

Dene Settlement at Kaché

The old village site at Kaché was home for many Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné families in the early and mid 20th century. Many families settled for a time at Kaché when they left permanent residences at Edacho Tué (Artillery Lake) and migrated into the treeline.

Located at the extreme east end of Tu Nedhe and near the treeline, the village site offered a perfect base from which to travel to the barren lands to harvest caribou and to trap white fox and other fur-bearing animals. Furs could be traded for goods at a nearby post at the tip of Fairchild Point. Wood for fires and fish to feed dog teams was always plentiful.

Most Lutsel K'e residents are able to trace their ancestry to grandparents who used to live in the village at Kaché. Ancestral log homes of the Nitah, Marlowe, Catholique, Drybones, Lockhart, and Casaway families remain at the village site, interspersed with evidence of how life was lived in those days – dog pens and houses, meat caches, and bone pits.

Life could certainly be hard in the days when the people lived at Kaché, but it was always full of adventure. Strong hunters were well respected, and in return they



Ni hat'ni Dene “the watchers of the land”

To preserve the integrity of our homeland that is so fundamental to our cultural identity, the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation is working on establishing a protected area called Thaidene Nene, or “Land of the Ancestors”. The Ni hat'ni Dene are the stewards and hosts of Thaidene Nene. They are responsible for maintaining the integrity of cultural sites and natural beauty, hosting visitors and transmitting cultural and scientific knowledge to younger generations. For further information and arranging tours with the Ni hat'ni Dene please contact the LKDFN or Gloria Enzoe (gloriaenzoe@hotmail.com).

Desnethche “the mouth of the river”

Deshun Bedézé (Lockhart River) is the sacred river of the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné, which empties out into Tu Nedhe at Kaché after a long journey through the barren lands. At a majestic waterfall a ways upriver of Kaché sits Ts'ankui Thedá – the “Old Lady of the Falls”. For centuries this has been a great spiritual place for the people. Legends tell of an old Dënesǫ́liné woman who sat in the waterfall, promising to help those in need as long as she is respected and protected for all time. Ts'ankui Thedá has helped those who are hungry or sick ever since.

Every year at the beginning of August, the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné come together for the Spiritual Gathering at the long sand beach near the mouth of the river, which is called Desnethche. It is a special time for families and friends to reconnect with the land and celebrate traditions. People in need have the opportunity to visit Ts'ankui Thedá and pray for guidance and healing.

All these places must be treated with the utmost respect. Visitors are welcome to visit with the permission of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation and in the company of the Ni hat'ni Dene. Please appreciate that Ts'ankui Thedá should only be visited by those in need, and proper protocols must be followed when accessing the site



“She said, ‘Tell the people not to come visit me just so that they could look, out of curiosity. Only those that believe in me, believe in what I stand for, should come.’”



Welcome to Kaché

Welcome to Kaché - “the place at the end of the lake where the river comes in”. This part of the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné traditional territory, well known for its crystal clear waters and spectacular scenery, is steeped in a rich cultural heritage as the traditional home to many families and the gateway to the barren lands. In this very special place, take time to explore the Creator's work and the history of the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné.

It's all about the elements

At first glance, one can see the clear waters lapping against rugged rocks, rising up into hills covered by evergreens whose crowns seem to touch the endless sky. But a closer inspection reveals that there is so much more!

This beautiful landscape is the result of billions of years of geological activity and sculpting processes, with the Wisconsin glaciation leaving behind marks that reveal the story of its long history. The granite shoreline that is exposed today includes some of the oldest rocks in the world, formed up to 2.7 billion years ago! They were smoothed and polished by glacial ice, when massive ice sheets were moving over this area about 20 000 years ago, scouring the landscape. Other rocks were ground down to small particles and transported in glacial melt water, visible today on the white sandy beaches and shorelines of red shale and gravel. Once the last ice sheets disappeared and the deep waters of Tu Nedhe (Great Slave Lake) remained, flora and fauna began to establish themselves.

The harsh climate and rocky ground have limited the soil development and vegetation growth in the region. Spruce, pine,



Det'anichogh is found commonly at Kaché in the summer months. Their diet consists mainly of fish, and they soar on thermal currents. Therefore they prefer to build their nests in large trees but sometimes place them on cliffs too. Try to use your eagle eye and you might even see a big nest!



Frequent forest fires play an important role in the life cycle of the boreal forest. In fact some trees like the jack pine need fire in order to release seeds from their cones.



Did you know that you can tell a rock's age by the size of the lichen growing on it? The elegant orange lichen is one of those species that can be used for so called lichenometry. Another one, the green map lichen, for example, only grows 0.02-0.5mm a year so that one with 10cm in diameter is therefore about 1000 years old in our area!



Hak'ós Tué Ts'ën Tt'azí (Charlton Bay) is usually ice free from about mid June until mid October, which, besides its depth, doesn't give the water much time to heat up in the summer. The temperature will reach its peak in August, with a maximum of about 17°C. And the photosynthesis rate is so slight that it is possible to look up to 10m deep!

Respecting the Land the Dene Way

In order to ensure that the land continues to provide for future generations, the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné practice with it a respectful relationship. We invite all to demonstrate their respect for our beautiful territory by following our traditions and laws:

- Pay the land and water with tobacco or spruce boughs before setting out on a journey.
- Pay back the land or water for anything that has been taken.
- Never take from the land what is not needed.
- At every meal, feed the fire with some of your food.
- Do not play with animals for sport.
- Never waste meat and usable parts of an animal (e.g. hides).
- Do not throw garbage on the land or in the water. Burn it or pack it out.
- Put out your fire before leaving camp.
- Do not disturb other people's camps and tools, even if it looks like it hasn't been used in a while.
- Respect the Dene right to harvest and make a livelihood from the land and water.
- Only visit sacred and cultural places with the permission and under the guidance of the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné.

