

Yúneþé Xá ʔetthën Hádi

**Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation's
Caribou Stewardship Plan**

**Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation
Wildlife, Land and Environment Department**

January 2020

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Signatories to the LKDFN's Caribou Stewardship Plan

The Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation's *Yúnethé Xá Ʒetthën Hádi* was approved in principle by a resolution moved by Chief Darryl Marlowe and seconded by Florence Catholique during a Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation public meeting at 6:00 to 9:30 pm on January 28, 2020 at Z'ah Community Hall, Łutsël K'é, Northwest Territories. The decision was by show of hands.

Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Chief

Print Name

Signature

Date

Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Councilor

Print Name

Signature

Date

Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Councilor

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Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Councilor

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Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Councilor

Print Name

Signature

Date

Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Councilor

Print Name

Signature

Date

Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Committee members

Roger Catholique, August Enzoe, Terrie Enzoe, Ron Fat, Jennifer Jonasson, Dacho Poole

Technical and coordination support

Albert Boucher (facilitator), Shonto Catholique (coordinator), Ron Desjarlais (facilitator), Dennis Drygeese (language specialist), August Enzoe (facilitator), Ray Griffith (facilitator), Anne Gunn (caribou biologist and advisor), Larry Innes (legal counsel), Lauren King (coordinator and technical writer)

Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation's Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádi planning participants

The Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation would like to express our gratitude to all the people that participated in the development of this Plan. This Plan is based on the beliefs, values, thoughts, and stories that you shared with us throughout the entire process.

Marsi cho to Raymond Abel, Mervin Abel, Marcel Basil, Frank Basil, Albert Boucher, Sam Boucher, Ernest Boucher, Sarazine Basil-Boucher, Madeline Catholique, Mary Catholique, Alfred Catholique, Deney Catholique, Florence Catholique, August Catholique, Joseph Catholique, Herman Catholique, Ethan Catholique, JC Catholique, Hanna Catholique, Shonto Catholique, Florence Catholique, Irene Catholique, Denecho Catholique, Dawn Catholique, Roger Catholique, Verna Catholique, Charlie Catholique, Archie Catholique, Doris Catholique, Iris Catholique, Saniz Catholique, Elizabeth Catholique, Sheldon Catholique, Delsin Enzoe-Clark, Ron Desjarlais, Edward Drybones, Madeline Drybones, Dennis Drygeese, Mary Rose Enzoe, August Enzoe, Gloria Enzoe, Pete Enzoe, Terrie Enzoe, Gabriel Enzoe, Dora Enzoe, Ron Fat, Jim Fat, Ray Griffith, Jennifer Jonasson, Addie Jonasson, Tommy Lafferty, Angie Lantz, Joe Lockhart, Jeanette Lockhart, Tassie Lockhart, Henry Lockhart, Tom Lockhart, Sandra Lockhart, James Lockhart, Alizette Lockhart, Patty Lockhart, Darryl Marlowe, Cathy Marlowe, James Marlowe, Belinda Michel, Jessica Michel, Noel Michel, Laura Jane Michel, Stephanie

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Thank you to Heather Beck and Dean Cluff from the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Natural Resources for their presentation on the 2018 Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou survey results, and the 2018 Ɂejéré (muskox) survey results on February 6, 2019 at a public meeting in Łutsël K'é.

Thank you to Darin Bagshaw, Dean Cluff, Heather Sayine-Crawford, and Adrian Lizotte from the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Natural Resources for participating in a one-day inter-governmental workshop focused on the monitoring and enforcement section of this Plan on March 4, 2019 in Łutsël K'é.

The LKDFN would also like to acknowledge the groundbreaking efforts of the Deline Got'ine Government in developing and implementing their caribou conservation plan. Their plan, and others, inspired us to develop our own caribou stewardship plan.

Preamble

The Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation (LKDFN) has Aboriginal and treaty rights to continue to exercise communal authority over the harvest of caribou by our own members within our traditional territory. It is well established that LKDFN has Aboriginal and treaty rights to harvest caribou in our traditional territory. Our ancestors have lived in this area for millennia, and have relied extensively on caribou long before assertions of European sovereignty or control. Our members continue Denesoline harvesting traditions and practices in modern forms in this area today. These practices were entrenched as treaty rights in the Treaty of 1900 (also known as Treaty #8). Aboriginal and treaty rights of the LKDFN to harvest caribou in our traditional territory are recognized and affirmed under s. 35 of *The Constitution Act, 1982*:

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed. (2) In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada.

Section 35 has been extensively interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada to extend protection to Aboriginal rights which flow from practices that are integral to a distinct Indigenous society, including but not limited to hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and the construction of cabins and trails.

Section 35 rights are communal rights. Communal rights are grounded in the relationships and responsibilities that existing between Indigenous peoples and their traditional territory. For LKDFN, our relationships and responsibilities to the caribou are established in histories and accounts that go back thousands of years. These relationships and responsibilities are the underpinnings of Denesoline law and our traditional management systems. Traditional management systems are also an integral component of the meaningful exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights within the scope of s. 35.

Canadian law and jurisprudence clearly recognizes that LKDFN’s rights to harvest caribou also include the right to collectively manage the caribou harvest by LKDFN members. LKDFN’s right to collectively manage the caribou harvest by LKDFN members is necessary for the

exercise of communal rights by LKDFN as an Indigenous peoples, and to maintain social, economic, and ecological balance of our traditional territory. Traditionally, LKDFN has exercised authority to manage the conduct of both LKDFN members, as well as other Indigenous hunters, who have sought LKDFN's permission to harvest within LKDFN territory.

1.0 Summary

The purpose of the *LKDFN's Yúnehtë Xá ʔetthën Hádi* is to protect ʔetthën (the caribou) in order to ensure ʔetthën and our way of life continues to exist as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows. This Plan is based on Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné beliefs, values, stories, and words that our members shared during the process of creating this Plan. This Plan consists of five main program areas: (1) nálze (harvest) policies, (2) nálze protocols, (3) education and communication, (4) monitoring, and (5) enforcement. This Plan applies to the nálze of ʔetthën and k'ech'ąıdı (other animals), by LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) in the LKDFN's nuwé nënë (traditional territory).

2.0 Introduction

"...What really got to me was when we were in that sharing circle [at the 2018 North American Caribou Workshop] in Ottawa. Listening to people from all over having the same problem, which was watching the government manage caribou and seeing the herds continue to decline. And hearing about how the Deline Government had made their own caribou conservation plan. I just felt that the Bathurst Caribou Range Plan wasn't strong enough to help the herd recover and I thought why couldn't we just make our own plan. So the government isn't just telling us what to do anymore." – Shonto Catholique, LKDFN member and Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Department staff.

The initial idea to develop a caribou stewardship plan came from Shonto Catholique, a young hunter and staff member of the Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Department (WLED). He traveled to the *2018 North American Caribou Workshop* in Ottawa, Ontario, where he joined a sharing circle on the last day of the Workshop. He listened to Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island talk about the same challenges we are facing at home – the ʔetthën (caribou) herds

that we rely on for physical, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual sustenance continue to decline, despite territorial or provincial governments managing ʔetthën herds. He listened to people from Deline, Northwest Territories, talk about creating and implementing their own ʔekwé conservation plan entitled, *Belare wilé Gots'é ʔekwé*, for the Bluenose East and West ʔetthën herds at the Workshop. And he thought we should create our own plan to protect the ʔetthën in our nuwé néné (traditional territory).

Many of our members share Shonto's deep concerns about the state of the ʔetthën herds across the sub-Arctic and Arctic regions. The ʔetthën no longer reliably return to traditional water and land crossing in our nuwé néné, and in 2015 and 2016, the ʔetthën did not come anywhere near Lutsel K'e. Based on our traditional knowledge, natural fluctuations in the number of ʔetthën and where ʔetthën migrate are normal, and we have experienced these variations in the past. Sadly, these natural fluctuations have been disrupted and exaggerated by global climate change; mineral and energy resources exploration and extraction; the ice road; past and present big game hunting; and, in some instances, disrespectful hunting practices.

The Government of the Northwest Territories, Environment and Natural Resources (GNWT ENR) 2018 survey results for the Bathurst ʔetthën herd, and the Government of Nunavut's 2011 survey results for the Beverly-Ahiak and the 2017 survey results for the Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën herds' corroborates and confirms our Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné knowledge findings and our profound concern for the caribou, particularly the Bathurst ʔetthën herd, as well as reinforces the need to help ensure other ʔetthën herds remain healthy.

The purpose of the *Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádi* is to protect the ʔetthën in order to ensure ʔetthën and our way of life continues to exist as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows. We are the stewards of our ní (land) and we have an inherent right and responsibility to protect the ní and tué (water), as well as all forms of life. We will exercise this right and responsibility, in part, through this Plan.

This Plan is a written expression of Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné's nálze (harvesting) practices, procedures, and protocols that help protect the ʔetthën and our way of life. Our Plan is based on

the values, beliefs, and words spoken by our members throughout the process of creating this Plan. The creation of this Plan is the start of a long journey to help the ʔetthën by following and enforcing our own Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné laws.

3.0 Our values

This Plan is guided by the following Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné values:

a) **Ní chu K'ech'ąıdı chu besųdı (we have respect for the land and animals)** – we still use our ní (land), our k'ech'ąıdı (animals), and have clean tué (water); we must protect our ní, tué, and k'ech'ąıdı; we pay the ní and tué; and nálze (hunting) is respectful and respectful nálze is encouraged. The best thing we can do is to educate our people on how to respect ʔetthën and all other life forms.

b) **Etthën hurétth'ą (the caribou are listening to us)** – we shouldn't talk too much about ʔetthën; they are listening to us; we must speak good words for them; and we must help protect them. The ʔetthën have their own natural laws and, as such, we have to respect the ways of the ʔetthën and all other life forms.

c) **Nuwé yakı begháre ʔeghádaldá (we have our own laws that we must follow)** – we have Aboriginal and treaty rights; we are a sovereign nation; we have our own Dënesųłné laws; we need to use our own laws and follow them; and we need to make the best decisions for our future and the ʔetthën.

d) **Nuwé ch'anié beréldı xá ʔą (we must pass on the teachings)** – we must teach the younger generation how to live off the ní – to pack a sled; to travel on the ní; to set camp; to hunt and fix meat; to fix hides and sew; and to make dry meat. It is our responsibility to pass on our knowledge and teachings to the youth in order to maintain our way of life.

4.0 Application

4.1 ʔetthën and other k'ech'áídi

Unlike scientists, Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné knowledge holders do not divide ʔetthën into separate herds based on the location of their calving grounds and range; however, for this Plan, we have adopted this approach to barren-ground ʔetthën sub-population classification. As such, this Plan applies to the Bathurst, Beverly, Ahiak, and Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën herds, because these are the ʔetthën herds that LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) have typically harvested from in the past or present, and these herds typically migrate through our nuwé nënë (traditional territory). This Plan also applies to any other k'ech'áídi (animals) harvested in LKDFN's nuwé nënë (traditional territory).

4.2. Hunters

This Plan applies to all LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) harvesting ʔetthën (caribou) and other k'ech'áídi (other animals) in the LKDFN's nuwé nënë (traditional territory). The LKDFN respectfully requests that other Indigenous peoples harvesting ʔetthën or other k'ech'áídi in our nuwé nënë complies with measures 7.2, 7.15, 7.16 in this Plan.

4.3 GNWT *Wildlife Act, 2018*

The Northwest Territories *Wildlife Act, 2018* and the forthcoming Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Areas Management Plan will also apply in Thaidene Nënë Territorial Protected Area and the rest of LKDFN's nuwé nënë (traditional territory), except within the boundaries of Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve.

4.4 Government of Canada's *Nations Parks Act, 2000*

The *Canadian National Parks Act, 2000* and the forthcoming Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve Management Plan will also apply to the Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve.

5.0 How our plan was made

5.1 Our approach

The process of developing this Plan was informed and guided by Indigenous planning principles of planning done by and for Indigenous peoples. This Plan was developed by and for the LKDFN. Indigenous planning processes are specific to place and people. As such, we followed a made-in- Łutsël K'é approach to creating this Plan. This Plan is a written expression of the words spoken by our members at ʔetthën (Caribou) Talks, which were held in order to develop this Plan. Our planning process privileged and applied Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné traditional knowledge to the creation of this Plan; however, this Plan is also supported by scientific data. We followed Łutsël K'é Dënesųłné protocols and procedures when gathering to discuss different parts of this Plan. This type of planning is also empowering. Together, we created a vision for a future based on our own values, beliefs, practices, protocols, and laws. Our planning process was inclusive. Space was created to engage elders, land users, and youth in meaningful dialogue about how to protect the ʔetthën and our way of life. Because this approach to planning is holistic, this Plan also applies to other k'ech'ą́dł (animals), because the same beliefs, values, practices, protocols, and laws apply to all life forms. And finally, Indigenous planning is a circular process. Through adaptive learning, this Plan will evolve with our traditional knowledge and scientific data on the caribou.

5.2 ʔetthën talks

A series of five “ʔetthën Talks” were held in Łutsël K'é. A ʔetthën Talk is a type of public meeting. All members were invited to the ʔetthën Talks. LKDFN members were notified about upcoming ʔetthën Talks through public notices on community bulletin boards, phone calls, and the Łutsël K'é Community Facebook page. Two facilitators – a respected Elder and a respected hunter – that are LKDFN members were hired for each ʔetthën Talk. There was a central theme for each ʔetthën Talk. The four main themes for the ʔetthën Talks were – the state of the herds and should LKDFN hunt caribou; respectful nálze (hunting) practices; ʔetthën stories, laws, and names; and monitoring and enforcement.

Each ǂetthën Talk began with an opening prayer. A talking feather was used and passed around the circle with a microphone. Translation equipment was used to ensure everyone could listen to and understand each other. Chairs were arranged in a circle to create a feeling of unity, equity, and to encourage everyone to share their thoughts, opinions, and perspectives. Everyone had an opportunity to contribute to the conversation. Each ǂetthën Talks ended with a closing prayer. A meal was also shared among the ǂetthën Talk participants. A small portion of food was collected from each person to feed the fire.

The first ǂetthën Talk was held on December 21, 2018. The facilitators were Ron Desjarlais and August Enzoë. The main topics of discussion were the state of the Bathurst, Beverley-Ahiak, and Qamanirjuaq ǂetthën herds and what herd(s) LKDFN members should or should not nálze (hunt). The purpose of this ǂetthën Talk was to determine which ǂetthën herds LKDFN should or should not be nálze (hunting). The outcome of the first ǂetthën Talk was a harvest policy. The second ǂetthën Talk was held on January 28, 2019. The facilitators were Ron Desjarlais and Albert Boucher. The main topic of discussion was respectful nálze (hunting) practices based on Lutsel K'e Denesoline ways of being on the ní (land). The outcome of this ǂetthën Talk was a nálze (harvest) protocol. The third ǂetthën Talk took place on February 12, 2019. Elders and youth participated in a storytelling circle at the Lutsel K'e Dene School's Culture Camp near Snowdrift River. The purpose of this ǂetthën Talk was for elders to share ǂetthën stories with youth and to document them. Parts of the stories shared during the third ǂetthën Talk were included in this Plan. The fourth ǂetthën Talk was held on March 5, 2019 to discuss monitoring and enforcement. The facilitators were Ron Desjarlais and Albert Boucher. The main topics of discussion were how to improve our existing ǂetthën monitoring programs and how to enforce our laws. The purpose of this ǂetthën Talk was to determine how to enforce this Plan. And the five ǂetthën Talk was held on April 17, 2019. The facilitators were Shonto Catholique and Lauren King. The purpose of this ǂetthën Talk was to review the draft Plan and to obtain feedback.

5.2 Newsletters

After each ǂetthën Talk, a one-page newsletter summarizing the general purpose and major components of this Plan; the outcomes of the latest ǂetthën Talk; the date, time, and topic of the

next ʔetthën Talk; and an invitation to visit or call the LKDFNs WLED if they had any comments or concerns about the draft Plan, was placed in every households post office box. This was done to keep members that did not attend the ʔetthën Talks informed of how this Plan was progressing and to invite them to provide their comments.

5.3 Inter-governmental workshop

During the development of this Plan, the LKDFN's WLED held an inter-governmental workshop with staff from GNWT ENR on March 4, 2019 in Łutsël K'é. The purpose of this workshop was to garner advise from ENR on monitoring and enforcement.

5.4 Information session

On February 6, 2019, GNWT ENR staff, Dean Cluff and Heather Beck, gave a presentation on the results of the 2018 Bathurst and Bluenose-East ʔetthën surveys and the 2018 ʔejëré (muskox) survey at public meeting in Łutsël K'é. The purpose of this public meeting was to provide LKDFN members with the latest population survey results for the Bathurst ʔetthën herd and for ʔejëré in the Akaitcho (north slave) region. This information was used to inform the development of this Plan.

5.5 Plan reviews

This Plan will be reviewed every two and five years. The nálze (harvesting) moratorium(s) will be reviewed every two years and the entire plan will be reviewed every five years. The review of this Plan will be lead by the LKDFN's WLED, in partnership with the Thaidene Nene co-governance boards. The LKDFN's Chief and Council must approve changes to this Plan.

6.0 How our plan fits into the big picture

6.1 Establishment of Thaidene Nene and co-management boards

Since 2006, the LKDFN has been negotiating with the Government of Canada's Parks Canada agency to establish a national park reserve in our nuwé néné (traditional territory). Following the

devolution of control and management over ní (lands) and resource in the Northwest Territories from the Government of Canada to the GNWT in 2014, the GNWT entered into Thaidene Nënë negotiations and proposed the creation of a territorial park and conservation area, and a smaller national park reserve.

On February 18, 2019, a ratification vote was held by LKDFN to determine if our members support a resolution for Chief and Council to finalize the establishment of Thaidene Nënë, in partnership with Parks Canada and the GNWT. Based on the results of the ratification vote, 89% of eligible voters voted in favor of Chief and Council proceeding with the establishment of Thaidene Nënë. On August 21, 2019, the LKDFN, Parks Canada, and the GNWT signed the establishment agreements for Thaidene Nënë.

As outlined in the establishment agreements, two Thaidene Nënë management boards will be established – a co-management board for the national park reserve, and another co-management board for the territorial park and caribou conservation area. Although the co-management boards are not authorized to interfere with section 35 rights, the exercise of section 35 rights may be discussed between the co-managers regarding the Plan, including its implementation, communication and education, and enforcement.

6.2 Bathurst Caribou Range Plan

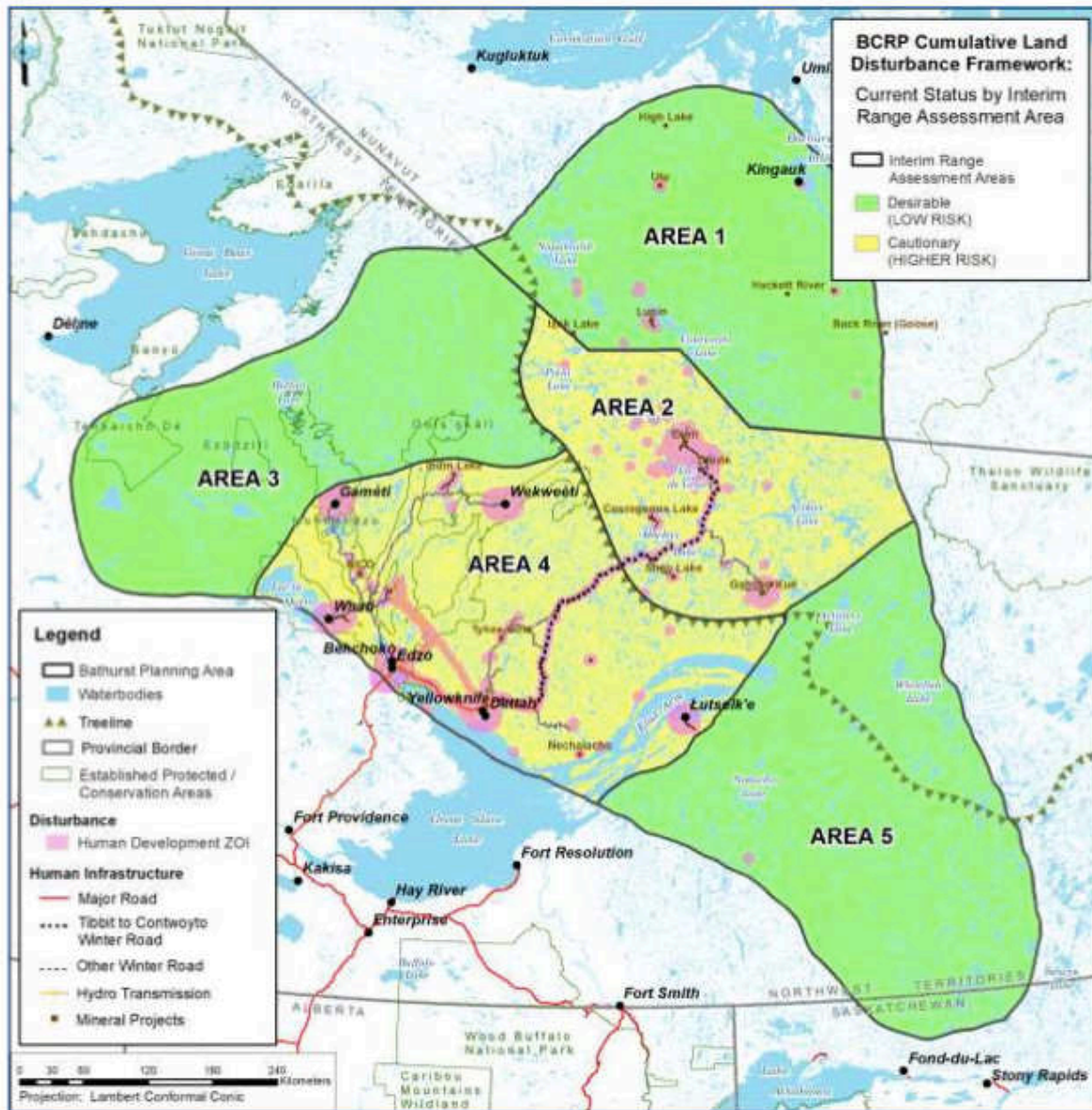
In 2014, the LKDFN became a member of a Working Group struck to provide guidance and advice on the development of the *Bathurst Caribou Range Plan*, lead by the GNWT ENR. The Working Group was made up of representatives from Indigenous governments and organizations, environmental organizations, industry, co-management boards including the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board, and territorial and federal governments. The Range Plan is meant to be a guide for governments, organizations, and companies to help manage activities on the land in a way that supports the recovery of the Bathurst ʔetthën herd. The Range Plan is advisory and all recommendations are non-binding. The Range Plan will be reviewed every five years.

The Range Plan is based on both traditional knowledge and science. The Range Plan mainly addresses challenges related to cumulative land disturbance across the Bathurst ǂetthēn herd's annual range. "The stated goal of the [Range] plan is to ensure the Bathurst herd annual range is in a resilient landscape condition, and there are four supporting objectives:

1. Ensure the integrity of important habitats.
 2. Ensure connectivity between seasonal ranges.
 3. Ensure the amount of human-caused land disturbance is kept below certain levels.
 4. Ensure the development, design and use of roads is managed with consideration to caribou"
- (GNWT ENR, 2018a, p. ii).

In the Range Plan, the Bathurst ǂetthēn herd's range is divided into five areas and each area is designated as desirable (green), cautionary (yellow), or high risk (red) based on the amount of development and disturbance on the land and the importance of ǂetthēn habitat areas. This is referred to as the "cumulative land disturbance framework" in the Range Plan. In the Range Plan, Area 1, 3, and 5 are designated as desirable (green) and Area 2 and 4 are designated as cautionary (yellow). LKDFN's nuwé nēné (traditional territory), including Thaidene Nene, falls into Area 2, 4, and 5 in the Range Plan.

Map 2.0 Bathurst Caribou Range Plan Cumulative Land Disturbance Framework: Current Status by Interim Range Assessment Area



Source: GNWT, 2018a.

Depending on the designation (color) of the Area, there are seven management tools that can be applied to that area to reduce the impacts of development and disturbances on the Bathurst ʔetthën herd. These management tools are: (1) Indigenous guardians, (2) habitat conservation, (3) mobile ʔetthën conservation measures, (4) road planning and management, (5) offsetting and compensatory mitigation, (6) wildlife and fuels management, and (7) online staking.

Table 1.0 Management Tools for Cumulative Land Disturbance Framework Levels

Amount of Disturbance	Status of Range	Management Tools and Response Level
High	High Risk	<p>INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</p> <p>Land activities resulting in new disturbance are allowed only when active disturbances are minimized, removed or reclaimed such that total disturbance remains below the high-risk threshold.</p>
Moderate	Cautionary	<p>ENHANCED MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (in addition to all recommendations in the BASIC level)</p> <p>Increased requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Planning / Management – consider enhanced traffic management and design features. • Offsetting / Compensatory Mitigation - habitat offsets at higher ratio AND compensatory mitigation (e.g. financial and in-kind contributions to science and TK research and monitoring, guardianship programs).
Low	Desirable	<p>BASIC MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</p> <p>Community Guardianship – support Indigenous communities to watch (monitor) caribou and habitat conditions and support education regarding respectful harvest practice.</p> <p>Habitat Conservation – use legislation to protect the most important habitat areas: water crossings, land bridges, calving areas/post-calving.</p> <p>Mobile Caribou Conservation Measures – for land use activities that occur within the centre of habitation, implement Mobile Caribou Conservation Measures (i.e., restrict non-essential project activities when caribou are present) and associated monitoring, compliance and enforcement.</p> <p>Road Planning / Management – manage routing, timing of construction, design, and consolidation of routes across all users.</p> <p>Offsetting / Compensatory Mitigation – counteract, or make up for, residual impacts on caribou considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat Offsets – at a minimum 1:1 ratio (restoration, enhancement, preservation) (include legacy land disturbance); OR • Compensatory Mitigation – if offsets are not feasible, use financial and in-kind contributions to science and TK research and monitoring, community guardianship programs. <p>Wildfire and Fuels Management – identify large patches of undisturbed winter range annually for the GNWT wildfire Values at Risk database that is used to prioritize wildfire response.</p> <p>Online Staking – use online staking to reduce the potential for caribou disturbance during the early phases of mineral exploration and thus increase caribou well-being through respectful practices.</p>

Source: GNWT, 2018a.

