2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Thaidene Nëné



Łutsel K'é Dene First Nation

Introduction

In the late summer of 2019, after close to 50 years of discussions and negotiations with Crown governments, we, the Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN), established the Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area, which encompasses a National Park Reserve, Territorial Protected Area, and Wildlife Conservation Area. For us, Thaidene Nëné is the heart of our homeland and an integral part of our way of life. The Agreements that we entered into with Parks Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) (the Parties) protect the lands, waters and wildlife of Thaidene Nëné and our Denesoline way of life.

The Agreements share the following vision:

Thaidene Nëné is the homeland of the people whose ancestors here 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, Canada Agency / GNWT will welcome the world. nurtured and passed on.

The living connection between land and people, between water and land, between forest and barrens makes Thaidene Nëné a national treasure of Canada. Carrying these relationships into the future, the ecological integrity and cultural continuity of Thaidene Nëné will be a living legacy for all, where the Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation and the Parks

We have developed this 5 Year Strategic Plan (our Plan) to help guide our Leadership and staff as we work with the Parties to lay the foundation for the implementation of Thaidene Nëné.

With this Plan, it is our Nation's objective to continue to carry the leadership role. By doing so, we will ensure that our interests to protect and promote our Denesuline Way of Life and our language, culture and traditions continue to lay the foundation and basis of Thaidene Nëné implementation.

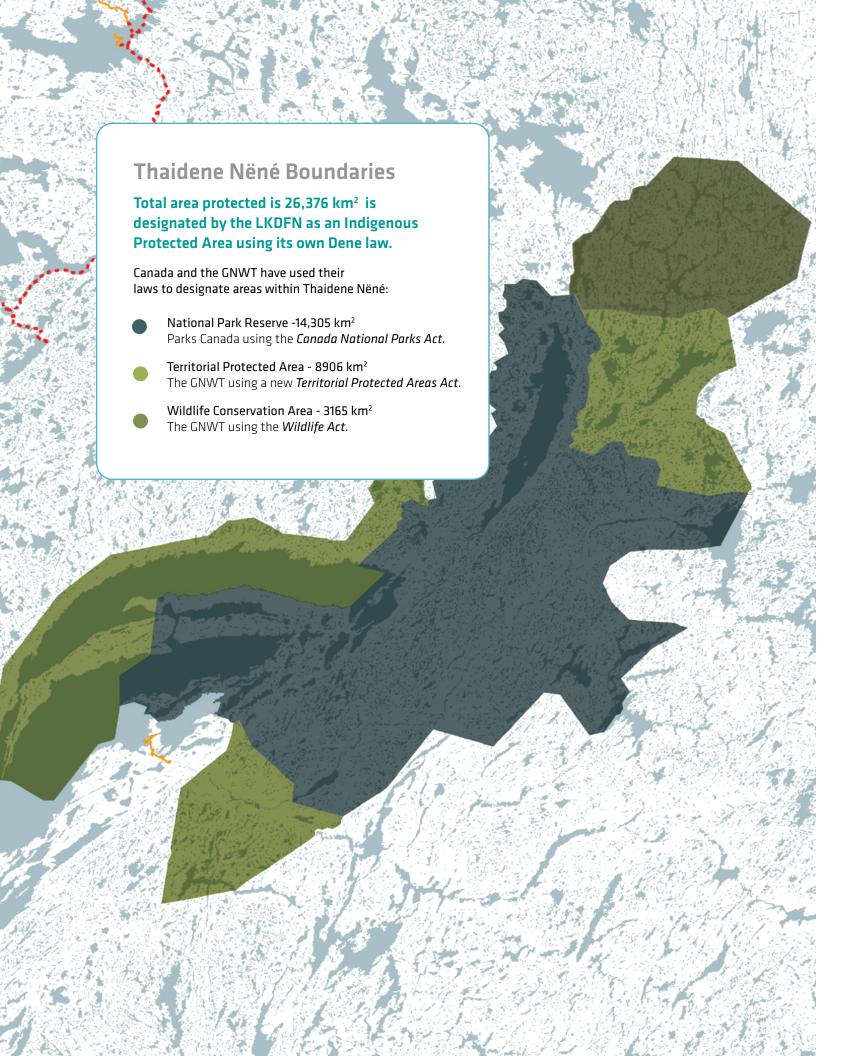
Our aim with this Plan is to help fulfil the role that has been given to our LKDFN Thaidene Nëné Team (our Team) for the benefit of current and future generations of our members.

Our Team includes leadership, staff and advisors. Key staff positions include Thaidene Nëné Manager, Ni Hat Ni Dene Coordinator, Ni Hat Ni Dene Senior and Junior Rangers, and Thaidene Nëné Tourism Officer.

The Plan will help our Team achieve this purpose by giving it direction and guiding the manner in which we will work with the other Parties on Thaidene Nëné implementation over the next five years; and serving as our Team's roadmap for developing action plans and measuring success on an annual basis.

Our Plan is built upon the shared vision of the Parties as expressed in the Establishment Agreements and identifies eight broad goals which are based on the various Agreement components. Under each goal, we have established specific objectives that we will strive to meet by 2025. Strategies are also identified, as are measures.

Our planning goals are presented in Dene Yati, which is our first language. Our planning process, including goals, objectives and strategies are also visualized through the process of moose hide tanning, and specifically the moose hide tanning frame. Moose hide tanning is a sacred and important cultural process that supports, maintains and fosters our Denesoline Way of Life, and that we view as a cultural expression of Nation building.



Background

Thaidene Nëné is a newly established Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) [2019], that permanently protects 26,376 km² of our traditional territory. Thaidene Nëné is comprised of nationally significant boreal forest, tundra, and freshwater ecosystems in and around the East Arm of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories and beyond. These pristine ecosystems, highlighted by sharp cliffs, deep lakes, and rushing rivers, teem with caribou, muskoxen, wolves, and fish. These healthy ecosystems sustain our culture and livelihood.

We are protecting Thaidene Nëné using our own Dene Law. Canada and the GNWT are also using their laws to designate areas within Thaidene Nëné, including the Canada National Parks Act, the Territorial Protected Areas Act, and the Wildlife Act. We will continue to practice our way of life in Thaidene Nëné, as our rights to hunt, fish, trap, gather, travel, make cabins and trails, and so on, will continue in Thaidene Nëné, as it always has.

The Establishment Agreements are a way to implement the treaty of 1900, as the Parties agree to share authority, resources and responsibilities in the common interest of fulfilling the following core objectives:

- Maintaining and promoting a healthy environment in Thaidene Nëné and the way of life of our community and members; and,
- Maintaining and making use of Thaidene Nëné so as to leave it for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations.

The Agreements recognize a nation-to-nation relationship between LKDFN, Canada and the GNWT. To ensure we work together, we will take direction from a joint decision-making body called the Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı (the Management Board). It will be the job of the Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı, in collaboration with the Parties, to ensure the protection and stewardship of Thaidene Nëné for present and future generations of our members and on behalf of all Canadians.

Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı will make decisions about subject matters such as ecological protection, cultural promotion, budgets and expenditures, access and use permits, and research and monitoring. The Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı will develop a management plan with a long-term environmental and cultural vision including protecting land and wildlife, managing visitors and supporting our Dene way of life. All Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı decisions are made by consensus.

Vision

Building on the shared Vision found in the Establishment Agreements, LKDFN's vision for Thaidene Nëné implementation in our Denesuline language is "Nuwe néné, nuwe ch'anié yunedhé xa". Translated into English, this means "Our land, our culture, for the future".

In the long-term (25 years from now), as a result of the implementation of Thaidene Nëné and other initiatives, we envision:

Strong Nation and Land Protection

- / An expansive protected LKDFN traditional territory, that includes lands in addition to those protected by Thaidene Nëné;
- / Becoming a fully self-governing nation, with strong and well established Nation-to-Nation relationships with Parks Canada, the GNWT and other Crown agencies and delegated authorities;
- / The ecological integrity of Thaidene Nëné is still fully intact, as upheld by our Agreements with Crown governments and their resulting partnerships;
- / Lands and waters in our traditional territory are in pristine condition, with healthy and abundant fish and wildlife:
- / Being recognized at the international level as a leader in IPA establishment and awarded international prizes for our work demonstrating and proving to the world a successful resurgent model of Indigenous stewardship and community responsibility; and,
- / Working with others to slow climate change and adjust to it.

