



Parks Canada Preliminary Screening under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT:

- New
- Amended
- Requires a permit, licence or authorization under the *Preliminary Screening Requirement Regulations* (issuance of a building permit pursuant to the *National Parks Building Regulations* s 5.1)
- Does not require permit, licence or authorization and is proposed by PCA

1. DEVELOPMENT TITLE & LOCATION

Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve

2. PROPONENT INFORMATION

łutsël K'é Dene First Nation

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATES

Planned commencement: 2021-07-01
Planned completion: *2021-09-30

4. INTERNAL FILE

TDN2021-001

5. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION (as posted on the preliminary screening section of the Mackenzie Valley Review Board's public registry, with recent minor changes denoted with *italics*).

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 Conservation Area (see map 1). For over a decade, members of łutsël K'é Dene First Nation have been actively patrolling Thaidene Nënë through the ongoing activities of their Guardian Program – Ni Hat'ni Dene – which means 'watchers of the land' in Dënesųłíné.

The Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardians are highly regarded as stewards of the land, maintaining the integrity of cultural sites, monitoring water quality, and interacting with visitors to the IPA. Much of the Ni Hat'ni Dene's work involves spending extensive time on the land. The Guardians travel over large expanses of water and land to monitor important traditional sites within



Thaidene Nënë in all seasons and types of weather. Locally-built patrol cabins provide necessary shelter and rest at key locations along frequent travel routes.

Since 2019, the Guardians have played an important role in winter caribou monitoring and supporting the implementation of the Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádi (łutselk'e Dene First Nation's Caribou Stewardship Plan). In support of this monitoring program, łutsël K'é Dene First Nation have identified a need to build a patrol cabin adjacent to the historic Pike's Portage Trail, en route to the barrens where caribou frequent during winter. The proposed building site falls within the boundaries of Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve and, therefore, requires a **building permit*¹. As per the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, Parks Canada is legally required, before issuing permits, to conduct preliminary screenings to determine any public concern, or adverse environmental, social or cultural impacts.

The construction of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin is planned to occur between July and **September* when Great Slave Lake is ice-free and site conditions are favourable. Use of the patrol cabin will likely vary from year to year, depending on caribou movement patterns and the overall monitoring **and patrol* needs. łutselk'e Dene First Nation has put forward the following activities and location for building a patrol cabin in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve:

Activities

- Transportation and delivery of building materials, which will occur by air or by boat.
- Off-loading of the building materials at the staging area located on the beach.
- Moving building materials to the proposed construction site, by hand and / or by quad and trailer.
- Site preparation, including the clearing of ground vegetation, small trees and rocks.
- Construction of one 16' x 24' wood cabin, including: a shingled gable roof; beam on wooden pad foundation (no soil excavation required), and a single floor with sleeping loft.
- Construction of an outhouse (pit toilet).
- Construction of two 2.8' x 8' wooden tent pads adjacent to the proposed cabin site.
- Installation of a floating dock.
- Installation of sump to dispose of greywater output from the cabin.

Locations

The proposed construction site for the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin is located at the Great Slave Lake / Charlton Bay end of Pike's Portage Trail within Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve (see Map 2). The site includes the outhouse, tent pads, sump and staging area.

¹National Parks Building Regulations, s. 5(1).



6. VALUED COMPONENTS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED

Indigenous Peoples, and the Social and Cultural Environment

The National Park Reserve is part of Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). Management of the National Park Reserve is shared between Parks Canada and Indigenous Governments: Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Deninu Kųé First Nation, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Work is conducted collaboratively, and consensus-based decisions are made through two management boards.

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve is a living legacy for all: a place where Indigenous peoples can continue to practice their ways of life, while also coming together to welcome the world. Here, Indigenous peoples continue resource harvesting, cultural, and spiritual practices in accordance with their constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve not only protects the ecological integrity, but also the cultural continuity of its unique landscape for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations and visitors from around the world.

- Indigenous Peoples

The lands now within Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve have provided sustenance and have been travelled by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The Park Reserve encompasses numerous sites of spiritual and cultural importance to Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, Deninu Kųé First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, and the North Slave Metis Alliance who also assert traditional territory within the area.

Use of the land continues today, as articulated above, including harvesting, travelling, spiritual gatherings, and monitoring. Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve is a living landscape where culture thrives. Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area, declared by Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation under Dene Law, encompasses the National Park Reserve. Pike's Portage is a both a current and historic access route to the barrens.

- Heritage Resources

Heritage resources are defined as a human work, an object, or a place that is determined, on the basis of its heritage value, to be directly associated with an important aspect or aspects of human history and culture of a heritage area. Examples of heritage resources include archaeological or historic sites, burial sites, artifacts and other objects of historical, cultural, or religious significance, and historical or cultural records.

Heritage resources exist throughout Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve. Several known cultural sites, cabins and graveyards are located within the Lockhart River – Artillery Lake corridor, and at Fort Reliance – now recognized as a National Historic Site. Fort Reliance was built as a base of operations for expeditions in 1833, and briefly operated as a fur trade post in



the 1850s. The Métis have a history of involvement in the fur trade and as expedition guides in the region.

Heritage resources also exist along Pike's Portage, a historic travel route that has been used for centuries by the Dene, Métis and European explorers to access the barrens. An archaeological survey of the area by Nobel (1966) documented significant evidence of use, including stone tools, trade copper, hearths, tent rings, caribou bones, and a cemetery. As noted by Deck (2020), "the presence of stone tools and early style projectile points reflect the antiquity of cultural activities in this area".

- **Visitor Experience**

It is currently estimated that approximately 500 people visit Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve on an annual basis. A wide variety of recreational activities are currently enjoyed throughout the area, including: sailing, kayaking, canoeing and motor-boating, hiking, snowmobiling, dog-sledding, cross-country skiing, fishing and berry picking. Visitation is expected to increase with new service offers from guide outfitter operations and greater promotion of the National Park Reserve.

