



Nááts'ihch'oh  
National Park Reserve

PIIP'ENÉH ŁÉETÓQ DEÉ

THE BROKEN

# SKULL

RIVER  
Trip Planner

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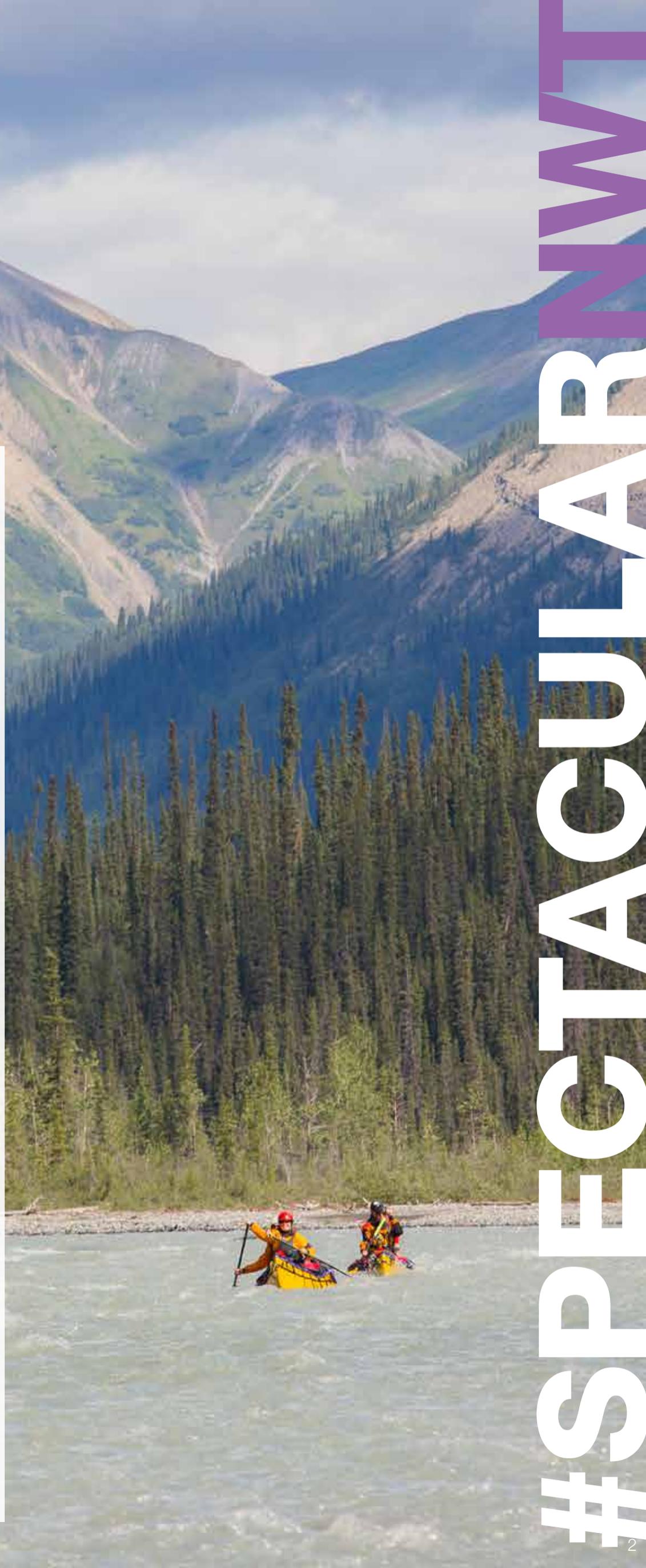
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# THE MOUNTAINS HAVE KEPT THE MUSIC

## Welcome to Our Home

*"It's almost like the mountains have kept the music...you can feel the spirit of our ancestors and you can feel the powerful feeling from the mountains. It's so majestic. It's so overwhelming.*

*...And we've had stories about our people where they dance their drum dances. There are rings where they've worn into the ground. There are places where they used to dance after a good celebration and a good kill, or maybe after they'd built their mooseskin boat and they would celebrate."*

*-Ethel Blondin-Andrew*

For generations of Dene and Métis people, Nááts'ihch'oh was and is a rich harvesting area. They still travel the land in the park, and welcome you to their home.



# NÁÁTS'JHCH'OH

THE MOUNTAIN THAT IS SHARP  
LIKE A PORCUPINE QUILL



## Mount Nááts'jhch'oh (Mount Wilson)

Nááts'jhch'oh is the name of this mountain in the Shúhtaot'ine language. It refers to its unique shape - sharp and pointed like a porcupine quill. The Shúhtaot'ine believe that Nááts'jhch'oh is a place of strong power, which can be bestowed on newborn children.

Nááts'jhch'oh is the name chosen for the National Park Reserve by the following Elders: Gabriel Horassi, David Yallee Senior, Maurice Mendo, Frederick Clement Senior, Frank Yallee, John Hotti, John B. Hetchinelle, James Bavard, Norman Andrew and Leon Andrew.

# TWO NATIONAL PARKS

Mount  
Nááts'jhch'oh

Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake)

## Nááts'jhch'oh

Gahnîhthah Mje (Rabbitkettle Lake)

Nájljcho (Virginia Falls)

