



Thaidene Nënë

Proposed National Park Reserve

Background

EARLY YEARS OF THE PROPOSAL

In 1969 the Government of Canada approached Chief Pierre Catholique of Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation (ŁKDFN), then known as the Snowdrift Band, with the concept for a new national park. At the time, there was insufficient support for the park proposal to proceed.

To leave the option for a national park open, an area of 7,340 km² was set aside in a land withdrawal under the *Territorial Lands Act* in 1970. The area was considered to have excellent potential to represent the Northwestern Boreal Uplands Natural Region as one of the 39 terrestrial natural regions in Parks Canada's National Parks System Plan.

In the latter half of the 1980s, provisions for establishment of a national park were negotiated as part of the Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim and a Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment (MERA) was conducted for the 1970 land withdrawal. The proposal was put on hold in 1990 when the Dene and Métis General Assembly rejected elements of the Dene and Métis Agreement.



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada

RESUMING THE PROPOSAL

In the early 2000s, Chief Felix Lockhart of ŁKDFN approached the Government of Canada to renew discussions about a proposed national park. In 2005, ŁKDFN requested that the Government of Canada reconsider the 1970 land withdrawal. In 2006, ŁKDFN Chief Adeline Jonasson and the federal Minister of Environment and Minister Responsible for Parks Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding which defined a process for working together on matters pertaining to establishing a national park.

One such matter was the size of the area of interest for the proposed national park. After completion of two significant reports: *Preliminary Area of Interest for a National Park in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake* and *Thaidene Nënë State of Knowledge Report*, an Interim Land Withdrawal of 26,350 km² was added to the 1970 land withdrawal, bringing the total study area to 33,690 km² in 2007. ŁKDFN Elders proposed the name Thaidene Nënë for the study area, which means 'Land of the Ancestors' in the Chipewyan language.

Two additional studies were undertaken in the late 2000s. In 2008, a MERA was initiated to study the lands in the 2007 withdrawal area and incorporate the results of the MERA conducted on the 1970 withdrawal. Then in 2009, Parks Canada commissioned an Assessment of Landscape Values (Our Landscape Values) study of the Thaidene Nënë area. This study was intended to use the results of both MERAs, identify ecological goods and services and conduct a cost-benefit analysis. The analysis was intended to estimate the economic benefits associated with three scenarios:

1. No national park reserve;
2. A national park reserve based on the current study area; and
3. A national park reserve based on the current study area less the areas of high mineral potential.

In 2010 Parks Canada and ŁKDFN signed a Framework Agreement to begin negotiation of an Establishment Agreement for the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve. Parks Canada and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN) furthered discussions about the proposed negotiation of an Impact and Benefit Agreement. As well, a draft National Parks Chapter was further considered within the Land and Resources Agreement between the NWTMN, the government of Canada and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

To better understand wildlife values, Parks Canada commissioned a Caribou Movement and Distribution report of the Thaidene Nënë study area in 2011.

In 2013, the final MERA report for Thaidene Nënë was released. Also in 2013, Parks Canada and ŁKDFN negotiators reached an agreement in principle on most elements of an Establishment Agreement, subject to internal review and consultation by both ŁKDFN and Parks Canada. The Impact and Benefit Agreement negotiations, based on the language in the National Parks Chapter of the Land and Resources Agreement in Principle, began between Parks Canada and the NWTMN.

CURRENT STATUS

Through the *Northwest Territories Devolution Act*, pursuant to the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement, the lands of the Thaidene Nënë proposal came under the administration and control of the GNWT effective April 1, 2014. In 2014 the Thaidene Nënë Interim Land Withdrawal was renewed and will continue to March 31, 2016.

Parks Canada continues to collaborate with the GNWT. Negotiations are on-going with ŁKDFN and NWTMN and consultations will be scheduled with other Aboriginal groups. The views and input of third parties, stakeholders, local residents and other interested parties are also an essential part of the park establishment process and opportunities for input will be provided.



For more information:

Protected Areas Establishment Branch
Parks Canada Agency
P.O. Box 1166
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N8

Email: ThaideneNene.Info@pc.gc.ca
Phone: (867) 766-8460
Fax: (867) 766-8466
Office: #215, 5101 – 50th Avenue
(Greenstone Building)

Aussi disponible en français

Photos © Bob Wilson and Parks Canada

