



Nááts'ihch'oh
National Park Reserve

TRIP PLANNING GUIDE

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Parks
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the mountains have kept the **music**



© Parks Canada / Lyn Elliott



© Parks Canada / Eric Laflamme

Welcome to Our Home

"It's almost like the mountains have kept the music. When you go up the river by boat you can feel the spirit of our ancestors and you can feel the powerful feeling from the mountains. It's so majestic. It's so overwhelming.

*...And we've had stories about our people where they dance their drum dances. There are rings where they've worn into the ground. There are places where they used to dance after a good celebration and a good kill, or maybe after they'd built their mooseskin boat and they would celebrate."*¹

- Ethel Blondin-Andrew

For generations of Dene and Metis people, Nááts'ihch'oh was and is a rich harvesting area. They still travel and harvest on this land, and they welcome you to their home.



© Colin Field / NWT

¹*Spirit of the Mountains Traditional Knowledge Study, Tulita District Land Corporation, 2009*

nááts'ihch'oh

the mountain that is sharp like a porcupine



Mount Nááts'ihch'oh (Mount Wilson)

Nááts'ihch'oh is the name of this mountain in the Shúhtaot'ine language. It refers to its unique shape - sharp and pointed like a porcupine quill.

The Shúhtaot'ine believe that Nááts'ihch'oh is a place of strong spiritual power, which can be bestowed on newborn children. Here, their ancestors would camp while travelling with moose skin boats to see Nááteho, the Nahanni prophet.

Nááts'ihch'oh is the name chosen for the National Park Reserve by the following Elders: Gabriel Horassi, David Yallee Senior, Maurice Mendo, Frederick Clement Senior, Frank Yallee, John Hotti, John B. Hetchinelle, James Bavard, Norman Andrew and Leon Andrew.

Traditional Place Names

We use the Shúhtaot'ine place names where we know them. As we learn more about the park and its traditional place names, we will be adding these names to our maps and publications. If you have traditional place names to share, please let us know.

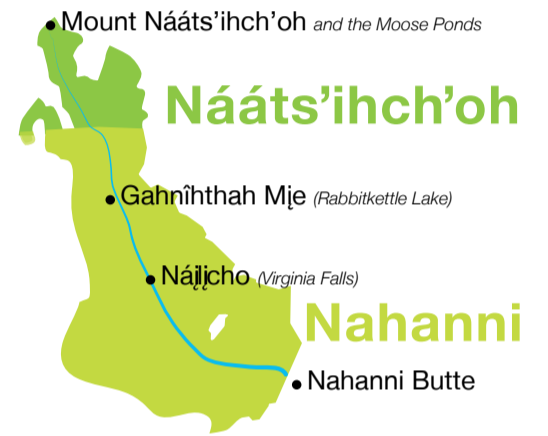
two parks one river



© Colin Field/NWTT



© Parks Canada



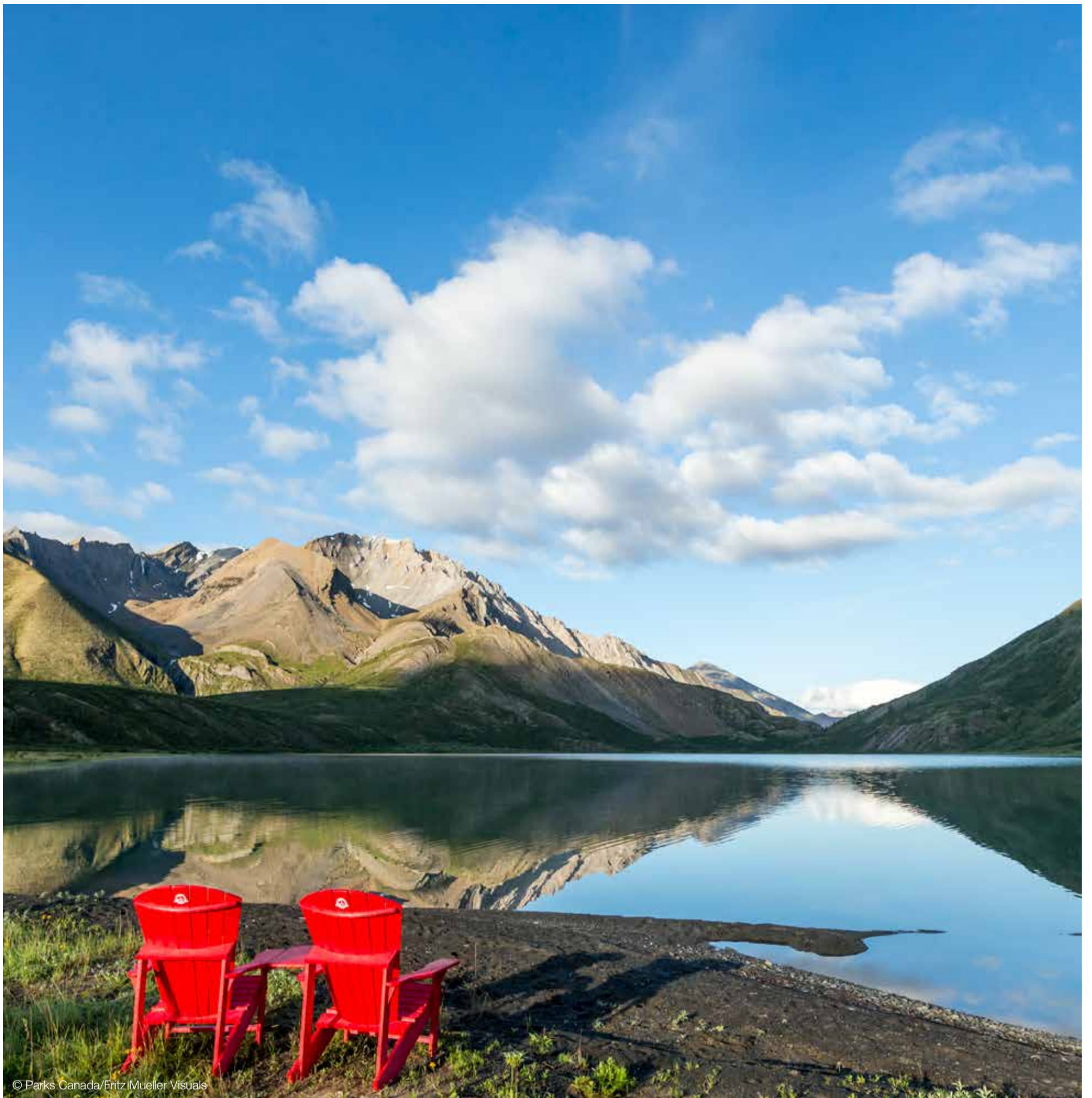
Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh

The South Nahanni River flows through two parks and two Dene and Metis territories. Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve is a gift to the people of Canada from the Shúhtaot'ine, the Mountain Dene, and the Metis people of the Sahtu region. Nahanni National Park Reserve is the traditional territory of the Dehcho First Nations.

The boundary between the parks is the border between the Sahtu and Dehcho regions of the Northwest Territories. As you paddle from the Sahtu to the Dehcho, be sure to say Mahsi, the Dene word for thank you.

what to expect





© Parks Canada/Fritz Mueller Visuals

#sharethechair

Red Chairs

Find the red chairs and share your moment.

paddle
here





nááts'ihch'oh triple header



© Colin Field / NWTT



© Colin Field / NWTT



Nááts'ihch'oh Triple Header

Guided trips starting at \$12,125

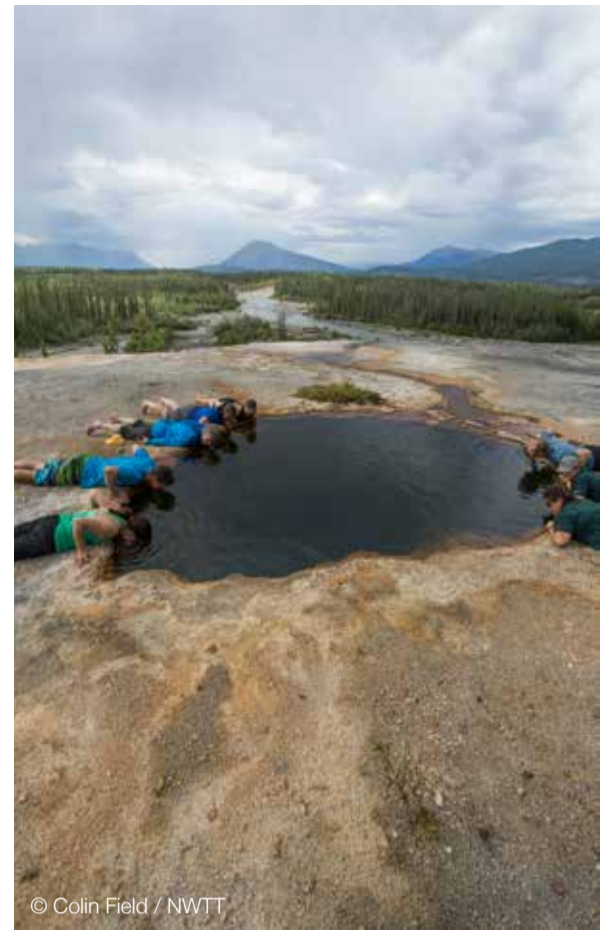
It's the ultimate northern river adventure. Paddle the three main headwaters of the South Nahanni River in one epic trip.

Warm up your whitewater skills on the Broken Skull River before tackling the South Nahanni River's Rock Gardens. Then, use everything you've learned to run the thrilling Little Nahanni.

Paddlers who complete all three rivers separately or in one epic trip will get a Triple Header crest and join an elite group of paddlers.

