Thaidene Nëné badi xá

(Working with Thaidene Nëné)

Thaidene Nëné Relationship Plan, the management plan for Thaidene Nëné

Draft

Table of Contents

Glossary	i
Terms and Meanings	iii
Introduction	1
Background	3
Planning Context	6
Guiding Principles	9
Vision Statement	10
Goals, Objectives, and Targets/Indicators	11
Goal 1 – Promote nuwé ch'anie	11
Goal 2 – Sustain the ecological integrity of Thaidene Nëné	12
Goal 3 – Maintaining Healthy Relationships	13
Goal 4 – Create good visitor knowledge and experience	14
Goal 5 – Support opportunities that strengthen Indigenous prosperity and well-being	16
Zoning for Visitor Activities	18
Zoning Framework	18
Zoning for Thaidene Nëné	20
Other Important Sites	22
Monitoring and Evaluation	24
Appendix A – Zoning Maps	25
Appendix B – Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment (Parks Canada)	33
List of Tables, Figures and Maps	
Table 1 – Dene Yatı terms	i
Table 2 – Terms and Meanings	iii
Figure 1 – Where is Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area	1
Figure 2 – Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area	4
Figure 3 –Hide tanning as management planning.	6
Table 3 - Hide tanning as management planning.	7

$\mathsf{Glossary}^1$

Thaidene Nëné badi xá uses Dene Yati (the Dene language used in the Thaidene Nëné area) for places and names. There is variation within, as well as between, languages and dialects used in the area. Different families use different words and/or spellings for things.

This document uses the following Dene Yatı terms, as outlined in Table $1\,$

Table 1 – Dene Yatı terms

Dene Yatı term / placename	Translation / English placename	Pronunciation ²
?edacho Túe /Kúe	Artillery Lake	eh-dah-cho too-way / eh-dah- cho coo-way
?edacho Tł'ázį	Timber Bay	
Thaidene Nëné badi xá	how we will look after Thaidene Nëné (title of the relationship plan)	thigh-den-ay nen-ay bye-dee ha
?ena Tué	Gagnon Lake	
?ıdor Bekue Chëlé Tł'ázį	Christie Bay	
Bet'síghí	Utsingi Point	
Dene Yatı	the Dene language used in the Thaidene Nëné area	den-ay yaw-tea
Desnéthcheé	Spiritual Gathering Site	dez-net-chay
Dzén Kín	Muskrat (rat) Lodge (a sacred place on ?edacho Tué)	dzen keen
Hachoghe's Shovel	The Giant's shovel	
Hakéth Hozé or Kaché Kazá	the place you go up to the lake (Pike's Portage)	

¹ Additional translation work will be carried out between January and April 2024 through a terminology workshop.

² To be completed for final draft

Dene Yatı term / placename	Translation / English placename	Pronunciation ²
Kaché Kuwé	McLeod Bay	catch-ay coo-way
Keldelé	open shallow water, all year around (Taltheilei Narrows)	
Łúh Chogh Tué	Big whitefish lake (Whitefish Lake)	too-way
Ni Hat'ni Dene	watchers of the land (Indigenous guardians)	nee hot-nee den-ay
Nuwe néné	our land	new-way nay-nay
Nuwé ch'anie	principle that describes all Dene values and knowledge systems.	new-way ch awe-nee
Taché / Kaché	Charlton Bay area	tatch-ay / catch-ay
Tesuchai Tu / Kesuchai Kuwe	Siltaza Lake	
Thílo dëzé	Thelon River	tea-low deh-zay
Tť ąkěle	Thompson Landing	
Tsąkuı Thedá Dezé	Lockhart River	tsaa-kwee thay-da deh-zay
Tsá Kín	Beaver Lodge (a sacred place on ?edacho Tué)	tsaa keen
Tsąkuı Thedá	Parry Falls	tsaa-kwee thay-da
Tthe Kálįka Tué	Stark Lake	
Tu Nedhé	Great Slave Lake	tsaa-kwee thay-da
Thaidene Nëné	Land of the Ancestors	thigh-den-ay nen-ay
Thaıdene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı³	those who speak for Thaidene Nëné	thigh-den-ay nen-ay ha da yah-tea
TBD	Back River	

³ Will be verified at terminology workshop.

Terms and Meanings

In this document the following terms have certain meanings, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 – Terms and Meanings

Term	Meaning
Original Indigenous peoples of the area / the descendants of Thaidene Nëné ancestors	Means the Dene and Métis descendants of Thaidene Nëné ancestors.
Shared Operational Management Partners (the Partners)	Means Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Parks Canada, and Government of Northwest Territories, as applicable.
Signatory Indigenous governments	Means Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Deninu Kųę́ First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, as applicable, that are signatories to establishment or impact/benefit agreements.
Regional Management Board	Has the same meaning as "Regional Management Board" or "Regional Management Body" in the Establishment and Impact Benefit Agreements ⁴ for Thaidene Nëné.
Thaıdene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı	Has the same meaning as "Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı" or "Thaidene Nëné Management Board" in the Establishment and Impact Benefit Agreements ⁵ for Thaidene Nëné.

⁴ The Establishment and Impact Benefit Agreements include: Agreement to Establish Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area, Territorial Protected Area, and Wildlife Conservation Area between Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation and the GNWT, Agreement to Establish Thaidene Nëné Territorial Protected Area between Deninu K'ųę́ First Nation and the GNWT, Agreement to Establish Thaidene Nëné Territorial Protected Area between Northwest Territory Métis Nation and the GNWT, Agreement to Establish Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area and National Park Reserve between Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation and Parks Canada Agency, Impact and Benefit Agreement for the East Arm National Park Reserve (otherwise known as "Thaidene Nene") between Northwest Territory Métis Nation and Parks Canada Agency, Denesoltiné: An agreement between Deninu K'ue First Nation and Parks Canada Agency regarding Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, and Final Agreement Regarding Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve: An Agreement between Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Parks Canada Agency.

⁵ See footnote 6

Introduction

Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area (Thaidene Nëné) is located within the territories of the Akaitcho Dene First Nations and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation in the Northwest Territories, Canada (see Figure 1).

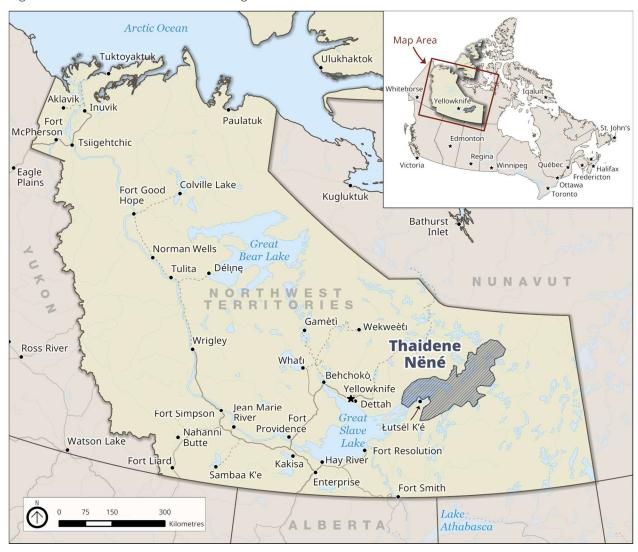


Figure 1 – Where is Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area

Thaidene Nëné, which means "Land of the Ancestors", has sustained the Indigenous peoples from time immemorial. Thaidene Nëné is a largely pristine and healthy landscape and is the result of countless generations who have cared for the land and water. Nuwé ch'anie, the principle that describes all values and knowledge systems of the original Indigenous peoples of the area, is inherently connected to the land and is vital to the ongoing stewardship of Thaidene Nëné.