## Nahanni

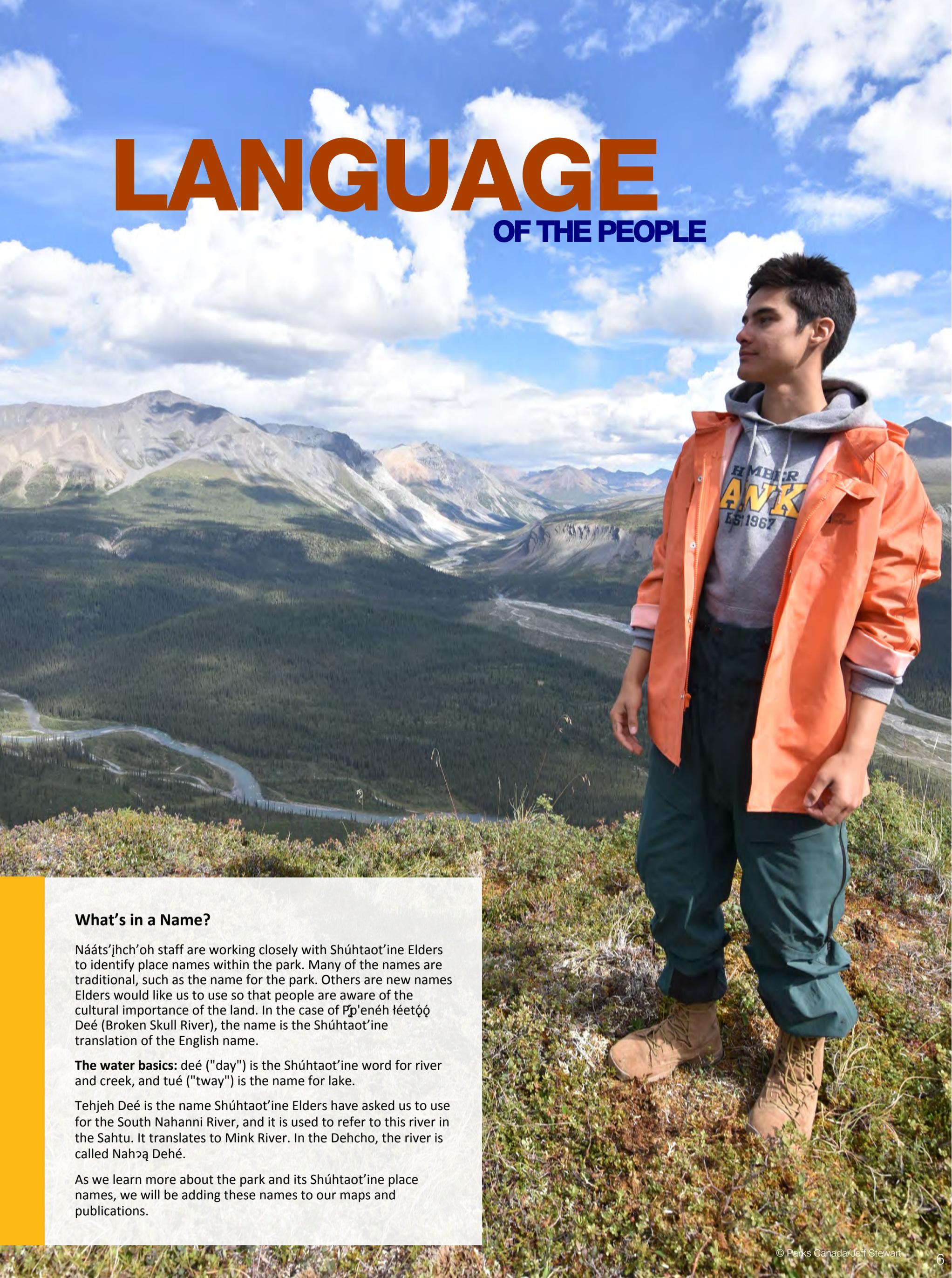
Nahanni Butte

### Nááts'jhch'oh and Nahanni

Tehjeh Deé (the South Nahanni River) and Píj'p'enéh léetóó Deé (the Broken Skull River - pronounced "peep-en-eh-clehtone day") flow through two parks and two Dene territories. Nááts'jhch'oh National Park Reserve is in the Sahtu Settlement Area. Nahanni National Park Reserve is the traditional territory of the Dehcho First Nations.

# LANGUAGE

## OF THE PEOPLE



### What's in a Name?

Nááts'jch'oh staff are working closely with Shúhtaot'ine Elders to identify place names within the park. Many of the names are traditional, such as the name for the park. Others are new names Elders would like us to use so that people are aware of the cultural importance of the land. In the case of P'p'enéh íéetóó Deé (Broken Skull River), the name is the Shúhtaot'ine translation of the English name.

**The water basics:** deé ("day") is the Shúhtaot'ine word for river and creek, and tué ("tway") is the name for lake.

Tehjeh Deé is the name Shúhtaot'ine Elders have asked us to use for the South Nahanni River, and it is used to refer to this river in the Sahtu. It translates to Mink River. In the Dehcho, the river is called Nahᓂᓂ Dehé.

As we learn more about the park and its Shúhtaot'ine place names, we will be adding these names to our maps and publications.



# PÍJP'ENÉH ÍÉETÓÓ DEÉ

## BROKEN SKULL RIVER

### Paddling Píjp'enéh íéetóó Deé

We don't know why you haven't paddled it yet. But we do know it's pure fun. Full of bouncy whitewater and epic scenery, the continuous whitewater is perfect for skilled paddlers going on their first northern river trip. Rapids range from class I to III; the majority of the river is I-II, with some long class II+ sections.

Plan 6-10 days to paddle the 150 km from Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake - "ohn-ta tway feht-own") to Gahnìhthah Mìe (Rabbitkettle Lake) on Nahᓇ Dehé (the South Nahanni River). Longer trips are possible to Nájìjcho (Virginia Falls) and Nahanni Butte. Contact us or consult the South Nahanni River Touring Guide for more information.

The best time to go is mid-June to mid-August. River difficulty may increase in low water, with more class II+ to III rapids reported.

#### National Topographic System Maps

105 P/01, 105 I/16, 105 I/09, 95 L/12, 95 L/05



YOUR

# STORIES

MATTER

## Getting To Know Píjip'enéh íéetóó Deé

### **Nááts'ihch'oh is a new national park.**

If you go, please share your stories, photos, and GPS data with us. Your experiences will help us learn about the river and make this trip planner a better one.

### **Only one stretch of rapids is marked.**

You read that right. The National Topographic System Maps only show one stretch of rapids on the river, located on map 105 1/16.

### **But, Píjip'enéh íéetóó Deé is continuous whitewater.**

For experienced paddlers, you can read and run most of this class II+ river. But make no mistake, it is 108 km of continuous class I-II+ whitewater with canyons, boulders, wood hazards, and super fun wave trains. There is one waterfall and one class III rapid (Thank You) on the creek that leads into Píjip'enéh íéetóó Deé.

### **Use this guide to supplement the information on the 1:50 000 National Topographic Service maps.**

Canada's National Topographic System maps are available for print-on-demand from your favourite map printers. To make ordering easier, we have provided the map numbers for the 1:50 000 maps throughout this planner.



# START HERE



## Put in at Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake)

0 km

Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake) is the best place to access Pííjp'enéh íéetóq Deé (the Broken Skull River). Take a day to enjoy the lake, and hike up the ridge for a view overlooking the Pííjp'enéh íéetóq Deé Valley.

**Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake): 63°01.18'N, 128°10.63'W**

**National Topographic System Maps** Divide Lake - 105 P/01



# QTAA TU FEHTO DEÉ

DIVIDE LAKE  
CREEK

## **Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake) to Pííłq̄hdaa Náárééłı (Swallow Falls)**

**0 - 2 km**

If you're lucky, you'll paddle from Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake) down Qtaa Tu Fehto Deé (Divide Lake Creek) towards Pííłp'enéh íéetq̄q̄ Deé (the Broken Skull River). If you're like us, you'll get your feet wet as you paddle and drag your boats 2 km downstream. Next up? The portage around Pííłq̄hda Náárééłı (Swallow Falls - "pih-lon-dah nah-re-lay").

### **National Topographic System Maps**

Divide Lake - 105 P/01, 105 I/16

# PÍÍLOHDA NÁÁRÉÉLI

SWALLOW  
FALLS

## Portage around Píílohda Nááréeli

**2 km**

The lone portage on this trip is around beautiful Píílohda Nááréeli (Swallow Falls), unofficially named for the nearby cliff swallow colony. The 150m portage starts on river right at the confluence with another small creek on river left. Follow the game trails to the spacious landing below the falls. After the portage, prepare to paddle through a mini-canyon ending at Thank You Rapids.

**Portage Start: 62°59.70'N, 128°10.73'W**

**Portage End: 62°59.66'N, 128°10.95'W**

**National Topographic System Maps 105 I/16**

# THANK YOU

## RAPIDS

### Píilq̄hda Nááréél̄ (Swallow Falls) to Píj̄p'enéh̄ léetq̄ Deé (Broken Skull River)

2 - 5 km

Between Píilq̄hda Nááréél̄ (Swallow Falls) and the confluence with Píj̄p'enéh̄ léetq̄ Deé (the Broken Skull River), prepare for some tight manoeuvres in a mini canyon. Take some time to scout Thank You Rapids near kilometre 3. If you make it through without denting your bow, you'll be saying, "mahsi" (thank you). Most groups find this to be the most technical rapid on the trip and choose to line or portage this class III section. Make your choice based on the skill level of your group. Remember, your trip has only begun and a damaged boat here could spell an early journey home.

**Thank You Rapids: 62°59.56'N, 128°11.18'W**

**Confluence with Píj̄p'enéh̄ léetq̄ Deé: 62°59.22'N,  
128°11.66'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 105 I/16**

# BOULDER

## DODGING



### **Píj'p'enéh íéetóó Deé to Pinball Rapid**

**5 - 10 km**

No rapids are marked, but the class I-II whitewater continues. Ride the bouncy waves, wind through half-canyons, and dodge just enough boulders to keep you on your toes. Watch for a creek on river right with plenty of broken shale. This marks the lead-up to Pinball, a II+ rapid, which gets harder with low water. Be sure to scout, there are possibilities for pins in this section.

**Shale Creek: 62°57.5898'N, 128°9.645'W**

**Below crux of Pinball: 62°57.0288'N, 128°9.1416'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 105 I/16**

THREE

# VALLEY

CONFLUENCE

## Pinball Rapid to Tu Dek'ale Deé

10km - 24 km

The whitewater continues, bringing you to the Three Valley Confluence where hiking opportunities abound. Tu Dek'ale Deé (White Water Creek) and K'áále Míé Deé (Rainbow Creek) merge just before joining Píjip'enéh íéetóó Deé (the Broken Skull River). Tu Dek'ale Deé is usually a cloudy white. The creek does sometimes run clear, so you can't count on the distinctive colour for your clue - nor any names on the map. Animals pass through the valley confluence, and you'll likely see tracks of all the big mammals.

**Tu Dek'ale Deé: 62°48.99'N, 128°01.17'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 105 I/16**

# HIKE

HERE

## Hiker's Paradise

Leave your campsite at Tu Dek'ale Deé (White Water Creek) and paddle to river right of Píjip'enéh íéetóó Deé (the Broken Skull River). Find a spot to secure your canoes and start walking up Tu ʔulah Shúh (Singing Water Mountain). There is no trail, so you'll need to find your own route. Your reward? Spectacular views. If the weather is clear, you can see back to Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake). There are also hiking options up the two tributary creeks if you don't feel like ferrying across the river.

**Possible hike start: 62°48.9564'N, 128°1.3518'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 105 I/16**

# EPIC

## VIEWS

### Tu Dek'ale Deé to the Hot Springs

24 - 36 km

As the river cuts through the mountains, you will paddle the only marked rapids along the route (and the second II+ rapid). The mountains are close to the river and fallen boulders pepper the riverbed. Shortly after Tu Dek'ale Deé (White Water Creek) you enter Landslide Alley (featured on the cover), a class II+, higher volume boulder dodge. After the narrows the "Alley" calms down but the boulders continue.

**End of Landslide Alley: 62°47.23'N, 128°02.27'W**

**Hot Springs Gravel Bar: 62°45.31'N, 128°05.60'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 105 I/16**

# SOAK

## IN THE SCENERY

### **Píjip'enéh Íéetóq Gaqfáá (Broken Skull Hot Springs)**

Ready to relax in a perfect hot spring? Not too hot, not too cold, and only the scent of fresh mountain air. This is Píjip'enéh Íéetóq Gaqfáá (Broken Skull Hot Springs), a 2.5 km hike from Píjip'enéh Íéetóq Deé (the Broken Skull River). Pull out river right on the large gravel bar, grab your GPS, and head through the brush and forest to Dedele? Deé (Red Creek). Prepare for a bush bash as there is no maintained trail. Cross Dedele? Deé and hike up to one of the best hot springs you could imagine.

**Hot springs are sacred to the Shúhtaot'ine.** Places of healing, they can lose their power if they are not treated with respect. Someday the springs may be needed once again for healing, so follow the Elders' requests: tread softly and watch over the springs. Pay your respects and give thanks by providing an offering (a small amount of tea or tobacco) as you cross Dedele? Deé on your way to the hot springs. The offering allows you to "pay" the land.

Elders tasked us with learning more about the hot springs, so in 2017 we installed a wildlife camera and temperature gauge. Feel free to smile and wave to the camera - we delete all visitor photos.

