



Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation

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Ms. Bastick and Ms. Swallow:

RE: Preliminary Screening of Thaidene Nene

The Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN) has been leading the visioning, planning, negotiation, and pre-implementation of Thaidene Nene since 2000. Thaidene Nene is our core primary use area in the LKDFN traditional territory, and our most important cultural and ecological landscape. We take very seriously our responsibility and jurisdiction to effectively caretake Thaidene Nene.

We have now initialled agreements with both Parks Canada for a core National Park Reserve designation, and with the GNWT for abutting territorial protected area designations. By overwhelming majority, LKDFN membership ratified these agreements in February 2019, and we are planning to sign off on the agreements during a ceremony and celebration on July 25, 2019 in Lutsel K'e.

Thaidene Nene forms a significant element of our community's socio-economic and cultural vision for the future. We are building a future where our people can seek jobs and meaningful livelihoods caretaking our traditional territory, showcasing our culture, and hosting visitors. In parallel with our discussions and negotiations with public governments regarding Thaidene Nene, over the past 19 years the LKDFN has expended significant internal time and resources to increase its readiness to take on management and operations responsibilities within Thaidene Nene. We have staffed up our administrative capacity, as well as our on-the-land monitoring, research, and hospitality capacity through our Ni hat'ni Dene Rangers. We have also invested significant resources into starting the development of our local tourism industry, with several local operators coming on-line over the past couple of years. We have developed a community tourism strategy to maximize economic opportunities

associated with Thaidene Nene, and we are currently investigating the feasibility of Thaidene Nene related infrastructure in our community. We are as prepared as we can be for Thaidene Nene to move from concept to reality.

LKDFN will be assuming significant responsibilities for the management and operation of Thaidene Nene, and we will be coordinating our efforts with Parks Canada, the GNWT, and our neighbouring Indigenous governments through collaborative, consensus-based bodies. These bodies will be established as per common terms in the agreements LKDFN enters into with public governments, as well as those entered into between the public governments and our neighbouring Indigenous governments. These bodies will deliberate on matters related to visitor engagement and experience, cultural promotion, infrastructure, etc. The bodies will not and cannot deliberate on matters related to the exercise of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, as they have no standing as rights holders. Rights-based matters can only be addressed on a nation-to-nation level, via direct consultation between public governments and Indigenous governments. We have comfort that any Aboriginal and Treaty Rights cannot be impacted by any Thaidene Nene designation – the Constitution of Canada protects us, this protection is recognized in both Parks Canada and GNWT legislation, and Thaidene Nene is ultimately subject to any outcome of land claim and treaty negotiations.

Thaidene Nene has the potential to set a new standard for Indigenous-Crown collaboration in protected areas, secure a vital cultural and ecological landscape, and provide for significant new investment into a region that sorely needs it. After many years of planning, negotiations, and engagements amongst and multitude of parties and stakeholders, we are now in the endgame of establishing Thaidene Nene. Our people are ready to move forward with the opportunities Thaidene Nene will bring. Let's not delay any longer.

Marci Cho,



Chief Darryl Marlowe
Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation