

# Thaidene Nëné

Proposed National Park Reserve

## Frequently Asked Questions



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## When was a national park in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake first proposed?

In the late 1960s, Parks Canada first proposed a national park in the vicinity of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. To leave the option for a national park open, an area of 7,340 km<sup>2</sup> was set aside in a land withdrawal under the *Territorial Lands Act* in 1970. In 2007, an Interim Land Withdrawal of 26,350 km<sup>2</sup> was added to the 1970 land withdrawal, bringing the total study area to 33,690 km<sup>2</sup>.

## Why does Parks Canada want to establish a national park reserve in Thaidene Nënë?

The study area for the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve, with its dramatic transition from the boreal forest of the Taiga Shield to above tree-line in the southern Arctic tundra, is considered an outstanding example of the Northwestern Boreal Uplands Natural Region, one of the 39 terrestrial natural regions that constitute Canada's world-class National Park System Plan.

A national park reserve provides opportunities for quality visitor experiences, such as recreational activities and the presentation of cultural heritage. Thaidene Nënë's spectacular wilderness characteristics already attract many visitors and local residents each year. While remote, the area's proximity to the City of Yellowknife allows for a degree of access that is less common in other northern national parks. The proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve will also be easily accessed through the gateway community of Łutsël K'e, whether by water or by air.

The Government of Canada is committed to working with Canadians to conserve and restore Canada's rich natural heritage for present and future generations. Launched in May 2014, Canada's National Conservation Plan provides a vision to advance conservation efforts across the country in three priority areas including: conserving lands and waters, restoring ecosystems and connecting Canadians to nature. The proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve would fulfill all of these priorities.



## How does devolution affect the establishment of a national park reserve?

As a result of the *Northwest Territories Devolution Act* of 2014, the Government of the Northwest Territories is now responsible for the administration and management of the lands known as Thaidene Nënë. The proposed boundary for the national park reserve meets a federal – territorial commitment to a “significantly smaller” national park reserve – it is 58 percent smaller than the 33,690 km<sup>2</sup> interim land withdrawal.

## Why is this proposal called a national park reserve, rather than a national park?

A national park reserve designation under the *Canada National Parks Act* applies to an area subject to an Aboriginal claim, or claims that have been accepted for negotiation by the Government of Canada. Aboriginal people can continue hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and spiritual activities, and may be involved in cooperative management of a national park reserve with Parks Canada. Once the land claims are settled and agreements are reached, that among other things, address cooperative management and harvesting, cultural and spiritual activities, the national park reserve designation is then brought under the *Canada National Parks Act* as a national park. Until then, a national park reserve is managed like a national park.





## Who is involved in discussions about the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve?

Parks Canada continues to collaborate with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Negotiations are on-going with Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation 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.

## What factors were considered in determining the proposed boundary for a national park reserve?

The proposed boundary for Thaidene Nënë national park reserve was informed by a number of technical studies, including: Preliminary Area of Interest for a National Park in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake; Migratory Tundra Caribou Seasonal and Annual Distribution; Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment of the proposed Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve; and the State of Knowledge Report for Thaidene Nënë. These studies helped to identify key areas to ensure that the proposed boundary not only represents the Northwestern Boreal Uplands Natural Region, but also:

- has a configuration that will maintain ecological integrity;
- includes some of the most significant cultural and spiritual sites in the Thaidene Nënë area;
- includes areas that will provide iconic visitor experiences;
- will allow for tourism investments that benefit communities;
- excludes all areas of high mineral potential; and
- is a significant contribution to the National Conservation Plan



## How will recreation and tourism opportunities be managed in a national park reserve?

Boating, camping and recreational activities will continue to be enjoyed by local community members and visitors. Businesses in the region of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake providing recreation and tourism opportunities could also continue to provide those services in the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve. A national park reserve in the Thaidene Nënë area would be managed to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation, visitor experiences and tourism.

## What other types of activities can be enjoyed in the proposed national park reserve?

The management of Thaidene Nënë national park reserve will be flexible on a range of uses and access:

- Open to non-Aboriginal subsistence activities within the national park reserve including harvesting of traditional foods.
- Access by snowmobiles for traditional activities and travelling between communities would be permitted as in several other national parks.
- Local northerners would continue to access the park and undertake activities such as boating, camping, fishing, berry picking and building campfires.
- Access by float planes would continue.

## How will fishing and hunting be managed within the proposed national park reserve?

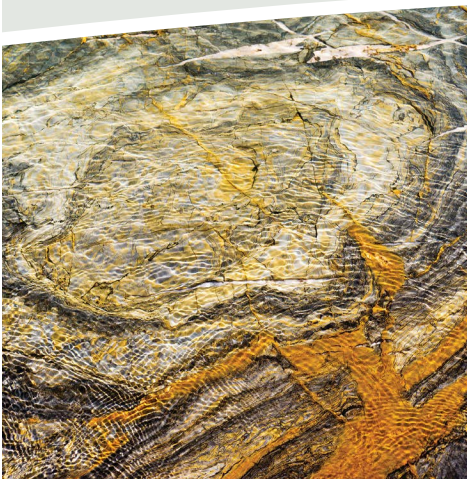
Recreational fishing is allowed within national parks under the *Canada National Parks Act*. Traditional harvesting by Aboriginal peoples with a historical relationship to the region will continue. Recreational hunting and guided outfitted hunting would not be permitted.

## How much will it cost to visit the national park reserve?

Fees in national parks vary depending on the services, facilities and programs provided. For Thaidene Nënë national park reserve, there will be no entrance fee, but there would be charges for the use of park facilities and services.

## What are the next steps for consultations and establishment of the national park reserve?

Parks Canada will be undertaking consultation with Aboriginal groups and communities as well as third-party interests, stakeholders and the public during the summer and fall of 2015. During the winter of 2016, Parks Canada will report the results of the consultations to the Minister of the Environment and Minister Responsible for Parks Canada. Should the governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada agree to proceed, Parks Canada and the GNWT would then launch the negotiation of a national park reserve establishment agreement. Also during this time, Parks Canada would complete negotiations with the Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation.



### For more information:

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