The final Range Plan was sent to the Working Group on August 10th, 2018 and reviewed in-person on August 21, 2018. The GNWT and the Government of Nunavut have not implemented the Range Plan; however, the *Joint Proposal on Management Actions for the Bathurst ?ekwò (Barren-ground caribou) Herd 2019-2021*, put forth by the GNWT ENR and Tlicho Government, recommend implementing the Range Plan.

There are nine recommendations to achieve the stated goals in the Range Plan. Recommendation #2 states, “[s]upport Indigenous groups in the coordinated development and use of integrated Community Guardianship Program across the range of the Bathurst herd. Such programs would watch and report on activity associated with industrial development and harvest in combination with the movements, abundance, health and condition of caribou and caribou habitat, the relationship between caribou and Caribou People and overall caribou well-being” (GNWT ENR,

2018a, p. 36). To fulfill recommendation #2 in the Range Plan, LKDFN requires sufficient, multi-year funding to carry out monitoring activities within our nuwé néné (traditional territory) for the Bathurst ʔetthën herd. LKDFN has agreed to working with other Indigenous groups within the Bathurst ʔetthën herd range to explore the feasibility of creating a range-wide, network of Indigenous guardianship programs that collaborates with each other in order to share knowledge and findings, engage in open dialogue, and take action to protect ʔetthën.

6.3 Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee

“The Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee (BCAC) was established to advise [the GNWT ENR] on the management of the Bathurst caribou herd and its habitat, including addressing and reconciling the various factors affecting the herd, including harvest, predation, environmental conditions, and land disturbance” (GNWT ENR, 2018b). The objectives of the BCAC are to provide recommendations on the management of the Bathurst ʔetthën and habitat, and to promote and improve communication and information sharing among members. BCAC includes representatives from: Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Deninu Kue First Nation, Salt River First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, NWT Metis nation, Tlicho Government, Athabasca Denesuline Ne Ne Land Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Burnside Hunters and Trappers Organization (Bathurst Inlet), Umingmaktok Hunters and Trappers Organization (Bay Chimo), Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of Nunavut. The BCAC meets bi-annually and LKDFN has two representatives that attend the meetings.

In August 2018, the BACA discussed issuing a request for proposal to hire a contractor to update the *Bathurst Caribou Management Plan, 2004*, which has not been updated since 2004. The initial draft terms of reference stated that a rough management plan was to be submitted to the BACA by January 2019, with a final draft by February 2020. The successful contractor will work the Working Group and will bring a draft plan to the BCAC for review and approval.

6.4 Federal and NWT Species At Risk assessment and listing

In 2017, the NWT Species At Risk Committee (SARC) assessed the territorial-wide status of barren-ground ʔetthën (caribou). The SARC recommended that barren-ground ʔetthën, which includes the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East, Bathurst, Beverly, Ahiak, and Qamanirjuaq herds, should be listed as threatened in the NWT. In July 2018, barren-ground ʔetthën were added to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a Threatened species (NWT Species at Risk, n.d.). Once a species is listed as Threatened, a recovery strategy must be development within two years. This means a recovery strategy for barren-ground ʔetthën must be developed by July 2020. The revised *Bathurst Caribou Management Plan* and the *Bathurst Caribou Range Plan* will be part of the recovery strategy.

At present, there is no Akaitcho First Nations representative on the NWT Species At Risk Committee. Akaitcho First Nations Chiefs should appoint a representative as soon as possible.

In 2016, the federal Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assessed barren-ground ʔetthën, which includes the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East, Bathurst, Beverly, Ahiak, Porcupine, and Qamanirjuaq herds. Currently, barren-ground ʔetthën are under consideration as a Threatened species under the federal *Species At Risk Act* (COSEWIC, 2016).

Comments on the proposed listing of barren-ground ʔetthën as Threatened under the federal *Species At Risk Act* are due on October 22, 2019. LKDFN will submit comments by the deadline date.

6.6 Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board

Since the inception of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) in 1982, the LKDFN has participated in this co-management advisory board. The BQCMBs mission statement is “to ensure the long-term conservation of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds for Aboriginal communities who wish to maintain a lifestyle that includes the use of caribou, as well as all Canadians and the people of other nations” (BQCMB, n.d.).

The BQCMB consists of Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments and organizations, including: the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Northland Dene First Nation, Black Lake First Nation, Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation, Northwest Territories Metis Nation, Kivalliq Wildlife Board, the Government of Nunavut, Government of Canada, the Government of Manitoba, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the Government of the Northwest Territories (BQCMB, n.d.).

The LKDFNs current representative is Ron Fat and the alternate is August Enzoë. The BQCMB holds bi-annual meetings that one of LKDFN's representatives attends and represents LKDFN's interests and positions.

6.7 Government of the Northwest Territories and Tlicho Government's joint proposal on management actions for the Bathurst ʔekwò (Barren-ground caribou) herd 2019-2021

On January 22, 2019, the Tłı̄chǫ Government (TG) and GNWT ENR submitted the *Joint Proposal on Management Actions for the Bathurst ʔekwò (Barren-ground caribou) Herd 2019-2021* to the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) outlining proposed management actions for the Bathurst caribou herd in Wek'èezhì. The WRRB established a level 2 proceeding and an online public registry initiated, with comments on the proposed Joint Proposal due by April 5, 2019.

The Joint Proposal states that a June 2018 photographic calving ground survey of the Bathurst ʔetthën herd shows that the population has continued to decline by approximately 58% since the last survey was done in 2015. Based on the most recent survey results, there are an estimated 3,636 breeding females and an overall estimated herd size of 8,207 caribou remaining. Low rates of survival in adult female ʔetthën, and low and variable rates of productivity are cited as the primary reasons for the herd's continued decline (Tlicho Government & GNWT ENR, 2019).

The Tlicho Government and the GNWT ENR propose 11 management recommendations based on five main themes: (1) harvest management, (2) wolf management, (3) habitat and land use, (4)

education, and (5) monitoring and research. The LKDFN submitted our comments on the Joint Proposal to the WRRB on April 5, 2019.

7.0 Nálze policy

“The caribou are listening to us talk here today. Elders used to say that one day the caribou will disappear. It is not our fault. But because this is happening, we should stop hunting the caribou for a while. Do not hunt the Bathurst anymore. We won’t starve. There is muskox and meat at the store. Give the [Bathurst] caribou a rest, so they can rebound.” - Herman Catholique, at the first Caribou Talk in Łutsël K’é on December 21, 2019 at the Z’ah Community Hall.

The nálze (harvest) policy is based on the discussions and outcomes of the ʔetthën Talks. At the first ʔetthën Talk, the facilitators shared with participants the GNWT ENR 2018 survey results for the Bathurst ʔetthën herd, and the Government of Nunavut’s latest Beverley-Ahiak and Qamanirijuaq ʔetthën herds’ survey results, and our members shared their traditional knowledge.

Based on the GNWT ENR 2018 survey, the Bathurst ʔetthën herd continues to decline at an alarming rate. Between 1986 and 2018, the herd went from 470,000 to 8,200 caribou. That is a 98% drop. In the last three years, from 2015 to 2018, the herd dropped from 19,769 to 8,207. That is a 60% drop. That means, for the last three years the herd is declining at a rate of 30% every year. At this annual rate of decline, the Bathurst ʔetthën herd could disappear forever in the next three to four years. The GNWT ENR reported that the pregnancy rate in June 2018 was good, but calf-to-cow ratio in October 2018 was low, and adult cow survival rates were also low (GNWT ENR, 2019; Tlicho Government & GNWT ENR, 2019).

Based on the Government of Nunavut’s 2011 surveys, the Beverly ʔetthën herd has declined since the previous survey was done in 1994. In 1994, the size of the herd was 276,000 ʔetthën and in 2011 the herd was 124,189 caribou. Due to the 15-year gap between the two surveys, it is difficult to determine the reasons for the population change. According to the Government of Nunavut, the 2011 Beverly ʔetthën herd size is on the lower end of the historic population cycle for this herd (Campbell, Lee, Boulanger, Kelly, Dumond & McPherson, 2011).

Based on the Government of Nunavut's 2011 survey, the Ahiak ʔetthën herd population was estimated at 71,340 caribou. Of the 71,340 ʔetthën, 27,729 were breeding females (Campbell *et al.*, 2011). Up until 2011, only incomplete studies and fragmented survey work had been conducted on the Ahiak ʔetthën herd, making it difficult to understand the state of the herd.

Based on the Government of Nunavut's 2017 surveys, the Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën herd is declining at a rate of 2% each year. In 2008, the herd was estimated at 344,078, and in 2014 the herd was estimated at 264,718. That means over a six-year period, the herd has declined by 23%. The number of breeding females was estimated at 146,217, which is high; however, the percentage of yearlings in the herd was 8% in 2017, which is down from 27% in 2014. This means that the rate of decline may increase due to fewer *bedziʔáze* (calves) (Boulangier, Campbell & Lee, 2017).

At the first ʔetthën Talk, our members expressed their deep concerns about the significant and continuing decline of the Bathurst ʔetthën herd, based on the findings from scientific surveys and our Lutsel K'e Denesoline knowledge. Lutsel K'e Denesoline knowledge holders stated that the decline of the Bathurst ʔetthën herd is the result of cumulative impacts from human-caused climate change causing more fires, reducing food availability, changing snow and ice conditions, and increasing pest exposure; mineral resource exploration and extraction is causing disruptions along ʔetthën migration routes and causing additional stress to the ʔetthën from noise, smell, dust, and emissions from the mines; the ice road that serves the exploration camps and mines is causing disruptions along ʔetthën migration routes, and is increasing hunting pressure on the Bathurst ʔetthën herd; big game *nálze* (hunting) in the Northwest Territories in the past and on-going big game *nálze* (hunting) in Nunavut; and, in some instances, disrespectful *nálze* (hunting) practices are some of the causes for the decline in ʔetthën herd populations. Participants thought that LKDFN should work more closely with the federal, territorial, and Indigenous governments on a nation-to-nation basis to help the ʔetthën recover. Members also expressed the need to receive more information and have greater dialogue with the GNWT ENR and Government of Nunavut. This means having more public meetings and information sessions in Lutsel K'é.

There was consensus among people that attended the first ʔetthën Talk that our members should “give the herd a rest” and stop hunting the Bathurst ʔetthën because the herd is not doing well and needs to recover.

At the first ʔetthën Talk, our members also stated that they think that the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën herds are doing better than the Bathurst ʔetthën herd. These herds still migrate through our nuwé néné (traditional territory) and have become our primary source of ʔetthën meat. Members are concerned that these herds may also be declining, but it is unclear whether or not the decline is cyclical. Our members would like to have more information from and better communication with the GNWT ENR, Government of Nunavut, and the BQCMB to augment our Łutsël K’é Dēnesuḷḷné knowledge and co-govern these herds together.

The nálze (harvest) policy measures are:

7.1 LKDFN members will not nálze (harvest) ʔetthën (caribou) from the Bathurst ʔetthën herd for two (2) years in LKDFN’s nuwé néné (traditional territory). Effective January 1, 2020.

7.2 LKDFN respectfully requests that other Indigenous peoples will not harvest caribou from the Bathurst caribou herd for two (2) years in LKDFN’s traditional territory. Effective January 1, 2020.

7.2 LKDFN members can nálze (harvest) ʔetthën (caribou) from the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën herds.

7.3 LKDFN will require GNWT ENR to provide the results of the next Bathurst ʔetthën (caribou) calving ground survey and analyses of available demographic data in a timely manner to the LKDFN.

7.4 LKDFN will require the Government of Nunavut to provide the results of the next Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën (caribou) calving ground surveys and analyses of available demographic data in a timely manner to the LKDFN.

7.5 After two (2) years, the LKDFN will re-assess the nálze (harvest) restriction in 7.1 based on the best available traditional knowledge and science. LKDFN will determine whether or not the nálze restriction will be extended, modified, or removed.

7.6 LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) are encouraged to nálze (harvest) bedzı chó (males) from the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirijuaq ʔetthën (caribou) herds.

7.7 LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) are not permitted to nálze (harvest) bedzıʔáze (calves) or Ts'uda bechą dá (pregnant females) from the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirijuaq ʔetthën (caribou) herds.

7.8 LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) should not nálze (harvest) the bedzı chó (male leaders) from the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirijuaq ʔetthën herds.

7.9 LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) will receive gas assistance to nálze (harvest) ʔetthën (caribou) from the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirijuaq ʔetthën herds. The total annual Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP) budget for nálze ʔetthën will be \$10,000.00.

7.10 LKDFN hunters will receive gas assistance to nálze (harvest) other k'ech'ąıdı (animals). The total annual CHAP budget for nálze other k'ech'ąıdı will be \$10,000.00.

7.11 LKDFN members will receive support for traditional hide tanning and sewing. The total annual CHAP budget for hide tanning and sewing is \$2,500.00.

7.12 LKDFN hunters will be compensated \$50.00 per fully completed CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment (CARMA) Level 1 ʔetthën sample kit. The maximum budget for CARMA Level 1 ʔetthën sample kits is \$2,000.00. ʔejëré (muskox) hides will be purchased for a maximum of \$200.00 for large and high quality hides by GNWT Industry, Tourism, and Investment.

