



What We Heard: Engagement and Consultations

**Thaidene Nënë Badı Xá
(Watching Over Thaidene Nënë)**

**Thaidene Nënë Relationship Plan
(Management Plan)**

August 2024



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Introduction

Thaidene Nënë Badi Xá (Watching Over Thaidene Nënë): Thaidene Nënë Relationship Plan (Management Plan) will be the first relationship (management) plan for Thaidene Nënë. This ten-year plan lays the foundation for what is needed to ensure that countless generations to come will be able to care for and benefit from Thaidene Nënë. The plan includes a set of guiding principles, a long-term vision for Thaidene Nënë, a series of goals and objectives for making progress towards achieving the vision, and zoning for visitor activities.

Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáfti (the operational management board for Thaidene Nënë) led the development of the draft plan, supported by Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Parks Canada, and Government of Northwest Territories (the partners). Consultation and engagement focused first on Indigenous governments with Thaidene Nënë agreements, also known as the Indigenous Signatory Governments, then other Indigenous governments, and finally through public consultation and engagement.

This *What we Heard* document primarily reports on feedback received on the draft plan through public consultation and engagement. However, a summary of feedback received from Indigenous governments is also included.



Indigenous Consultation and Engagement

Łutsël K'édene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation supported Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı and the other partners in developing the plan. In 2022-2023, workshops engaging Indigenous knowledge holders and members from the Signatory Indigenous Governments were held with Łutsël K'édene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation. The purpose of these workshops was to develop the concept for the plan, identify broad goals, confirm the vision and learn about important areas within Thaidene Nënë. An invitation was also extended to Denínu Kų́é First Nation to participate in conceptual work.

Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Denínu Kų́é First Nation have a role on the regional management board for Thaidene Nënë and were invited to provide input on a preliminary draft of the plan. Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı, Parks Canada, and Government of Northwest Territories sought to further engage/consult with Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Denínu Kų́é First Nation on the draft plan.

Indigenous government consultation and engagement was important to understand interests and concerns regarding the draft plan. This process was run separately from, and for a longer period than the public consultation and engagement period. Several members from Łutsël K'édene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation, as well as other nations, also participated in community sessions that were part of the public engagement process.

Parks Canada and Government of Northwest Territories also sought input from Tłıchq Government and North Slave Métis Alliance. Parks Canada and Government of Northwest Territories offered meetings with Indigenous governments

if requested, and met with North Slave Métis Alliance and Denínu Kų́é First Nation. West Point First Nation inquired about engagements. Parks Canada and Government of Northwest Territories received written submissions from Yellowknives Dene First Nation¹, Tłıchq Government, and North Slave Métis Alliance.

Summary of key feedback from Indigenous governments included:

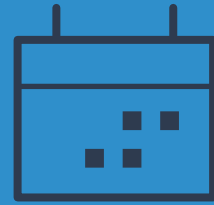
1. Ensure that it is clearly articulated in the plan that section 35 rights and the rights of members of specific Indigenous governments are not impacted by the plan.
2. Dene Yatı is not the only Indigenous language that should be reflected in Thaidene Nënë.
3. Concerns over the amount of historic waste and garbage; support for clean-up and encouraging better waste management practices.
4. Dissatisfaction with the structure of the boards; and the need to ensure meaningful engagement in Thaidene Nënë.
5. Ensure special places for all Indigenous governments are protected.
6. Ensuring all Indigenous governments that have traditional territory in Thaidene Nënë are referenced in the plan; and,
7. The translation of the title is not quite right.

Some of the feedback from Indigenous governments can be addressed in *Thaidene Nënë Badı Xá*. Some feedback is outside the scope of a relationship plan and may be addressed in other ways.

We are grateful for the time and perspectives shared. Mahsi.

1 Submission to Government of Northwest Territories

Public Consultation and Engagement Numbers



48

days to comment



2

public radio stories



6

in-person events



156

people attended in-person sessions



+14,000

likes, comments, shares, and clicks



488

people visited Have your Say



8

email submissions

55

people submitted comments



Dates

March 12 to April 28, 2024



Options

Comments via email thaidene.nene@pc.gc.ca.

Have Your Say on-line comment platform
(March 21-April 28)



Events

- March 25 Yellowknife Community Engagement
- March 26 Łutsël K'é Community Engagement
- April 9 Fort Smith Community Engagement
- April 10 Denínu Kųę (Fort Resolution) Community Engagement
- April 11 Hay River Community Engagement
- April 17 Yellowknife Pop-up Event

Public Consultation and Engagement²

Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı and the partners sought input on the draft plan to ensure Northwest Territories residents, stakeholders, and Canadians had an opportunity to provide input on the future direction of Thaidene Nënë through consultations and engagement. All input will be considered before the plan is finalized.

The public consultation and engagement period was open from March 12 to April 28, 2024. This included an on-line engagement portal,³ in-person community engagement sessions, and the opportunity to provide comments by email. Public participation in the consultation and engagement was encouraged through social media posts⁴, an information bulletin sent to media outlets, print newspaper advertisements, direct emails and media interviews.

Partner staff and Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı members interacted with 156 people, and received 55 online Have Your Say surveys and 8 email submissions. We heard from leaseholders, stakeholders, organizations, and the public. Some people may have chosen to provide input via all three means: in-person, on-line and email.

² Parks Canada and Government of Northwest Territories have different requirements and definitions for consultation and engagement, and one term may not apply for one or the other Crown government in all instances.

³ On-line survey launched on March 21, 2024.

⁴ Facebook: Thaidene Nënë (Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation) and Parks Canada, Northwest Territories.

Sharing information

Information about the public consultation and engagement was advertised, reported on by the media, posted on relevant websites, circulated on social media, and emailed directly to stakeholders.

In the second week of March emails were sent to lessees, tourism licensees, and permit holders within Thaidene Nënë, as well as organizations that Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı and the partners identified as having possible interests, such as recreation and interest groups, tourism and conservation organizations, and municipalities. The emails included an information bulletin, links to the draft plan and information about the community engagement sessions, and how to provide input. This direct emailing reached approximately 65 recipients, some of which were organizations who then shared the message with their members.

To share information with Canadians, as required by policy and legislation, Parks Canada posted information about the draft plan consultations on the federal *Consulting with Canadians* platform.⁵

The Government of Northwest Territories posted a bilingual public service announcement on the consultations in their on-line newsroom on March 21 and launched the plan's *Have Your Say* on their online engagement portal site the same day. The Government of Northwest Territories also took out a newspaper advertisement with the following newspapers: News North (March 25), Yellowknifer (March 27), Hay River Hub (March 27), Inuvik Drum (March 28), and L'Aquilon (March 29).

Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı sent a public notice to media outlets on March 12, which resulted in an article posted on-line by Cabin Radio, an internet radio station based in Yellowknife. The Chair of Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı was interviewed on CBC's the Trailbreaker, CBC's Weekender also ran a story, and News North ran an online article in early April.

Information on the draft plan was hosted on both the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation and Parks Canada's Thaidene Nënë websites.⁶ Both websites provided mirrored content about the plan, including a plan overview, information about community engagement sessions, and the full version of the draft plan. The Parks Canada website provided information in both official languages. During the public consultation/engagement period, the Parks Canada website had 679⁷ visits to the main information page for the draft plan and 314 views or downloads of the plan.

Information on the community engagement sessions were posted on social media 41 times⁸ during the consultation/engagement period to encourage participation, both on-line and at in-person events.

5 <https://canada.ca/consultingcanadians>

6 <https://www.landoftheancestors.ca/> and <https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/nt/Thaidene-nene>

7 Parks Canada's general information page on the draft plan had 679 visits, and 314 visits to the draft plan page, which contained the full plan in HTML as well as a downloadable PDF. Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation does not have analytic information available for their web pages.

8 Parks Canada had nine posts on Facebook in each English and French, for a total of 18. The highest single post reached 3,720 people. Łutsël K'é had 11 Facebook posts, and one Facebook ad, in addition to 11 Instagram posts.



