

OUR PLACE NAMES

Naalin Dhä, meaning “flowing around,” is located on the northside of the Takhini River, close to the Thirty Mile. Also referred to as ‘Lookout Mountain’ this well-known landmark has many associated stories for Ta’an Kwäch’än people. Due to its location and height, Naalin Dhä was considered to be a good lookout with an excellent vantage point. From this lookout, one was able to see smoke from as far away as Kusawa Lake, Champagne, Marsh Lake, and the Laberge areas. “Naalin” refers to the way that the Takhini River flows around the base of the mountain.



Naalin Dhä—Lookout Mountain

Nju Shäw translates as “big island.” This island on Lake Laberge was used by many travellers. Elder Johnnie Smith recalls that “Jim Boss had a roadhouse here. Indian people used to come over to the island in the spring by dog team just before the ice went out to hunt blue grouse.” The remains of both the cabin and roadhouse associated with Chief Jim Boss are still located on the island.



Nju Shäw—Richtofen Island

Similar to many other locations along the Yukon River, the English name of Richtofen Island was provided by an American Lieutenant, Frederick Schwatka in 1883 during a scientific exploration. It is curious that this island, in the middle of Lake Laberge, was named by an American for a German. Ferdinand Von Richthofen was born in Germany in 1833. He was best known as a famous geographer and geologist who was also the uncle of the German WWI flying ace, Manfred von Richthofen, also known as the “Red Baron.”



T’äw Tä’är, Winter Crossing, is located on the west bank of the Teslin River and translates to “grayling run up.” The name comes from Open Creek upriver as grayling spawned there. T’äw Tä’är was an important seasonal settlement and meeting place for both Ta’an Kwäch’än and Kwanlin Dün people. Several well-used trails meet there including the trail up the McClintock River to Black Lake and Marsh Lake, as well as the Livingstone Trail.

T’äw Tä’är has been designated as a National Historic Site by the Government of Canada as it is an Aboriginal cultural landscape that represents the interconnected web of seasonal food gathering activities, family relations, and travel and trade of the Southern Tutchone people. Ta’an Kwäch’än Council has been involved with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to erect a plaque at this culturally significant site and will update Citizens about an upcoming plaque ceremony.



Louie and Fred Smith at Winter Crossing

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