Protected areas such as Thaidene Nëné are often guided by management plans. These plans set out a long-term vision, specific objectives, and provide strategic direction. However, the term 'management'

implies control and ownership over the land, as well as a level of separation between land and people that does not exist within Indigenous worldviews. We have chosen to name this management plan a relationship plan. This designation highlights the importance of the relationships between the descendants of Thaidene Nëné ancestors, the land, water, and animals.

Thaidene Nëné badi xá is built on the foundation of nuwé ch'anie that has conserved Thaidene Nëné for millennia. The plan draws on the strength of nuwé ch'anie and provides direction on how we will continue to steward Thaidene Nëné for generations to come.

How does this plan support people?

For Indigenous peoples whose territory includes Thaidene Nëné:

Thaidene Nëné badi xá ensures and respects the practice of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Indigenous laws and traditions are the foundation for looking after Thaidene Nëné. This plan ensures that the relationship between people and land, and nuwé ch'anie continues.

For Indigenous business owners from signatory Indigenous governments:

Thaidene Nëné badi xá helps support Indigenous economic development for members.

For tourism licence holders and people who hold leases in Thaidene Nëné:

Thaidene Nëné badi xá ensures the ecological integrity and cultural continuity of Thaidene Nëné remain strong, while continuing to welcome visitors.

For visitors to Thaidene Nëné:

Thaidene Nëné badi xá helps define what a respectful and positive visitor relationship with this land looks like, sets out what activities can happen where, and the importance of story that visitors will learn from Thaidene Nëné and nuwé ch'anie.

For those that never come here:

Thaidene Nëné badi xá is assurance that this spectacular place is being well cared for. Things that the public may associate with northern Canada - like caribou and muskox, tundra, clean water, adventure, beauty, vibrant Indigenous cultures, and vast and wild spaces - will continue to exist because of what is being done to ensure healthy and respectful relationships with Thaidene Nëné.

Background

In Thaidene Nëné, there is a living connection between the land, the water, the plants, animals, and people. Indigenous ways of life are practiced, nurtured, and passed on to future generations.

Thaidene Nëné is the heart of the Łutsël K'é Dene homeland, where many generations ago, the ancestors established the foundations for the Dene way of life, a way of life that continues to be practiced today. At the centre of Thaidene Nëné is Tsąkui Thedá. It is the most important cultural and sacred place in Thaidene Nëné for the original Indigenous peoples of the area.

Thaidene Nëné is a rich cultural landscape that includes many ancient trails, camps, and village sites. There are numerous places of spiritual and cultural importance to the descendants of Thaidene Nëné ancestors, as represented by Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Deninu Kųę́ First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation (referred to as "signatory Indigenous governments" in the plan).

The spectacular landscape of Thaidene Nene has been shaped by glaciers that have helped form the stunning vertical cliffs, canyons, islands, peninsulas, and waterfalls surrounding Tu Nedhé. Within Tu Nedhé, ?ıdor Bekue Chëlé Tł'ázı boasts the deepest water in North America, and the pristine waters make for excellent habitat for Lake Trout, Lake Whitefish, Arctic Grayling, Cisco, and many other species. Tu Nedhé is surrounded by boreal forest, which transitions to lichen woodland and on to tundra, as you move northeast. The tundra has giant eskers, important habitat for wildlife, that meander across the landscape.

Many northern species rely on vast, intact areas to thrive, and the forest and tundra landscapes of Thaidene Nëné are an important component of their range. This is a landscape that both Arctic and Boreal species use, such as Barren-ground caribou, muskox, wolverine, grizzly bear, wolf, moose, lynx, and black bear. Important waterfowl staging and bird nesting areas are also found throughout Thaidene Nëné.

What types of protected areas are included in Thaidene Nëné?

Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area is 26,376 km² in size. Thaidene Nëné was established using Dene law, Agreements with the signatory Indigenous governments, the *Canada National Parks Act*, and the Northwest Territories' *Protected Areas Act* and *Wildlife Act*. Thaidene Nëné is made up of several parts—a national park reserve, a territorial protected area, and a territorial wildlife conservation area (see Figure 2⁷).

The core of Thaidene Nëné is protected as a national park reserve, through the *Canada National Parks Act*. National parks are established to protect and present outstanding representative examples of natural landscapes that occur in each of Canada's 39 unique natural regions. Thaidene Nëné is considered an outstanding example of the Northwestern Boreal Uplands Natural Region. National parks promote understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in a way that maintains their ecological integrity. In

⁶ Elements of a draft origin story will be added following public engagement.

⁷ Map will be updated to remove white lines and add Rat Lodge / Beaver Lodge on ?edacho Túe /Kúe

establishing Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, Parks Canada has also committed to the continuation of Indigenous ways of life.

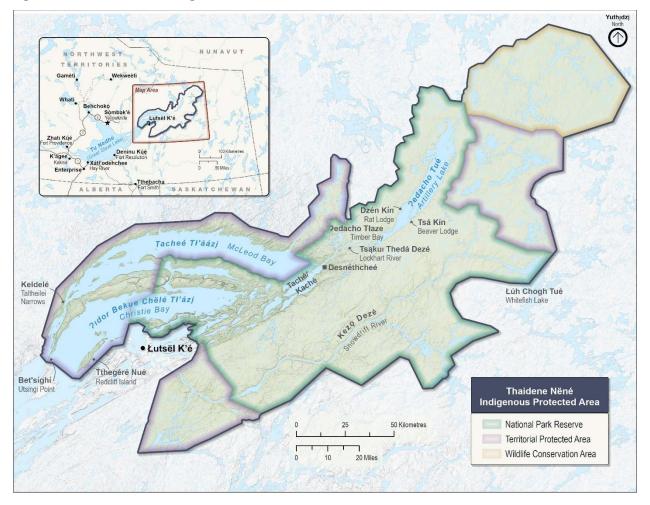


Figure 2 – Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area

Other parts of Thaidene Nëné are protected as a territorial protected area through the Northwest Territories' *Protected Areas Act*. Thaidene Nëné Territorial Protected Area is established and cared for collaboratively by the Government of Northwest Territories, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous organizations to protect the biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural continuity of the Northwest Territories.

The most northerly portion of Thaidene Nëné is designated as a Wildlife Conservation Area under the Northwest Territories *Wildlife Act*. The area is currently protected from development through a Land Withdrawal Order under the *Northwest Territories Lands Act*. The Land Withdrawal Order will remain until supplemental mechanisms, such as an approved land use plan for the area, are in place. Thaidene Nëné badi xá doesn't apply to the Wildlife Conservation Area, which is managed in accordance with the *Wildlife Act*.

Fort Reliance National Historic Site is located within Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve near Desnéthcheé (the spiritual gathering site for Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation) in the area known as Taché/Kaché. The site features four stone fireplaces and chimneys that are considered unique relics of the history of the exploration and commerce in Canada's North. Designated in 1953, without the consultation or participation of the original Indigenous peoples of the area, the National Historic Site commemorates Captain George Back's travels along the Thílo dëzé and Great Fish (now Back) River in the 1830s.

Who makes decisions about and takes care of Thaidene Nëné?