Marsi Cho!



Kaché Hakëth - Pike's Portage

In order to journey from the forests of Kaché to the barren lands to the east, one more than likely must travel the chain of trampled paths and small lakes between Charlton Harbor and Edacho Tué. Called Kaché Hakëth, or Pike's Portage by more recent European explorers, this important route has been used by the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné for many generations as the primary route across the tree line. The barren lands, especially around Edacho Tué, is an important place to harvest the caribou upon which the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné have always depended for subsistence and cultural identity.

The portage route totals approximately 38 km, with the many small lakes connected by seven portage trails. The first portage trail between Charlton Harbor and Kehora Tué (Harry Lake), called Kaché Kará, is by far the most challenging. With a length of 5 km and an elevation gain of about 200 m, this first part of the portage passes a diverse landscape of raised beaches, high cliffs, and stunning lookouts. It makes an attractive hike. However, hidden in the foliage just off the trail are many signs of the Dënesǫ́liné, including old campsites, cool watering holes surrounded by moss, and the graves of those who perished along the way. Please respect these places.

In the summer, the ancestors would travel Kaché Hakëth in teams, working together and making many trips back and forth on each portage trail to carry a season's worth of food and supplies out into the barren lands. This was backbreaking work. Even the dogs would help with the hauling, carrying supplies on their backs in caribou-hide bags, or pulling small packs on miniature “travois”. In the winter, the well-worn trail would make smooth sledding for a dogteam and musher. Today, Kaché Hakëth is primarily travelled in the winter by Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné riding snowmachines, travelling out towards Edacho Tué to harvest caribou and muskoxen. In the summer, the occasional canoeist is brave enough to make the trek.



“everyone would help each other carry over the portage”

- Elder Pierre Catholique

Etthen - caribou

The caribou have always played a central role in the livelihood and culture of the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné. Caribou is the key to survival and the foundation of the Dënesǫ́liné way of life. Our traditional territory is also the home of the caribou: on the boundary between the boreal forest and the barren land. The caribou spend more time along and around the tree line than anywhere else, feeding on the readily available lichens that make up their primary diet. In the springtime, the caribou cross the still-frozen lakes making their way northeast to the calving grounds in the tundra. In the fall, the caribou return with their calves in great herds numbering into the tens of thousands, streaming across the landscape along centuries old migration paths towards their wintering grounds around Tu Nedhe.

Our ancestors followed the annual migrations of the caribou, living a very nomadic lifestyle with entire families moving from camp to camp. The caribou did not just provide the main food for the people; it was also used for many other things including clothing, shelter, toys, and tools. Almost all parts of the caribou were used. This intimate relationship with the caribou has fostered a profound respect amongst the Lutsel K'e Dënesǫ́liné for this special animal. The youngest child is told the legends of the caribou, and is taught how to respect the animal at all times.

“The caribou, I remember as I was told when I was a young girl, they feed us, cloth us, guide us, and for this reason we respect them with every breath we take as Dene.”

- Gloria Enzoe

HIDE

Clothing, moccasins, tents, teepees, sleds, thongs for snowshoes, drums, dog harnesses

SINEW

Snowshoes, thread for sewing

BONES

Scraping tools, needles, knives, hunting equipment, sticks for hand games

INNARDS

Tongue for example is regarded as very delicious, brain or marrow used for tanning hides

FAT

Candles



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KACHÉ



Gus D'Aoust was one of the last old-time trappers to live at Kaché. He spent most of his life (1933-1975) operating a trading post at Reliance and became a real "living legend".

In 1927 a RCMP station was established for two officers tasked with patrolling the Thelon Game Sanctuary. The station was operated until 1961 and today you can visit the old houses, including a workshop and jail.

The power lines at this old weather station are the reason that the Dene say they called their workers H'u' dené - string people.

Kaché Tr'azí
McLeod Bay

Hāskēnchēlá
Fairchild Point

Ni hat'ni

Cabin of the Ni hat'ni Dene - "watchers of the land" and the ruins of Red Nose's cabin (an old-time trapper)

Late Noel Drybones, a Dene sayine elder, lived and trapped out of Kaché year round until his last days. Behind his cabin the LKBN has a cabin used by hunters in the winter.

Cheth Chogh Ghí
Sentinel Point

Narhila
Hauffely Bay

Hauffely Point

Hak'ōs Tuē Ts'ēn Tr'azí
Charlton Bay

Nu cho
Belle Ile

Kaché ka'ā
"where you go up the lake"
Charlton Harbor

Haketh Hachagh
Glacier Creek

Kaché Haketh
Pike's Portage

Pedacho Tuē
Artillery Lake

Tu Dore
Round L.

Perit's
Niyā Tuē

Burr lake

Trihai Tuē
Kipling Lake

Lue Tuē
Aches Lake

Kanis Tuē
French lake

keho'ā Tuē
Harry Lake

fus chin
Pay the land for respect and safe travels when you reach this landmark: the old spear of an ancient giant

The Laré

McDonald Fault

this ridge extends over 100km along an ancient fault line. Up to 130m tall, it is evident all over the East Arm of Tu Nedhe until Pedacho Tuē.

Many berries can be picked in late summer

There is plenty of lake trout, whitefish and grayling in the waters. The water is so clear you can even see them swimming or nipping on the surface for insects.