Our People and Denesuline Ways of Life are Thriving

- / The ability of LKDFN to offer employment positions directly and indirectly related to Thaidene Nëné as a result of the booming conservation and tourism economy;
- Our language and traditions are alive, being practiced and are valued;
- Our staff members are trained and accredited in conservation and land stewardship, in guiding and in other professions, and are supported by Leadership and senior management;
- Our staff enjoy top of the line salaries and full benefits; and,
- Our members are in all key Thaidene Nëné positions, including the role of Superintendent of Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve.

First Class Community infrastructure

- / Park and Visitor Infrastructure are enjoyed by our Members and Visitors from around the world:
- / Affordable and suitable housing for our staff, and all our resident community members;
- A thriving community with all essential services for our members and in support of Thaidene Nëné operations;
- / Visitors from around the world keep returning to Thaidene Nëné;
- / Operational community-owned lodges near Łutsël K'e and within Thaidene Nëné that hold 5-star ratings and are world renowned for their hospitality;

- / A world class Thaidene Nëné park office, with cultural complex, restaurant and theatre;
- / A hotel in Yellowknife for Thaidene Nëné guests that are in transit:
- / A system of patrol cabins throughout Thaidene Nëné;
- / Electric boats and skidoos, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels;
- / Year-round services at Frontier Lodge and other properties; and,
- / Cross country running / ski trails and maybe even a golf course!



25 YEAR

MISION

Strong Nation

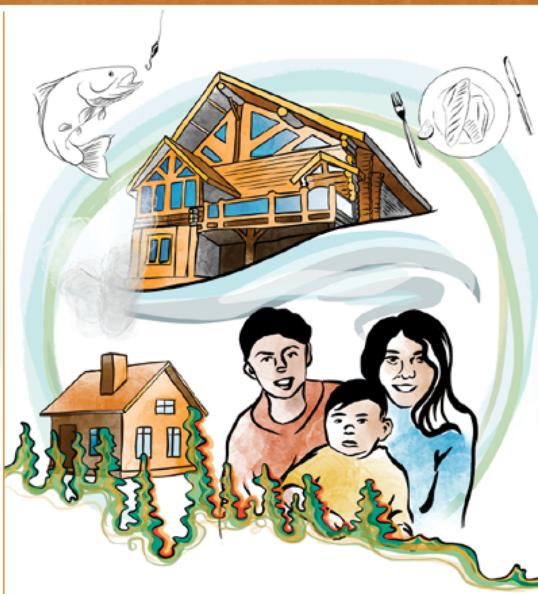
Land Protection

Our People and Denesuline Ways of Life are Thriving

First Class
Community Infastructure







1 Yunedhé xa ts'edél 2 Nuwe ch'ánié

8 Nets'ı k'ızı́ bet'á regháladá

7 Thaidene nené k'éyaghe niʔúú, kuweʔúú ʔeke badi



3 Dëne xa surúlye huzų xa

4 Dëne hánelkën xél tth'í la hurishą xa suzúlye

6 Háskëne nezų nuwe ghą názídíl 5 T'a híltsi sí, nuwe ch'ánié dagháré xa

Legend

- / Deni dhëdh chené (Poles) = Our Goals
- / Bet'á zenélką zetth'é (Rope/sinew) = Our Objectives, Strategies and Measures

When We work on Moose Hides, we are Nation Building

Like the process of moose hide tanning, implementing our vision, as well as the shared vision found in the Establishment Agreements for Thaidene Nëné, will take a concerted effort.

The moose hide tanning process works best when it is done by a team. Tanning a hide requires creating the proper frame that carefully ties and holds the gift of the moose in place. The frame includes:

- / good and solid poles (Dení dhédh chené);
- / lots of rope/sinew that binds the poles and holds the hide in place (Bet'á zenélką zetth'é); and,
- / a healthy moose hide that has been given to us by the Creator (Dëni dhëdh).

Tanning a hide requires good tools and materials, which come from the moose and the land (bone scrapers, wood and moss for smoking). These tools must be kept sharp. When they get dull, we sharpen them. You need the right kind of wood and moss. Tanning also requires a balance of strength and being gentle with the hide.

The goals we have identified in our strategic plan address what we view as building our foundation for Thaidene Nëné implementation and are like the poles, or "Deni dhédh chené" of the tanning frame. Good poles rarely need to be replaced.

The ropes, or "Bet'á ʔenélką ʔetth'é" that hold the hide in place are the drivers – they are the objectives, strategies and measures that will help our Nation reach our goals through the implementation of Thaidene Nëné. We may need to adjust those objectives and strategies as we move forward, to sharpen them, just as we must sharpen our tanning tools. We may also need to adjust our tension at times during the implementation phase. There will be hard conversations internally and with the Parties. We will work under a consensus process with the Parties as we move forward to co-govern Thaidene Nëné.

Dení dhédh chené

Goals and three to five year objectives and strategies



Yunedhé xa ts'edél Łutsël K'e leading

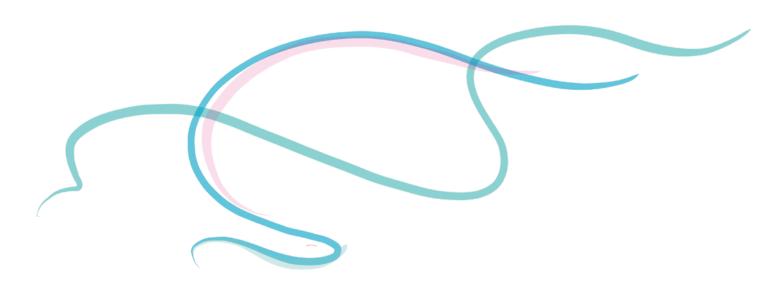
OBJECTIVES

- / Increase our understanding of how other Indigenous Governments have managed the implementation of their IPA's (by March 2022);
- / Maintain existing partnerships with other IPA communities to exchange knowledge;
- Increase our Team's effectiveness, cohesion and impact by 2025, where we are fully achieving our roles and responsibilities;
- / Increase our effectiveness/ability to "fix it together" with staff and leadership from the other Parties:
- / Have Dene Laws incorporated into management plan by 2025; and,
- / Increase community awareness of Thaidene Nëné establishment and operations.



STRATEGIES

- / Create funding and travel opportunities for the Team, as well as with the other Parties and the Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı members, in order to visit other IPA's to consider implementation approaches and lessons learned;
- Create lower-cost opportunities for the Team to connect with other IPA communities, including video-conferencing and online information exchange;
- / Implement annual Team retreats (including leadership and all LKDFN staff connected with Thaidene Nëné), with a commitment to team building, annual work planning and strategic planning renewal;
- / Develop and promote the concept of annual land-based gatherings of the Parties to commemorate Thaidene Nëné, to address party-based priorities for the upcoming year, which promotes relationship building and that provides opportunities for our members to celebrate the establishment of Thaidene Nëné;
- Develop Dene law concurrent to the development of all regulatory components of the management plan developed by Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı; and,
- / Develop a community engagement strategy that ensures members are consulted on a regular basis about Thaidene Nëné and members feel engaged through regular opportunities to provide input into key strategic objectives.



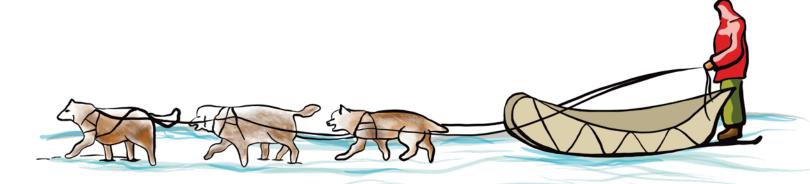
Nuwe ch'ánié Dene Yati and Denesuline Way of Life in all decisions

OBJECTIVES

- / Increase the use of Denesoline Yati by all members at the Thaidene Nëné xá dá yáłtı and Parks Canada Agency, GNWT and LKDFN representatives by 2021;
- / Increase opportunity for members involved in Thaidene Nëné to increase their fluency in Dene Yati; and.
- / Increase language and cultural curriculum within land-based programming connected to cultural practice that supports the management of Thaidene Nëné.

STRATEGIES

- / Establish language protocols for use by the Thaidene Nëné xá dá yáłtı by 2021;
- / Develop language tools related to Thaidene Nëné that can be integrated into language programming in Łutsël K'e; and,
- / Expand land-based programming in Thaidene Nëné to ensure cultural transmission to youth.



Dëne xa surúlye huzu xa Maximize successful employment for members, including youth and elders

OBJECTIVES

- / Increase the number of full-time Ni Hat Ni Ranger positions from 4 to 8 by 2025;
- / Increase seasonal youth employment opportunities in Thaidene Nëné through the Ni Hat Ni Dene Ranger Program;
- / Increase the number of youth accessing local, territorial and national "on the land programming"; and,
- Increase employment opportunities for elders and Dene Yati speakers related to Thaidene Nëné / Establish a Thaidene Nëné Elder / Master translation and interpretive services.

STRATEGIES

- / Address housing and daycare barriers by:
 - Integrating Thaidene Nëné staff housing requirements as part of the LKDFN housing strategy in order to provide housing options to Thaidene Nëné staff; and,
 - Identifying the requirements for childcare needs of Thaidene Nëné staff as part of the LKDFN childcare strategy in support of increasing employee success at work.
- apprentice Program;
- Continue to build additional youth programming connected to Thaidene Nëné, including the Ni Hat Ni Dene Ranger program; and,
- Build awareness and LKDFN access to territorial and national "on the land" youth programming to increase on the land opportunities for youth.



Dëne hánelkën xél tth'í la hurjshą xa suzúlye Provide training, leadership capacity building and mentorship for our employees and Thaidene Nené xá dá Yáłtı members

OBJECTIVES

- / Increase capacity of our Team and Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı members to address all aspects of Thaidene Nëné implementation and management; and,
- / Increase Team performance and satisfaction through strong culture of management/ leadership practice at LKDFN.

STRATEGIES

- Investigate and access leadership and management development programs for senior members of the Team and Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłti appointees;
- Build and implement capacity building and training strategy including individualized plans for our Team members: and.
- Build mentorship as a key focus within the overall capacity building and training strategy, including mentorship from elders and emerging youth leaders.

T'a híltsı sí, nuwe ch'ánıé dagháré xa Design and maintain infrastructure that reflects who we are

OBIECTIVES

- / Open the Thaidene Nëné Visitors and Interpretive Center by 2023 within budget and which meets LKDFN interests;
- / Increase the number of upgraded or new patrol / outpost cabins required for Thaidene Nëné operations by 2023;
- / Explore feasibility of community recreational infrastructure that aligns with Thaidene visitor goals and objectives; and,
- Increase commercial hotel capacity in Lutselk'e by 2025.

STRATEGIES

- Seek partners to help fund and support momentum towards all infrastructure objectives;
- / Develop community engagement mechanism for feasibility and design-build process;
- / Complete feasibility and design build for the Thaidene Nëné Visitors and interpretive center;
- Develop and implement the Thaidene Nëné housing and daycare requirements under a Łutsël K'e Housing Strategy;
- Develop and complete plan for upgrading existing patrol/outpost cabins and building new ones: and.
- operated hotel in the community of Łutsël K'e.



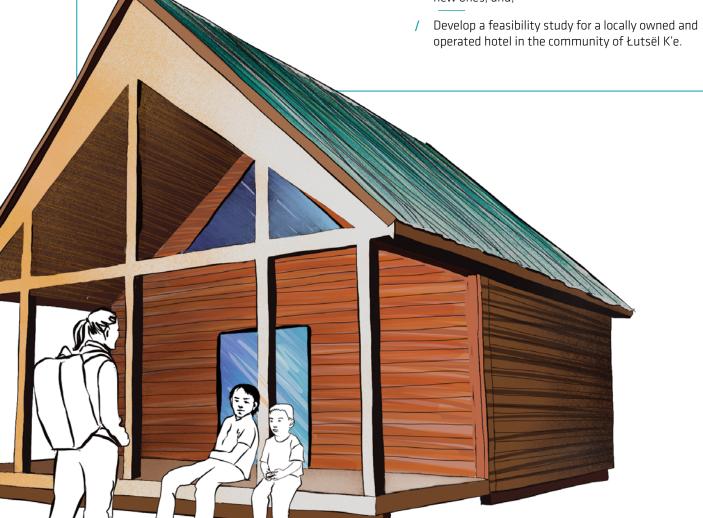
Háskëne nezų nuwe ghą názídíl Hosting our visitors, using LKDFN visitor protocols

OBJECTIVES

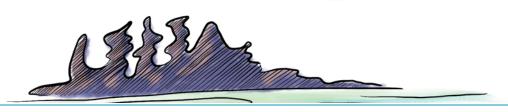
- / Increase awareness amongst visitors about the importance of protecting Thaidene Nëné as well as the cultural, historic context of Lutselk'e:
- Increase awareness of members about the value of community-based tourism, how to successfully add value to visitor experience, and host/visitor interactions;
- / Increase programming at Frontier Lodge from seasonal to year-round; and,
- / Maintain our community's privacy as visitor numbers increase.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to implement all elements of the Thaidene Nëné Sustainable Tourism Strategy related to visitor experience;
- Develop a visitor experience strategy, including protocols and cross-cultural orientation for visitors as they enter Thaidene Nëné and Lutselk'e, and for members who will be interacting with visitors;
- Explore developing film/videos about the moose hide tanning practice and process that can form part of visitor experience;
- Develop new products and promotion materials that showcase LKDFN stories / histories; and,
- Develop, in partnership with GNWT, workshop style/short training course programming for our members interested in opportunities in the hospitality, interpretive tourism and related small business sectors.







Thaidene nené k'éyaghe nįzúú, kuwezúú zeke badi Respecting protection of ecological integrity

OBIECTIVES

- / Increase impact of Ni hat'ni Dene Ranger program in order to provide boots on the ground monitoring and enforcement capabilities within Thaidene Nëné;
- / Increase our ability to implement aspects of Yúnethé Xá ?etthën Hádı – LKDFN's Caribou Stewardship Plan through - Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı processes;
- / Increase our ability to monitor, and if necessary manage, commercial land and water based activities (e.g. tours, researchers) in Thaidene Nëné by December 2020, prior to formal management measures established through the Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı process;
- / Increase the Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı's understanding of contaminated sites within Thaidene Nëné (for example Timber Bay); and,
- / Increase Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı's understanding of LKDFN research priorities within Thaidene Nëné.

STRATEGIES

- / Expand and upgrade Ni hat'ni Dene Ranger program into a year-round, consolidated program under existing workplans by 2021, including the development of a Ni hat'ni Operations Manual;
- / Explore how Yúnethé Xá ?etthën Hádı LKDFN's Caribou Stewardship Plan - measures and recommendations can be implemented through Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı processes;
- Develop and implement a LKDFN interim measures protocol in order to monitor, and if necessary manage, non-subsistence land and water based activities;
- / Develop a priority list of contaminated sites within Thaidene Nene and provide to Thaidene Nëné xá dá yáłtı as a high priority directive by 2022; and,
- / Establish a research priority list for Thaidene Nene and provide as an information item to the Thaidene Nëné xá dá yáłtı by 2022.



Nets'į k'ızį bet'á regháladá Building a sustainable community economy

OBJECTIVES

- / Increase community awareness regarding opportunities to bid on Parks Canada and GNWT contracts;
- / Increase community awareness regarding nongovernment business opportunities related to Thaidene Nëné:
- / Increase readiness for local contractors to take advantage of infrastructure development contracts; and,
- / Increase number of businesses licensed to operate in Łutsël K'e and within Thaidene Nëné and eligibility under the Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation Business Registry.

STRATEGIES

- / Support Parks Canada and the GNWT in their efforts to communicate the business and contracting opportunities resulting from Thaidene Nëné under the Establishment Agreements;
- Develop business development strategy sessions for local entrepreneurs to access nongovernment contracts; and,
- / Explore, in partnership with Parks Canada and the GNWT, the development and implementation of a business certification support program to support increased business registration.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The LKDFN Chief and Council is ultimately responsible for ensuring the Plan is meeting desired results by measuring the progress of goals and related objectives - strategies and making changes as required.

Day to day management of the Plan and its objectives, strategies and actions is the responsibility of the Thaidene Nëné Manager and staff, under the direction of the Director of the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department (WELD), who together are accountable for the implementation process and monitoring progress.

The Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis so that workplans and related activities can be determined. Measures that will be used to identify progress towards goals are found in Appendix 1. The LKDFN Thaidene Nëné Manager is responsible for tracking progress by keeping data (including statistics) on each measure.

The Plan will be renewed every five years.

Appendix 1

Measuring the success of our goals (Dení dhédh chené)

1 Yunedhé xa ts'edél

Łutsël K'e Leading

- / Evidence of field trip, teleconference/video conference reports, which include content regarding lessons learned, implementation options and strategic considerations.
- / Codified LKDFN team member roles and responsibilities [e.g. Team terms of reference within the WLED (accountability and reporting), clearly articulated roles and responsibilities within job descriptions];
- / Records of annual team building sessions including session reports, workplans, etc. that show evidence of team cohesion and effectiveness exercises;
- / Annual reports submitted by the Thaidene Nëné Manager to WLED and LKDFN Council respecting progress on the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan;
- / Number of Dene laws embedded into Thaidene Nëné management plan;
- / Number of communication and engagement tools and events aimed at increasing community awareness of Thaidene Nëné (newsletters, website updates, #of community listening sessions, increase in attendance at public sessions); and,
- / Number of annual commemorative meetings and gatherings, and a record of results and outcomes.
- 2 Nuwe ch'ánié Preserve and promote the use of Dene Yati and Denesuline Way of Life in all decisions about Thaidene Nëné
- / Increase in the # of Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı documents using Dene Yati (agendas, meeting minutes, formal board documents); and,
- / Completed glossary of Dene Yati terms required for the management of Thaidene Nëné.

- 3 Dëne xa surúlye huzu xa Maximize successful employment opportunities for members, including youth and elders
- / # of houses acquired/ built / dedicated to Thaidene Nëné Staff;
- / # of daycare positions accessed by Team staff;
- / # of our youth accessing LKDFN youth employment opportunities;
- / # of our youth accessing national and territorial youth programs;
- / Established Elder / Master apprentice Program, with measures set for program results for 2025-2030;
- / Established land-based youth programming for youth, with measures set for program results for 2025-2030: and,
- # of LKDFN youth programming spaces created or maintained.

4 Dëne hánelkën xél tth'í la hurįshą

xa suzúlye Provide Training, Capacity Building and Mentorship opportunities for our Employees and Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı members

- / # of training courses, certifications, etc. taken/ attained by staff;
- # of individuals retained in positions on an annual basis;
- / # of completed plans for staff against capacity building and training strategy;
- # of staff moved into mentorship positions or different positions with increased authority and responsibility; and,
- # of mentors employed and retained, including Elders.

5 T'a hiltsı si, nuwe ch'ánıé dagháré xa

Design and Maintain Infrastructure that reflects who we are.

- / # of successful funding partnerships built that support infrastructure projects;
- / Level of funding raised towards infrastructure goal;
- / Interpretive center that is fully operational by 2025;
- / # of houses dedicated to staff working for Thaidene Nëné:
- / # of upgraded cabins;
- / # of new cabins; and
- / # of hotel rooms in community.

6 Háskëne nezų nuwe ghą názídíl

Hosting our visitors, using LKDFN Visitor Protocols

- All elements of the LKDFN Sustainable Tourism Strategy identified for 2020-2025 are implemented;
- / Completed visitor experience surveys that record number of visitors, accommodations accessed, trip satisfaction in relation to services, and value of visit, including where money was spent;
- / # of infractions of visitor protocols;
- / # of new locally developed products and marketing materials;
- # and title of hospitality, interpretive tourism and related small business courses taken by our members; and,
- / # of members gaining and maintaining employment in the hospitality, interpretive tourism and related small business sectors.

7 Thaidene nené k'éyaghe nizúú, kuwezúú zeke badi Respecting protection of Ecological Integrity

- / Complete Ni hat'ni operations manual that is utilized by Rangers;
- / Complete interim measures protocol;
- / # of measures / recommendations in the Yúnethé Xá ?etthën Hádı – LKDFN's Caribou Stewardship Plan implemented.
- / # of commercial tours, research projects, etc.
 registered under the interim measures protocol;
- / # of contaminated sites addressed by Thaidene Nene Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı; and,
- # of LKDFN research priorities addressed by Thaidene Nené xá dá yáłtı.

8 Nets'ı k'ızı bet'á regháladá Building a

Sustainable Community Economy

- # of community engagements provided that address business and contracting opportunities related to Thaidene Nëné;
- / # of existing and new businesses registered under the LDFN Business Registry;
- # of contracts awarded by the Parks Canada Agency to LKDFN registered businesses; and,
- # of contracts awarded by the GNWT to LKDFN registered businesses.









www.landoftheancestors.ca thaidenenedepartment@gmail.com