Making operational decisions about and taking care of Thaidene Nëné, is the shared responsibility of the Partners, being the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Parks Canada, and Government of Northwest Territories. Deninu Kųę́ First Nation and Yellowknives Dene First Nation⁸, through their establishment agreements, also play a key role in providing guidance for stewardship of Thaidene Nëné. The four Indigenous governments that signed agreements (referred to as "signatory Indigenous governments"), have different responsibilities and roles on two boards: Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı and the Regional Management Board.

The Partners are ultimately responsible for operational matters within Thaidene Nëné, with operational decisions under the guidance of Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı, which means "those who speak for Thaidene Nëné" being the starting point. Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı provides decisions, which are referrals, to the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Parks Canada, and Government of Northwest Territories. Tasked with thinking long term for the land and the people, Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı provides direction on planning, operations, monitoring, and evaluation within Thaidene Nëné. Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı uses consensus to make decisions. These decisions guide how operations are carried out to protect ecological integrity and Indigenous ways of life and ensure future generations can live in relation to the land as the ancestors did. Members of Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı are appointed by the Partners. Members do not represent the Partner that appointed them; they speak for Thaidene Nëné.

The Regional Management Board provides recommendations and guidance to Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáltı and provides recommendations to Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Government of Northwest Territories, and Parks Canada. Recommendations are made by consensus. Members are appointed by, as applicable, the three Akaitcho Dene First Nations (Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and Deninu Kųę́ First Nation), Government of Northwest Territories, and Parks Canada. Unlike the members who sit on Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáltı, members of the Regional Management Board are representatives of the governments that appoint them.

⁸ Work is ongoing between the Government of Northwest Territories and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation towards concluding an agreement regarding the Territorial Protected Area.

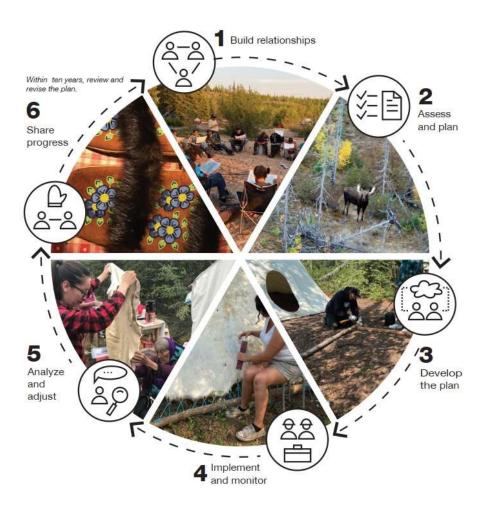
Planning Context

Thaidene Nëné badi xá is the first plan for Thaidene Nëné. Much of the work for this first plan is foundational, setting out what is needed to ensure that countless generations to come will be able to care for and benefit from Thaidene Nëné. The plan is for ten years (2024-2034), and includes a set of guiding principles, a long-term vision for Thaidene Nëné; and a series of goals, objectives, and targets/indicators that will help us make progress towards achieving the plan's vision.

What hide tanning can teach us about management planning.

Throughout the process of developing *Thaidene Nëné badi xá*, Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı took inspiration from the practice of hide tanning, which is integral to Indigenous communities with connections to Thaidene Nëné⁹. Hide tanning offers an appropriate cultural metaphor to demonstrate the steps of management planning (see Figure 3, Hide tanning as management planning, and Table 1).

Figure 3 –Hide tanning as management planning.



⁹ Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłti. 2022. Hide Tanning as Adaptive Management.

Table 3 - Hide tanning as management planning.

	Hide Tanning Process	Management Planning Process
1	Make connections with and develop respectful relationships with hunters to obtain a hide to be tanned. Thaidene Nëné provides many types of hides – moose, muskox, beaver, caribou, etc.	Establish effective connections with communities, stakeholders, local leadership to ensure a broad range of views are represented.
2	What type of hide is needed? What will it be used for, and how can we ensure the hide we start with will meet our needs? Do we need the strength of a moose hide? The warmth of caribou? Speak to Elders who carry the knowledge of many different types of hides and uses.	Determine scope. Follow a critical path ¹⁰ using appropriate steps and methods. Work with the right people. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Determine what we need to address.
3	There are certain steps in the hide tanning process that are followed every time. Speak to knowledge holders to ensure the right process is followed. Keep your finished product in mind so your hide-making achieves the goals you need it to achieve.	Identify guiding principles. Develop a vision, along with goals, objectives, and indicators. Identify annual workplans to achieve objectives and targets.
4	Elders have helped guide the project, but now the work must be done: stretching, drying, scraping and smoking. Each step in making the hide prepares for the next step and helps meet the ultimate goal of creating a useful hide.	Implement, and monitor progress through each reporting period of the plan. Each step should build on previous successes and lead toward the overall vision.
5	Sometimes the hide tanning process goes smoothly, but sometimes adjustments are needed to ensure we meet our goals. Do we need to dry the hide more? Has it been thoroughly scraped? Check your progress and speak with Elders to ensure your plans are still working well.	Analyze progress and adjust where necessary. Speak with local people, knowledge holders and other experts to assess the effectiveness of the plan in achieving goals.
6	Hide tanning is a good way to pass on intergenerational teachings. The completed hide will allow people to sew for their families, to make sure they have moccasins, mitts, equipment, and clothing needed to pursue their traditional activities on the land. But as good as that hide was, there will be the need for other hides for other goals in the future. Be ready to begin the process again.	Share our progress with local communities, leadership, stakeholders, and those to whom we are accountable annually. Within a ten-year cycle, review and revise the plan.

 $^{^{10}}$ Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yálti. 2022. Critical Path towards a Thaidene Nëné Management Plan.

How did Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı involve others¹¹? Thaidene Nëné badı xá will be further shaped by feedback received through community and public engagement, as outlined in the Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı's Engagement Strategy¹².

 $^{^{11}}$ This section will be expanded in the final document, once engagement and consultation are complete.

¹² Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yálti. 2022. *Engagement Strategy*.

Guiding Principles¹³

Nuwé ch'anie is the principle that describes Dene values and knowledge systems, with responsibilities to care for the land, water and wildlife. Nuwé ch'anie encompasses cultural, linguistic, political, and ecological understandings of the relationship the original Indigenous peoples of the area have with Thaidene Nëné. Ensuring nuwé ch'anie is practiced, nurtured, and passed on is vital for the well-being of people, and ensuring cultural continuity.

Flowing from nuwé ch'anie, are six additional principles that will guide the work, and ensure it is being done in the right way and with respect. Each are important for good relationships and planning.

Additional principles¹⁴

Insert Dene Yatı term (economic reconciliation)

Supporting Indigenous economic

development

Insert Dene Yatı term (consensus) We talk it out

Nuwé yakı begháre peghádalıdá (accountability) We work with our laws

Insert Dene Yatı term (collaboration)

Together we are stronger,

making room for more than one way of

knowing, being and doing

Nuwé ch'anié beréld į xá pą (cultural continuity)¹⁵ We will pass on our knowledge and

value systems

Yúnethé xá (for future generations) For the future

¹³ Guiding principles will be graphically illustrated for final draft.

 $^{^{14}}$ Dene Yatı principle terms will be validated at a Terminology Workshop

¹⁵ This translation might need work. Translates to "We have to understand our knowledge and value systems". Flag for Terminology workshop.

Vision Statement

Thaidene Nëné is the homeland of the people whose ancestors laid down the sacred, ethical, and practical foundations of their way of life. This land has nurtured and inspired countless generations whose prosperity continues to be ensured by a deep intimacy between the people and the land. For the wellbeing of future generations, this way of life needs to be exercised, nurtured, and passed on.