nahanni deh

south nahanni river



© Colin Field / NWTT



Nahanni Deh

South Nahanni River

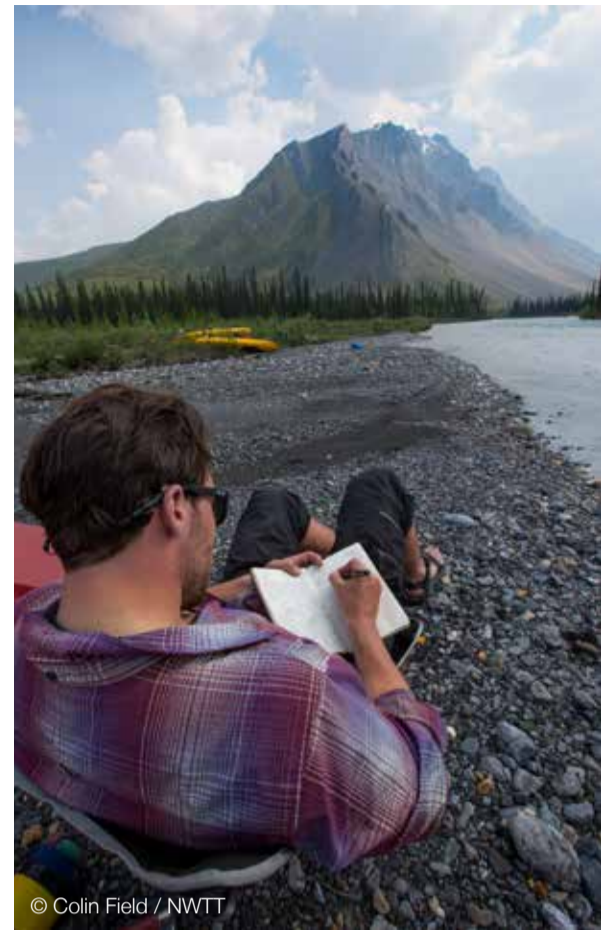
Guided trips starting at \$7,475

Escape on a paddling expedition down the entire South Nahanni River. Take a float plane to Mount Nááts'ihch'oh and the Moose Ponds. Have your helmet cam ready? The Rock Gardens are 50 kms of the South Nahanni River's most challenging whitewater perfect for skilled paddlers.

The Rock Gardens are best run mid-June through July, before water levels drop. Plan for 7-9 days from Moose Ponds to Gahnjthah Mje (Rabbitkettle Lake) or 18-23 days to Nahanni Butte.

We recommend using the South Nahanni River Touring Guide (\$5.00) to navigate the river. Order your waterproof copy via e-mail nahanni.info@pc.gc.ca or phone 1-867-695-7750.

broken skull river



© Colin Field / NWTT



Broken Skull River

Guided trips start at \$7,195

Are you looking for 150 kms of pure fun? Full of bouncy whitewater and epic scenery, the continuous Class I-III whitewater is perfect if you're an experienced paddler going on your first northern river trip.

Plan 6 -10 days to paddle from Divide Lake to Gahnjthah Mje (Rabbitkettle Lake) on the South Nahanni River. The best time to go is mid-June to mid-August.

National Topographic System Maps

105 P/01, 105 I/16, 105 I/09, 95 L/12, 95 L/05

© Colin Field / NWTT

little nahanni river



© Colin Field / NWTT



Little Nahanni River

Guided trips starting at \$4,950

Is this the Nahanni's *Scary Little Sister*? You decide. The Little Nahanni River is 85 kms of intense Class II-V whitewater. The best time to go is mid-June to mid-August. Plan for 4 - 9 days to paddle from Flat Lakes to Gahnjthah Mje (Rabbitkettle Lake) via Nahanni Deh (South Nahanni River). For a shorter trip, take 3 - 5 days to paddle from Flat Lakes to the Steel Creek confluence.

National Topographic System Maps

Shelf Lake - 105 I/01
Upper Hyland Lake - 105 I/02
Dozer Lake - 105 I/07

díga dezene deh black wolf creek



© Colin Field / NWTT



Díga Dezene Deh

Black Wolf Creek

Air charters starting at \$2,450

We've only paddled the upper reaches of Díga Dezene Deh (Black Wolf Creek), but from what we saw, it looks exciting. From Grizzly Bear Lake, this whitewater creek eventually joins the Broken Skull River and Nahanni Deh (South Nahanni River).

Unknown difficulty. Unknown trip length. If you go on an adventure, let us know what you find!

National Topographic System Maps

95 L/12, 9 L/05, 95 L/06

túochéé tué o'grady lake



© Colin Field / NWT



Natla-Keele River Access at Túochéé Tué

O'Grady Lake

Guided trips starting at \$6,650

Start your Natla-Keele River whitewater paddling trip on beautiful Túochéé Tué (O'Grady Lake). Plan for 18-21 days to paddle the Natla-Keele River all the way to Tulita, NT on the Mackenzie River. Be sure to drop in our office to say "Hello!" when you get there.

63°00.44'N, 129°00.50'W

National Topographic System Maps

105 P/3, 105 P/2, 105 I/14, 105 I/15



hike here

níonep'ene? tué grizzly bear lake



Níonep'ene? Tué

Backbone or Grizzly Bear
Lake

Guided trips available.

For alpine adventurers, Níonep'ene? Tué (Grizzly Bear Lake) is the Nááts'ihch'oh destination. Follow alpine streams to countless peaks, including the park's highest peak - just south of Grizzly Bear Lake. No matter how much time you have, there is a trip option to meet your needs. You can camp at Grizzly Bear Lake, or attempt a loop trek through the mountains to the northeast.

62°41.25'N, 127°49.19'W

**Highest Peak in the Park: 62°37.08'N,
127°48.43'W**

National Topographic System Maps

Grizzly Bear Lake - 95 L/12

margaret lake



© Parks Canada/Fritz Mueller Visuals



Margaret Lake

Air charters starting at \$2,100

If you're an enthusiastic hiker who doesn't mind wet feet, Margaret Lake can give you access to rarely seen alpine meadows. The best hiking is around the unnamed lake northeast of Margaret Lake. Here, you'll get into rocky alpine slopes and turquoise creeks.

If you go, please let us know what you find. We haven't been much further than the photo you see here (left).

Due to the high altitude and short length of the lake, you need a powerful float plane to get you in and out of here. Many of our licenced air charter companies have Pilatus Porter, DeHavilland Turbo Beaver, or a DeHavilland Twin Otter aircraft that can get you safely in and out of this lake.

62°36.26'N, 128°39.53'W

National Topographic System Map

105 I/10



bezíihule tué

the lake with no name



© Parks Canada / Lyn Elliott



Bezíihule Tué

The Lake with No Name

Air charters starting at \$2,100

If you're looking for miles and miles of alpine meadows, Bezíihule Tué is your destination. Situated on the Broken Heart Plateau, Bezíihule Tué offers rolling hills, glaciers, dramatic vistas, and waterfalls everywhere you look.

Three days will give you enough time to enjoy base-camping near the lake with day hikes up to nearby peaks and plateaus.

Five or more days will give you time to hike into the neighbouring valleys and explore as far and wide as you can see.

Due to the high altitude and short length of the lake, you need a powerful float plane to get you in and out of here. Many of our licenced air charter companies have Pilatus Porter, DeHavilland Turbo Beaver, or DeHavilland Twin Otters that can get you safely in and out of this lake.

62°34.35'N, 128°31.58'W

National Topographic System Maps

105 I/10, 105 I/09

divide lake



© Colin Field / NWTT



© Colin Field / NWTT



Divide Lake

Air charters starting at \$2,650

Divide Lake is a great place to relax for a few days. Simply watch the wildlife crossing back and forth across the lake, hike down to Swallow Falls, or climb up the ridge for a view 800m above the Broken Skull Valley.

63°01.18'N, 128°10.63'W

National Topographic System Maps

Divide Lake - 105 P/01



relax
here

grizzly bear

hot springs



© Colin Field/NWTT



Grizzly Bear Hot Springs

The moment you see them, you know they're special. Grizzly Bear Hot Springs are beautiful— surrounded by delicate wildflowers and tufa formations.

Please walk softly and visit carefully.

From Grizzly Bear Lake, the hot springs are a 5 km hike one-way from the mountain pass. It is easiest to follow the game trails on the north/river right side of the creek. However, you will need to cross the creek by the tufa to climb up to the hot springs. Allow at least 6 hours return to hike to and enjoy the hot spring.

From the Broken Skull River, Grizzly Bear Hot Springs is a long 10 km hike up a creek bed. Allow a full day, and be prepared for multiple creek crossings and bad jokes about the hike being TOO FAR or TU-FA.

From either direction, the "turret" you see on top of the mountain (photo at left) is a good landmark. It is located on the far side of the creek from the hot spring.

62°40.28'N, 127°54.00'W

National Topographic System Maps

95 L/12

broken skull

hot springs



Broken Skull Hot Springs

Ready to relax in a perfect hot spring? Not too hot, not too cold, and only the scent of fresh mountain air... just a 2.5 km hike from the Broken Skull River.

62° 45.28'N, 128° 08.15'W

National Topographic System Maps

105 I/16



Communities and Services

Tulita, NT



Pop: ~500
 Air access: year-round
 Road access: winter only

Norman Wells, NT



Pop: ~700
 Air access: year-round
 Road access: winter only
 Canoe rentals

Fort Simpson, NT



Pop: ~1200
 Air access: year-round
 Road access: year-round
 Canoe rentals

go to town

Watson Lake, YT

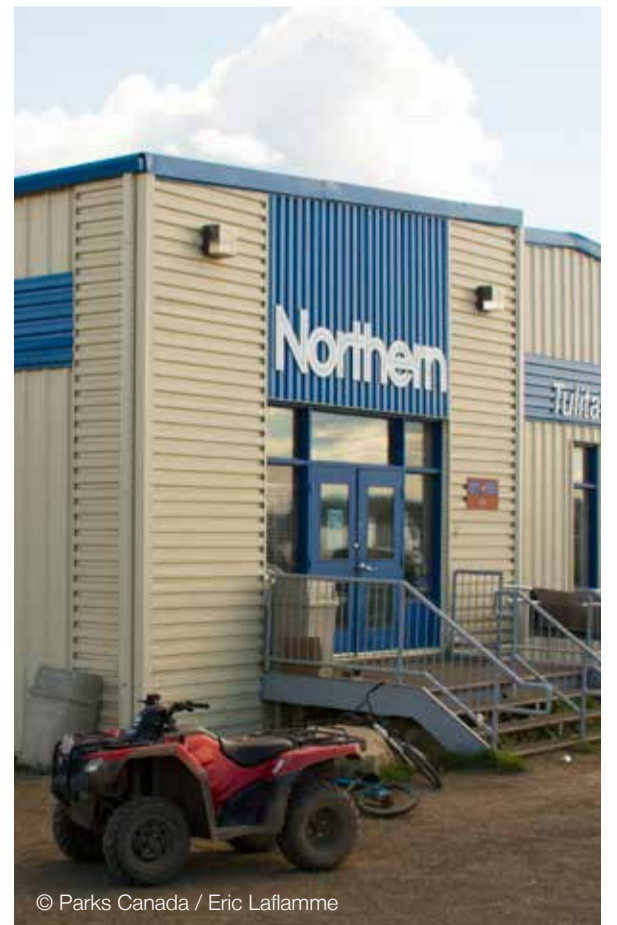


Pop: ~800
 Road access: year-round

Nahanni Butte, NT



Pop: ~100
 Road access: via river taxi across Liard River



© Parks Canada / Eric Laflamme



Park Office

Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve's office is located in Tulita, NT. Nááts'ihch'oh is part of the traditional lands of the people of the Sahtu, and they chose Tulita as the park headquarters. The only road access is a winter ice road from Wrigley. But, if you're paddling the Mackenzie River, be sure to drop in and say hello!

Get Here by Road

Drive to Fort Simpson, NT or Watson Lake, YK

Whether you take the Mackenzie Highway and Liard Highway to Fort Simpson, or the Alaska Highway to Watson Lake and Flat Lakes, you're in for an epic road trip. From there, connect with your charter flights into the park.

Get Here by Plane

Fly commercially into Yellowknife, NT then onto Norman Wells, Tulita, or Fort Simpson. Alternatively, fly into Whitehorse, YK. Once in these neighbouring communities, charter an aircraft into the park.

Airlines with scheduled flights to Yellowknife and Whitehorse:

- Air Canada
- Air North
- Canadian North
- Condor
- First Air
- Northwestern Air
- WestJet

Airlines with scheduled flights to Norman Wells or Fort Simpson:

- North Wright Airways
- Canadian North
- First Air
- Air Tindi

drive
here

fly
here



© Dustin Silvey

find your way

Maps and Guides

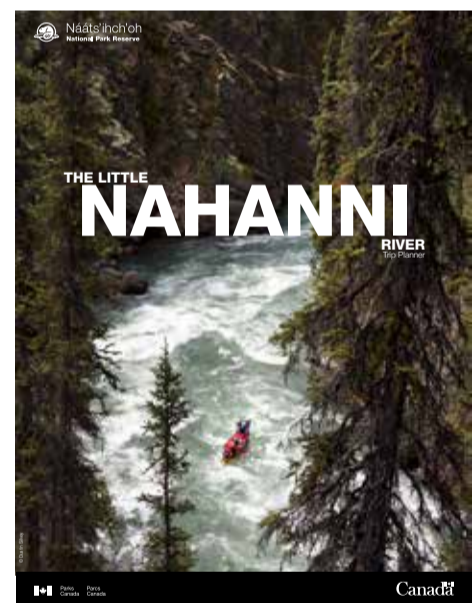
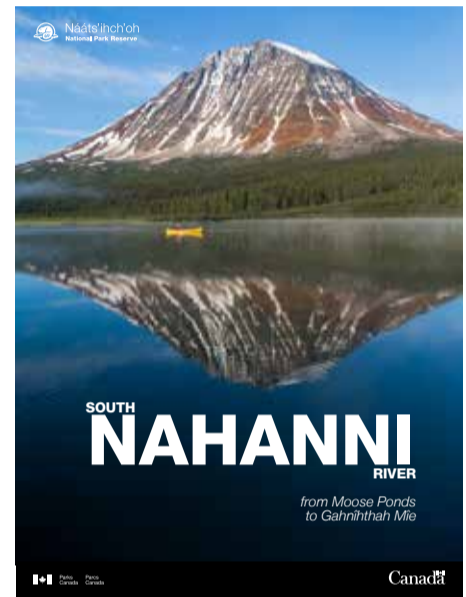
National Topographic System Maps

These are the maps we use to navigate the park. Canada's National Topographic System maps are available print-on-demand from your favourite map printers. To make ordering easier, we have provided the map numbers for the 1:50 000 maps.

South Nahanni River Touring Guide

All the river maps you need to paddle the South Nahanni River are in one booklet. To order your waterproof copy (\$5.00), e-mail nahanni.info@pc.gc.ca or phone 1-867-695-7750.

Trip-specific planning guides are available.





carefree travel

Guides and Outfitters

Let these experts take care of the details:

Blackfeather, The Wilderness Adventure Company

1-888-849-7668
info@blackfeather.com
www.blackfeather.com

Canoe North Adventures

1-519-941-6654
info@canoenorthadventures.com
www.canoenorthadventures.com

Nahanni River Adventures

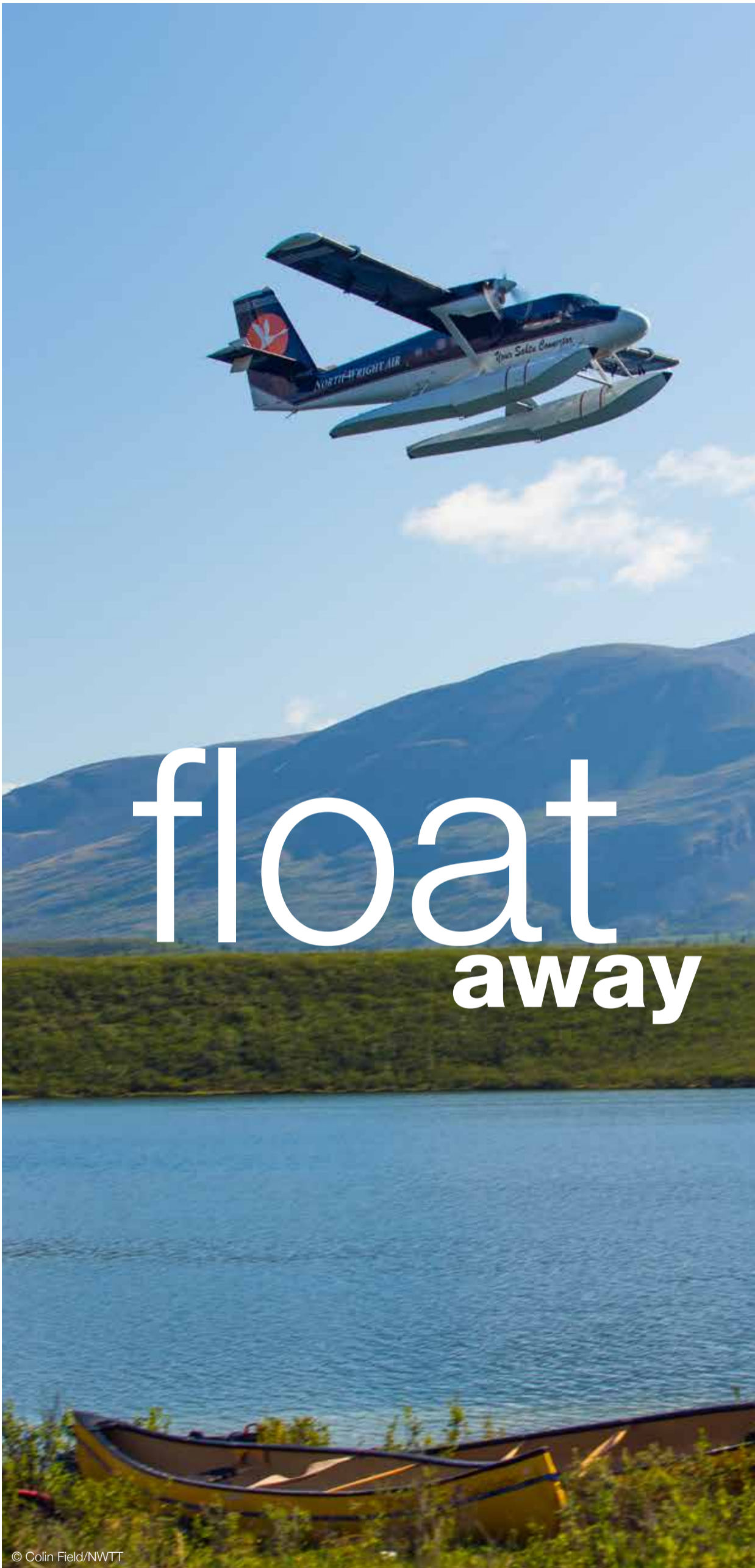
1-800-297-6927
info@nahanni.com
www.nahanni.com

Nahanni Wilderness Adventures

1-888-897-5223
adventures@nahanniwild.com
www.nahanniwild.com

Summit Helicopters

1-855-355-5527
info@summithelicopters.ca
www.summithelicopters.ca



Flightseeing and Air Charters

Flightseeing tours starting at \$2,450

Book your air charter or flightseeing tour:

Alpine Aviation

Whitehorse, YK
1-867-668-7725
alpineaviation@gmail.com
www.alpineaviationyukon.com

Kluane Airways

Kelowna, BC
1-250-860-4187
info@kluaneairways.com
www.kluaneairways.com

North Wright Airways

Norman Wells, NT
1-867-587-2288
info@north-wrightairways.com
www.north-wrightairways.com

Sahtu Helicopters

Norman Wells, NT
867-587-2827
dennis.rusch@gsheli.com
www.greatslaveheli.com

Simpson Air

Fort Simpson, NT
1-866-995-2505
simpsonair@northwestel.net
www.simpsonair.ca

Summit Air

Yellowknife, NT
1-866-709-7717
info@flysummitair.com
www.flysummitair.com

Summit Helicopters

Yellowknife, NT
1-855-355-5527
info@summithelicopters.ca
www.summithelicopters.ca

South Nahanni Airways

Fort Simpson, NT
1-867-695-2007
info@southnahanniairways.ca
www.southnahanniairways.ca



How to Book an Air Charter

Booking an air charter is easier than you think. The pilots know the lakes and mountains, and they'll help you plan where to put in, take out, and what kind of aircraft you'll need to make it happen.

Book as early as you can to ensure your aircraft and dates are available.

When you request a quote, have this information ready:

- Date and time (if) you want to fly into the park
- Date and time (if) you want to fly out of the park
- Name and coordinates of the location where you want to be taken
- Name and coordinates of the lake/location if you want to be picked up
- Number of passengers
- Any special equipment (canoes, kayaks, etc.)
- Any special flightseeing route or added stops

The **"Air charters starting at"** prices listed in this guide are based on flying two people and lightweight camping gear in a Turbo Beaver aircraft at November 2016 fuel prices. Prices will vary based on the location of the float plane base, the size of your group, your equipment, the aircraft required, and fuel prices.

Flight delays are part of the adventure.

Weather can make flying in and out of the park tricky, and flights are regularly delayed. Your pilots have the experience to decide when it's safe to fly.

Plan for a **flight delay** to be part of your adventure story, and bring extra food just in case.

go places



Fees

We don't have a fee system set up. That's right, there are no fees to visit Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve in 2017. We'll let you know when this changes.

If visiting Nahanni National Park Reserve is part of your trip plan, fees do apply. See **Nahanni's website** for more information.

Reservations

To reserve your trip, contact us at 1-867-588-4884 or naatsihchoh.info@pc.gc.ca with this information:

- Type of trip (hiking, paddling, etc.)
- Trip itinerary (# days, route)
- Preferred trip dates
- Trip leader's contact information
- Group size (max 12)
- Air charter company (if needed)
- Whether you plan to visit Nahanni as well

If you are taking a guided trip, the company you have booked with will make the necessary reservations.

Registration and Orientation

You can register in person at our Parks Canada office in Tulita or Fort Simpson, or by phone. We'll ask for this information:

- Group member names
- Communication equipment details (sat phone #, etc.)
- Emergency contact info
- Equipment descriptions (tents, canoes, kayaks)
- Trip itinerary and end date

it's just you out here



© Colin Field/NWTT

Emergency Help

This isn't the place for rookies. You are responsible for your own safety. Prepare to handle an emergency on your own. Bring good first aid and repair kits, and the skills to use them.

If you do need urgent help, call our Duty Officer at **1-867-695-3732**, 24 hours a day, June 1 - September 30.

Keep in mind, our resources are limited and we might not be able to rescue you right away due to flight delays.

Satellite Phones, InReach, and SPOT Devices

Coverage can be limited in northern latitudes, canyons, and valleys. Know how to deal with your device's limitations. The Iridium satellite system currently has the most reliable coverage here.

Alpine Safety

Make sure you and your group have the wilderness, alpine trekking, and creek crossing skills to travel here.

Flash Flooding

Rain upstream can raise water levels suddenly - even if it is not raining where you are. Choose your campsites accordingly, and secure your boats each night.

River Safety

Make sure you and your group have the wilderness paddling, river reading, and swiftwater rescue skills to tackle these challenging river. Or, consider a guided trip with one of our outfitters.

Strainers and Sweepers

Wood hazards such as strainers and sweepers are common. River-wide log jams are often reported by paddlers on the Little Nahanni River. Make sure you and your group are confident and competent in avoiding these hazards.

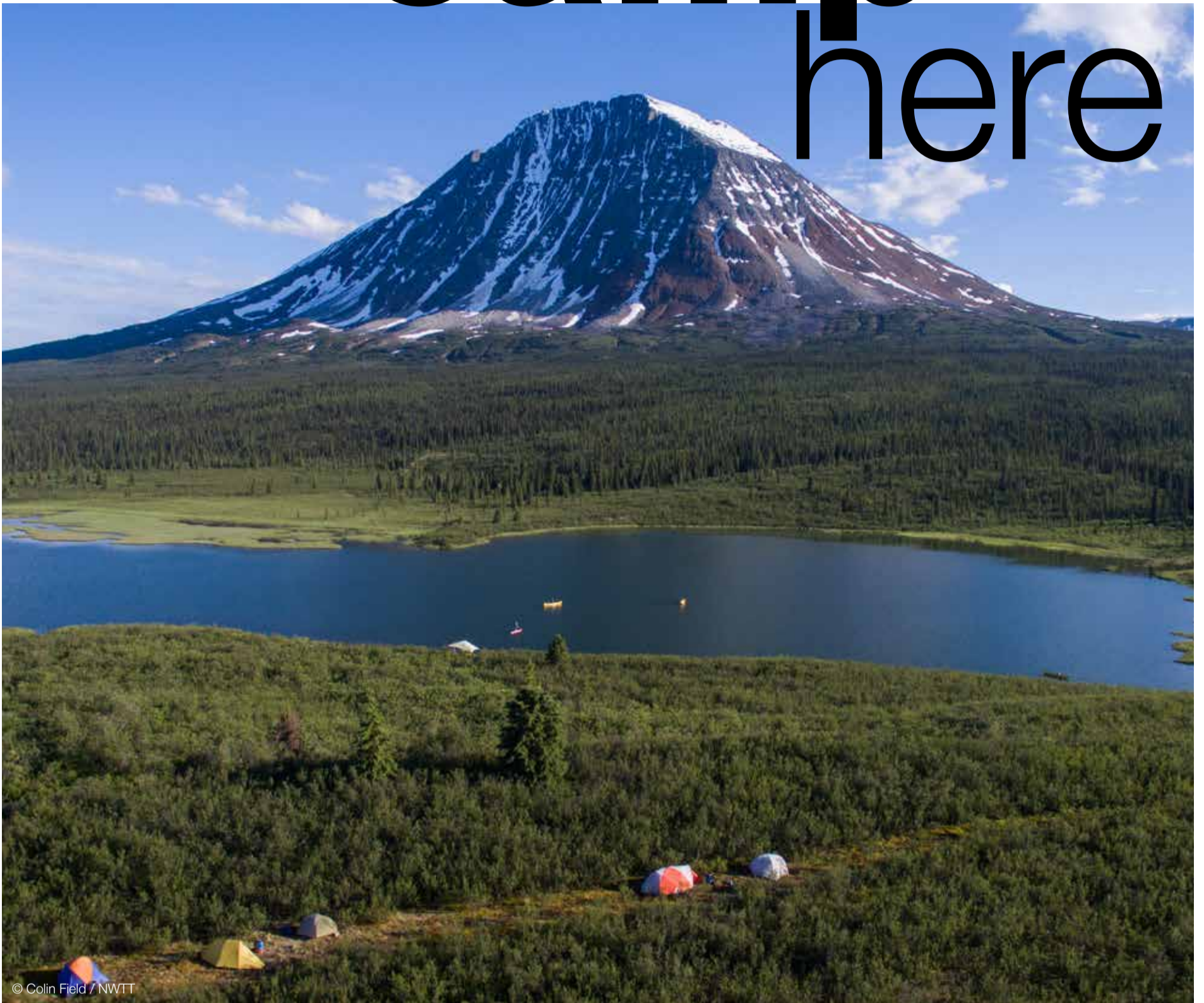
Insider tip:

The water is really cold, and you don't want hypothermia. A wetsuit is okay, but a drysuit is better.



© Colin Field/NWTT

camp here



© Colin Field / NWTT

Choosing Your Campsite

In most of Nááts'ihch'oh, you choose where to camp. When choosing your site, please follow Leave No Trace principles:

- Find a good campsite - don't make one.
- Keep your campsite small, and in areas with no plants.
- Camp on durable surfaces such as rock and gravel.

Camping at Moose Ponds

If you're camping at the **Moose Ponds**, please camp near the commemorative plaque. Due to the powerful nature of Mount Nááts'ihch'oh, Shúhtao'tine elders recommend that you do not camp too close to the mountain.

We've established a kitchen area with a great view near the float plane landing area. A short walk away, there is a large flat tenting area on an old air strip.

Moose Ponds Kitchen Site 62°55.19'N, 129°41.30'W

Moose Ponds Tenting Area 62°55.25'N, 129°41.28'W



Cooking and Campfires

Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove or firebox for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.

At alpine lakes and creeks, use a gas stove or charcoal for cooking and warmth. Trees are scarce here - do not collect or burn firewood.

At river campsites, keep fires contained in a firebox. Do not build fires on the ground. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes. On big rivers, you may scatter cool ashes in the river.

Drinking Water

It may look crystal clean, but it's a really long ride home if you get beaver fever (Giardia).

Treat all your drinking water.

Waste Disposal

Pack it in? Pack it out.

Pack out all of your trash, leftover food, and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 15 to 20 cm deep at least 100 metres from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

To wash, use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater, or on big rivers, pour strained dishwater into the river.

take only memories

Share Your Stories

We love hearing stories, seeing pictures, and watching videos about your trips. Use the hashtag **#Naatsihchoh** on social media so we can find you.

If you have stories, images or video you're willing to share with us, drop us a line at naatsihchoh.info@pc.gc.ca.

Leave What You Find

Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

Leave your campsite as pristine as you found it.

Drones and UAVs

Take lots of photos and videos to document your trip, but please leave your drone at home. Recreational use of drones or other unmanned aerial vehicles is not allowed at Parks Canada sites.

Filmmakers

If you are a filmmaker, please contact us about how to get a film permit for Nááts'ihch'oh.

Fishing

Except for traditional harvesting, fishing is not permitted at this time.



no headlamp? no problem

© Colin Field / NWT

Midnight Sun and the Northern Lights

You probably won't use your headlamp, but you'll want a mask for sleeping under the midnight sun. Especially in late June and early July, the sun seems to shine all night long.

If you really want to see the northern lights, or *aurora borealis*, plan your trip for mid to late August or early September when the skies are darker.

	Sunrise	Sunset
Jun 21	4:40 am	12:30 am
Jul 21	5:30 am	11:45 pm
Aug 21	6:50 am	10:15 pm



© Craig Kerr

Weather

The elders tell us that in Nááts'ihch'oh, "the rain is always moving somewhere." From our time in the park, we know this to be true. Nááts'ihch'oh is in the mountains. It can snow or rain at anytime, and storms can cause flash floods in canyons and steep valleys. Make your trip a fun one - be prepared for all conditions.

	Low	High	And you can expect...
Jun	-5°C	25°C	Frost, snow, blazing sun
Jul	0°C	30°C	Hot sun, afternoon rainstorms
Aug	0°C	30°C	Hot sun, rain, and frost
Sep	-5°C	20°C	Frost and snow

wild

life



This Is Their Home

For caribou, bears, moose, and other wildlife, Nááts'ihch'oh is their home. Be a courteous guest:

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviours, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- **Protect wildlife and your food by storing food and trash in mouse- and bear-proof containers.**
- Leash pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.



Bears

Black bears and grizzly bears live here, and they especially like the river valleys and hot springs. For more information, read **You Are In Bear Country** or call us.

If you're flying, check with your airline before packing bear spray or bangers.

Bear spray is available for purchase at the Norman Wells Museum. Alternatively, check with your air charter company.

Wildlife Cameras

During your trip, you might notice motion-sensitive cameras installed along wildlife trails. We use the images from these cameras to monitor and learn more about wildlife such as caribou, moose, wolves, and bears that live here.

All photos of visitors are deleted to protect your privacy. But don't be afraid to strike a pose and give us a laugh!

gear? check.

Camp Gear

- tarp
- tent
- water filter/purification system
- stove and fuel or firebox
- cooking pot
- rope
- trowel and toilet paper
- biodegradable soap
- food and lots of hot drinks
- other stuff you need or want
- leash if you're bringing your pet

Personal Gear

- water bottle
- mug, bowl and spork
- knife
- toothbrush and toothpaste
- towel
- daypack
- sunscreen / sunglasses
- sleeping bag, pad, and mask
- wallet / cash
- contact phone numbers
- trip plan
- camera and spare batteries

Safety Gear

- brain filled with experience
- satellite phone/InReach/SPOT
- headlamp/flashlight
- lighter/fire starting kit
- bear spray and bear bangers
- first aid kit
- extra food in case of flight delays

Navigation

- maps and waterproof case
- watch
- GPS and compass
- binoculars

Repair Kit

- duct tape
- spare batteries
- silicon sealant
- needle and thread
- tent repair kit
- stove repair kit

Personal Clothing

- warm hat
- sun hat
- rain gear with hood
- shorts: quick dry
- pants: wool or fleece
- jacket: fleece
- sweater: light wool
- shirt/t-shirt
- long underwear
- underwear and socks
- gloves or mittens
- camp shoes
- swimsuit
- bug hat, jacket, and repellent

For Hikers

- backpack
- hiking boots
- blister kit
- trekking poles
- bear canisters

For Paddlers

- repair kit
- paddles
- PFDs
- whistle, bailers, throw bags, and pin kits
- drysuit (best choice) or wetsuit
- canoe barrels/packs
- canoe/kayak/raft





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need help **trip planning?**

Contact Us

Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve
Tulita, NT
1-867-588-4884
naatsihchoh.info@pc.gc.ca
parksCanada.gc.ca/naatsihchoh
www.facebook.com/ParksCanadaNWT

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