Visitor use of Pike's Portage primarily occurs during summer months by recreational paddlers. According to Tupakka (2017), the route includes eight portages that connect nine lakes, with the first portage being the longest (~5 km) and the most difficult (~600 ft. elevation gain). Some winter use by visitors occurs using snowmobile or dogsled.

Natural Environment

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve protects approximately 14,000 km² of nationally significant boreal forest, freshwater and tundra ecosystems, and represents the Northwestern Boreal Uplands Natural Region in the National Parks System Plan. The area exemplifies the transition from the Taiga Shield Eco-region to the Southern Arctic Eco-region – the boundary of which is defined by tree line. It is characterized as having low to moderate relief with innumerable interlocking lakes and large areas of exposed bedrock. Glacial erosion and deposition created these and other unique landscape features, including archipelagos, steep eskers, gorges and waterfalls. The National Park Reserve is situated within the sub-Arctic climate zone and, to a lesser extent, the Boreal climate zone. The western half of the area is underlain by isolated permafrost patches, while the eastern half is underlain by continuous permafrost. Overall, Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve represents an outstanding example of an intact, remote wilderness area.

- **Soil**

Soil development and nutrient availability are significant factors influencing the distribution and abundance of vascular plants (e.g., trees, shrubs, flowering herbs etc.). Soil development is dependent on regional source materials, climate and hydrology. The source materials found in and around Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve include granite bedrock, marine clays, and glacial till. Soils within the region are Cryosolic, which is a term used to describe soil



development in areas with permafrost. Soil development is considered to be very slow (i.e., a few millimetres per century), with the exception of peat materials that tend to accumulate more quickly.

Unlike other areas within the National Park Reserve, the soils found at the Great Slave Lake/Charlton Bay end of Pike's Portage are likely sandy loam Brunisols that have developed on tills derived from granitic bedrock (ECG, 2008). Nobel (1966) described 38 beach ridges during his archaeological survey conducted at the at Pike's Portage. These beach ridges were noted in other documents (e.g., Kelsall et al., 1970; Raup, 1928) where they are referred to as "The Fort Reliance Sand Plain". The beach ridges rise to upwards of 600 ft (~183 m) and correspond to the historic levels of Great Slave Lake.

- Air

No formal observations of air/noise quality have occurred in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve. However, it is expected that these valued components are representative of their natural state as Łutsël K'é is the only nearby community, and industrial activity in the surrounding area is relatively low. Reduced air quality from regional/national forest fires may seasonally occur.

- Water

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve overlaps the east arm of Great Slave Lake, which is the deepest (and fifth largest) lake in North America. The National Park Reserve encompasses Artillery Lake and several freshwater tributaries including the Lockhart and Snowdrift Rivers. Ts'akui Theda (Lady of the Falls – Parry Falls) and the Lockhart River have great cultural and spiritual importance.

Water quality within the National Park Reserve is expected to be pristine as relatively low inputs of industrial and community-related pollutants potentially come from the surrounding area. The Water Survey of Canada (Environment and Climate Change Canada) operates one monitoring station in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve. The station is located on the Lockhart River at the southern end of Artillery Lake and is dedicated to providing only hydrometric information (water level and flow). Data available from 2000 to 2005 indicate no abnormal flow conditions for the site. The Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers have been monitoring water quality in and around the community of Łutsël K'é, Macleod Bay and Christie Bay since 2008, and have periodically shared this data with the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). Data analysis can be used to detect any changes in water quality over time.

- Vegetation

The shores of lakes and rivers within the forested parts of Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve are lined with dense stands of black spruce, white spruce, and white birch. Southern inland areas are occupied by stands of white spruce and jack pine, with understories consisting of blueberries and cranberries, feather moss and lichens. Northern inland areas are occupied by open stands of black spruce covering thick understories of lichen. In areas that transition from



the boreal forest to the barrens, stunted black spruce and tamarack sparsely cover dwarf tundra vegetation and exposed bedrock. Greater detail about the distribution and status of vascular plants in the National Park Reserve will be determined with species inventories. Historical records indicate that one 'At Risk' species may occur in the area. The Canadian Museum of Nature retains a sample of Mackenzie Hairgrass (*Deschampsia mackenzieana*), a plant listed as Special Concern on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*, that was collected near Fort Reliance in 1927.

- Wildlife

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve is home to plethora of wildlife species. Information, particularly traditional knowledge, is most abundant for large bodied mammals and fur bearers because of their cultural and social importance within Indigenous cultures. Hunting and trapping of caribou, moose, muskox, wolf, lynx, wolverine, beaver, red fox, otter, marten, muskrat, mink, snowshoe and Arctic hare provide food and economic benefit to Indigenous peoples. In total, 42 species of mammals are known to inhabit the National Park Reserve. Of those, 4 species are listed on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*: Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), and Northern Myotis (*Myotis septentrionalis*) are listed as Endangered; and Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) and Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) are listed as Special Concern. Four herds of Barren-ground Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) – the Bathurst, Beverly, Ahiak, and Qamanirjuaq - are of vital importance to Indigenous peoples and are known to occur in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve. Although not yet listed on Schedule 1, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has assessed Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened. All three herds are listed as Threatened under NWT species at risk legislation, with the Bathurst herd being intensely managed after a continued and significant decline in numbers. In light of this, Łutsël K'édene First Nation has recently approved a Caribou Stewardship Plan (called *Yúnethé Xá ǂetthën Hádi*) that includes a self-imposed 2-year moratorium on hunting caribou from the Bathurst herd. Other plans (e.g., Bathurst Caribou Plan), co-management boards and harvest restrictions have also been established to protect and manage these herds.

Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve is also home to approximately 171 bird species; however, species inventories and consistent monitoring are needed to confirm the numbers and status of landbirds, waterfowl and shorebirds. Of note, ten species of hawks and falcons, two eagle species, osprey and six owl species also occur in the area. Islands and cliffs in the area are known to be important nesting habitat for breeding birds and many rocky islands host colonies of gulls and terns. Several species thought to be present in the National Park Reserve are listed on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*: Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*), Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), and Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) are listed as Threatened; and Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*), and Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) are listed as Special Concern. Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) is not listed on Schedule 1, but it has been assessed by COSEWIC as a species of Special Concern.

Although not yet confirmed, 5 amphibian species (i.e., frogs, toads and salamanders) are expected to occur in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve. Of these, only one species is



considered to be 'At Risk'. The Northern Leopard Frog (*Lithobates pipiens*) is listed as Endangered on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*.

There are 28 species of freshwater and anadromous fish known to occur in Great Slave Lake and its tributaries. Sport and subsistence fishing activities occur throughout the area. Fish species of particular importance within Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve include: Lake Trout, Lake Whitefish, Burbot, Northern Pike, Walleye and Arctic Grayling.

7. ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Indigenous Peoples, and the Social and Cultural Environment

- Indigenous People

The potential impacts resulting from the construction of the Ni Hat'ni patrol cabin at Pike's Portage should be negligible given that the purpose of Guardian operations is to ensure the ecological and cultural integrity of the Thaidene Nënë for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations and visitors from around the world.

- Heritage Resources

Recognizing the historical and cultural importance of Pike's Portage trail, an Archaeological Overview Assessment (AOA) was conducted to evaluate the archaeological potential related to the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin (see Appendix B). The purpose of the AOA was to determine whether archaeological mitigation measures are necessary prior to, or in conjunction with, the proposed project activities in order to protect existing heritage resources. The AOA was completed in December, 2020 by a Parks Canada archaeologist, Donalee Deck, based on a review of existing archaeological documentation (i.e., Nobel, 1966) and the Development Description (see Section 5) that was posted on the preliminary screening section of the Mackenzie Valley Review Board's public registry.

As noted by Deck (2020), the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin project corresponds to the large archaeological site recorded as Pike's Portage (KeNo-21) at the east end of Great Slave Lake, including the first 8 out of 38 beach ridges that were described by Nobel (1966). The outcome of the AOA was that mitigation measures, by way of an archaeological impact assessment (AIA) conducted on site prior to project construction, are required due to the "high probability of encountering archaeological resources with the association of the project to a large archaeological site along an historically significant trail" (Deck, 2020).

Several recommendations are proposed to ensure Indigenous consultation and collaboration during the AIA survey, which is scheduled to occur mid to late June, 2021 (Deck, 2020). These recommendations, as well as the standard protocols that will be employed if features or artifacts are encountered will be discussed in greater detail in Section 8 (i.e., Mitigation Measures) of this Preliminary Screening.



- Visitor Experience

The Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin will have minimal impact on visitor experience, and will not impact access to Pike's Portage. Pending the outcome of the AIA, the cabin will likely be set back off the trail so as not to impair the iconic nature of Pike's Portage. It is also likely that the cabin will be located further up the trail so as not to attract additional (unintended) use of the area.

The Ni Hat'ni Guardians will be responsible for the cabin upkeep and maintenance. Regular shift changes will ensure that garbage, empty fuel barrels and discarded machinery parts are frequently removed from the area and properly disposed of in Łuts'elk'é (or Yellowknife).

Natural Environment

- Soil

Impacts from machinery (e.g., quads) and human foot traffic is expected to be minimal during and post construction of the Ni Hat'ni patrol cabin as sandy soils are less prone to compaction compared to other soils because they hold less water. Similarly, the impacts from the construction of the cabin foundation and surrounding tent pads (i.e., wooden platforms above ground) are expected to be minimal as soil excavation is not required.

- Air

Woodstove and campfire burning of wood (and occasionally garbage) at the Ni Hat'ni patrol cabin is not expected to impact overall air quality in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve or the Pike's Portage area.

- Water

The Ni Hat'ni patrol cabin is not expected to impact water quality in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve or Pike's Portage area. The location of the grey water sump and outhouse (i.e., pit toilet) will be determined during the Archaeological Impact Assessment (AOS). Suitable sites will be based on terrain features (e.g., substrate, slope) that best avoid possible contamination of freshwater resources.

- Vegetation

Vegetation, rocks and logs will be cleared from the build site prior to construction of the Ni Hat'ni patrol cabin; however, the resulting impacts are expected to be relatively minimal.

- Wildlife

The Ni Hat'ni patrol cabin is not expected to impact wildlife in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve or Pike's Portage area.

8. MITIGATION MEASURES

The construction of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin at Pike's Portage may have negative impacts on heritage resources, visitor experience and the natural environment.



Potential negative impacts on heritage resources will be primarily mitigated through:

- I. The Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) prior to construction;
- II. If features or artifact concentrations are encountered during the AIA or construction, then the *Accidental Finds Protocol* will be employed. This involves implementing a stop work order until advice is provided by the Parks Canada Terrestrial Archaeological section about how to proceed. Photographs of the artifact and GPS waypoints of the artifact location will be well-documented, and
- III. A *Change of Scope* protocol will be employed if there are any changes to the development description, including the project footprint.

Potential negative impacts on the natural environment and visitor experience will be mitigated through the following ways:

- IV. The Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian program wishes to showcase their role as stewards of the land. Guardian staff are trained to lead by example to ensure that Thaidene Nënë and important cultural sites, like Pike's Portage, continue to be a living landscape of Indigenous use;
- V. The cabin will be frequently occupied by Ni Hat'ni staff. Guardians are trained to monitor and interact with visitors to conjure appreciation and respect for the land and Indigenous culture;
- VI. If any adverse impacts are perceived (e.g., concentrated land use, visual impact) mitigation measures will be considered by the Thaidene Nënë Management Boards and implemented, and
- VII. All use of the park is subject to the *Canada National Parks Act* (CNPA) and the regulations that serve to leave ecological and commemorative integrity of national parks unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Park Wardens will be making regular patrols in the National Park Reserve to enforce the CNPA and the regulations.

9. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL ADVERSE EFFECTS

Given the limited magnitude of effects and the application of mitigation measures, the construction of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin is not expected to cause residual adverse effects to natural, social or cultural environments.

10. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Parks Canada staff worked with designated contacts from Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation to develop and review the draft Development Description for the proposed construction of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin. This document was also shared with the other Indigenous partners involved with cooperative management prior to the January 11th, 2021 announcement commencing a 30-day public review of the Development Description.



