



DEVELOPMENT TITLE: Aircraft Operations in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATES: April 01, 2021 - March 31, 2022

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 Wildlife Conservation Area (see Map 1). Visitors can access Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve by fixed and rotary wing aircraft operated by local air charter companies. Air charter companies that wish to do business in a national park require a business licence¹ to conduct take-offs and landings. Parks Canada conducts preliminary screenings before issuing/reissuing these types of authorizations to determine any public concern, or adverse environmental, social or cultural impacts according to the requirements of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*.

Aircraft operations in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve occur throughout the year, with most operations occurring during summer months when tourism and park operational requirements are greatest. Day flights (e.g., sightseeing excursions, resident/visitor/staff drop offs and pick-ups) comprise the majority of air charter activities. However, pilots and their aircraft may overnight in the park on occasion, depending on client needs. This preliminary screening pertains to proposed aircraft operations by companies applying for a 2021/2022 business licence reissuance for Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve.

Aircraft operations include the flight paths, take-offs and landings, and the potential impacts associated with the presence of visitors brought into the National Park Reserve by aircraft. The following activities and locations are being proposed by the air charter companies listed below, including up to five additional companies that may propose similar aircraft operations in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve after this preliminary screening has been completed:

Air charter companies

- Acasta Heliflight
- Ahmic Air
- Air Tindi
- Great Slave Helicopters
- Hoarfrost River Huskies Ltd.
- Northwestern Air Lease Ltd.
- Summit Helicopters

Activities

- Sightseeing tours
- Charters for traditional harvesting and on the land activities
- Charters for recreational trips, including (but not limited to) dog-sledding, fishing, hiking,

¹ National Parks of Canada Businesses Regulations, s. 4(1).



- canoeing, kayaking, packrafting and paddleboarding
- Charters for in-park operations, including (but not limited to) area reconnaissance, cultural resources management, wildlife research and monitoring, facility construction and maintenance, search and rescue, enforcement, park interpretation and visitor events
- Access to Reliance fuel cache

Locations

The majority of flights into Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve originate from Yellowknife, with the exception of: Hoarfrost River Huskies Ltd., which also has an operational base out of the Hoarfrost River; and Northwestern Air Lease Ltd., which originates out of Fort Smith (see Map 1).

Take-offs and landings by water-based aircraft (e.g., fixed-wing planes with floats/skis) can occur on any waterbody in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve². Helicopters take-offs and landings are permitted within 200 m of all waterbodies; however, landings that are located farther inland must be cleared first by Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve. Aircraft operations may be managed through area closures (e.g., visitor safety concerns) or Superintendent's Orders to ensure the protection of areas identified as culturally or environmentally sensitive.

MITIGATIONS:

Operators will adhere to the mitigations described in the "*Interim Best Management Practices for Aircraft Operations in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve*" and, when applicable, the "*Interim Best Management Practices for Fuel Caching in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve*".

² Parks Canada will provide for the activities and land uses as described in s. 9.1 of the *Land Transfer Agreement* between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories, including take-offs and landings on any waterbody in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve.



Map 1: Map of Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area, including Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve and the locations where proposed aircraft operations originate.

