



DEVELOPMENT TITLE: Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATES: July 01 – August 31, 2021

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve is located on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, in the Northwest Territories. The park reserve is part of Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), which also includes a Territorial Protected Area and a proposed Conservation Area (see map 1). For over a decade, members of Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation have been actively patrolling Thaidene Nënë through the ongoing activities of their Guardian Program – Ni Hat'ni Dene – which means 'watchers of the land' in Dënesųtíné.

The Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardians are highly regarded as stewards of the land, maintaining the integrity of cultural sites, monitoring water quality, and interacting with visitors to the IPA. Much of the Ni Hat'ni Dene's work involves spending extensive time on the land. The Guardians travel over large expanses of water and land to monitor important traditional sites within Thaidene Nënë in all seasons and types of weather. Locally-built patrol cabins provide necessary shelter and rest at key locations along frequent travel routes.

Since 2019, the Guardians have played an important role in winter caribou monitoring and supporting the implementation of the Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádi (Łutselk'e Dene First Nation's Caribou Stewardship Plan). In support of this monitoring program, Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation have identified a need to build a patrol cabin adjacent to the historic Pike's Portage Trail, en route to the Barren Grounds where caribou frequent during winter. The proposed building site falls within the boundaries of Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve and, therefore, requires a permit¹. As per the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, Parks Canada is legally required, before issuing permits, to conduct preliminary screenings to determine any public concern, or adverse environmental, social or cultural impacts.

The construction of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin is planned to occur between July and August when Great Slave Lake is ice-free and site conditions are favourable. Use of the patrol cabin will likely vary from year to year, depending on caribou movement patterns and the overall monitoring needs within the Barren Grounds. Łutselk'e Dene First Nation has put forward the following activities and location for building a patrol cabin in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve:

Activities

- Transportation and delivery of building materials, which will occur by air or by boat.
- Off-loading of the building materials at the staging area located on the beach.

¹ National Parks Building Regulations, s. 5(1).



- Moving building materials to the proposed construction site, by hand and / or by quad and trailer.
- Site preparation, including the clearing of ground vegetation, small trees and rocks.
- Construction of one 16' x 24' wood cabin, including: a shingled gable roof; beam on wooden pad foundation (no soil excavation required), and a single floor with sleeping loft.
- Construction of an outhouse (pit toilet).
- Construction of two 2.8' x 8' wooden tent pads adjacent to the proposed cabin site.
- Installation of a floating dock.
- Installation of sump to dispose of greywater output from the cabin.

Locations

The proposed construction site for the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin is located at the Great Slave Lake / Charlton Bay end of Pike's Portage Trail within Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve (see Map 2). The site includes the outhouse, tent pads, sump and staging area.

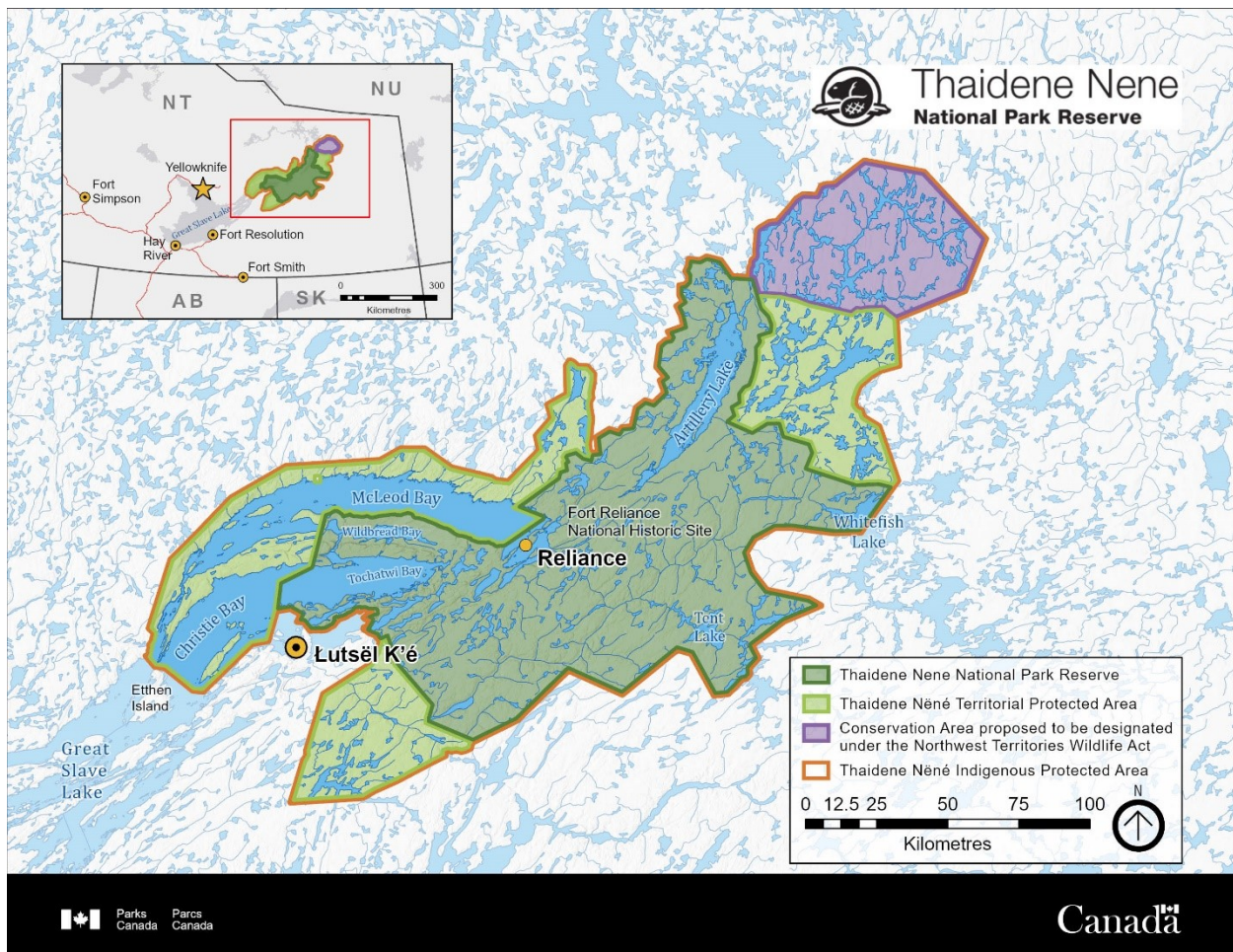
MITIGATIONS:

Pike's Portage Trail has been used as a travel corridor to access the Barren Lands since time immemorial, and is known to contain heritage resources. Heritage resources are defined as a human work, an object, or a place that is determined, on the basis of its heritage value, to be directly associated with an important aspect or aspects of human history and culture of a heritage area. Examples of heritage resources include archaeological or historic sites, burial sites, artifacts and other objects of historical, cultural, or religious significance, and historical or cultural records. An archaeological survey conducted in the area in 1966 identified a series of beach ridges with associated lithic (stone) artifacts within the proposed building area. The area has been designated as an archaeological site.

To ensure the protection of these and other potential heritage resources, a Parks Canada archaeologist, accompanied by Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation elders and community representatives, will conduct an assessment of the proposed site prior to the start of any construction activities. The results of the assessment will be used to provide information for determining the most suitable site and building methods for constructing the patrol cabin in order to achieve the least amount of impacts.



Map 1: Location of Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, in relation to Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area, Territorial Protected Area, and the proposed Conservation Area.





Map 2: The proposed location of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, including the outhouse, tent pads, sump and staging area.