The living connection between land and people, between water and land, between forest and tundra makes Thaidene Nëné a national treasure. Carrying these connections into the future, the ecological integrity and the Indigenous ways of life of Thaidene Nëné will be a living legacy for all, where we will welcome the world¹⁶.

¹⁶ The vision statement honours and is adapted from the Łutsël K'é community vision for Thaidene Nëné, which is described in Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation's establishment agreements. The plan's vision was reviewed and endorsed by Northwest Territory Métis Nation and Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation community members at an early planning workshop (June 2022).

Goals, Objectives, and Targets/Indicators

Thaidene Nëné badi xá contains five goals, including:

- Goal 1 Promote nuwé ch'anie;
- Goal 2 -- Sustain the ecological integrity of Thaidene Nëné;
- Goal 3 Maintain healthy relationships;
- Goal 4 Create good visitor knowledge and experience; and,
- Goal 5 Support opportunities that strengthen Indigenous prosperity and well-being.

Each goal focuses on several objectives and identifies targets/indicators for the Partners to implement over the next 10 years¹⁷. Each Partner has different responsibilities for implementation as outlined in their agreements¹⁸. Annual workplans will be developed by the Partners, in collaboration with Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı.

Monitoring commitments are woven through many of the goal areas. Combined, they create a comprehensive system that addresses the ecological and cultural continuity components that we are seeking to sustain, support and promote in Thaidene Nëné.

Goal 1 – Promote nuwé ch'anie

Ensuring nuwé ch'anie is practiced, nurtured, and passed on is vital for the wellbeing of people and the land. Nuwé ch'anie is strong. However, as Elders pass on, their knowledge of language and culture is at risk. Sacred places within Thaidene Nëné must be protected, and the stories that are told about them must be shared; Aboriginal and treaty rights must be upheld; Dene Yatı must be protected and revitalized; and youth must be mentored.

Obj	ectives	Target	s / Indicators
1.1	The descendants of the Thaidene Nëné ancestors maintain their relationship with Thaidene Nëné and cultural continuity is preserved.	1.1.1	Harvesting within Thaidene Nëné by the original Indigenous peoples of the area is encouraged. Indigenous governments apply their own protocols for their members' use of Thaidene Nëné.
1.2	Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłti uses Dene Yati in governance, planning, and community engagements.	1.2.1	Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłti meetings, workshops, community engagement sessions, documents, presentations, advertisements, and other communications include Indigenous languages.

¹⁷ Targets / indicators must be interpreted wholly within context of their corresponding objective.

¹⁸ Any requirement for funding to deliver on the objectives of the management plan does not automatically commit any of the Partners to providing that funding.

		1.2.2	Indigenous placenames are used in Thaidene Nëné documents, maps, reports, presentations, brochures, videos, etc.
1.3	Young people are learning nuwé ch'anie from the Elders.	1.3.1	Land-based Elder and youth programming is delivered in Thaidene Nëné. These programs include sharing language, traditional knowledge, spiritual connections to the land, and Indigenous laws and stories of Thaidene Nëné.
1.4	Knowledge of cultural resources is recorded to share with future generations.	1.4.1	Important cultural resources are identified, and their condition is documented.

Goal 2 – Sustain the ecological integrity of Thaidene Nëné

Together, the water, soil, rocks, plants, animals, migrations, wildfires, freezing, thawing, and all other parts and processes in the ecosystems of Thaidene Nëné have created a landscape that, for countless generations, has supported nuwé ch'anie. If Thaidene Nëné remains healthy, it will continue to offer this prosperity. However, Thaidene Nëné cannot speak for itself. We have a responsibility to pay attention to what is happening on the land and to take action to protect it.

Wildfires, extreme weather, and other climate induced impacts have not been experienced before at this magnitude. Climate change creates a significant unknown with factors that are less predictable and more severe. Changing snow and ice patterns, shifting wildlife populations and habitats, increase in invasive species, increased intensity of wildfires, and a changing landscape due to permafrost thaw are just a few examples of observed differences. These rapid changes and industrial development adjacent to Thaidene Nëné are placing increased pressure on wildlife and their habitats.

Along with the uncertainty of the future, the current baseline condition of Thaidene Nëné is not fully understood. Monitoring the state of Thaidene Nëné's ecological integrity is important to help respond to changes in the landscape.

Increased use of Thaidene Nëné by visitors may also have the potential to negatively impact species and their habitat. Waste left on the land from historical use must also be addressed to ensure healthy lands.

Objectives	Targets/Indicators		
2.1 All habitats and species are sustained.	 2.1.1 Climate change trends, projections, and likely impacts on the biodiversity of Thaidene Nëné are identified and tracked over time, including identifying species presence and distribution. Observations of change are informed by Indigenous knowledge. 2.1.2 Key habitat within Thaidene Nëné is mapped to support good 		

		2.1.3 2.1.4 2.1.5 2.1.6 2.1.7 2.1.8 2.1.9 2.1.10	decision-making. The Łutsël K'é Dene Caribou Stewardship Plan (Yunethe Xa ?etthen Hadı) is followed by the nation's members. Other Indigenous governments use comparable tools as appropriate to support the conservation of caribou. Fire management planning considers climate change impacts, the protection of the community of Łutsël K'é, critical habitat, species at risk, and other key species such as caribou. An integrated research and monitoring program is developed collaboratively. It identifies knowledge gaps and includes research priorities. Climate adaptation strategies are guided by immediate impacts and results from research and monitoring programs. A water resource protection strategy is developed. It includes visitor/community education and invasive species measures. A visitor use management policy upholds ecological integrity goals. Harvester education supports the ongoing conservation of key habitats and species in Thaidene Nëné. Increased understanding of the carbon balance in Thaidene Nëné and high biodiversity areas is built, including how these areas might be impacted by climate change.
2.2	Guardians are observing the land and supporting conservation objectives.	2.2.1	An Indigenous guardian program expansion strategy is developed.
2.3	Historic waste left on the land is addressed, and garbage is cleaned- up.	2.3.1	An assessment of waste sites is conducted to identify locations, and a clean-up plan is developed which includes setting standards and prioritizing sites. A "pack it in, pack it out" policy is followed by all users of Thaidene Nëné.

Goal 3 – Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Relationships in Thaidene Nëné – within and between Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı, the Partners and other signatory Indigenous governments – are complex and, in the past, have often been challenging. Today, these relationships are evolving and at different stages. Thaidene Nëné is being implemented in a time of reconciliation. There is a shared understanding that Thaidene Nëné is going to be different.

Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı has made great progress since its formation in 2021. Positive relationships have been formed, building upon the foundations set out in in the agreements. Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá

Yáłtı has formalized its operational procedures and has been successful in meeting its work planning targets and indicators.

The approach to shared management makes room for multiple ways of knowing, being, and doing. It allows for new and innovative forms of collaboration, where everyone has a role in achieving shared outcomes. It requires a commitment to ongoing dialogue, consensus building and a willingness to learn and implement.

Objectives	Targets	/indicators
3.1 Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı's decision making is respectful and honours multiple ways of knowing.	3.1.1	Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłti's operating procedures and processes welcome different knowledges and approaches, create space for reflection and opportunities to make changes, and strengthen the use of Dene Yati.
3.2 The Partners have healthy relationships with each other and work together on implementation.	3.2.1	Joint policy, planning, and communications systems are in place that all Partners have had a voice in developing. Operations are collaborative, and human and financial resources are effectively used.

