

## **Reasons for Decision for Preliminary Screening of Proposed Establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area**

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has conducted a preliminary screening of the establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area under sections 124(2) and 125(1) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA). The Reasons for Decision (Preliminary Screening Decision) are set out below.

The GNWT has concluded that there is no likelihood that the proposed establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area might have a significant adverse impact on the environment or might be a cause of public concern in relation to a potential impact on the environment that could be included within the scope of an environmental assessment. The GNWT is therefore not referring the proposed establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board for environmental assessment. The Preliminary Screening Decision does not constitute a decision by the GNWT to actually establish Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area.

On May 8, 2019, the GNWT submitted a Preliminary Screening Notice and Description of Proposal for Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board and to ninety 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/gnwt\\_thaidene\\_nene\\_territorial\\_protected\\_area\\_proposal.pdf](http://reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/ps/gnwt_thaidene_nene_territorial_protected_area_proposal.pdf).

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, the GNWT placed an advertisement in News North 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 set June 3, 2019 as the deadline for responses. Twelve responses were received. These can be found at

[http://reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/ps/2019\\_tdn\\_preliminary\\_assessment\\_responses\\_-\\_combined\\_2.pdf](http://reviewboard.ca/sites/default/files/ps/2019_tdn_preliminary_assessment_responses_-_combined_2.pdf). The Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN) submitted a response after the deadline. For the purpose of the Preliminary Screening Decision, the GNWT regards NWTMN's response as having been submitted prior to the deadline and does not accord it any lesser weight.

A summary of all comments received and the GNWT'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 in relation to a potential impact on the environment that could be included within the scope of an environmental assessment, can be found in the attached Table. The attached Table forms part of the Preliminary Screening Decision.

There is no likelihood that establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area might have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment. As set out in the Description of Proposal, various types of potentially high impact developments will be prohibited within Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area. As such, establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area would result in and achieve protection, whereas, adjacent lands could be developed and used for industrial or commercial resource development purposes. Unless exempt, any allowable future proposed

developments within Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area will be subject to preliminary screening under the MVRMA.

There is no likelihood that establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area might have a significant adverse impact on the social and cultural environment or heritage resources. The permanent protection of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area and cooperative management with Indigenous governments will help protect the social and cultural environment and heritage resources.

There is no likelihood that establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area might be a cause of public concern in relation to a potential impact on the environment that could be included within the scope of an environmental assessment. As set out in the attached Table, the concerns that have been expressed are regarding:

- i. lost potential economic opportunities that will result from establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area, which are not impacts on the environment;
- ii. other matters with very little or no connection to the natural environment, the social and cultural environment or heritage resources; and
- iii. a concern regarding monitoring and enforcement of harvesting and cultural activities within protected areas that could not be included within the scope of an environmental assessment.

The GNWT will ensure that it fulfills its duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous governments and organizations with asserted or established Aboriginal and/or Treaty rights that could potentially be impacted by establishment of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area prior to making its decision regarding establishment.

### **Preliminary Screening Decision**

Based on the assessment presented above, it is the GNWT's opinion that:

- there is no likelihood that the proposed development might have a significant adverse impact on the environment; and
- there is no likelihood that the proposed development might be a cause of public concern in relation to a potential impact on the environment that could be included within the scope of an environmental assessment.

Therefore, the GNWT is not referring the proposed established of Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board for environmental assessment.