Thaidene Nënë
(Łutsël K'éd)

1,956 ad reach
206 ad engagement
11 posts
6,445 post reach
274 post engagement



Thaidene Nënë
(Łutsël K'éd)

1,547 impressions
1,411 reach
59 engagements



Parks Canada,
Northwest
Territories
(English)

9 posts
12,950 post reach
431 post engagement



Parks Canada,
Northwest
Territories
(French)

9 posts
116 post reach
2 post engagement

*Engagement on Facebook is classified as the number of likes, comments, shares and clicks.



Community engagement sessions

At least 156 people attended community engagement and consultation sessions held throughout March and April in Yellowknife, Łutsël K'é, Fort Smith, Denínu Kué (Fort Resolution), and Hay River (see Table 1).

Evening sessions in each community allowed leaseholders, businesses, stakeholders, and members of the public to learn more about the draft plan and discuss their thoughts with Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłti members, partner staff, and representatives from the partner governments. Posters were on display throughout the room and a station with large maps was set-up to discuss zoning. Handouts provided information on the goals and zoning. Full copies of the draft plan were also available.

A daytime pop-up event was held in downtown Yellowknife on April 17th, from 10am to 2pm. People were able to drop-in and learn more about the plan and Thaidene Nënë. Staff from Parks Canada and Government of Northwest Territories provided information, answered questions and distributed draft plan handouts and printed copies of the draft plan.

Table 1. Attendance at public engagement and consultation sessions

Date	Location	Attendance*
March 25	Yellowknife	60
March 26	Łutsël K'é	24
April 9	Fort Smith	23
April 10	Denínu Kué (Fort Resolution)	20
April 11	Hay River	9
April 17	Yellowknife (Pop-up)	20
TOTAL		156

*The number of attendees is approximate. Not everyone interacted with staff at the welcome station during community engagements where the number of attendees was counted.

Online survey

The survey page on the Government of Northwest Territories' Have Your Say on-line platform (Figure 1) was visited 488 times, with 120 of those visits reading further through the post. There were 55 survey submissions.

The survey asked people the following questions:

1. Do you think the goals below provide good direction for Thaidene Nënë? Do you think anything is missing? (Information was provided on each goal).
2. After looking at the proposed zoning, do you have suggestions or additional areas that should be considered?
3. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Email feedback

Eight email submissions were received and/or email conversations were had with five individuals and three companies/organizations, including a Yellowknife based tourism outfitter, a conservation organization, and an industry association. Parks Canada hosted email feedback for the plan via thaidene.nene@pc.gc.ca. Staff responded to questions received about the plan and acknowledged receipt of submissions.

Figure 1. Have Your Say webpage

Thaidene Nënë badi xá (Working with Thaidene Nënë) – Land Relationship Plan

[Cliquez ici pour consulter la présente page en français.](#)

Overview

The living connection between land and people, between water and land, between forest and tundra: these relationships have protected the Thaidene Nënë area for millennia. We want to hear from you on how you would help carry these connections into the future.

Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area is 26,376 km² and includes a national park reserve, a territorial protected area, and a territorial wildlife conservation area.

Thaidene Nënë badi xá is the first plan for Thaidene Nënë. 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 the area. The plan is for ten years (2024-2034), and includes a set of guiding principles, a long-term vision for Thaidene Nënë, and a series of goals, objectives, and targets/indicators that will help us make progress towards achieving the plan's vision.

We want to ensure Indigenous governments, stakeholders and the public have an opportunity to provide input on the future direction of Thaidene Nënë. Your feedback will play an important role in the development of this first management plan for Thaidene Nënë.

You can read a quick overview [here](#) or the full draft management plan [here](#).

Status

- Open
This engagement is open from March 21, 2024 to April 28, 2024.
- Under Review
- Completed

Related Links

- Draft Management Plan
- Overview
- Parks Canada



What We Heard

The consultation and engagement process was very informative, and has made it clear that there are mixed views on aspects of the plan, and some misconceptions related to park zoning and management.

Three main themes emerged from the public feedback:

- 1. Goals, objectives, and targets**
- 2. Zoning and closures**
- 3. Support of the plan**

A fourth section, “Other”, is included to capture comments that did not fit within the three key themes.

The themes were identified by reviewing feedback received including the on-line survey, email submissions and community engagement sessions. A summary of the comments on each theme is presented on the next pages.



1. Goals, objectives and targets

Supportive and constructive comments were received related to the goals, objectives, and targets in the plan. The on-line survey did contain a question about the goals providing good direction; however, responses were limited to yes or no. Most respondents that did reply “no” did not articulate their concerns about the goals elsewhere in the survey. Several community engagement participants, and some email submissions noted looking forward to seeing many of the initiatives outlined, and some respondents wanted to participate in different ways.

“We support business development, tourism planning, and other training opportunities for youth and members of TDN communities and members. We would be happy to mentor or assist local operators get off the ground in any way possible – based on our experiences...”

...We welcome the development of any resources to guide the conduct of our clients and guides and as a licenced outfitter such as a Visitor Orientation Program, and sanctioned interpretive programming for tourists. Zone 1 areas identified in the Zoning framework are helpful. We welcome any further detailed guidelines or protocols on sites of cultural importance. Further details on how to recognize burial or archaeological sites may look like might be helpful when producing the Visitor Orientation Program.”

- email submission

1.1 Waste management

There were several comments related to waste management, which has indicators/targets identified in goal two of the draft plan. Some were general concerns, while others suggested options for keeping the area clean:

One attendee voiced concern over historical waste sites: *“There is a big mess to clean-up from exploration camps.”*

- Denínu Kuqé (Fort Resolution) participant

“...Beef up enforcement of people leaving garbage or ruining the area (including locals using the East Arm).”

- online survey

“What is going to happen with the garbage left by people? Who is going to oversee the cleanup process?”

- Yellowknife participant

“To the south of Lutsel K’e there are thunder boxes set-up, that would be good to see in key places. When I was at Magic Finger, 16 years ago, there were cardboard, biodegradable outhouses/thunderboxes set-up. It would be good to see facilities of some sort like that, for example at Magic Finger.”

- Fort Smith participant

2. Zoning and closures

While many people expressed support for the proposed zoning, some concerns were also expressed. Concerns focused on three areas with proposed closures or access restrictions for visitors: the mouth of Tsąkui Thedá Dezé (the Lockhart River), recreation on the Tsąkui Thedá Dezé, and temporary closures in Nit'ě́r Nué Naá Tł'áázı (Wildbread Bay). The future site-specific plan for the Kaché/Taché area also received some comments.

2.1 General zoning feedback

Attendees at the Łutsël K'é, Fort Smith, Denínu Kų́é (Fort Resolution), and Hay River community events expressed support for the proposed zoning. This support was also reflected in email submissions, and some online surveys. Here is a sample of their comments:

"We support the proposed zoning framework..."

- email

"I like the proposed zoning. I think it's a good balance between allowing access and preserving sites."

- online survey

"If I'm reading the map correctly and the zones my understanding is that access into the East Arm is still permitted by boat. As long as there is continued access to navigable waters by boat I have no issue with it though I am leery of this park just becoming Jasper of the North. I would hate to see the erosion of peoples (non indigenous and indigenous alike) right to travel freely on the land and to experience nature in all it's glory."

- online survey

The on-line survey had more respondents who shared concerns about the zoning, than other forums. Also, Yellowknife was the one community engagement location where there were concerns expressed about the proposed restrictions to visitor access. As with all in-person events, there was a large portion of attendees who just came to learn, and did not interact with staff, board members or partner representatives.

Comments outlining general concerns with zoning are illustrated by the following sample of feedback received.

"...with this proposal you are attempting to severely restrict access to our National Park to all but indigenous Canadians. As our National Anthem [sic] states: "This land was made for you and me". Not just you. This is blatant discrimination against non-aboriginals. Racism is ugly. Stop it."

- online survey

"GNWT should be advocating for northern residents to have unrestricted access."

- Yellowknife participant

"Scrap this proposal entirely, for any and all areas within this national park. I cannot imagine the outcry if this were to be proposed for Banff or Jasper National Parks."

- online survey

One person who initially criticized the zoning proposal rescinded their submission after going to one of the in-person engagement events:

"I'd like to follow up to my original email and apologize for the message that was sent without important context.

I had read a cabin radio article earlier this day that outlined a photograph screenshot with boundaries of Thaidene Nene and incorrectly mistook them to be an area that represented a total closure to non-indigenous people.

I later came to understand upon going to the information session that the proposed area to be closed is a very small amount of total area in relative comparison to the park, but that little area carried much significance. My original email wasn't intended to downplay areas of cultural significance, more the concept of a framework existing that could theoretically close a large area of the lake to people who aren't indigenous themselves. I am worried about the 'slippery slope' that could see more and more land access be taken away from a large segment of the population....

...I now see that the proposed closed areas within Thaidene Nene do not close a large surface area but more specific small specific sites of cultural significance..."

- email

Negative sentiments about the proposed zoning were posted on a public social media page. In response, a Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation member shared the following:

"All my people are asking is that desneth che (mouth of lockhart river) remain off limits for its cultural significance to us. It's a special area for us and we keep it close to our hearts. We have lost everything. We lost culture, our languages are dying and our land being exploited for resources. We are finally taking steps to reclaim what is ours! You are acting like the whole park is restricted, which it's not, it's a small portion of Thaidene nene that is off limits. We will always be here to protect our land and water. If this tiny inconvenience makes you uncomfortable, imagine people coming in and saying "this land is ours by the right of god" in your back yard. Which has happened to every indigenous group on this continent."

- public social media post

There were also some constructive comments with recommendations for changes to the zoning during the consultation and engagement. Here is a sample:

"... rather than a complete ban on motorized boats [in Zone II], perhaps a horsepower limit of 25 hp or electric equivalent. This would allow for the continued use of small motorized vessels and canoes that are an important component of on the land transport in the north, and have limited impact on the environment, and limited speed."

- online survey

"Please keep development and fossil fuel production out of the park. Zone 3, especially the Reliance Fuel Cache, don't seem to fit with a climate crisis."

- email

"You should allow permit use on the Lockhart. Other places manage visitors by permitting. I was hoping to paddle it myself."

- Yellowknife participant

The facts on zoning in Thaidene Nënë compared to other national parks⁹

Zoning is used to manage visitor activities in national parks. The restrictions in Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve are much smaller than other parks, such as Jasper or Banff.

	Restricted or prohibited visitor access	Visitor access allowed	
	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III, VI or V
Proposed for Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve	0.05 %	91.89 %	8.06 %
Proposed for Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area	0 %	56.57 %	43.43 %
Proposed for Thaidene Nënë combined National Park Reserve and Territorial Protected Area	0.03 %	78 %	21.97 %
Banff National Park	10 %	87 %	3 %
Jasper National Park	0.4 %	97.3 %	2.3 %

⁹ Note: National parks also use area closures or restrict activities to support the management of the park. These are often time limited and are not included in the table/figure. E.g., to support wildlife migration, visitor safety, and/or Indigenous harvesting activities.



2.2 Restricted visitor access to the mouth of Tsąkuı Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River)

The draft plan proposed a Zone I with restricted visitor access at the mouth of Tsąkuı Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River). The zone would allow visitors to access the site with a licensed Indigenous guide from a Signatory Indigenous Government. This proposed zoning received the most comments at the Yellowknife community engagement session, as well as from on-line survey respondents.

“It’s the gem for everyone, that area.”

- Yellowknife participant

“Please consider this very carefully before limiting access to a remote area that few people venture into. Why punish those of us that are adventurous. Requiring a guide is of no interest to many of us. How would this even be arranged if we are out in our boat?”

- online survey

At the Łutsël K’é community engagement, participants highlighted the cultural significance of the river mouth, including burial sites in the vicinity. There was also support voiced for the restricted visitor access at community engagement sessions.

“That’s awesome that Indigenous guides can take people to respectfully visit important cultural sites. It will help protect the sites.”

- Denínu Kuę (Fort Resolution) participant

“Having important cultural sites protected in Zone 1s - that’s the way they [Elders] wanted it when it [the Indigenous Protected Area] was created.”

- Denínu Kuę (Fort Resolution) participant

2.3 Recreational Use Closure on Tsąkuı Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River)

Four submissions¹⁰ expressed concerns with this proposed closure, with some expressing a desire to paddle and/or line canoes on Tsąkuı Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River). People who shared this sentiment expressed that historically there had been use of the river and that they wanted this to continue. Here is a sample of comments received:

“I’m writing to express my concern that all of the lower Lockhart River between Artillery Lake and Great Slave Lake will be, according to the plan, off-limits to non-indigenous users of the Park. This stretch of the Lockhart River is spectacular and should be available for all to enjoy, irrespective of their race/ethnicity. Specific sites along the valley of importance to the Dene can be protected with less instructive measures. However, excluding the entire stretch of river from public access is unfair and an overreach.”

- email

At the Łutsël K’é in-person event, one Elder shared information about the sacred nature of the Tsąkuı Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River) as a powerful site. The river is dangerous, not for its waterfalls and rapids, but for the power it contains. The Elder noted that members respected that power and chose alternative routes to access the tundra:

“Agree with the zoning as put forward. In the old day, people never used the river for travel, it is too powerful. It can kill animals. People always went through Pike’s...”

- Łutsël K’é participant, Elder

¹⁰ From in-person interactions, email and the on-line survey. Some people chose to participate via all three methods.

**The facts on Tsąkui Thedá Dezé
(Lockhart River) zoning:**

1. This closure is for the portion of the river which flows from ʔedacho Tué (Artillery Lake) to Tu Nedhé (Great Slave Lake) through a series of canyons, rapids and waterfalls.
2. Tsąkui Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River) is a sacred river to the Indigenous peoples of Thaidene Néné.
3. Historically, there have been a handful of paddlers who have ascended and/or descended Tsąkui Thedá Dezé; however, it is not a common route.
4. The traditional and historic route to the barrenlands, Kaché Kaʔá, also known as Pike's Portage, is located within a proposed Zone II area, which allows for visitors to portage boats from Tu Nedhé (Great Slave Lake) to ʔedacho Tué (Artillery Lake) and vice versa.
5. On-line canoe trip reports and guided trips on the Lockhart River take place on the upper portions of the river, outside of Thaidene Néné and the proposed Zone I area.
6. The proposed zoning prohibits access on the river corridor (the water) and restricts access to an area around Tsąkui Thedá (Parry Falls). Visitors may walk on land alongside Tsąkui Thedá Dezé (Lockhart River), if they respect the restricted access around Tsąkui Thedá (Parry Falls).





2.4 Future Area Plan for Kaché/Taché

Some concerns were also expressed about restrictions that might be put on the Kaché/Taché area when the site-specific plan is developed in the future. There was at least one conversation about this at the Yellowknife community engagement sessions, and it was also highlighted in the on-line survey. Some people found the map confusing, interpreting it as a proposed closure. This is not the case - it is an area identified for a site-specific plan to be developed in the future.

“We have been accessing the area for years.”
- Yellowknife participant

In Łutsël K'é, one participant at the community engagement session noted that the number of cultural and burial sites in Kaché was significant. They further noted that an area plan for Kaché was an important step to protect the cultural significance of the area.

“Totally supportive of the Kaché and Wildbread zoning proposals, and the development of a site-specific plan for the overall Kaché region.”

- Łutsël K'é participant

The facts on the site-specific plan for Kaché/Taché:

1. The Kaché/Taché area is a culturally important area to the Indigenous peoples of Thaidene Néné, in particular the people of Łutsël K'é who continue to use the area today.
2. The area has sacred sites, and other important cultural sites ranging from harvesting areas to archaeological resources.
3. More time is needed to determine how best to protect key cultural sites as well as to develop visitation guidelines.
4. The Kaché/Taché area depicted on the map in the plan is not proposed as a closure. However, in the future, there may be further restricted sites in the area to protect cultural resources.

2.5 Nitl'ér Nué Naá Tl'áázi (Wildbread Bay) temporal closure

The lack of detailed information on the Nitl'ér Nué Naá Tl'áázi (Wildbread Bay) temporal closure was a concern expressed by a few attendees at the Yellowknife community engagement session. Some attendees questioned the need for the entire bay to be closed and were concerned about a closure beginning in mid-August. One attendee noted that a September closure was not a concern. Another noted that they wanted access to the canoe portage in Nitl'ér Nué Naá Tl'áázi (Wildbread Bay). Similar comments were received from the online survey. Here is a sample:

"I am opposed to restrictions (which are vague as to their seasonal application) for access to Wildbread Bay - I have visited Wildbread Bay by boat from Yellowknife on 6 or 7 occasions - I see no reason why July/Aug needs to be restricted - if that timeline was applied wildbread bay will essentially be off limits for summer seasonal boaters (from outside Lutselke) - a hunting season of Sept onwards might be reasonable."

- online survey

"...Some of the zoning is not legal, you can not block access to navigable waters such as Wildbread Bay..."

- online survey

Participants at the Łutsël K'é community engagement session and elsewhere shared the importance of Nitl'ér Nué Naá Tl'áázi (Wildbread Bay) as a location to harvest moose, and their support of the closure during key community harvest times.

"..support the closure during hunting season."

- Łutsël K'é participant

"No concerns re. Wildbread Bay closure"

- Hay River participant

The facts on the proposed temporal closure

1. Nitl'ér Nué Naá Tl'áázi (Wildbread Bay) is an important area of Indigenous harvesting, as well as a popular destination for boaters and private plane owners.
2. The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* is not about closing waters, rather about requiring approvals for any works that may impede navigation.
3. Parks Canada has the legal authority to restrict access to waters in national parks and national park reserves under the *Canada National Parks Act*.
4. The earliest time period for the temporal closure being considered is August 15; this was selected as visitation numbers drop significantly after this period. In 2023, the last registered visitor in Nitl'ér Nué Naá Tl'áázi was for August 14.



3. Support for the plan

While a small number of participants shared concerns about the proposed zoning, we received some very positive feedback on the spirit and intent of the plan, and how it was drafted.

“I love the concept of a Relationship Plan rather than a Management Plan! It is not speciesist, rather it suggests that the plants, animals, rivers, trees, environment, are all members of a board. I wish all decisions were made that way!”

- online survey

“It is a really well written plan.”

- Yellowknife participant

“[Apart from the mouth of the Lockhart zone 1] the plan looks good.”

- Yellowknife participant

“...We applaud the board getting this plan out to the public in such a timely, transparent, accountable and dynamic way.”

- email

“Thank you for taking action for reconciliation.”

- online comment

General support was also voiced by many people at the community engagement sessions for the existence of the protected areas.



4. Other

Feedback was received on topics other than the key themes. Some were questions, some were suggestions on how to implement the goals. For example:

> Questions about:

- » how people will know when they are nearing a restricted area when they are out there (e.g. signage, posts, gpx files);
- » what activities are permitted;
- » whether corridors will be allowed in the territorial protected area;
- » the role of guardians; and
- » how visitors receive orientation, a park pass and fishing licences.

> Suggestions to have:

- » rules and processes need to be laid out so people have clarity;
- » improved communications, such as repeaters out on the East Arm to support the use of VHF; and
- » signs along the highway promoting Thaidene Néné.

Conclusion

This *What we Heard* report provides a summary of the comments and perspectives shared during the consultation and engagement with Indigenous governments, leaseholders, tourism licence holders, organizations, community members, and Canadians. The themes and comments illustrate the passion and connection people have with Thaidene Nënë.

The consultation and engagement process was very informative, and has made it clear that there are mixed views on aspects of the plan. Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłti and the partners are taking the time to review all the notes from the in-person conversations, the surveys, and email submissions.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to learn about the draft plan, attend a community engagement session, and/or provide feedback. Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłti and the partners are carefully considering how to improve the draft relationship plan.