Goal 4 – Create good visitor knowledge and experience

The ancestors walked the trails that their descendants now share with visitors. Sharing Thaidene Nëné means offering meaningful and authentic experiences for visitors, while also contributing to the vitality of ongoing local Indigenous use. The descendants of the ancestors have knowledge and stories to share with visitors that will enrich their experience when they come to Thaidene Nëné.

It is important that visitor experiences have a cultural connection to the ancestors' stories, and that these stories are conveyed in a culturally appropriate and authentic way. It is also important that we work to tell the whole story of Thaidene Nëné, to shine light on the existence and resilience of the ancestors. As Thaidene Nëné employees and tour operators share this knowledge with visitors, visitors will gain increased reverence for the land, and will tread lightly and with respect. The stories of Thaidene Nëné also reach beyond those who can visit, to all Canadians and to the world.

Thaidene Nëné is just beginning to welcome the world. Developing the infrastructure, protocols and activities that contribute to meaningful experiences for visitors will take time. Understanding who will come to Thaidene Nëné and why, and what their impact will be, will help guide this work and ensure that visitation is sustainable. It will also be important for Thaidene Nëné staff to promote practices for all users that keep the land and water clean and ensure sites are respected.

Objectives	Targets/Indicators		
4.1 Thaidene Nëné has a diverse visitor offer that provides opportunities to understand and appreciate local Indigenous cultures, histories and values in an accessible, inclusive, and meaningful way.	 4.1.1 A tourism strategy is developed that identifies target markets and prescribes authentic, cultural experiences that connect visitors to the land, people and way of life. Product development for visitor markets is harmonized with the use and enjoyment of Thaidene Nëné by local Indigenous people. 4.1.2 Signatory Indigenous governments are engaged to create a Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS) for Fort Reliance National Historic Site and revise the Historic Sites and Monuments Board commemoration to reflect the heritage values of the site more accurately. 4.1.3 A heritage recording and a condition assessment are completed for Fort Reliance National Historic Site. 		
4.2 Visitors are welcomed, learn how to respect places of cultural and spiritual importance, and are informed of culturally appropriate behaviours if visiting important sites to ensure visitation is sustainable.	 4.2.1 A visitor orientation program is developed. It includes allowable uses of Thaidene Nëné and a visitor code of conduct. 4.2.2 Visitors receive orientation programming and robust trip planning materials. 4.2.3 Guardians, staff, and tourism operators working in Thaidene Nëné are trained and supported to welcome visitors and provide them with authentic experiences. 4.2.4 Visitor access to and behavior at important sites is managed through appropriate tools such as zoning and regulations. 4.2.5 Zoning and closures are communicated to visitors and enforced. 4.2.6 A site-specific plan is developed for the Taché/Kaché region, which includes guidelines for visitation. 		
4.3 Indigenous cultural activities and languages are central to visitor experiences, products, and promotion.	 4.3.1 Interpretive programs are developed based on Indigenous cultures and ways of life and include Indigenous languages. 4.3.2 Thaidene Nëné products, promotions, advertisements, and visitor orientations include Indigenous cultures, ways of life, and languages. 4.3.3 Public appreciation for Thaidene Nëné is fostered through promotion and storytelling, even for those who may never visit. 		

Goal 5 – Support opportunities that strengthen Indigenous prosperity and well-being

Thaidene Nëné has created prosperity for countless generations of Indigenous peoples. Over the past 150 years, the western economy has created new industries and sources of wealth, but Indigenous peoples of the area have been excluded from those benefits. As a protected area, Thaidene Nëné offers a new economy with a host of opportunities. A key priority is the prosperity of members of signatory Indigenous governments.

The establishment and impact and benefit agreements prioritize training and employment for members of signatory Indigenous governments, as applicable. The jobs and business opportunities available to members are focused on the conservation and tourism economy, including jobs with the Partners, as well as business opportunities including guiding, outfitting, catering, and hospitality¹⁹.

There have been positive employment gains made since Thaidene Nëné was established in 2019, including multiple jobs created in protected area operations, and a few local business operators now provide licensed tourism services to visitors.

Future policy will aim to reduce barriers to employment for members of signatory Indigenous governments, and support Indigenous businesses, while maintaining the cultural continuity and ecological integrity of Thaidene Nëné, promoting consistency and fairness, and ensuring safe and quality visitor experiences.

Objectives	Targets/Indicators	
5.1 Business opportunities are created that support Thaidene Nëné and benefit signatory Indigenous governments and their members.	5.1.1	A commercial activity licensing policy and land occupancy policy are developed. These policies promote Indigenous businesses operating in Thaidene Nëné. Non-Indigenous applicants for business licences in the National Park Reserve demonstrate how their proposed activities will support and benefit Indigenous communities.
	5.1.3	Business opportunities within the Territorial Protected Area look to support and benefit Indigenous communities where possible (e.g., partnerships, employment, building relationships).
5.2 Maximize employment opportunities of members from signatory Indigenous	5.2.1	Human resource/hiring policies support Indigenous applicants applying for and being successful in attaining and retaining Thaidene Nëné jobs.

¹⁹ Business opportunities only apply to the National Park Reserve.

governments for all positions within Thaidene Nëné.	5.2.2	A Thaidene Nëné mentorship/leader-in-training program is developed.
5.3 Infrastructure barriers to local employment are reduced.	5.3.1	Housing units ²⁰ are available to support staffing of Thaidene Nëné operational positions in Łutsël K'é. An office complex and visitor centre is developed in Łutsël K'é, where staff from Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Parks Canada, and Government of Northwest Territories can work together collaboratively.
5.4 Members from signatory Indigenous governments, including youth, have training and education opportunities related to Thaidene Nëné.	5.4.15.4.25.4.3	Business development, tourism planning, monitoring, and other training opportunities are provided. K-12 students learn about Thaidene Nëné through educational programming. Scholarship opportunities are available for members of Partner Indigenous governments.

²⁰ The plan does not quantify numbers; however, it is important to note that the number of housing units will not equal the number of Thaidene Nene staff employed by Parks Canada, Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation and/or the Government of Northwest Territories.

Zoning for Visitor Activities

Zoning Framework

Zoning is an important tool for encouraging good relationships with the land, ensuring visitors are directed to appropriate areas, and sensitive ecological or cultural areas are protected. Zoning does not impact Aboriginal or treaty rights.

The zoning system for Thaidene Nëné is adapted from the Parks Canada system allowing for a unified approach for all protected areas within Thaidene Nëné²¹. Cultural continuity and Indigenous ways of life are foundational to Thaidene Nëné agreements, and the Government of Northwest Territories' *Protected Areas Act*; as such, they are incorporated into the zoning descriptions.

Zoning maps for Thaidene Nëné can be found in Appendix A.

III waters by motorized boat.

ZONE I	Areas within Thaidene Nëné that contain unique, threatened, or endangered natural or cultural features. Preservation is the key consideration. Visitor access is not permitted in some Zone Is, while in others, visitor access is permitted with restrictions. Motorized access is not permitted.
ZONE II	Extensive areas within Thaidene Nëné where ecosystem processes and Indigenous ways of life continue. Visitors have opportunities to experience the living landscape in remote areas with few to no services or facilities. Motorized access is not permitted with two exceptions ²² :
	 Visitors may access Zone II via air charter or private aircraft landing²³ on waterbodies; and, Visitors may access Zone II by over snow vehicle (e.g., snowmobile).
ZONE III	Areas within Thaidene Nëné that support cultural continuity and are managed as natural environments. Visitors have opportunities to experience nature and culture through outdoor recreation activities requiring minimal services or facilities of a rustic nature. There may be commercial leases in this zone.
	Motorized access is allowed ²⁴ . Visitors may access any Zone II shoreline adjacent to Zone

²¹ The zone descriptions are similar to, but do not completely mirror Parks Canada zoning as outlined in the 1995 *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*.

