

Reasons for Decision for Preliminary Screening of Proposed Establishment of Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta as a Territorial Protected Area

Introduction

The Government of the Northwest Territories through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (GNWT - ENR) has been negotiating with the K'asho Got'ine, as represented by the Fort Good Hope Dene Band, the Yamoga Lands Corporation, the Fort Good Hope Métis Nation Local #54 Land Corporation, the Ayoni Keh Land Corporation and the Behdzi Ahda" First Nation¹, to establish Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta (previously referred to as Ramparts River and Wetlands) as a Territorial Protected Area using the *Protected Areas Act*, SNWT 2019 c.11. The Act provides for the creation of permanent protected areas to support and promote the protection, conservation and maintenance of biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural continuity in the Northwest Territories.

Sections 124(2) and 125(1) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA) require the GNWT to conduct a preliminary screening of any development, including the establishment of a territorial park. This means the GNWT is responsible for carrying out a preliminary screening for the proposed establishment of Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta as a Territorial Protected Area under the *Protected Areas Act*, to determine whether there might be any significant adverse impact on the environment or cause of public concern with the establishment of Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta.

Preliminary Screening

On June 10, 2019, the GNWT - ENR submitted a Preliminary Screening Notice for the Establishment of the Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta Territorial Protected Area and proposal summary to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board and to 72 other organizations or individuals for review. The Preliminary Screening Notice and Description of Proposal can be found at:

http://reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/ps/tnt_preliminary_screening.pdf

The GNWT - ENR placed an advertisement in News North on June 10, 2019 and L'Aquilon on June 14, 2109, notifying the public of where the Description of Proposal could be found which provided an opportunity to submit comments to be taken into account in the Preliminary Screening Decision. The GNWT - ENR set June 28, 2019 as the deadline for responses. Five responses were received. These can be found at:

http://reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/ps/tueyeta_preliminary_screening_responses.pdf.

A summary of all comments received and the GNWT - ENR's assessment of whether each comment indicates that this proposed development might cause a significant adverse impact to the environment or might be a cause of public concern can be found in the attached Table. The attached Table forms part of the Preliminary Screening Decision.

¹ Since the release of the project description for this preliminary screening, as a result of consultation, Ayoni Keh Land Corporation and the Behdzi Adah" First Nation have been added as part of the definition of K'asho Got'ine.

The comments brought forward by reviewers were positive. Two reviewers specifically indicated support for creation of the Territorial Protected Area, two territorial government departments confirmed no comments or concerns and one party submitted a question regarding licenced outfitting activities in Territorial Protected Areas. Comments from one party were submitted after the due date; but, for the purposes of this preliminary screening the comments have been considered.

In general, the reviewers:

- recognized that the establishment of this protected area would have positive socio-economic benefits;
- noted that the Territorial Protected Area will provide opportunities for sustainable business development, recognition of traditional Dene cultural activities and the protection of an important ecological area.

In summary, no concerns were raised that indicated the proposed establishment of Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta as a Territorial Protected Area under the *Protected Areas Act* might have a significant adverse impact on the environment or be a cause of public concern.

Preliminary Screening Decision

Based on the assessment presented above, the GNWT - ENR has concluded that the development will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or be a cause of public concern.

Therefore, the GNWT - ENR is not referring the establishment of Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta as a Territorial Protected Area under the *Protected Areas Act* to the Review Board for environmental assessment.

Note that the Preliminary Screening Decision does not constitute a decision by the GNWT - ENR to establish Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta as a territorial protected area.