

# Protected Areas Strategy Update

## Industry, Tourism and Investment



### Message from the Honourable Bob McLeod, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment

The Northwest Territories (NWT) is home to some of the most breathtaking scenery and rich natural resources on the planet. Our land is vast, unique and enriches our day to day lives in many ways. Through the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS), the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) is working with our partners to ensure that our important landscapes are protected for the long term.

ITI has committed to working with local partners, including Aboriginal governments and organizations, the federal government, industry, and environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS), in order to progress toward our ultimate goal of establishing Łue Túé Sulái as a territorial park. This is reflected in our sponsorship of Łue Túé Sulái in the Dehcho Region, and the efforts of the PAS working group.

The PAS is an integral part of ITI's commitment to creating a sustainable, responsible future for our territory, and I am excited to see the results of our efforts. When northerners work together, great things are possible, and the PAS is yet another example of that.

### Łue Túé Sulái (Five Fish Lakes) Update

In November of 2010, ITI announced the sponsorship of the Dehcho Region's Łue Túé Sulái (Five Fish Lakes) area as a candidate Cultural Conservation Area under the NWT's Protected Area Strategy (PAS).

A Cultural Conservation Area is a classification of territorial park used to protect landscapes which are culturally significant to the area and its indigenous people. By sponsoring Łue Túé Sulái, ITI is committing to working cooperatively with local communities, the public, industry, and other stakeholder groups with the ultimate goal of establishing the area as a territorial park.

Three working group meetings have already been held in 2011 to move this initiative forward. The purpose of the working group is to review the results of scientific, traditional, and local studies, and make recommendations for the final designation and management of Łue Túé Sulái.

Attendees included members of the Jean Marie River and Dehcho First Nations, as well as delegates from ITI. Other affected First Nations, industry, and ENGOS are welcome to join the working group.

The working group will meet next on Ekali Lake from August 16-18, with a fifth meeting tentatively scheduled for November of this year in Fort Simpson. The Fort Simpson meeting will also include a public open house. Public input is welcome throughout the PAS process.



## Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh Update

In 2009, the Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh area near Wrigley was proposed to ITI as a candidate Cultural Conservation Area by the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation. The area remains under consideration, and in April 2011, ITI staff met with representatives from the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation to discuss the proposal. The two groups collaborated on a workplan which will serve as a blueprint for future steps, and a final proposed boundary for the area is expected by September 2011.

A community informational open house was held in conjunction with the April 2011 meeting with the PKFN. ITI welcomes any comments or questions about the possible sponsorship of the area.

## New PAS Position created in the Dehcho Region

ITI is pleased to announce the creation and staffing of a new position: Protected Areas Strategy Analyst.

This position, located in Fort Simpson, was created to support ITI's work on protected areas in the Dehcho Region. The analyst will also provide advice and guidance to both communities in the Dehcho Region and First Nations groups (both local and regional) and will be the main support of the Łue Túé Sulái working group.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - TERRITORIAL PARKS

### Are Aboriginal rights recognized in territorial parks?

Yes, Aboriginal rights are protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and cannot be overridden by territorial legislation. The *Territorial Parks Act* also explicitly acknowledges Aboriginal peoples' right to hunt and fish in territorial parks.

### Where can I get wood for a campfire in a territorial park?

Several Territorial Parks sell firewood at the gatehouse, and you are always welcome to bring your own firewood with you, however, campfires in Territorial Park campgrounds are subject to any fire restrictions in place. The *Territorial Parks Act* prohibits cutting or using trees within a park whether they are standing or not.

### Can I drive an ATV in a territorial park?

Yes, but only on existing roads and you must obey any park rules and posted signs.

### Can I bring my dog with me to a territorial park?

Yes, dogs are welcome in territorial parks. However, for the safety of yourself and your pet, and in consideration of others, you must keep your dog on a leash at all times. Also, please remember to clean up after your dog.

### Can I stay overnight in parks that don't have designated campsites?

Yes. You may stay in parks that do not require entrance permits for up to 14 days per year.

### Can I bushwhack trails in a territorial park?

A top priority of ITI is to preserve the pristine natural environment for others to enjoy. For this reason it is considered an offence to damage the natural features of a park. Parks staff would be happy to answer any questions you have about existing trail systems or any other park facilities.

### How can I obtain a vehicle entrance or daily camping permit?

Permits can be purchased from staff at the park gatehouse. You may also reserve campsites ahead of time at [www.campingnwt.ca](http://www.campingnwt.ca). For questions regarding special permits such as extended stay camping permits and commercial use permits, please contact the ITI office in your region.

### Do these apply to Cultural Conservation Areas?

A Cultural Conservation Area is one of several classifications of territorial park and all territorial parks fall under the authority of the *Territorial Parks Act* and regulations. In addition, park specific management plans will be developed for any new parks, including Cultural Conservation Areas. These plans may include additional conditions respecting matters with the park such as permitted activities.



For more information or to contact the PAS Analyst, please call ITI's Dehcho Regional Office in Fort Simpson at (867) 695-7500.