



Thaidene Nënë

Proposed National Park Reserve

Overview

Located at the eastern end of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories, the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve is part of a larger group of proposed protected areas around the East Arm and Artillery Lake regions. Thaidene Nënë means 'Land of the Ancestors' in the Chipewyan language. The Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation consider Thaidene

Nënë to be the 'heart of the homeland' as well as a sacred place. The Northwest Territory Métis Nation also has significant cultural ties to the area. Thaidene Nënë is a culturally rich area, including the traditional and present-day hunting, fishing, gathering and spiritual areas used by various Aboriginal peoples.



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The proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve's spectacular wilderness characteristics attract many visitors and local residents each year for experiences such as:

- the magic of boating, camping, fishing, berry picking and hiking in 'the land of giants';
- exploring Fort Reliance National Historic Site / Old Fort Reliance Territorial Historic Site at the mouth of the Lockhart River;
- hiking up to Tyrrell Falls and learning about the traditional village site known as Kaché with Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation's Ni hat'ni Dene Watchers of the Land Program;
- boating through The Gap into Wildbread Bay; and
- fishing in Christie Bay, the deepest fresh water body in North America, home of huge lake trout.

Parks Canada is working to add part of the Thaidene Nënë area to its existing network of national parks, national marine conservation areas, national historic sites, and the Rouge National Urban Park. If established, the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve will uniquely contribute to Parks Canada's goal of representing each of the 39 distinct, terrestrial natural regions within Parks Canada's National Parks System.

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 an outstanding example of the Northwestern Boreal Uplands Natural Region of the national park system. Fort Reliance National Historic Site / Old Fort Reliance Territorial Historic Site and the traditional travel route between Great Slave Lake and Artillery Lake known as Pike's Portage are also within the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve.

In 1970, a land withdrawal of approximately 7,340 km² was established which has no expiry date. In 2007, a further 26,350 km² was withdrawn bringing the total study area to 33,690 km².

Through the *Northwest Territories Devolution Act*, pursuant to the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement, signed by the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, the lands of the

Thaidene Nënë proposal came under the administration and control of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) effective April 1, 2014. In 2014, the Thaidene Nënë Interim Land Withdrawal, under the authority of the *Territorial Lands Act*, was renewed and will continue to March 31, 2016.

The Interim Land Withdrawal does not provide for new mineral staking, exploration or development. No new land use permits, licences of occupation or leases can be issued for the withdrawn lands. During the park establishment process however, all existing activities within the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve boundary will continue.

In January 2015, the GNWT initiated work on developing a matrix of protected area designations and northern tools for the 33,600 km² Thaidene Nënë land withdrawal area. Through a series of meetings with Parks Canada, GNWT, Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation and Aboriginal groups, it was agreed that a proposal for a national park reserve of 14,000 km² would be part of that matrix.

Developing an understanding of the variety of existing and potential uses and interests in the proposed Thaidene Nënë national park reserve is an essential component of the national park establishment process and will be obtained in part, through Parks Canada's consultations with Aboriginal groups, as well as discussions with the GNWT, third parties, stakeholders and local communities.

Parks Canada will undertake consultations 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 negotiate 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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