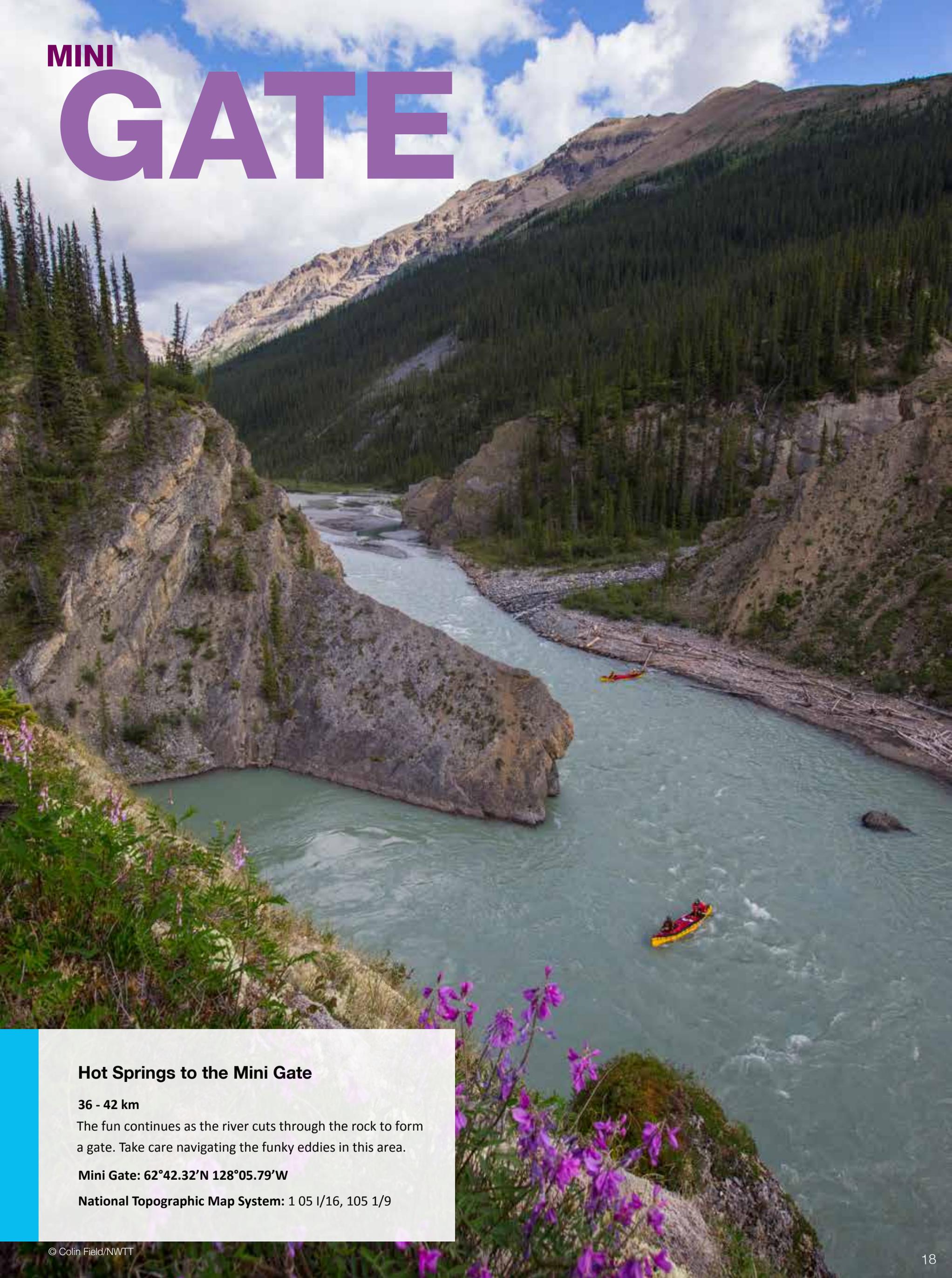
Last time we visited there was a bear napping under a tufa ledge. This is a known bear hangout spot; make noise while hiking so that they can hear you. While it may be tempting, please do not camp at the hot springs.

**Gravel Bar: 62°45.31'N, 128°05.60'W**

**Hot Springs: 62° 45.28'N, 128° 08.15'W**

**National Topographic Map System: 105 I/16**

# MINI GATE



## Hot Springs to the Mini Gate

36 - 42 km

The fun continues as the river cuts through the rock to form a gate. Take care navigating the funky eddies in this area.

**Mini Gate: 62°42.32'N 128°05.79'W**

**National Topographic Map System: 1 05 I/16, 105 1/9**

# TIME TO PLAY



## Mini Gate to Shúhzhíé kájlí (creek)

42 - 53 km

The bouncy stuff just keeps going. If you like to play, keep your eyes peeled for surf waves. We found this one beside a small cave on river left. As for Shúhzhíé kájlí ("shu-jeh-cane-lee"), you won't find this creek named on maps - it's named for the "creek that flows from the mountain" at the pass below Níonep'eneᑦ Tué (Grizzly Bear Lake).

**Cave:** 62°41.09'N, 128°04.47'W

**Shúhzhíé kájlí :** 62°37.86'N, 128°01.87'W

**National Topographic Map System:** 105 I/9



HOW FAR IS

# TUFA?

## Sadée Shúh Gaqfáá (Grizzly Bear Hot Springs)

The moment you see it, you know it's special. Sadée Shúh Gaqfáá (Grizzly Bear Hot Springs - "sah-day shoe gah-ohn-faa") is a delicate and beautiful spring located on a tributary of Píjip'enéh íéetqó Deé (the Broken Skull River). Fragile wildflowers and tufa formations surround the spring. The Shúhtaot'ine name for this spring comes from the name of the prominent mountain across the valley - Sadée Shúh. This translates as "Sunlight Mountain," and it is seen as a source of life for everything from grasses to wildlife.

Please walk softly, visit carefully and follow the teaching of the Elders to make an offering in the creek as you approach the hot spring. The offering allows you to give thanks and to give back to the land for the experience you are about to have.

From Píjip'enéh íéetqó Deé (the Broken Skull River), Sadée Shúh Gaqfáá is a long 10 km hike up a creek bed. Be prepared for multiple creek crossings and bad jokes about the hike being TOO FAR or TU-FA.

**Sadée Shúh Gaqfáá: 62°40.28'N, 127°54.00'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 95 L/12**

# NÍONEP'ENE? TUÉ

## GRIZZLY BEAR LAKE



### Side Trip to Níonep'ene? Tué (Grizzly Bear Lake)

For enthusiastic hikers, a side trip to Níonep'ene? Tué (Grizzly Bear Lake - "knee-o-nipen-ay tway") is the quintessential Nááts'ihch'oh destination. Plan 2-3 extra days to hike 14 km up Shúhzhíé kájl and over the mountain pass to the lake. Camp on the shore and spend your days exploring nearby peaks.

Elders tell us not to use the words "grizzly bear" as it can draw the "big guy" to you. Because of the cultural sensitivity, we are moving forward with an official name change for this lake. Níonep'ene? translates as "prehistoric backbone".

**Níonep'ene? Tué: 62°41.17'N, 127°49.23'W**

**National Topographic System Maps:** Grizzly Bear Lake - 95 L/12

FLOW FROM ONE

# PARK

TO ANOTHER

## Shúhzhíé kájlj to Nahanni Boundary

**53 - 72 km**

On your way to the Nahanni boundary, you'll pass through low canyons with some hoodoo-like formations. In a spot just before the cliffs start to tower again on river left, there is a good campsite. It makes a great place to spend one last night in the Sahtu.

**Cliff Camp: 62°30.312'N, 127°54.641'W**

**Nahanni Boundary: 62°29.86'N, 127°53.83'W**

**National Topographic System Maps:**

105 I/9, 95 L/12, 95 L/5



**LAFFERTY'S**

# RIVAL

## **Nahanni Boundary to Díga Dezene Deé (Black Wolf Creek)**

### **72 - 103 km**

Just across the Nahanni park boundary, we found a wave train to rival Lafferty's on Nahąą Dehé (the South Nahanni River). If you're looking for a fun spot to set up some photos, this is it. We found it easy to eddy out below a gravel bar river right and drag back up to the top to run it again.

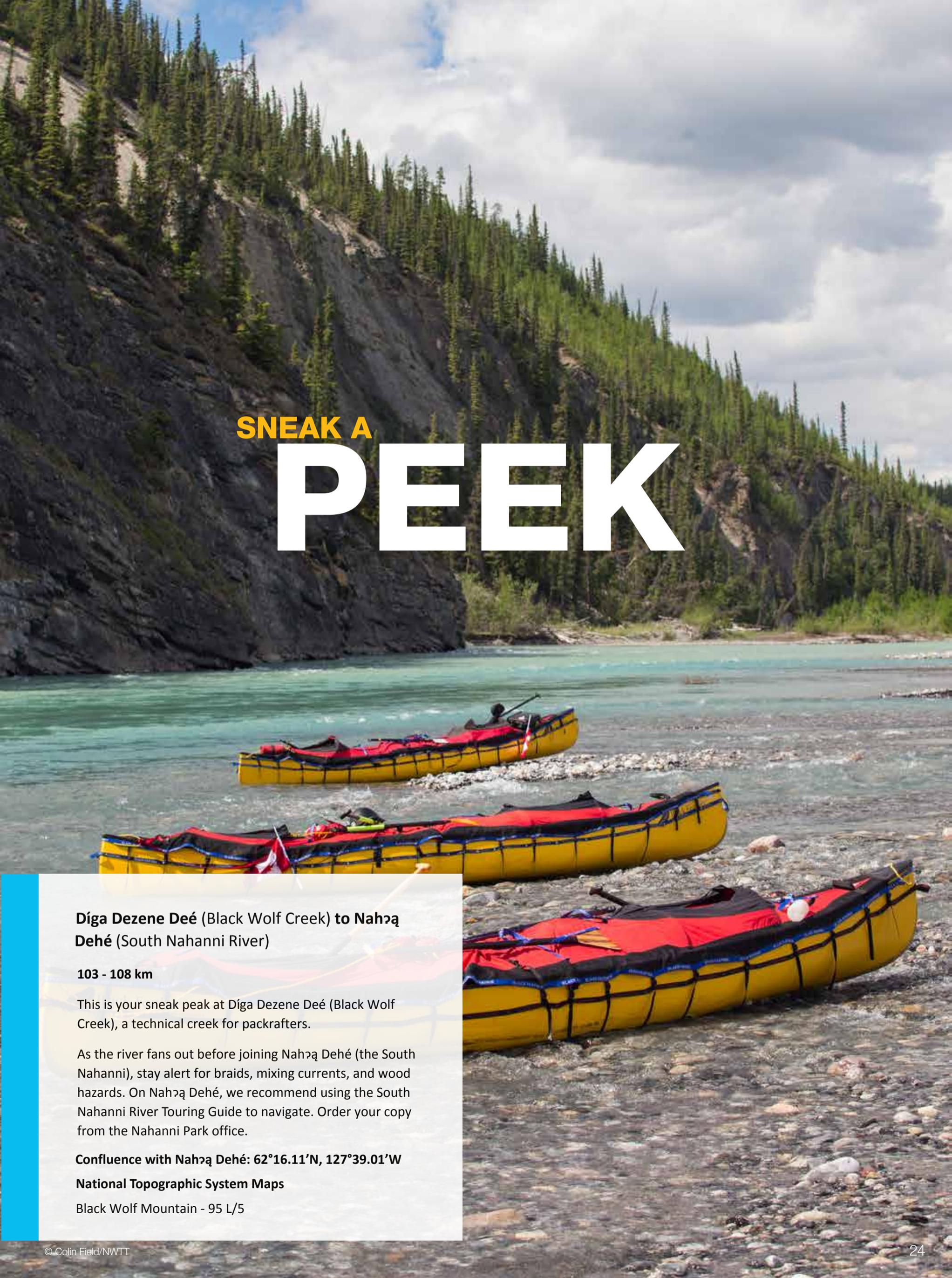
Braided channels with wood hazards continue on this stretch of the river.

**Lafferty's Rival: 62°28.13'N, 127°50.94'W**

**Díga Dezene Deé: 62°18.44'N, 127°39.02'W**

**National Topographic System Maps: 95 L/12, Black Wolf Mountain - 95 L/5**





**SNEAK A**

# PEEK

## **Díga Dezene Deé (Black Wolf Creek) to Nahᓃᓃ Dehé (South Nahanni River)**

**103 - 108 km**

This is your sneak peak at Díga Dezene Deé (Black Wolf Creek), a technical creek for packrafters.

As the river fans out before joining Nahᓃᓃ Dehé (the South Nahanni), stay alert for braids, mixing currents, and wood hazards. On Nahᓃᓃ Dehé, we recommend using the South Nahanni River Touring Guide to navigate. Order your copy from the Nahanni Park office.

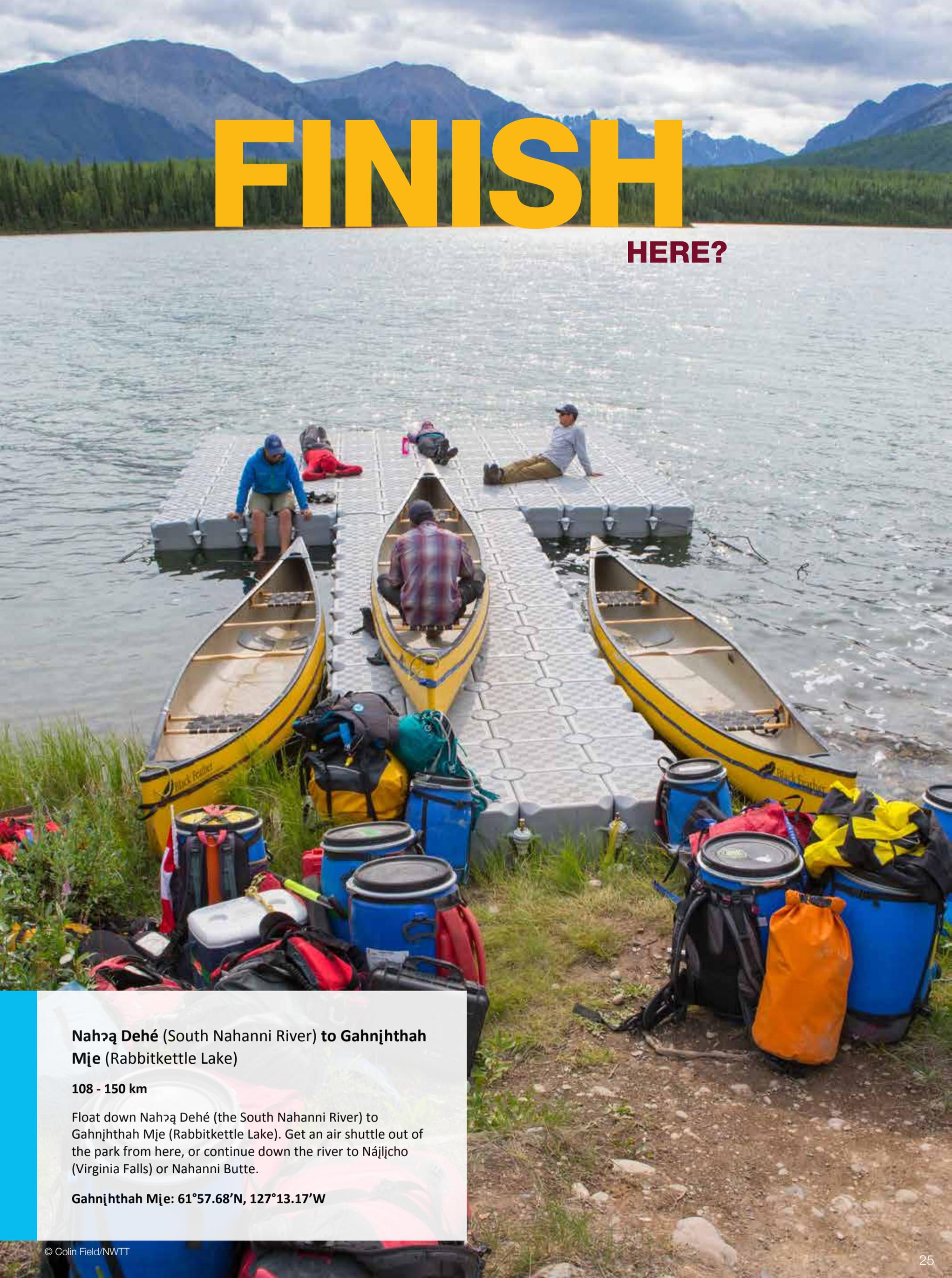
**Confluence with Nahᓃᓃ Dehé: 62°16.11'N, 127°39.01'W**

**National Topographic System Maps**

Black Wolf Mountain - 95 L/5

# FINISH

HERE?



## **Nahą Dehé (South Nahanni River) to Gahnįthah Mįe (Rabbitkettle Lake)**

**108 - 150 km**

Float down Nahą Dehé (the South Nahanni River) to Gahnįthah Mįe (Rabbitkettle Lake). Get an air shuttle out of the park from here, or continue down the river to Nájįcho (Virginia Falls) or Nahanni Butte.

**Gahnįthah Mįe: 61°57.68'N, 127°13.17'W**

# FLY HERE



## Getting Here by Plane

Fly commercially into Yellowknife, NT then onto Norman Wells, Tulita, or Fort Simpson. Alternatively, fly into Whitehorse, YK. Once in these neighbouring communities, charter an aircraft into the park.

Airlines with scheduled flights to Yellowknife and Whitehorse:

- Air Canada
- Air North
- Canadian North
- Condor
- First Air
- Northwestern Air
- WestJet

Airlines with scheduled flights to Norman Wells:

- North Wright Airways
- Canadian North

Airlines with scheduled flights to Fort Simpson:

- First Air
- Air Tindi

## Getting Here by Road (and then Plane)

Whether you take the Mackenzie Highway and Liard Highway to Fort Simpson, or the Alaska Highway to Watson Lake, you're in for an epic road trip. From there, connect with your charter flights into the park.

GO TO

# TOWN



## Park Office

Nááts'jch'oh National Park Reserve's office is located in Tulita, NT. Nááts'jch'oh is part of the traditional lands of the people of the Sahtu. The only road access is a winter ice road from Wrigley. But, if you're paddling Deho (the Mackenzie River), be sure to drop in and say hello!

## Communities and Services

### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**Tulita Pop: ~500**



Air access: year-round

Road access: winter only

**Norman Wells Pop: ~700**



Air access: year-round

Road access: winter only

Canoe rentals

**Nahanni Butte Pop: ~100**



Air access: year-round by charter flight

Road access: to the Liard River then river taxi

**Fort Simpson Pop: ~1200**



Air access: year-round

Road access: year-round

Canoe rentals

### YUKON

**Watson Lake Pop: ~800**



Road access: year-round

## Guides and Outfitters

Guided trips starting at \$7,050.

Contact one of these outfitters for more information:

**Blackfeather,  
The Wilderness Adventure Company**

1-888-849-7668

Info@blackfeather.com

www.blackfeather.com

**Nahanni River Adventures**

1-800-297-6927

Info@nahanni.com

www.nahanni.com

**Nahanni Wilderness Adventures**

1-888-897-5223

adventures@nahanniwild.com

www.nahanniwild.com

GO

# GUIDED



# FLOAT AWAY

## Air Charters

Contact one of these companies to book an air shuttle to Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake) and the Píjip'enéh féetqó Deé (Broken Skull River). Take note: there are TWO Divide Lakes near Nááts'j'ch'oh. You want the Divide Lake in the northeast part of the park — not the Divide Lake near Tungsten, NT. See “How to Book an Air Charter” for more details.

### North Wright Airways

Norman Wells, NT  
1-867-587-2288  
info@north-wrightairways.com  
www.north-wrightairways.com

### Alpine Aviation

Whitehorse, YK  
1-867-668-7725  
alpineaviation@gmail.com  
www.alpineaviationyukon.com

### Kluane Airways

Kelowna, BC  
1-250-860-4187  
info@kluaneairways.com  
www.kluaneairways.com

### Simpson Air

Fort Simpson, NT  
1-866-995-2505  
simpsonair@northwestel.net  
www.simpsonair.ca

### South Nahanni Airways

Fort Simpson, NT  
1-867-695-2007  
info@southnahanniairways.ca  
www.southnahanniairways.ca

### Summit Air

Yellowknife, NT 1.866.709.7717  
info@flysummitair.com  
https://flysummitair.com



BOOKING IS

# EASY

## How to Book an Air Charter

Don't worry - booking an air charter is easier than you think. The pilots know the lakes and mountains, and they'll be able to let you know if your plan is a good one. They'll also help you figure out what type of plane you'll need to get you where you want to go. Book early for the best availability.

### When you call, have this information ready:

- Date and time (if) you want to fly into the park
- Date and time (if) you want to fly out of the park
- Name of the lake/location where you want to be dropped off. For the Píjip'enéh léetóó (Broken Skull) trip, specify Divide Lake located at 63°01.18'N, 128°10.63'W. There is a different Divide Lake near Tungsten - this is not the lake you want.
- Name of the lake/location if you want to be picked up
- How many passengers you'll have
- Any special equipment you'll have (canoes, kayaks, etc.)
- Any special flightseeing route or added stops

Prices will vary based on the size of your group, your equipment, the aircraft required, and fuel prices. Contact an air charter company for more information.

### Flight delays are part of the adventure.

Weather can make flying in and out of the park tricky, and flights are regularly delayed. Your pilots have the experience to decide when it's safe to fly. Plan for a flight delay to be part of your adventure story, and bring extra food just in case.

# BOOK

## YOUR TRIP

### Reservations

To make a reservation, contact Nahanni National Park Reserve with this information:

- Type of trip (paddling)
- Trip itinerary (# days, route)
- Preferred trip dates
- Trip leader's contact information
- Group size (max 12)
- Air charter company

**If you are taking a guided trip,** the company you have booked with will make the necessary reservations and registrations.



# PLACES

TO GO

## Registration and Orientation

Paddlers must register with Nahanni National Park Reserve. When you register, we'll ask for this information:

- Permit number
- Group member names
- Communication details (satellite phone #, etc.)
- Emergency contact info
- Equipment descriptions (tents, canoes, kayaks)
- Trip itinerary and end date

As part of your orientation, we'll give you our latest wildlife, forest fire, and river conditions, as well as information to de-register.

RIDE THE

# WAVES

## Nahanni Fees Apply

Píip'enéh íéetóó Deé (the Broken Skull River) runs through Nááts'j'ch'oh and Nahanni National Park Reserves. Although Nááts'j'ch'oh does not have a fee system yet, fees apply for the Nahanni segment of your trip.

Northern Park Backcountry Excursions and Camping permits are an annual flat fee of **\$147.20** per person. These permits are also valid at Aulavik, Auyuittuq, Ivvavik, Quttinirpaaq, Sirmilik, Tuktut Nogait and Vuntut National Parks.

For more information, contact Nahanni National Park Reserve at [nahanni.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:nahanni.info@pc.gc.ca) or 1-867-695-7750.

IT'S JUST YOU

# OUT HERE



## Emergency Help

If you need urgent help, call our Duty Officer at **1-867-695-3732** (landline) or **1-867-695-6572** (cell), 24 hours a day, June 1 to September 30.

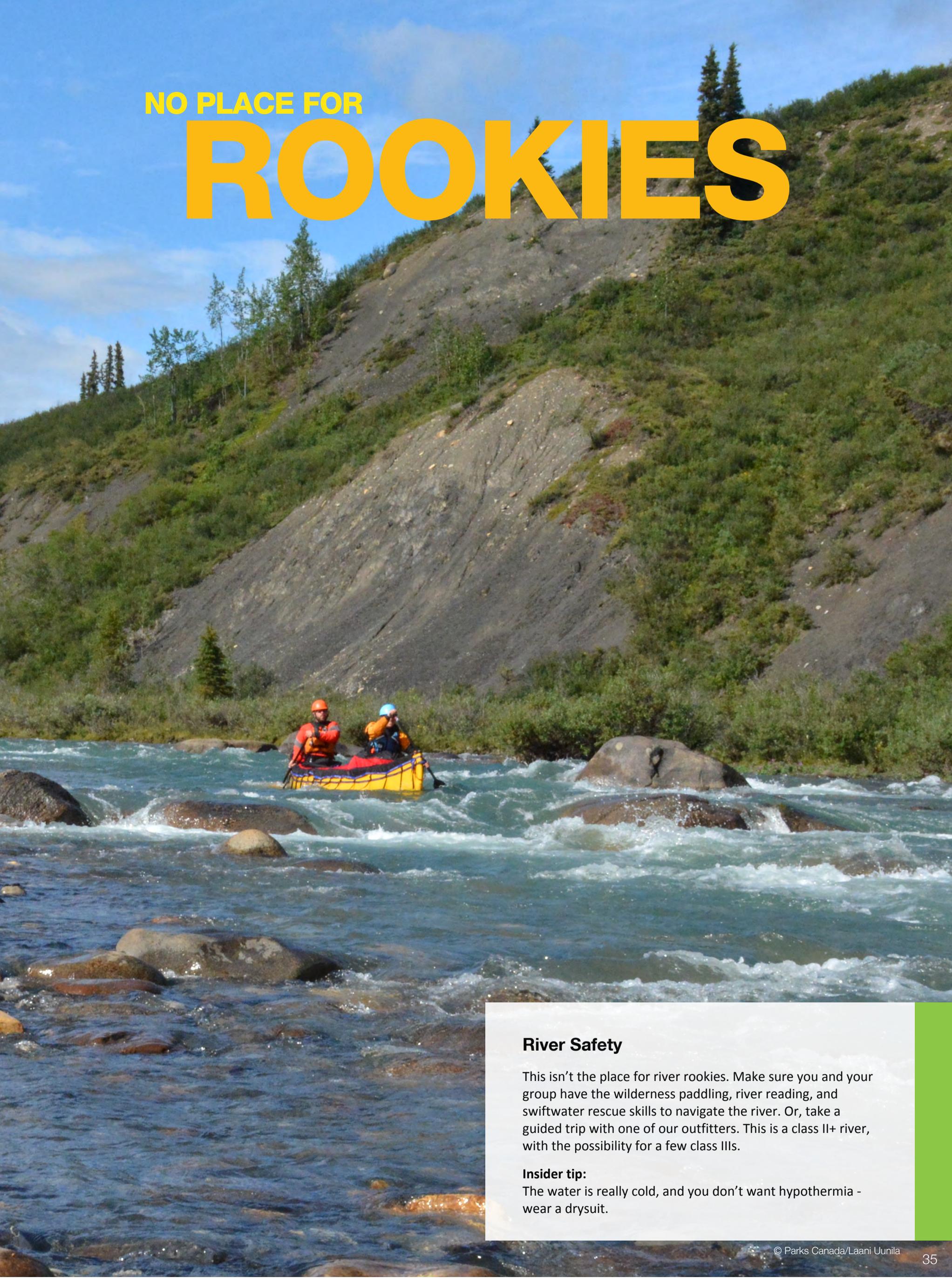
You are responsible for your own safety. Prepare to handle an emergency on your own. Bring a good first aid kit, and the skills to use it. Keep in mind, our resources are limited and we might not be able to rescue you right away due to flight delays.

## Satellite Phones, InReach, and SPOT Devices

Coverage can be limited in northern latitudes, canyons, and valleys. Know how to deal with your device's limitations. The Iridium satellite system currently has the most reliable coverage here.

NO PLACE FOR

# ROOKIES



## River Safety

This isn't the place for river rookies. Make sure you and your group have the wilderness paddling, river reading, and swiftwater rescue skills to navigate the river. Or, take a guided trip with one of our outfitters. This is a class II+ river, with the possibility for a few class IIIs.

### Insider tip:

The water is really cold, and you don't want hypothermia - wear a drysuit.

# DREAM

HERE

## Choosing a Campsite

Nááts'jch'oh and Nahanni have no established campsites on Píjip'enéh íéetóó Deé; you choose where to camp. When choosing a site, please follow Leave No Trace principles:

- Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Durable surfaces include rock, gravel, or dry grasses.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- Leave your campsite as pristine as you found it. If you moved rocks to secure your tent, please scatter them before you leave.

## Leave What You Find

Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.



WHERE THE  
**WILD**  
THINGS ARE

### **Respect Wildlife**

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.

Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

# BEARS

LIVE HERE

## Bears

Yep. Black bears and grizzly bears live here. Grizzly bears especially like the Pí'p'enéh íéetóq Deé (Broken Skull River) valley and hot springs. For more information, read **You Are In Bear Country** or call us. If you're flying, check with your airline before packing bear spray or bangers.



# WHATEVER

## THE WEATHER

### Weather

Nááts'ihch'oh and Nahanni are in the mountains. It can snow at anytime, and rain storms can cause flash floods in canyons and steep valleys. Make your trip a fun one - be prepared for all conditions.

	Low	High	And you can expect...
Jun	-5°C	25°C	Frost, snow, blazing sun
Jul	0°C	30°C	Hot sun, afternoon rainstorms
Aug	0°C	30°C	Hot sun, rain, and frost
Sep	-5°C	20°C	Frost and snow

YOUR

# HEADLAMP

WILL BE LONELY

## Midnight Sun and the Northern Lights

You probably won't use your headlamp, but you'll want a mask for sleeping under the midnight sun.

If you really want to see the northern lights, or *aurora borealis*, plan your trip for August when the skies are darker.

	Sunrise	Sunset
Jun 21	4:40 am	12:30 am
Jul 21	5:30 am	11:45 pm
Aug 21	6:50 am	10:15 pm



## COOKING AND

# CAMPFIRES

### Minimize Campfire Impacts

On your first few days on the river, you'll be struck by the beauty of the canyons, the mountains and the nearly non-existent driftwood supply. We ask that you bring a camp stove, instead of gathering wood at Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake), as it is an alpine lake with limited wood.

Near the Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake) cabin, there is a wood supply that was harvested pre-park, but it is used by Sahtu Dene and Métis. (p.s. Our trees thank you for not bringing wood into the park - imagine the insects and diseases you could bring with you. Plus, it's illegal, so there's that too).

For campfires later in your trip, please use a firebox. Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry.

Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.

Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes. On big rivers, dispose of cool ashes in the river.

CRYSTAL CLEAR

# WATERS



## Drinking Water

It may look crystal clean, but it's a *really* long ride home if you get beaver fever (*Giardia*).

**Treat all your drinking water.**



KEEP IT

# PRETTY

## Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack it in, pack it out. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 15 to 20 cm deep at least 60 metres from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

To wash, use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Dispose of strained dishwater in the river or scatter it.

ARE YOU

# READY?

## Gear Checklist

### Camp Gear

- tarp
- tent
- water filter/purification system
- stove and fuel or firebox
- cooking pot
- rope
- trowel and toilet paper
- biodegradable soap
- food and lots of hot drinks
- other stuff you need or want
- leash if you're bringing your pet

### Personal Gear

- water bottle
- mug, bowl and spork
- knife
- toothbrush and toothpaste
- towel
- daypack
- sunscreen / sunglasses
- sleeping bag, pad, and mask
- wallet / cash
- contact phone numbers
- trip plan
- camera and spare batteries

### Safety Gear

- brain filled with experience
- satellite phone/InReach/SPOT
- headlamp/flashlight
- lighter/fire starting kit
- bear spray
- first aid kit
- extra food

### Navigation

- maps and waterproof case
- watch
- GPS and compass
- binoculars

### Repair Kit

- tuck tape/sheathing tape
- spare batteries
- silicon sealant
- needle and thread
- tent repair kit
- stove repair kit

### Personal Clothing

- warm hat
- sun hat
- rain gear with hood
- shorts: quick dry
- pants: wool or fleece
- jacket: fleece
- sweater: light wool
- shirt/t-shirt
- long underwear
- underwear and socks
- gloves or mittens
- camp shoes
- swimsuit
- bug hat, jacket, and repellent

### For Hikers

- backpack
- hiking boots
- blister kit
- trekking poles
- bear canisters

### For Paddlers

- repair kit
- paddles
- PFDs
- whistle, bailers, throw bags, and pin kits
- drysuit
- canoe barrels/packs
- canoe with skirt/kayak/raft

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# STORIES

## TO TELL



Clockwise from the left, Lyn Elliott, David Lichty, Roger Estey, Taylor Pace, Andrew Pichora, and Colin Field. Colin's the photographer whose holding the Queen of Diamonds. It was the only photo with ALL of us in it. ©Colin Field/NWTT

## If Rivers Could Talk

Elder Leon Andrew tells us that Qtaa Tué Fehto (Divide Lake) was used as an access point when the Shúhtaot'ine traveled to reach the area they called Gaofáá (Rabbitkettle Hot Spring / Gahnjthah) where they gathered material for arrowheads.

In the 1960s a geologist ascending the river found a cracked moose skull. He submitted "Broken Skull River" to the Geographic Place Names Board, and...the rest is (modern) history:

### Lower Píjp'enéh íéetqó Deé (Broken Skull River)

In 1979 Chris Larkin builds a cabin on Píjp'enéh íéetqó Tué (Broken Skull Lake) and descends the lower Píjp'enéh íéetqó Deé (Broken Skull River) in 1980.

In the 2000s, Parks Canada staff fly into Broken Skull Lake, and portage to the river, wanting to check out the section of river that was becoming part of Nahanni National Park Reserve.

### Píjp'enéh íéetqó Deé (Broken Skull River)

Before 2015, there were just two known groups who paddled the entire river. Mike Fischesser was the only guy we could reach who had paddled the river. In the early 1990s, he ran the river for his honeymoon and thought it was a first descent until he met a polio survivor who had done it the year before.

2015 - Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve organized a scout trip coordinated by Lyn Elliott. She was joined by: Colin Field ([www.colinfield.com](http://www.colinfield.com)); David Lichty (Nahanni Wilderness Adventures); Roger Estey (Nahanni River Adventures); Andrew Pichora (Black Feather the Wilderness Adventure Company); and Taylor Pace (Canoe North Adventures). Their trip from June 23 - July 3 opens up the river to modern adventurers. The first trip planner is subsequently developed.

2016 - The first guided groups travel the river and paddlers are drawn to the magnetism of this hidden gem. Guides declare it one of the best northern rivers they have paddled, as it is chock full of stunning scenery and great whitewater.

2017 - Eric Bayha, from Tulita, runs the river as part of a Parks Canada trip - the first Sahtu Dene to do so in modern times. Caleb Roberts produces a video about the river.

### Upper Píjp'enéh etqó (Broken Skull)

2016 - Two Alaskan packrafters hike into "Bird Lake" and head down the Upper.

2017 - In June a group of packrafters from Wyoming start at MacMillian Pass, paddling and hiking their way to "Bird Lake". They paddle the upper stretch of Píjp'enéh íéetqó (the Broken Skull) and become the first group to complete a paddling descent of Díga Dezene Deé (Black Wolf Creek) on their seven-river journey.

### Written from the Heart

Lyn, 2015 Broken Skull trip planner author, says: Here's the thing about working in a new national park - someone's gotta figure out what's there. I was lucky to make this my work, but you wouldn't be reading this without the incredible team that made it happen. Thanks to: David, Roger, Andrew, Colin and Taylor for paddling; Julie Warnock and Northwest Territories Tourism; Wendy Grater and Black Feather; Neil Hartling at Nahanni River Adventures; David Hibbard at Nahanni Wilderness Adventures; Canoe North Adventures; Cam Zimmer and Laani Uunila from Parks Canada for thinking it was an okay idea; and Carolyn Wright at North Wright Airways for helping me book my very first float plane charter.

Trip planner produced by Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve. Updated June 2018.

WANT

# HELP

PLANNING?



## Contact Us

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www.facebook.com/  
ParksCanadaNWT

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