

JUNE 2024

# THAIDENE NĒNÉ NEWSLETTER



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Biodiversity Monitoring
- Hide Tanning Activities
- Honouring Elders
- New Place Profile
- Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yátti
- Frontier Lodge

Every season in Thaidene Nënë is wonderful, but summer is particularly special because it is when we receive most of our visitors. For the month of July, Parks Canada will be hosting a Welcome Camp at Chëlaa Delk'os Ghe near Portage Inlet, with support from the Thaidene Nënë Department and the Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians. The guardians will also be conducting patrols on the lake throughout the summer and look forward to engaging with visitors.

Keep reading for updates on departmental activities, including the biodiversity monitoring work and community programming, as well as Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yátti and Frontier Lodge.



# BIODIVERSITY MONITORING

Work continues on the biodiversity monitoring project, which is providing us with valuable information about the land and the animals across Thaidene Nënë.

Based on feedback received during a community workshop in May 2023, Parks Canada staff and Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians have been refocusing monitoring efforts around ʔedacho Tué (Artillery Lake).

In early June, guardians and Parks Canada staff retrieved cameras and sound recorders from 15 locations, and deployed cameras and sound recorders at 19 sites around ʔedacho Tué, including sites in the forest and on the tundra.

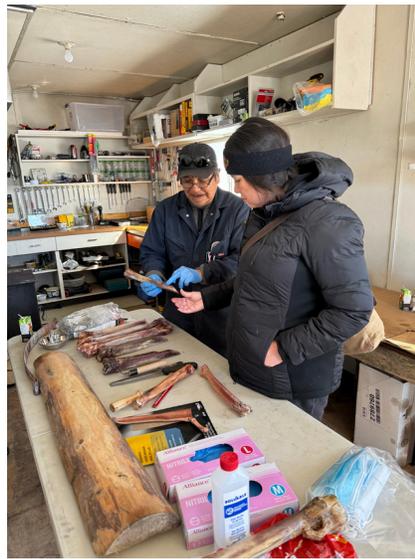
The plan is to finish setting up the camera and sound recording sites in September.



## TOOL MAKING WORKSHOP

In April, Parks Canada staff, in collaboration with the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation Wellness Department and with the support of the Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians, organized a two-day bone tool making workshop. Elder Charlie Catholique shared his knowledge about making tools out of caribou and moose bones for scraping and fleshing hides.

This workshop will be repeated again for anyone in Łutsël K'é that may have missed it. A caribou hide processing workshop is also being planned, leading up to a drum making session.



## HIDE CAMP

The eleventh annual Łutsël K'é Hide Tanning Camp took place June 1-9. New and experienced hide tanners from Łutsël K'é, the NWT, BC, and Ontario gathered to learn from each other and work on hides together. Ni Hat'ni Dene supported the camp by helping with wood and delivering fish.



## UPDATED VISITOR BROCHURE HONOURS ELDERS

The 2024 visitor brochure for Thaidene Nënë honours two special Elders that we lost in recent years: Albert Boucher and Madeline Drybones.

Madeline was born and lived most of her long life on the land in and around Kaché, ʔedacho Kué, and beyond. She was a skilled hide tanner and seamstress, who generously shared her knowledge and skills with others. Madeline raised her kids on the land and was one of the last people to move into Łutsël K'é. She was known for her gentle way and deep understanding of traditional knowledge.

Albert was a passionate advocate for the protection of Thaidene Nënë. He was a fixture at community meetings and, in more recent years, at the Thaidene Nënë office, sharing stories and reminding negotiators and staff about the Elders' vision for ensuring a good future for these lands and the Dënesųtiné way of life. Albert loved dancing and singing, and he was known for his sense of humour and infectious laugh. He also loved travelling the Snowdrift River, the place of his youth, with his brothers and friends.



## CARNIVAL WEEKEND: COMMUNITY BBQ AND YOUTH FISHING DERBY

The Thaidene Nënë and Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Departments hosted a community BBQ and youth fishing derby during the annual LKDFN Spring Carnival. The skies were grey both days, but all of the participants had big smiles on their faces as they ate and fished. Mársı cho to everyone who joined us over the weekend.



# NEW PLACE PROFILE: BETSIIGHIÉ

There is a new place profile on the Land of the Ancestors website: Betsiighié, the place where the water is alive.

Near to Utsingi Point, Betsiighié is a sacred place for Łutsël K'é Dene. When we pass by the weathered limestone cliffs here, we do so in silence. We also stop to make an offering to the lake, a gift of tobacco or spruce bough or something else of value for the beings that live in the water there. We ask that visitors to Thaidene Nënë do the same.

## WELCOME CAMP

Visitors to Thaidene Nënë in the month of July are invited to stop by the Welcome Camp at Chëlaa Delk'os Ghe near near Portage Inlet (62.490707 -110.700080). Łutsël K'é Dene knowledge holders and Parks Canada staff will be on hand to welcome visitors. Have a cup of tea, a piece of bannock, and try whatever activities are happening during your visit, like dryfish making, scraping a hide, making drymeat, or listening to Elders' stories. Ni Hat'ni Dene guardians look forward to supporting the Welcome Camp again this year.



# TDNXYD RUNS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS ON DRAFT RELATIONSHIP PLAN

The public comment period for *Thaidene Nënë badı xá* (*Working with Thaidene Nënë*), the draft relationship plan (management plan) for the Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area, opened in mid-March and closed on April 28. Opportunities for public engagement included attendance at open houses, an online survey, and email feedback.

Information Sharing (mailings 65, notice to media, websites, social media)	In-person information sessions (156 sign ins)	Online Survey – Have Your Say! (55 submissions)	Email Feedback (8)

The board and partners ran five public engagement sessions in Yellowknife, Łutsël K'é, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, and Hay River. Over 150 people attended the sessions. Each public session allowed for leaseholders, businesses, stakeholders, and members of the public to learn more about the draft plan and discuss their thoughts with Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı members, partner staff, and representatives from the partner governments.

Thaidene Nënë Xá Dá Yáłtı is grateful for the time and perspectives shared. The board will be finalizing the draft relationship plan later this month before providing the plan to the partners for final approval, which is anticipated in the fall of 2024.



# FRONTIER LODGE

By the time you read this, Frontier will have welcomed the first guests of the 2024 season. The lodge's soft start is scheduled for July 18 with a full camp beginning on June 21. Frontier is preparing for another near-record season. The majority of visitors are returning clients, though the lodge will also be hosting a number of first-time guests this year. Of special note, in September, Frontier will welcome its first group of Japanese tourists as part of the lodge's new aurora/wildlife viewing package.

Well there is lots to celebrate, it's been a challenge to get thing up and running this year with the very low water. Water is at its lowest level in living memory. All of the lodge docks are dry, and the river mouth is impassable with anything other than the jet boat. Thankfully, lodge staff have been able to get all of the boats in the water and they will make due.

Last but not least, we'd like to congratulate lodge general manager Corey Myers are being elected to the board of NWT Tourism.



## RETRACING OUR ROOTS YOUTH CANOE TRIP

SNOWDRIFT RIVER | JULY 11-18, 2024

We're looking for seven youth and one elder to participate in an eight-day canoe trip on the Snowdrift River. Participants need to also be available for canoe safety training July 8-10.

To apply, contact Laura at [lkdfntkarchive@gmail.com](mailto:lkdfntkarchive@gmail.com) or stop by the WLED office.

