

JUNE 2021

THAIDENE NĒNÉ NEWSLETTER



HIGHLIGHTS

ʔedacho Tué

Xá Dá Yátlı

Ni Hat'Ni Dene

Spring Camp

Spring Training

New Guardian

TDN in the News

Frontier Lodge

SPRINGING FORWARD

The last year has been difficult in so many ways. In spite of what has seemed like an endless stream of challenges, the Thaidene Nënë team has accomplished so much.

One of the highlights of this spring has been all of the community-focused programming led by Ni Hat'ni Dene. Between camps at ʔedacho Tué (Artillery Lake), Tsa Kuʔúze (Little Beaver Pond), and Tthe Kálıka Tué (Stark Lake), and a canoe trip, the guardians have been busy sharing their land-based knowledge and skills, particularly with children and youth. As the photo above from Tsa Kuʔúze shows, the future is bright!

We hope community members have a safe and happy summer, and that you are able to get out and enjoy Thaidene Nënë!

ʔEDACHO TUÉ HUNT AND CULTURE CAMP

In mid-March, twenty community members, including four students from the school, travelled to ʔedacho Tué (Artillery Lake) by snowmobile and ski-plane for a spring hunt and culture camp. The trip was also an orientation for Parks Canada staff, Will Tarleton (Visitor Experience Manager) and Kyle Van Delft (Visitor Safety and Fire Operations Coordinator).

Guided by Elder JC Catholique, the group set up camp around the newly renovated LKDFN cabin at ʔedacho Tłaze (Timber Bay). A successful muskox hunt—Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians and Ni Hadi Xá traditional knowledge monitors harvested three bulls from a group of 15 animals on the third day of the camp—made for a busy week of butchering and making drymeat. The group also set nets off ʔedacho Chela (Artillery Point). While the harvest over two days was small, the fishers were excited to see a 30-pound trout when they pulled the net for the second time. When they arrived back to Łutsël K'é, camp members delivered smoked trout, drymeat, and muskox quarters to people unable to travel to harvest, including elders.

One of the highlights of the week was a day trip to the old campsite north of ʔedacho Tłaze, where at least seven Łutsël K'é Dene families built cabins in the last century to escape an influenza epidemic ravaging communities around Tu Nedhé. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the village is a powerful testament to the resilience of Łutsël K'é Dene.

This camp, which was important both for harvesting traditional food and for sharing knowledge, was featured in an audio documentary on CKLB radio and a photo essay on the Nature United website.



SECOND MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı, the operational management board for Thaidene Nënë, had their second meeting in Łutsël K'é in April. Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı means the people that speak for Thaidene Nënë in Dënesųłné yati. The board orientation that began at the first meeting in February 2021 continued at this meeting with updates by the three parties—LKDFN, Parks Canada, and the GNWT—on things like policy development, staffing, infrastructure, and programming.

The focus of the April meeting, though, was the board's governance policies, which include guiding principles, member roles and responsibilities, and meeting conduct. These policies are critical to the board's work, which includes developing a management plan for Thaidene Nënë and making decisions about cultural promotion, ecological protection, access and use permits, and research and monitoring.

Elder Albert Boucher attended the meetings, which are open to the public, listening through translation as the parties provided updates and the board members discussed governance. On Friday, he told the board, "The elders have given us the words and we have to keep those words. We are the ones that are carrying on our elders words." Drawing on those words, he encouraged the board members to work together, to make decisions by consensus, and to engage the community, including elders and youth, as they chart a path forward for Thaidene Nënë.



NI HAT'NI DENE UPDATE

Spring Camp

The Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians, in partnership with the Łutsël K'é Dene School, set up a spring camp for community members near Tsa Kuᗵúze (Little Beaver Pond) on May 13. For two weeks, the site was busy with a variety of activities including setting beaver and muskrat traps, processing ducks and geese, fixing fish, and storytelling. The guardians provided transportation, so anyone who wanted could attend.

Because of the COVID-19 outbreak in Yellowknife and travel restrictions, at the end of the month, rather than pack up, the guardians relocated the camp to the shores of Tthe Kálłka Tué (Stark Lake), where they continued to deliver programming.



One of the highlights of the Ni Hat'ni Dene spring camp activities was a youth canoe trip in early June. Departing from the road to Háketh Tué (Duhamel Lake), the group planned to travel to K'áíhuká Tué (McLean Bay). The presence of ice on Tthe Kálłka Tué stopped them short, but they still had a good weekend of paddling, portaging, and camping. Travelling by canoe was an eye-opening experience for the young people who observed that this was how our ancestors travelled, and it wasn't easy! Marci cho to our traditional knowledge instructors, James and Sandra Lockhart. The youth enjoyed fixing muskrats.



Spring Training

One of the primary responsibilities of Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians is monitoring. The winter monitoring program involves travelling to and on the tundra. In the summer, the guardians turn their attention to the lakes and rivers of Thaidene Nënë. What happens in between these two seasons?

While Ni Hat'ni Dene wait for the ice to freeze or break up, they lead programming for the community that doesn't require travel by snowmachine or boat. They also

use this time to service their equipment and complete important training. This spring, the training focused on water and biodiversity monitoring.



Water Monitoring

In early June, the guardians, along with Parks Canada staffer Kyle Van Delft, were visited at their camp on Tthe Kálłka Tué (Stark Lake) by Mike Palmer, coordinator of monitoring and research with ENR's Water Resources Division. Mike provided training to Ni Hat'ni Dene on water sampling and the installation of a buoy with a water sampling device attached. This device, which is called a "sonde," records information about the water, such as turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and pH, every two hours. The data will be downloaded this fall after the sondes are retrieved. There will be three sondes on buoys in Thaidene Nënë this year: one in front of Frontier Lodge, one at Taltheilei Narrows, and one at the mouth of the Lockhart River.

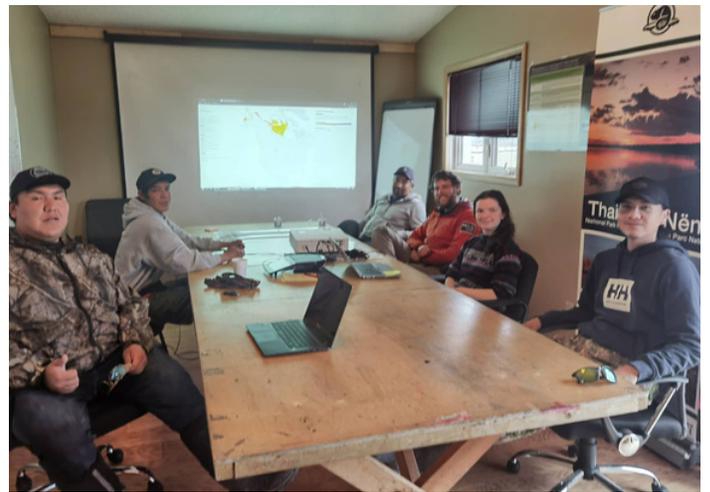


NEW GUARDIAN

Paul Catholique is the newest Ni Hat'ni Dene guardian. Paul brings a wealth of experience living and working on the land to the crew. Alongside the other guardians, Paul will be responsible for mentoring the summer students. By creating hands-on learning opportunities, he notes, Ni Hat'ni Dene "can help make it safer to send younger people out on their land."

Biodiversity Monitoring

In collaboration with Environment and Natural Resources, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the University of British Columbia, the Thaidene Nënë Department is embarking on a multi-year biodiversity monitoring program in the Land of the Ancestors. This summer, Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians will install trail cameras and audio recording units in different parts of the Indigenous protected area. The cameras and recording units will gather information about the movement and sounds of wildlife, providing an important baseline of information about biodiversity in Thaidene Nënë. In anticipation of this work, the Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians received training from Laura Stewart (University of British Columbia) in the deployment and use of the technology, and also the survey design and data collection methods.



THAIDENE NĒNÉ IN THE NEWS

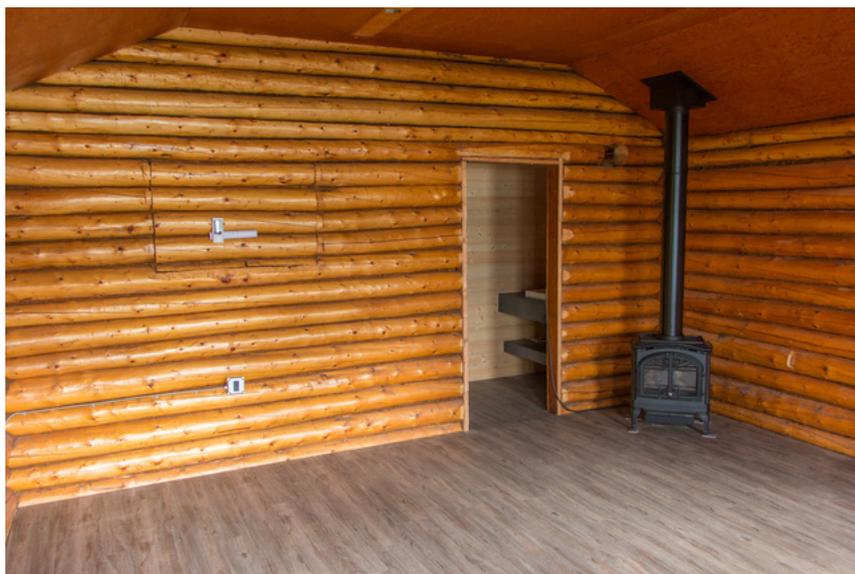
It's been a busy spring for the Thaidene Nënë Manager and communications support staff. News outlets from around the world have been calling to learn more about our Indigenous protected area. Here are a few examples of the coverage:

- **March:** The US-based *Huffington Post*'s feature on saving the boreal forest highlighted the work of the Łutsël K'é Dene in protecting our homeland and way of life.
- **April:** *TimeOut*, a global travel publication based in London, England, named Thaidene Nënë one of the five wildest places in the world.
- **May:** The Łutsël K'é Dene, the guardians of Thaidene Nënë, were featured in the magazine of the Nature Conservancy, a global environmental non-profit, headquartered in the US.

FRONTIER LODGE

The Frontier team is busy preparing for another unique but very full season. While border closures and travel restrictions have made regular operations impossible again this year, we are taking positive steps to ensure we're prepared for what we believe will be Frontier's busiest year ever in 2022.

Right now, our focus is on repairing the damage caused by the high water. Over the next few weeks, we will also be completing our cabin renovation and renewal project (check out the photo below!). With those upgrades complete, it will be time to install the new culturally inspired Thaidene Nënë themes throughout the guest cabins. We can't wait to share all of the progress we've made over the last 18 months with community members!



Frontier Lodge is operating a condensed staycation season for northerners from late July to mid-August. If you're interested in getting out on the East Arm and checking out Thaidene Nënë, this is the summer to do it.

Ron Dejarlais

East Arm Pop-Up Camp

Ron's guests can take advantage of the area's fabulous fishing opportunities, but they will also see that Thaidene Nënë has lots more to offer, including stimulating hikes, rejuvenating paddles, awe-inspiring birdwatching and wildlife viewing, delicious shore lunches, and spectacular aurora viewing.



Credit: Pat Kane Photo/ NWT Tourism