



Thaidene Nene Establishment Agreement Summary of Initialed Draft

The Thaidene Nene Vision

The Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN) is advancing an initiative to foster ecological integrity, cultural continuity, and economic sustainability in the core of the LKDFN homeland. This landscape is called Thaidene Nene - the "Land of the Ancestors".

Thaidene Nene spans an abrupt transition from boreal forest to tundra, and includes the dramatic cliffed islands and waters of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake and canyons and falls of many clear water rivers. Part of the largest road-less landscape in North America, this still intact ecosystem features some of the cleanest and deepest freshwater in the world and some of the last free-ranging migratory herds of barren-ground caribou. Home to grizzly bears, tundra wolves, abundant fish species and muskoxen as well as forest dwellers such as black bears and moose – this vast region is a globally significant carbon sink comprised of boreal forest peat. Maintaining this landscape and the services it provides to us all is essential.

Protecting Thaidene Nene is especially important for the wellness and vitality of the Lutsel K'e Denesoline. Intimately linked with the integrity of the environment in Thaidene Nene, the Lutsel K'e Denesoline are heavily dependent upon the landscape for subsistence and cultural fulfillment. Thaidene Nene is a source of country food because it provides critical habitat for animals such as caribou and lake trout, as well as important plants for medicinal and artisanal purposes. Thaidene Nene is also home to the great spiritual site of the Denesoline - T'sankui Theda, the "Lady of the Falls". Ensuring this landscape remains pristine is fundamental for northern aboriginal people's way of life.

The broad goal of the Thaidene Nene initiative is best expressed in the LKDFN's *Thaidene Nene Vision Statement*:

Thaidene Nene is the heart of the homeland and sacred place of the Lutsel K'e Denesoline. It is where the ancestors of the Lutsel K'e Denesoline laid down the sacred, ethical, and practical foundations of the Denesoline way of life.

Carrying these traditions into the future, the Lutsel K'e Denesoline have the right to promote their culture, practice their relationship with the land and water, and protect the territory upon which this culture and relationship depend. Protection of Thaidene Nene means preserving the environmental and cultural integrity of a homeland fundamental to a material well-being and cultural identity.

As the keepers of Thaidene Nene, the Lutsel K'e Denesoline have the responsibility to act as stewards of the land and as host to visitors.

In order to achieve this vision, the LKDFN have been working towards:

1. Permanent protection of Thaidene Nene.
2. LKDFN jurisdiction and responsibility for the management and operation of Thaidene Nene.
3. Promotion and transfer among generations of Denesoline culture, traditional knowledge, and science.
4. Fostering a conservation economy in Lutsel K'e.

The Draft Agreement

Pursuant to the *Thaidene Nene Framework Agreement*, the LKDFN is negotiating with the Government of Canada (Parks Canada Agency) to establish a partnership that will result in the establishment of Thaidene Nene as a National Park Reserve. It is the priority objective of the LKDFN to protect both the ecological integrity and cultural continuity of Thaidene Nene for future generations.

The LKDFN and Parks Canada Agency initialed a draft *Thaidene Nene Establishment Agreement* in November 2013. The draft agreement defines the relationship between the LKDFN and Parks Canada Agency with respect to Thaidene Nene.

The draft agreement:

IS, once finalized, a legally binding contract between LKDFN and Parks Canada Agency (the "Parties"). It is not a land claim or treaty that creates, diminishes, or defines any aboriginal rights and titles.

IS intended to define a cooperative relationship between the Parties with respect to the planning, management, operation, monitoring and evaluation of Thaidene Nene, and the sharing of resources to ensure that the ecological integrity of Thaidene Nene and the cultural continuity of the LKDFN are maintained and promoted for the use, benefit, education and enjoyment of all future generations.

DOES detail how the Parties will share responsibilities for all aspects of Thaidene Nene, including management planning, research and monitoring, visitor experience, and heritage interpretation.

DOES outline a rigorous consensus decision-making process designed to avoid conflict and encourage collaboration and partnership between the Parties.

DOES contain provisions for how LKDFN members will access training, employment, and business opportunities.

DOES detail infrastructure and human resource requirements in Thaidene Nene and Lutsel K'e.

DOES outline how LKDFN culture and language will inform management and interpretation of Thaidene Nene.

DOES NOT speak to the rights or privileges of anyone who is not a member of the LKDFN.