²² Limited opportunity business licences may be available in Zone II in the National Park Reserve for Indigenous guide/outfitter businesses from signatory Indigenous governments. These licensed businesses may use motorized boats for tours on: ?edacho Tué (Artillery Lake), Tesuchai Tu / Kesuchai Kuwe (Siltaza Lake), and Łúh Chogh Tué (Whitefish Lake).

²³ All aircraft take-offs and landings require an aircraft access permit in the National Park Reserve.

²⁴ In the National Park Reserve, motorized access means aircraft with an aircraft access permit, motorized boats and over-snow vehicles..

Temporal Closures

Temporal closures are tools to restrict visitor access to certain areas or activities for a specific period. These closures relate to various management needs, such as public safety, environmental protection, wildlife conservation, and/or to help facilitate harvesting activities for Indigenous peoples of the area. As there are different legislative regimes for the National Park Reserve and the Territorial Protected Area, the mechanism to apply temporal closures differs.

Parks Canada can create temporary closures, such as a seasonal closure, through two methods: 1) a temporal zone identified in the management plan, and/or 2) by using Superintendent's Orders from the *National Parks General Regulations* to close an area or restrict specific activities.

The Government of Northwest Territories can create temporary zones in the Territorial Protected Area, when required, by issuing a public notice of the zone at least 30 days in advance and posting a description and map of the zone on the Protected Areas Registry.

Zoning for Thaidene Nëné

Zone I locations

No Visitor Access

Desnéthcheé (Spiritual Gathering Site)

The community of Łutsël K'é spends time at Desnéthcheé for a spiritual gathering every summer. There is personal and community infrastructure at the site, including a church and arbour. The gathering site of Desnéthcheé is a culturally important area closed to visitors. Invited guests of the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation are allowed.

Dzén Kín (Rat Lodge) and Tsá Kín (Beaver Lodge)

Dzén Kín and Tsá Kín are sacred places on ?edacho Tué (Artillery Lake) that are closed to visitor access. Interpretation about their importance will be provided.

Island in ?edacho Tł'ázı (Timber Bay)

Gahdële, a powerful medicine man, is buried on this island in ?edacho Tł'ázį on ?edacho Tué. Visitor access is not allowed.

Restricted Visitor Access – Guided/Accompanied Only

Taché /Kaché Village Site

Taché/Kaché is located at the mouth of Tsąkui Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River). Visitors must be accompanied by Ni Hat'ni Dene, Parks Canada staff, or a licensed guide from a signatory Indigenous government.

?edacho Tł'ázį (Timber Bay) Village Site

This former village is very close to ?edacho Tué (Artillery Lake). The site is also near to a Ni Hat'ni Dene operational cabin that is located at ?edacho Tł'ázį. Visitors must be accompanied by Ni Hat'ni Dene, Parks Canada staff, or a licensed guide from a signatory Indigenous government.

Tsgkui Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River)

Tsąkui Thedá Dezé is sacred and includes Tsąkui Thedá (Parry Falls). The Zone I area extends from the south end of ?edacho Tué (Artillery Lake) to the mouth of the river, including the islands located there. Sacred sites must be respected. They are not to be played with, or they lose their power. Unless otherwise noted, when visiting Tsąkui Thedá Dezé Zone I, visitors must be accompanied by Thaidene Nëné, Ni Hat'ni Dene, Parks Canada staff, or a licensed guide from a signatory Indigenous government. Licensed guides from a signatory Indigenous government may use motorized boats for tours at the mouth of Tsąkui Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River).

Tsąkui Thedá Dezé Zone I includes areas where visitor access is further restricted:

Tsakui Thedá Dezé
 access prohibited in the river corridor

• Tsąkuı Thedá (Parry Falls) permission required from Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation

Zone II locations

All areas of Thaidene Nëné not otherwise identified as a Zone I or Zone III are Zone II. This is the majority (78%), which is 92% in the National Park Reserve and 57% in the Territorial Protected Area. ²⁵ Designation of wilderness in the National Park Reserve through the *National Parks of Canada Wilderness Area Declaration Regulations* will not be pursued at this time.

Zone III locations

Tu Nedhé (Great Slave Lake)

The waters of Tu Nedhé serve as the front country of Thaidene Nëné, with motorized boating a key form of access and recreation.

Tthe Káljka Tué (Stark Lake)

Tthe Kálįka Tué waters in the National Park Reserve are Zone III to allow for the continuation of motorized boating.

Waterbodies in the Territorial Protected Area

All waterbodies in the Territorial Protected Area are Zone III.

Reliance Fuel Cache and Commercial Lease

Reliance has significant infrastructure, more than other areas of the National Park Reserve, with several modern buildings and a fuel cache. The lands where this infrastructure is located are Zone III; this includes the Reliance fuel cache and the Trophy Lodge lease.

Keldelé (Taltheilei Narrows) Commercial Lease

The lease area for Great Slave Lake Lodge including the airstrip in the Territorial Protected Area is Zone III.

Tł'ąkĕle (Thompson Landing) Commercial Lease

The lease area for Indian Mountain Lodge in the Territorial Protected Area is Zone III.

Pena Tué (Gagnon Lake) Leases

The commercial leases on Gagnon Lake in the Territorial Protected Area are Zone III.

²⁵ The percentages are rough estimates. They were adjusted on 13/03/2024 due to a calculation error, they were previously noted as 83%, 92% and 70%.

Other Important Sites

In addition to zoning, two other designations are used to identify sites: culturally/ecologically sensitive areas in the National Park Reserve; and sites of cultural importance within Thaidene Nëné.

Culturally and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

This designation within Thaidene Nëné applies only in the National Park Reserve. It is for smaller areas that contain significant and sensitive resources that require special protection or management. Culturally and ecologically sensitive areas can be applied within any of the zone types. Currently, no ecologically sensitive areas are identified.

Visitor use and/or resource management strategies will be defined by specific guidelines. Because of the sensitivity of these sites, they may not be shown on maps. As new information is obtained, it may be necessary to refine the boundaries of sensitive areas or to identify new ones. If necessary, this designation may be removed from some sites. Boundary changes will not require a revision to *Thaidene Nëné badı xá*.

Taché/Kaché Region

The Taché/Kaché region is of significant cultural importance to the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation. Within this region is the village site of the same name, gravesites and other sacred sites, the mouth of Tsąkul Thedá and Desnéthcheé (the spiritual gathering site). Visitor guidelines for the Kaché Region will be developed as part of a site-specific plan. A rough outline of the Taché/Kaché region is shown in Appendix A; the map will be refined during development of the site-specific plan.

Nıtl'ër Nué Naá Tl'áázı (Wildbread Bay)

Nit'ếr Nué Naá T'áázı is a culturally important area to the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation. It is used annually in the late summer through to early fall for harvesting. Visitor access will be restricted during times of harvest. The closure will be time limited and seasonal.

Łúh Chogh Tué (Whitefish Lake) Village Site

This village site is an important birthplace and home for several families from Łutsël K'é. Work is on-going to understand this site more fully. Visitors must be accompanied by Thaidene Nëné, Ni Hat'ni Dene, Parks Canada staff, or a licensed guide from a signatory Indigenous government.

Sites of Cultural Importance

This designation within Thaidene Nëné applies to areas that are culturally important but may not have Thaidene Nëné specific visitor restrictions. Archaeological sites are located throughout Thaidene Nëné. Visitors are prohibited from disturbing archaeological sites under legislation. If a visitor comes across an archaeological site, they must not handle, move, or otherwise disturb archaeological artifacts.

Sites of Cultural Importance may be managed through other legislation and/or regulations to ensure a respectful relationship with these areas. Specific guidelines or protocols for each sensitive area may also

exist or be developed to help inform visitor use, such as paying the land²⁶. Because of the sensitivity of these sites, they may not be shown on maps; however, rules, guidelines and/or protocols will be communicated with visitors.

Hachoghe's Shovel

Hachoghe's Shovel is at the south end of ?edacho Tué (Artillery Lake). ?edacho Tué used to be called Tsátué (Beaver Lake) because there was a giant beaver living there. Hachoghe was a powerful person – known to other Dene as Yamória and Yamoòzha. He protected the people from the giant animals, including the giant beavers. Hachoghe used a shovel to dig into the beaver's lodge, only to have the beaver escape. Hachoghe put his shovel down to stop the beaver from getting away. But the beaver was so strong he broke it. The handle of the shovel is still visible. This site is accessible for visitors, but there are protocols for travellers to pay the land at this site when coming to ?edacho Tué.

Bet'síghí (Utsingi Point)

Water is alive here. The site is accessible to visitors but there are traditional protocols encouraging all travellers to pay the land and be quiet and respectful when passing by Bet'síghí.

Village Sites

There are many other villages sites within Thaidene Nëné. More will be done to better understand the sites and determine the best management approach, some may not be appropriate to identify.

Arctic Star Lodge

This lodge on the north shore of Kaché Kuwé (McLeod Bay) is an important area to Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation. Many members worked there for long periods of time that took them away from their families.

All Burial Sites

Burial sites are located throughout Thaidene Nëné, and burials continue there to this day. Visitor access to known and/or marked burial sites is prohibited within 10 metres. If a visitor comes across a burial site they should leave the immediate area.

²⁶ Paying the land is a protocol where people pay the land and water with something valuable like tobacco, spruce boughs, tea, or sugar as a sign of respect.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The establishment agreements require Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı to review and revise *Thaidene Nëné badı xá* within ten years after it is first approved. Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáłtı and the Partners are jointly responsible for ensuring the relationship plan is meeting its desired results. Success can be measured from the number of targets/indicators achieved during the life of the plan.

We commit to basing our annual workplans against *Thaidene Nëné badı xá*. We will consider progress made against goals, objectives, and targets/indicators as we set out our focus for the next year. We will develop and provide annual implementation reports to signatory Indigenous governments and stakeholders.

To accommodate the collaborative management of Thaidene Nëné, the Partners will work together over this first 10-year planning cycle to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework that meets the legal requirements of both the National Park Reserve and the Territorial Protected Area. This includes identifying and collecting baseline and monitoring data to evaluate ongoing progress towards achieving the goals and objectives of this plan.

Successful implementation of this plan will require action of all participating Partners. An ongoing commitment to engagement with research partners, tourism operators, and users of Thaidene Nëné will be required.

Appendix A – Zoning Maps

Tacheé Trász (McLeod Bay)

Keldelé (Talheilei Narrows)

Keldelé (Talheilei Narrows)

Zone II (no visitor access)

Zone II (restricted visitor access)

Zone III

Tacheé Trász (McLeod Bay)

Taché (Lockhart River)

Keldelé (Talheilei Narrows)

Map 1 – Overview of Thaidene Nëné Zoning

Łutsël K'é

Tu Nedhé (Great Slave Lake)

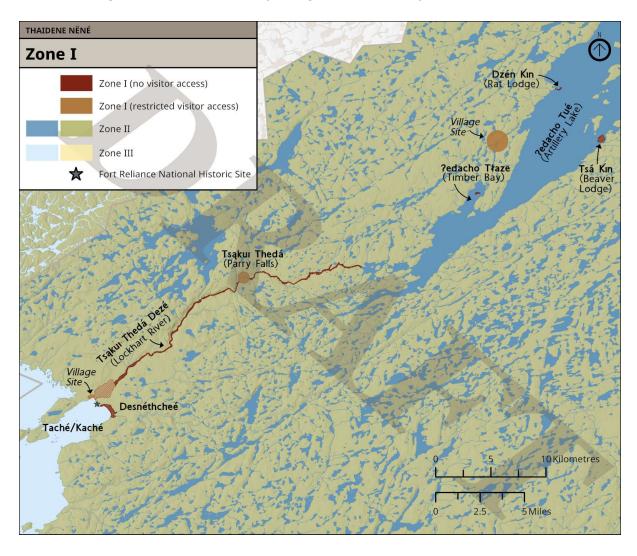
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25

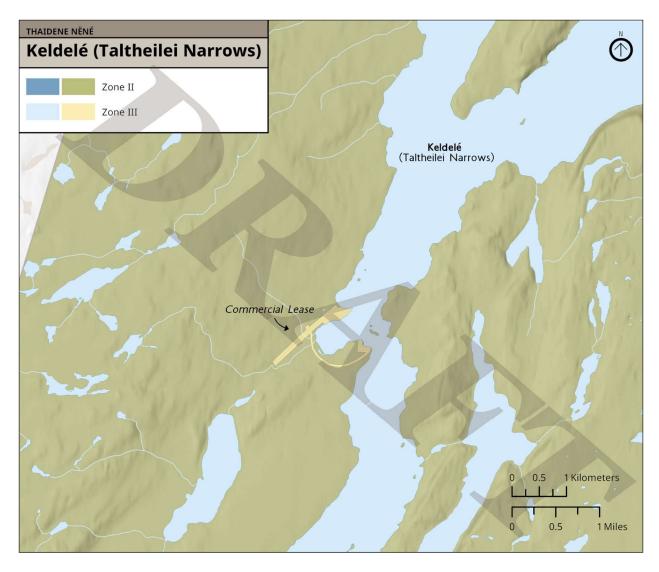
20 Miles

10

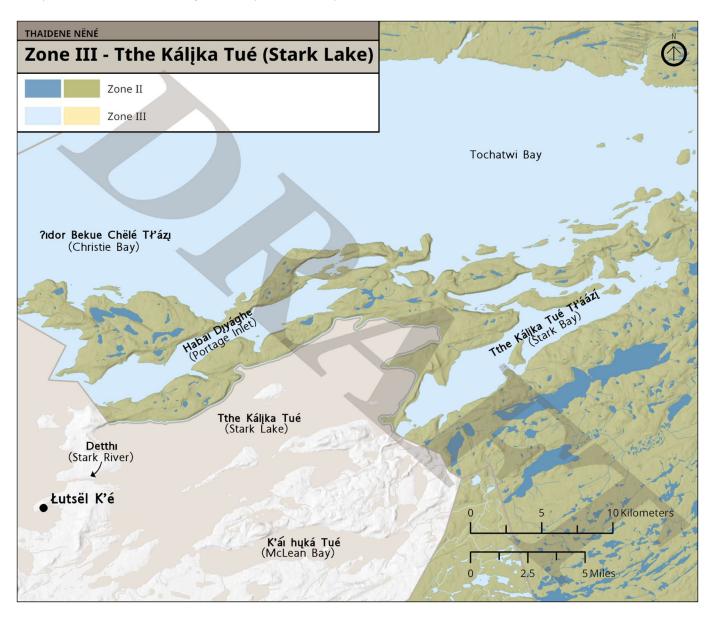
Map 2: Zone I Desnéthcheé, Dzén Kín, Tsá Kín, Island in ?edacho Tł'ázį, Taché /Kaché Village Site, ?edacho Tł'ázį Village Site, and Tsąkui Thedá Dezé

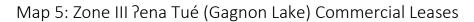


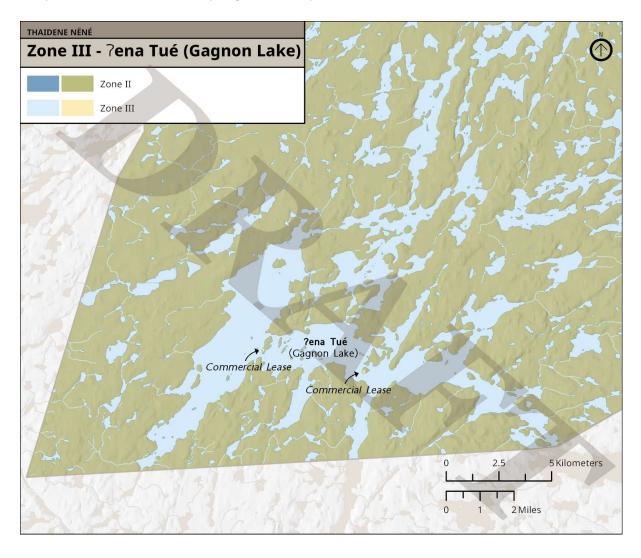




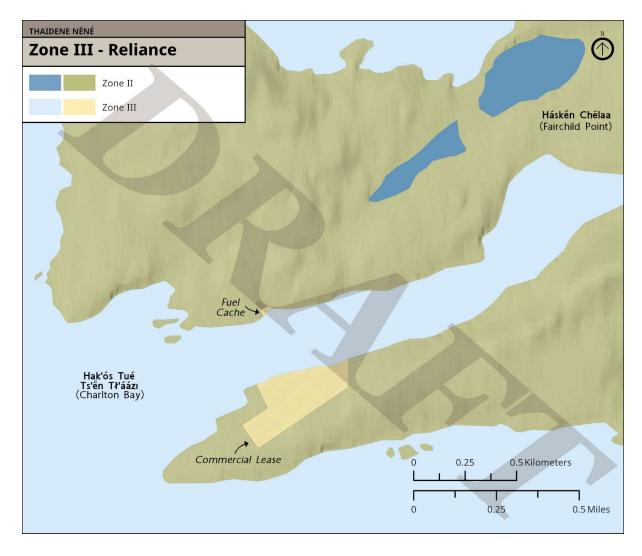
Map 4: Zone III Tthe Káljka Tué (Stark Lake)



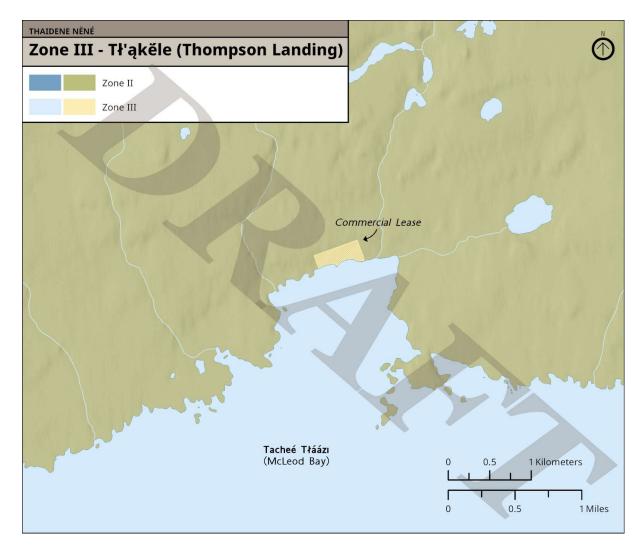


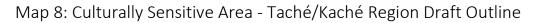


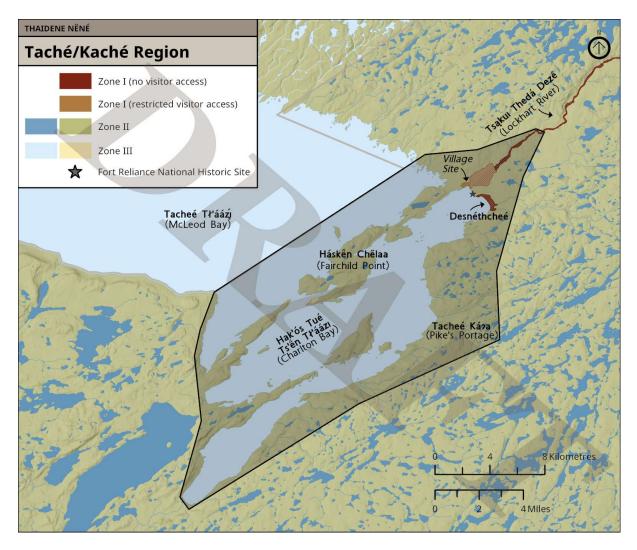




Map 7: Zone III Tł'ąkĕle (Commercial Lease)







Appendix B – Strategic Environmental Assessment Summary (Parks Canada)

All national park management plans are assessed through a strategic environmental assessment to understand the potential for cumulative effects. This understanding contributes to evidence-based decision-making that supports ecological integrity being maintained or restored over the life of the plan. Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve was established in 2019. Given this recent establishment, baseline data is currently being collected to better understand species presence in the National Park Reserve and develop ecological integrity indicators. Therefore, the strategic environmental assessment assessed the potential impacts on different aspects of the ecosystem, including species at risk that have the potential to be present in the National Park Reserve.

The plan contains several targets focused on increasing understanding of the current and historical environment of the Park Reserve, including:

- A research and monitoring program which will identify knowledge gaps and research priorities,
- Mapping of key wildlife habitat, and
- Land-based Elder and youth programing in Thaidene Nëné. These programs will include sharing language, traditional knowledge, spiritual connections to the land, and Indigenous laws and stories of Thaidene Nëné.

The strategic environmental assessment for Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve's management plan considered the potential impacts of climate change, local and regional activities around the park reserve, expected increases in visitation and proposals within the management plan. The plan contains specific targets to mitigate these impacts on the environment, including:

- Fire management planning which considers climate change impacts,
- Zoning of important sites to manage visitor access and/or behavior,
- A visitor orientation program, which will include allowable uses of Thaidene Nëné and a visitor code of conduct,
- A tourism strategy and harvester education to reduce negative impacts on key habitats and species,
- A water resource protection strategy, which includes visitor/community education and invasive species measures, and
- An assessment and clean-up plan which identifies sites requiring clean-up and standards for restoration.

Thaidene Nëné Xá Dá Yáltı led the development of Thaidene Nëné badı xá, the management plan for Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, supported by the Partners and signatory Indigenous governments.

The strategic environmental assessment was conducted in accordance with Parks Canada policy. Individual projects undertaken to implement management plan objectives at the site will be evaluated to determine if an impact assessment is required under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, or successor legislation. The management plan supports the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

goals of Sustainably Managed Lands and Forests, Healthy Wildlife Populations, Connecting Canadians with Nature, Safe and Healthy Communities.

Many positive environmental effects are expected and there are no important negative environmental effects anticipated from implementation of Thaidene Nëné badı xá, the management plan for Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve.