



DEVELOPMENT TITLE: Eradication of invasive plant species at the former weather station in Fort Reliance, Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATES: Summer, 2021

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve is located on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, in the Northwest Territories. The park reserve is part of Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), which also includes a Territorial Protected Area and a proposed Wildlife Conservation Area (see Map 1). In 2019, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) remediated the former weather station at Fort Reliance that is now part of the National Park Reserve. The results of the 2020 site monitoring program documented six invasive plant species that had taken hold in disturbed areas, including: Lamb's Quarters (*Chenopodium album*), White Sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*), Common Plantain (*Plantago major*), Common Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), and Worm-seed Wallflower (*Erysimum cheiranthoides*). According to ECCC, the site was free of invasive species prior to remediation work.

Invasive plant species, as defined by NWT Biodiversity Team (2020), are species that occur in areas beyond their natural range as a result of disturbance, development, or climate change. It is likely that seeds and roots of these invasive species were introduced to the former weather station area via large machinery and/or staff during remediation activities. Recently disturbed soil and full sun exposure provides optimal conditions for newly dispersed seeds and vegetative growth. It is important to control the spread of invasive plant species to limit potential economic, cultural, and environmental damage. Invasive species can potentially displace native species, which in turn can alter wildlife habitats, increase the risk of wildland fire, and reduce the availability of berries and medicinal plants, among other impacts.

ECCC is proposing to hire an environmental consultant, Tetra Tech, to eradicate the six invasive plant species at the Fort Reliance former weather station during summer, 2021. Tetra Tech may recruit a subcontractor to assist with the fieldwork. Any company that conducts a business in a national park requires a business licence¹. As per the requirements of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, Parks Canada conducts preliminary screening before issuing business licences to determine any public concern, or adverse environmental, social or cultural impact.

The proposed methods for eradicating the invasive plant species are described in the draft *Weed Control Plan for Fort Reliance Former Weather Station* (Tetra Tech, 2021). Methods include a combination of mechanical (e.g., hand pulling and digging) and chemical treatment (e.g., spot application of herbicide), depending on species and extent of occurrence. As part of the eradication plan, Tetra Tech has proposed the following activities:

¹ National Parks of Canada Businesses Regulations, s. 4(1).



Activities

- Resurvey documented sites to assess the density and extent of invasive plant species, as well as, the presence of other native plant species
- Determination of treatment option
- Treatment application
- Disposal of invasive species (i.e., bagged and burned on site)

MITIGATIONS:

Tetra Tech will adhere to the mitigations described in the draft *Weed Control Plan for Fort Reliance Former Weather Station*.

Map: Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area, including Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve and the former weather station at Fort Reliance where eradication activities will occur.

