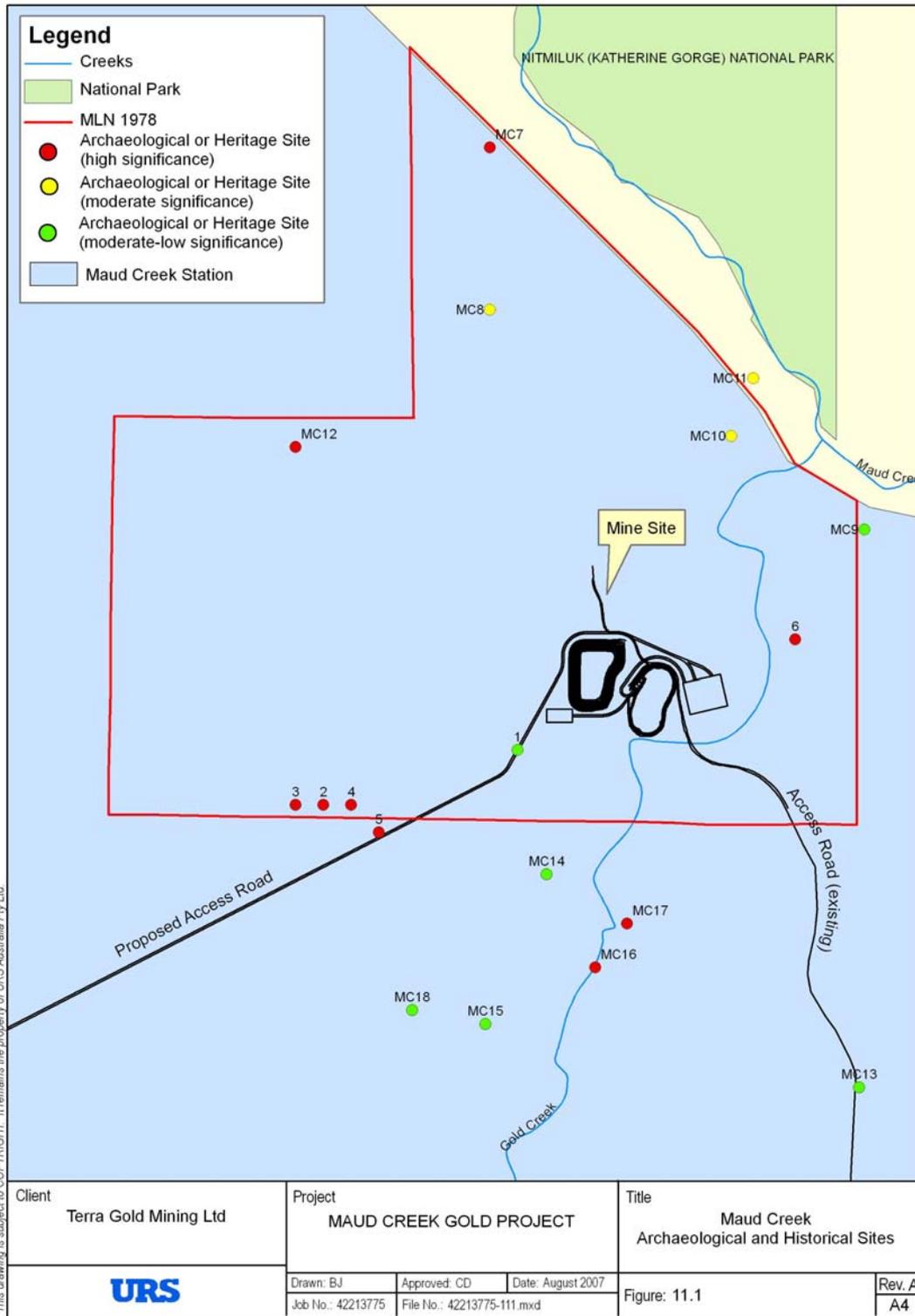
Mine site personnel will be made aware of protected “No-Go” areas for archaeological sites through inductions and regular communications with the Terra Gold Environment Manager, as well as the on-site signage described above.

Terra Gold has developed an Archaeological Chance-Find Procedure to direct mine staff, contractors and visitors in the event that artefacts are discovered during mine construction or operation. In accordance with this procedure, work will cease on a site where suspected archaeological material is found. The Environment Manager will then inspect and secure the site, and contact the Heritage Conservation Services, NRETA, for advice.

Section 11

Cultural and Historical Environment

Figure 11-1 Maud Creek archaeological and historic sites



**Section 11****Cultural and Historical Environment****11.6 Commitments**

*Terra Gold commits to applying for Ministerial permission to disturb or destroy the three archaeological sites (Sites 1, 5 and MC13) and the various isolated artefacts that are located close to or within the development footprint.*

*Terra Gold commits to placing temporary fencing and signage around Sites 2, 3, 4, and 6 to protect them from disturbance.*

*Terra Gold commits to implementing an Archaeological Chance-Find Procedure to direct mine staff, contractors and visitors in the event that suspected archaeological material is discovered during mine construction or operation.*

*Terra Gold commits to restricting staff access to areas of NNP that are closed to the general public.*