This preliminary screening document has been reviewed by the two Indigenous partners who, through their establishment agreements, help guide park operations: Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation.

11.1 Bibliography

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12. DECISION

Parks Canada has conducted this preliminary screening of "Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve" (the proposed development) pursuant to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (ss. 124(2) and 125(1)), and has concluded that it is **not** referring the proposal to the Mackenzie Valley Review Board for environmental assessment.

Reason for Preliminary Screening Decision

A summary of all comments received and Parks Canada's response, can be found in Appendix A. The Appendix forms part of this preliminary screening decision.

There is no reasonable likelihood that the construction of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin might have significant adverse impact on the environment (natural environment, social and cultural resources, or heritage resources). The *Canada National Parks Act* (CNPA) requires the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity to be the first priority when considering the management of national parks and national park reserves. The shared management of the National Park Reserve requires collaboration between Indigenous Governments and Parks Canada, and consensus-based decisions by the Thaidene Nënë Management Boards. The



construction of a Guardian patrol cabin at Pike's Portage will help protect the Dene and Métis living cultural heritage, and increase opportunities for educating others about that heritage.

Taking into account the analysis and implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the analysis, the development:

- ❑ Might have a significant adverse impact on the environment, and the proposal should be referred to the *Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board* for environmental assessment.
- ✓ Does not have a likelihood of causing significant adverse impact on the environment.
- ❑ Might be a cause for public concern, and the proposal should be referred to the *Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board* for environmental assessment.
- ✓ Does not have a likelihood of causing public concern.

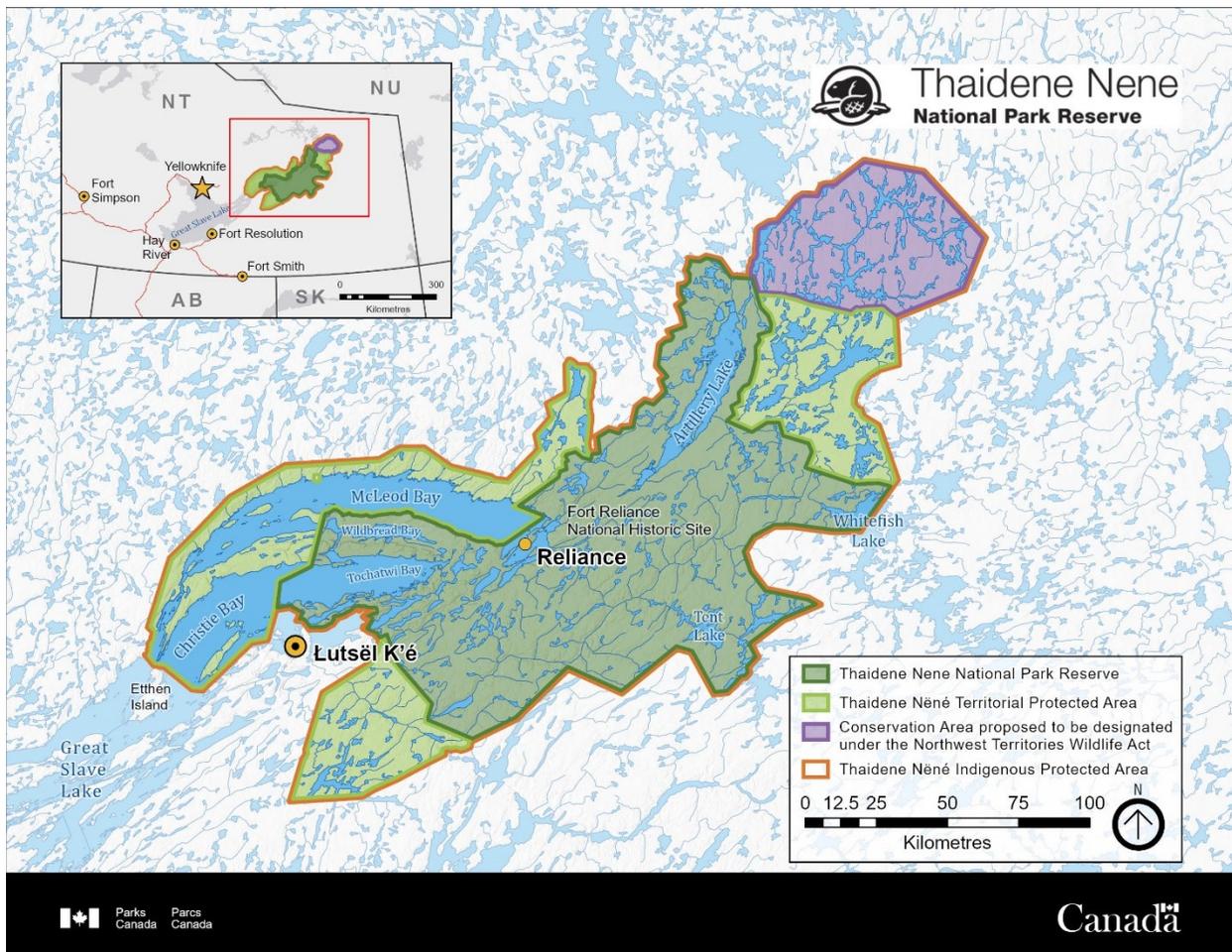


13. APPROVAL

Prepared by: <i>Danielle Thompson</i> Ecosystem Scientist, SWNWT Field Unit	Date: March 11, 2021
Reviewed by: <i>Patrick Carroll</i> Cultural Resource Management Advisor, SWNWT Field Unit	Date: March 12, 2021
Recommended by: łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (Iris Catholique, Thaidene Nënë Department and Steve Ellis)	Date: March 30, 2021
Recommended by: Northwest Territories Métis Nation (Arthur Beck, Paul Harrington, Betty Villeneuve)	Date: March 30, 2021
Approved by:  <hr/> <i>Laani Uunila</i> Implementation Manager, Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve	Date: March 31, 2021

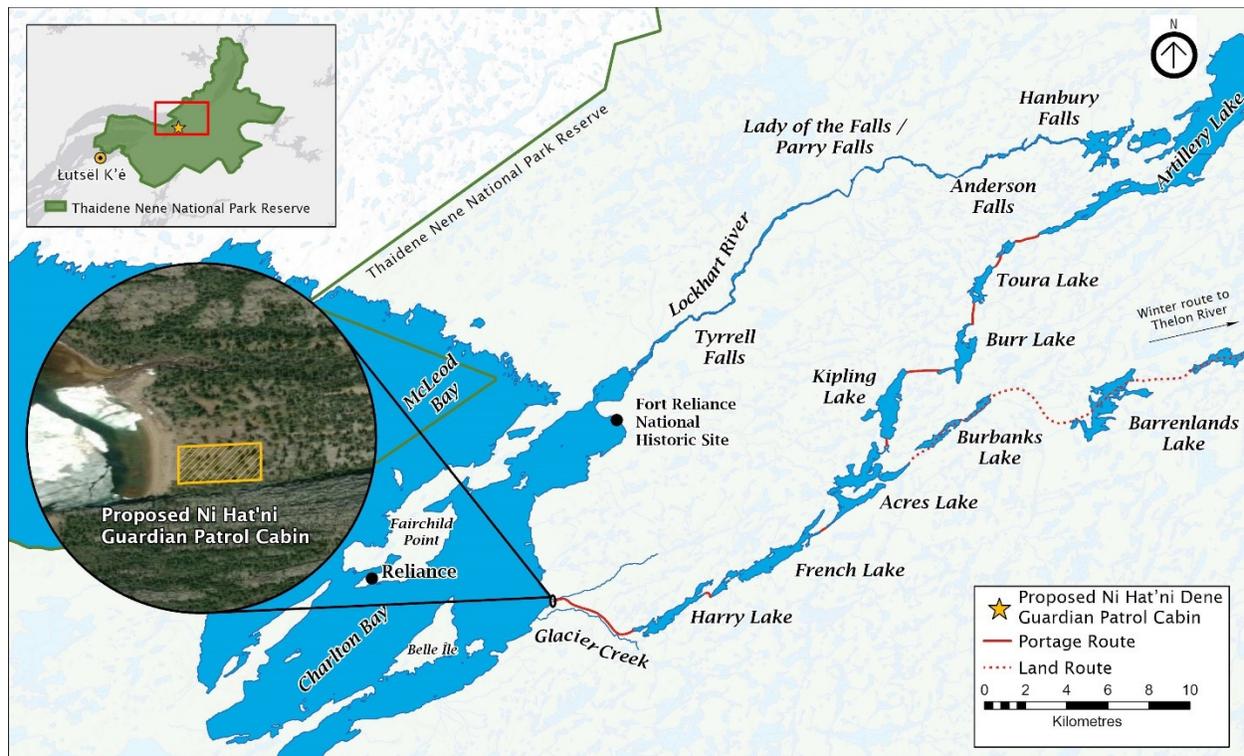


Map 1: Location of Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, in relation to Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area, Territorial Protected Area, and the proposed Conservation Area.





Map 2: The proposed location of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve, including the outhouse, tent pads, sump and staging area.





Appendix A: Summary of comments received during the public review, and Parks Canada’s response

Date Received	From	Public Comment Summary	Parks Canada’s Response
2021-01-11	Dan Wong, Jackpine Paddle, NT	Supportive of development. No comments to add.	The submission does not indicate that the Ni Hat’ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin might have a significant adverse impact on the environment or that there might be cause of public concern.
2021-01-13	David Olesen, Hoarfrost River, NT	Concerned about visual impact of general cabin debris and refuse if the site is not properly cleaned and maintained over time (e.g., Guardian cabins at Fairchild Point and Timber Bay). Concerned about hunters and travellers also using the site, increasing firewood cutting and discarded equipment, tarps and animal parts. Recommended moving the cabin up ~1-2 km north or south of Pike’s trailhead to avoid impact at this historic trail.	Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Visitor Experience), and Sect. 8 (Mitigations; IV, VI and VII). Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Visitor Experience), and Sect. 8 (Mitigations; V). Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Visitor Experience).
2021-01-19	Glen Guthrie, Director, Wildlife Lands and Environment, LKDFN	Supportive of development. No comments to add.	The submission does not indicate that the Ni Hat’ni Dene Guardian patrol cabin might have a significant adverse impact on the environment or that there might be cause of public concern.
2021-01-22	Wallace Finlayson, Trophy Lodge, NT	Supportive of development. Curious about where the grey water from the pump will be disposed of.	Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Water).
2021-02-01	Morten Asfeldt, Co-editor of Pike’s	Supportive of development. Concerned about impacting cultural resources and historical site that are “both	Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Heritage Resources), and Sec. 8 (Mitigations; I – VII).



	Portage: Stories of a Distinguished Place	<p>environmentally and archaeologically sensitive”.</p> <p>Concerned that a cabin at the foot of Pike’s will encourage and focus use in the area, and associated impacts from skidoo and powerboat. Lack of infrastructure at the site allows visitors to imagine the long history of Pike’s Portage use from time immemorial.</p> <p>Concerned about firewood cutting and hunting debris (e.g., bones, gas and oil cans, skidoo and boat parts).</p> <p>Recommended continued use of cabins at Fairchild Point, Timber Bay and, potentially, Reliance (e.g., Catling house); or moving the cabin location ~1-2km north or south of Pike’s trailhead, or along Pike’s Portage (e.g., Acres Lake).</p>	<p>Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Visitor Experience), and Sect. 8 (Mitigations; IV, V).</p> <p>Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Visitor Experience), and Sect. 8 (Mitigations; IV, VI and VII).</p> <p>Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Visitor Experience).</p>
2021-02-03	Robert Henderson, Co-editor of Pike’s Portage: Stories of a Distinguished Place	<p>Supportive of development.</p> <p>Recommended placing the cabin in a site already active rather than at the foot of Pike’s Portage.</p>	<p>Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 8 (Mitigations; IV).</p>
2021-02-09	North Slave Métis Alliance	<p>Supportive of development.</p> <p>Indicated the presence of Métis heritage in the area including camp sites, gathering sites, and a burial site. Asked to be consulted before construction to ensure their sites will not be impacted.</p>	<p>Parks Canada feels that the concerns raised have been addressed in Sect. 7 (Assessment of Impacts; Heritage Resources), and Sect. 8 (Mitigations; I).</p>

Archaeological Overview Assessment: Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve

Donalee Deck

Terrestrial Archaeology, IACHD, December 2020

Introduction

This archaeological overview assessment (AOA) will evaluate the archaeological potential related to the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin project at Pike's Portage in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve (Fig. 1). The project is being initiated by the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN) who have been actively patrolling Thaidene Nënë through their Guardian Program: Ni Hat'ni Dene or "watchers of the land" in Dënesųłiné (Parks Canada 2020). The infrastructure for the cabin project will provide a place for the guardians to stay while on patrol.

The project will involve construction of a cabin, tent frame platforms, outhouse and sump near Charlton Bay at the west end of Pike's Portage. This AOA will determine if archaeological mitigation measures are necessary prior to, or in conjunction with, the proposed project activities in order to protect archaeological and cultural resources.

Assessment Methodology

This assessment is based on correspondence with Southwest Northwest Territories (SWNWT) field unit staff, Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN) project description, Mackenzie Valley Review Board Preliminary Screening document and a review of existing archaeological documentation for the park reserve.

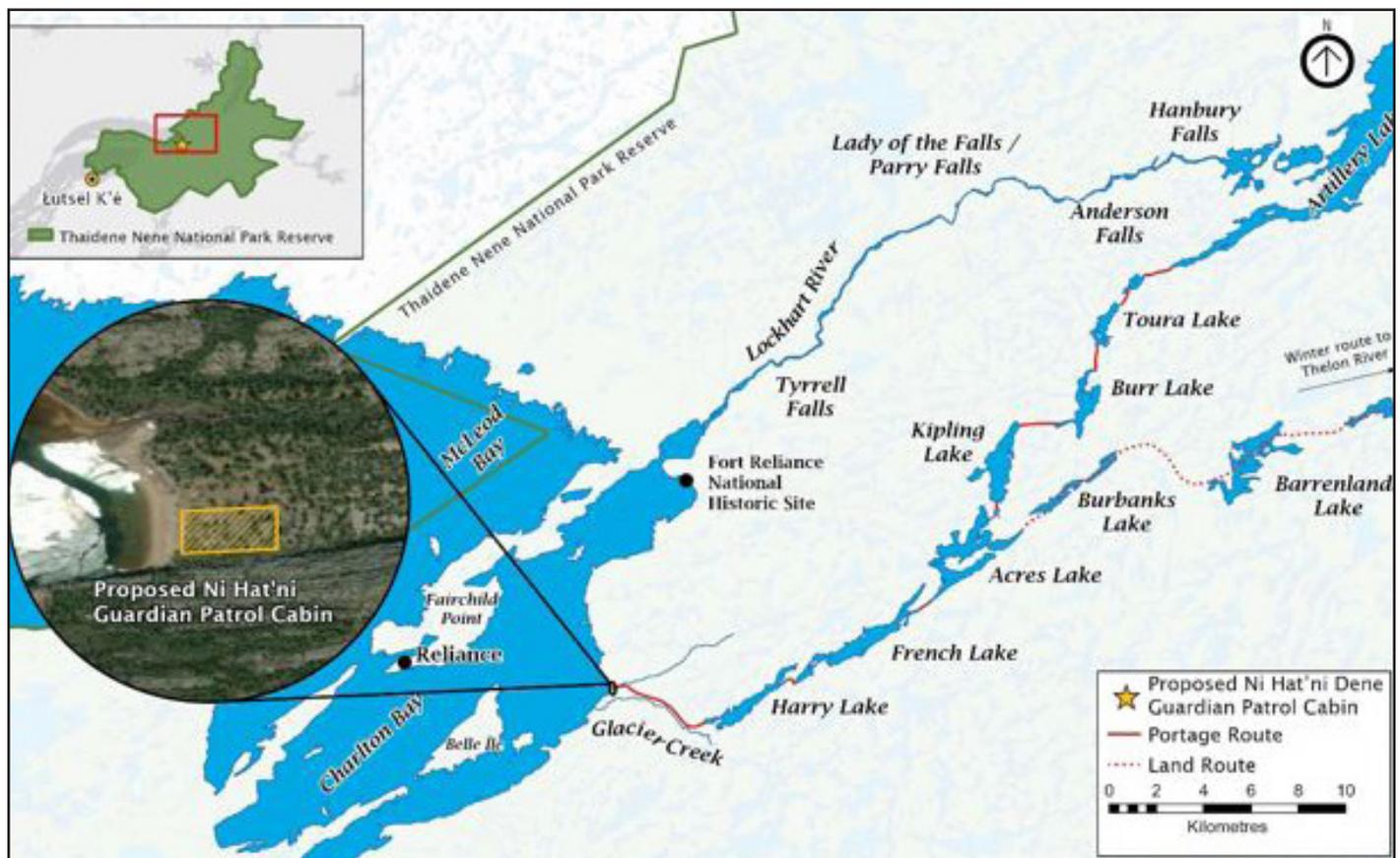


Figure 1. Location of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin project at Pike's Portage in Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve (From Parks Canada 2020:4).

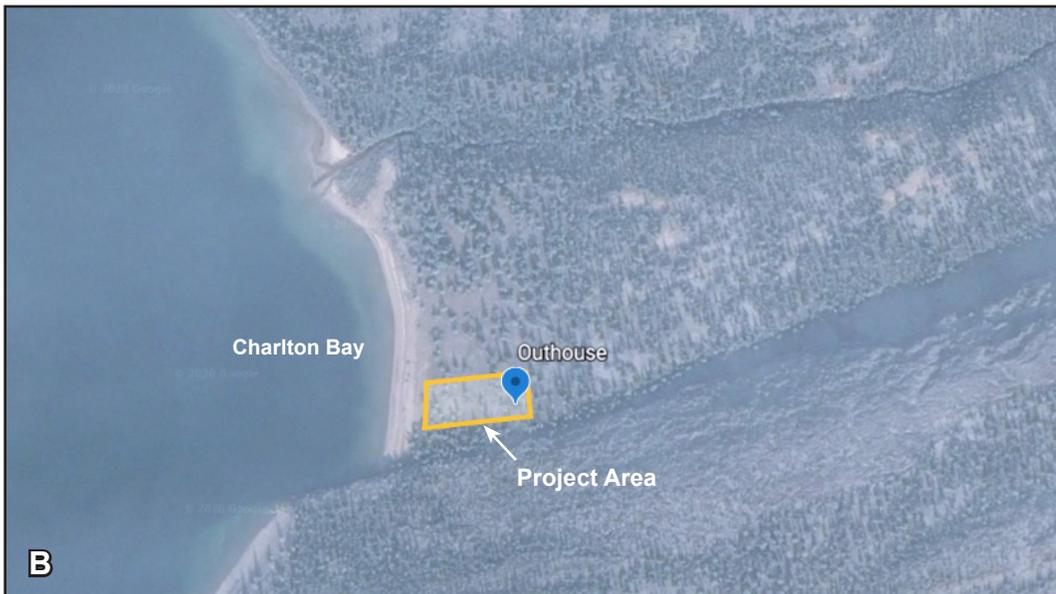


Figure 2. Location of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin project: (A) project location relative to Great Slave Lake; and (B) close-up of project location relative to Charlton Bay (Modified from LKDFN 2020).

Project Description

LKDFN is planning a cabin project along a historic portage trail referred to as Pike's Portage at the east end of Great Slave Lake (Fig. 2). The project will involve construction of a cabin, tent frame platforms and outhouse. The proposed construction date is between July and August 2021. The precise footprint for the project infrastructure is not available for this review. A general Google Earth location was provided with the project description (Fig. 2).

The cabin will be 16' x 24' in size, constructed with milled lumber, a gabled roof with shingles, beam on wood pad foundation, single floor with sleeping loft and knotty pine exterior and interior (Fig. 3). There will be no plumbing installed. Future plans for the cabin are for upgrades to solar power. The individual platforms for tent camping will be 28' x 8' in size. The number of platforms planned has not been provided at this stage of the project. There will be a small sump behind the outhouse for wash basin gray water disposal.

Construction materials for the cabin will be shipped by truck from Alberta to Yellowknife and then chartered via plane or barge to the beach near the building site. Materials will be offloaded from the plane or barge by hand at the beach. A floating dock may also be used to offload. The beach will serve as the staging area. Supplies will be moved to the cabin site by hand and, if needed, heavier items will be moved from the beach to building site by quad and trailer. A second staging area will be located adjacent to the cabin site.

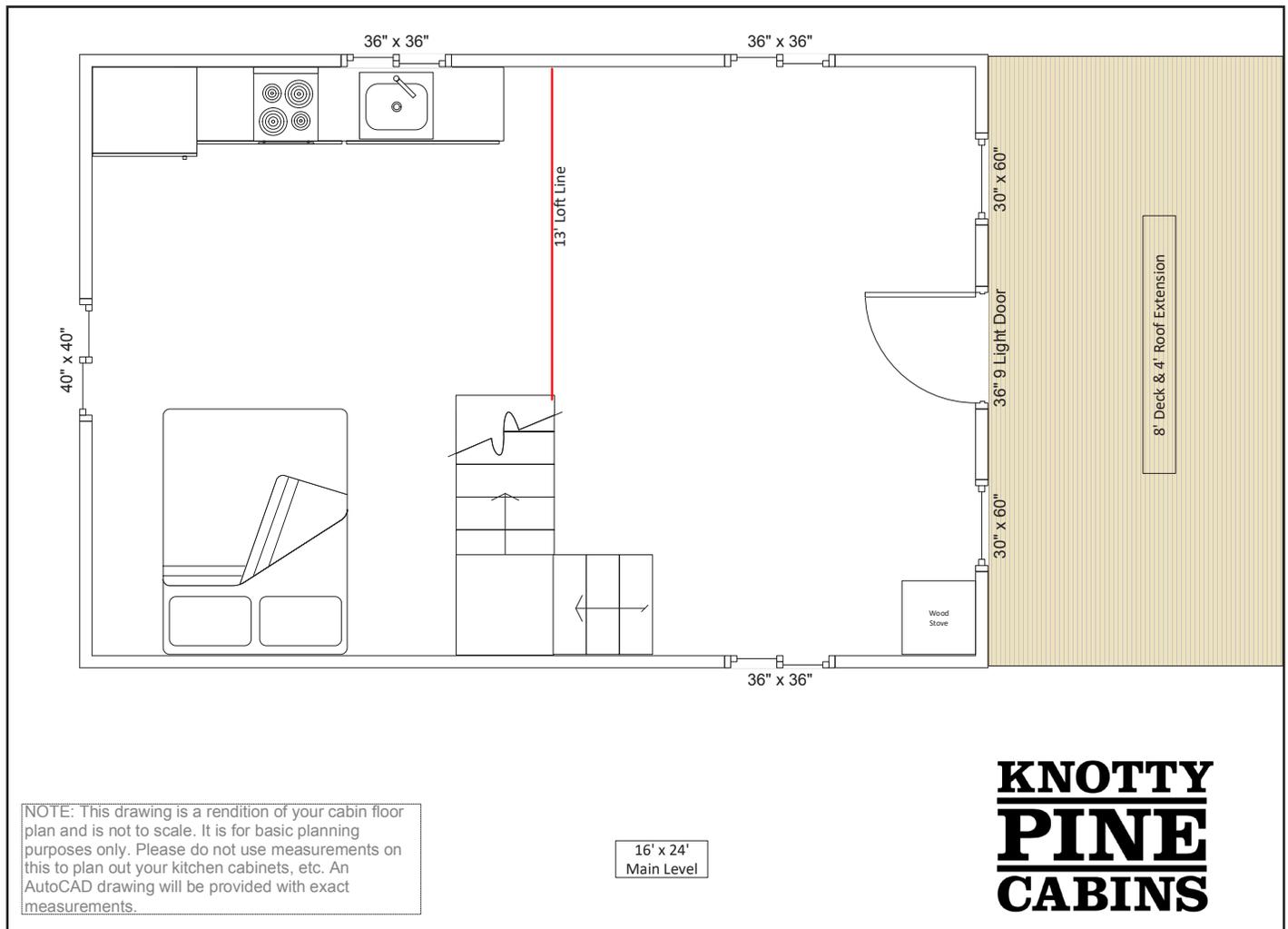


Figure 3. Cabin floor plan provided with the project description (LKDFN 2020).

Archaeological Background

The Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin project corresponds to a large archaeological site recorded as Pike's Portage (KeNo-21) at the east end of Great Slave Lake. It was recorded during survey work in 1966 to include 38 beach ridges beginning at Charlton Bay and extending to the east along the portage (Nobel 1966). Cultural occupations represented by artifacts and features correlate to former beaches associated with water level changes over time. Nobel's beach ridges 1 to 8 at the west end of Pike's Portage correspond to the cabin project.

Archaeological resources documented within the proposed footprint of the cabin project (including the staging area at Charlton Bay and the trail from the beach to the cabin location for moving supplies) include artifact scatters, tent features and hearths representing early Indigenous land-use to recent times. More specifically, Nobel documented stone tools; stone flakes and cores (waste material from stone tool manufacture); historic artifacts; tent rings; rectangular tent bases; an oval tent ring with stone stove base, caribou bone and tin artifacts inside; and a large campsite with multiple tent rings. This large encampment is thought to correlate with one described in 1890 by Warburton Mayer Pike (Nobel 1966).

Artifacts and features documented by Nobel (1966) along the portage to the east of the cabin project area (beach ridges 9 to 36) include stone tools, such as projectile points, bifaces (knife), scrapers and microblades; flakes and microblade cores; fire-cracked rock from hearths; trade copper, other historic artifacts and tent rings. There is also a cemetery to the left of the portage between beach ridge 24 and 25. The presence of stone tools and early style projectile points reflect the antiquity of cultural activities in this area.

Archaeological Potential

Project activities that may result in ground impact include:

- Staging areas at the beach and adjacent to the cabin site;
- Vegetation clearing;
- Cabin foundation;
- Tent frame platforms;
- Outhouse;
- Gray water sump; and
- Transportation of supplies between the beach and cabin site with potential for use of a quad and trailer.

There is a high potential for surface and buried archaeological artifacts and/or features to be located within the parameters of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin project. The project is located along a historically significant trail that corresponds with a very large archaeological site with artifact scatters as well as features such as tent rings, tent frames and hearths. The artifacts include stone tools representing early Indigenous activities.

Archaeological Requirements and Mitigation Measures

An archaeological impact assessment (AIA) is required prior to project construction due to the high probability of encountering archaeological resources with the association of the project to a large archaeological site along an historically significant trail.

The AIA should be done in consultation and collaboration with the LKDFN community including elder and possibly youth and/or other community member participation. Community members should be invited to participate in the archaeological survey and test excavation. This could serve

as a training or hands-on experience for career options. Depending on financial and scheduling/ weather logistics, a preliminary survey of the broader portage trail would provide an update on the archaeological resources that were documented in the 1960s. If there is an opportunity to do this survey, it would ideally be done with community members using mobile mappers, photographs and written descriptions. This would give us a better understanding of the archaeological resources in terms of a detailed site map that will support future management decisions and also provide archaeological information to the community.

Recommended mitigation measures include:

- Consultation and collaboration with LKDFN including:
 - Participation in the field work and post field interpretation;
 - Ground blessing prior to commencement of field work;
 - Project areas identified (flagged or marked by community member working with the archaeologist). This is needed to identify where the archaeological work should focus related to ground impact and potential future expansion at the cabin site, for instance, if there are potential plans to add additional tent frames, updates to cabin or other needs. The archaeologist will need to know the location of the project footprint, including:
 - Trail between beach and cabin site for transporting supplies and equipment;
 - Staging areas at the beach and at the cabin site;
 - Cabin, outhouse, sump, tent frame footprints/general area;
 - Other activity areas associated with the cabin and tent frames such as fire pits, other;
 - If possible, identify if there is a broader use area planned for future development at the cabin site so that it can be assessed as part of this AIA; and
- Archaeological Impact Assessment including survey and judgementally placed shovel testing within the project footprint, staging area(s) and any other location associated with the project; and
- Time permitting, survey of the portage route to update existing archaeological data.

Based on the pre-AIA review, mitigation measures during the project construction phase will include:

- Accidental Finds Protocol; and
- Change of Scope Protocol.

Accidental Finds Protocol: There may be a chance that features or artifact(s) are encountered in the course of the proposed project activities. If features or artifact concentrations are encountered within a location of impact, work should stop in the immediate area, photographs and a GPS reading should be taken, and the Parks Canada project manager informed. The project manager should then contact Parks Canada's Terrestrial Archaeology section for advice and assessment of significance that will in turn determine what may be required to mitigate the find.

What is a significant find? It may be possible that historic objects, older Indigenous artifacts (such as stone tools, butchered animal remains, Indigenous ceramics) or features (such as hearths, structural remains) could be found in the project area(s). Concentrations of artifacts are significant, however, and so are undocumented historic or Indigenous features that cannot be avoided due to construction. Encountering any of these would be a stop work situation, as would the accidental find of human remains.

Change of Scope: Any changes to the proposed plans including the project footprint should be

submitted to the Parks Canada Agency Terrestrial Archaeology Representative for review.

References Cited

LKFN

2020 LKFN Project Description and Figures for Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin.

Nobel, W. C.

1966 *Archaeological Sites in the Northwest Territories*. Compiled by W.C. Noble. Manuscript No. 615: Archaeological Sites. Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Parks Canada

2020 Preliminary Screening Document: Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardian Patrol Cabin. Part of the Mackenzie Valley Review Board process. Parks Canada