7.13 A portion of LKDFN's Impact and Benefit Agreement (IBA) funds may be allocated towards family ʔetthën (caribou) hunts and gas assistance for harvesting ʔetthën and other k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals).

7.14 All LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters), whether they received gas assistance or not, are required to report back to the LKDFN WLED after each nálze (hunting) trip. Nálze dëne (hunters) are required to report the type, number, sex, and estimated age of the k'ech'ą́ıdı (animal(s)) harvested and the location(s) where the k'ech'ą́ıdı were harvested. This information will be entered and stored in the LKDFN's Traditional Knowledge Archive.

7.15 Before coming to LKDFN's nuwé nënë (traditional territory) to nálze (harvest) k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals), the LKDFN respectfully requests that all non-LKDFN hunters notify the LKDFN WLED of their intention to nálze k'ech'ą́ıdı in our nuwé nënë. Non-LKDFN hunters are asked to provide the number of hunters and their names; where they will be hunting; and what they will be nálze, to the LKDFN WLED. This information will help LKDFN WLED to monitor nálze in our nuwé nënë and help ensure the safety of hunters.

7.16 After coming to LKDFN's nuwé nënë (traditional territory) to harvest k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals), the LKDFN respectfully requests that all non-LKDFN hunters report the type, number, and sex of the animal(s) harvested and the location(s) where the animal(s) were harvested, to the LKDFN WLED. This information will help LKDFN WLED monitor the animals in our nuwé nënë and be responsible stewards of our ní (land) and k'ech'ą́ıdı.

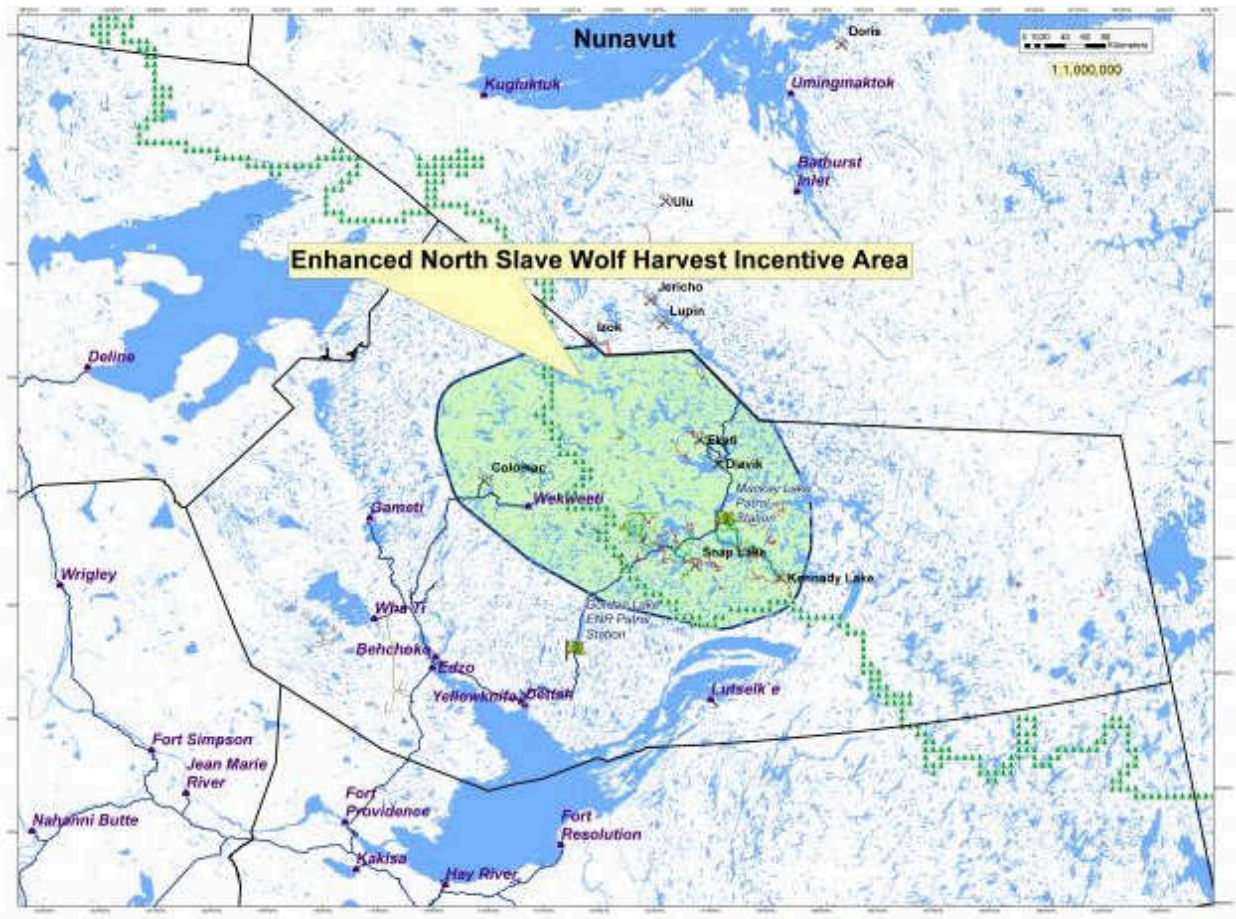
7.17 A Lutsel K'e community freezer will be located at a central location in Lutsel K'e for nálze dëne (hunters) to put meat and fish into it for our Elders and members that do not have the means to nálze (harvest) for themselves.

7.18 Establish, re-establish, and maintain winter skidoo trails and cabins for nálze (harvesting).

7.19 Nálze dëne (hunters) can voluntarily participate in the GNWT ENR "Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program". If an LKDFN nálze dëne (hunter) has successfully nálze

(harvested) wolves in the designated area, called the “2019 North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentives Area”, the LKDFN hunter must then call the GNWT ENR phone line at 867-873-7181 and provide the GPS location and time of the náłze. The GNWT ENR Officer and LKDFN náłze dēne will arrange an agreed upon meeting time and place, along the winter road to Gahcho Kue Diamond Mine. The GNWT ENR Officer will uniquely mark the wolf and issue a receipt to the LKDFN hunter. LKDFN náłze dēne will need to provide their name, address, and phone number in order to receive payment in the mail. The “2019 North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentives Area” is shown in Map 3.0.

Map 3.0 2019 Enhanced North Slave Wolf Incentive Area



Source: GNWT, 2019

8.0 Nálze protocol

“When hunting caribou you have to stay upwind, so that the caribou cannot smell you. Women and men can kill animals equally in the bush. I had all the equipment I needed to hunt. When I was a young girl, I killed all animals, but I needed to watch the blood. Girls and women cannot step over animal blood. You have to be careful, or you could get sick. If you disrespect caribou and step on their blood, they won’t come back to you.” – Madeline Drybones, at the third Caribou Talk on February 12, 2019 at the Lutsel K’e Dene School’s Culture Camp near the Snowdrift River with grade 7, 8, and 9 students.

The nálze (harvest) protocol is based on the discussion and outcomes of the ʔetthën Talks. At the second ʔetthën Talk, the facilitators provided a summary of the outcomes of the first ʔetthën Talk and participants were asked to share besúdi (respectful) nálze (hunting) practices based on Lutsel K’e denesoline ways of being on the ní (land). Examples of other First Nations’ besúdi nálze protocols were shown to participants to help ensure that people understood what was meant by a nálze protocol. This nálze protocol is based on traditional and contemporary Lutsel K’e denesoline nálze practices.

The nálze protocol measures are:

8.1 Before gas assistance is provided to LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) for nálze (harvesting) ʔetthën (caribou), Lutsel K’e Denesoline Guardians will be hired, trained, and based at an LKDFN nálze cabin used for monitoring.

8.2 Before gas assistance is provided to LKDFN hunters for nálze (harvesting) ʔetthën (caribou), nálze dëne (hunters) are required to attend an informal meeting to talk about the ʔetthën nálze like in the old days.

8.3 LKDFN nálze dëne should take our youth nálze (hunting) and teach them how to travel on the land, set camp, hunt, cut meat, and pack a sled. If funding is available, the LKDFNs WLED will plan and organize an annual family ʔetthën nálze in springtime.

8.4 LKDFN youth should be taught how to butcher meat, make dry meat, tan hides, and sew.

8.5 Nálze dëne (hunters) must not consume drugs and alcohol when nálze (hunting) ʔetthën or any other k'ech'áǰǰi (animal).

8.6 Nálze dëne must not hit ʔetthën with sticks.

8.7 Nálze dëne must not chase ʔetthën.

8.8 Nálze dëne must not leave ʔetthën guts and bones on the lake. ʔetthën remains must be moved into the bush.

8.9 Nálze dëne may only nálze (harvest) the number of ʔetthën they need, can cut, and transport in a sleigh. Nálze dëne must not overhunt.

8.10 Women and girls cannot step over ʔetthën carcasses and blood.

8.11 Nálze dëne must gather all the ʔetthën parts in one spot, and give thanks for a successful hunt and ask the ʔetthën to come back.

8.12 No meat wastage is permitted. Meat wastage is defined as leaving any part of the k'ech'áǰǰi (animal), except the guts and blood shot.

8.13 If nálze dëne (hunters) use LKDFN-owned cabins, hunters must clean up after themselves, and burn or pack out all of their garbage. This will help keep the land clean and deter animals from breaking into and damaging the cabins.

8.14 Dispose of bones in the bush. LKDFN members must not throw bones on the road, in the garbage, or in the garbage dump.

8.15 Meat and usable parts should be shared with elders and those without the means to go hunting.

8.16 It is important to play the ʔetthën drum and dance.

9.0 Education and communication

“When I was a child, there were no guns. One time, we were at Artillery Lake and there were caribou swimming across the lake. This was the easiest way to get caribou in the fall time. My grandfather was killing caribou, using a spear. After spearing the caribou, women start working on hides and men start working on cutting up the meat. Women had to flesh and fix the hides for clothing and keep fur for a year to make clothing.” – Madeline Drybones, at the third Caribou Talk on February 12, 2019 at the Lutsel K’e Dene School’s Culture Camp near Snowdrift River with grade 7, 8, and 9 students.

Education and communication are essential to the success of this Plan. The LKDFN’s WLED is responsible to disseminating meaningful and understandable information on the state of the ʔetthën herds. This is crucial information that needs to be shared with elders, nálze dëne (hunters), and youth so that our members understand the reasons for the development, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of this Plan. It is equally important that our members are fully aware of the main components of this Plan to help ensure that the Plan is fully understood and adopted. The results of ʔetthën monitoring programs, namely the LKDFN’s monitoring program, Athabasca Denesoline ʔetthën monitoring program, and the Tlicho Government’s Boots on the Ground program as well as the Government of Nunavut and the GNWT ENR ʔetthën survey results will be disseminated to LKDFN members so that decisions and actions are based on the best available traditional knowledge and science.

Below are the primary communication tools that have been and will be used to disseminate information and engage in dialogue with our members.

Table 2.0 LKDFN’s Caribou Stewardship Plan Communication and Awareness Plan

Communication Objective(s)	Communication Type	Target Audience(s)	Frequency	Owner	Feedback Mechanism
Updates or changes to this Plan	Caribou Talk	LKDFN members living in Lutsel K’e	At least every two years or when needed	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received at the Caribou Talk
Summary of LKDFNs caribou and wildlife monitoring program(s)	Caribou Talk	LKDFN members living in Lutsel K’e	Once a year	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received at the Caribou Talk
(a) Inform members about upcoming events and (b) Summarize key aspects of this Plan	Posters	LKDFN members	(a) A week before an event; (b) When updates or changes to this Plan	LKDFN WLED	Telephone calls, emails, and drop ins at the WLED office
(a) Summarize changes to this Plan and (b) Summarize information on the state of caribou and other animals (c) Summarize monitoring program findings/results	Newsletters	LKDFN members	Placed in PO boxes within five days after a Caribou Talk or information session	LKDFN WLED	Telephone calls, emails, and drop ins at the WLED office
Share state of the caribou and other animals and summarize non-LKDFN wildlife monitoring program findings	Information sessions	LKDFN members living in Lutsel K’e	At least once a year	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received at the information session
Inter-generational exchange of traditional knowledge and respectful hunting practices and how to prepare meat and hides	Family Caribou Hunts	LKDFN members living in Lutsel K’e	Once a year	LKDFN WLED	Stories, ideas, and recommendations shared at the camp or after the camp
Summarize updates or changes to this Plan	LKDFN quarterly update meetings	LKDFN members living in Lutsel K’e	Four times per year	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received at the meeting

Inter-generational exchange of traditional knowledge	Lutsel K'e Dene School educational events	Lutsel K'e Dene School students and elders	At least once a year	LKDFN WLED	Stories, ideas, and recommendations shared at an educational event
(a) Inform members about upcoming events, (b) Summarize key aspects of this Plan, (c) Summarize information on the state of caribou and other animals and monitoring programs, and (d) employment opportunities	Social media	LKDFN members	At least 10 times per caribou hunting season and when needed	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received on the social media platform
(a) Summarize key aspects of this Plan, (b) Summarize changes to this Plan, and (c) Communicate aspects of this Plan that apply to all AFN members	Akaitcho First Nations gatherings	AFN representatives	At least once a year	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received at the gatherings
Cross-cultural learning opportunities	Knowledge exchanges	LKDFN members	When possible	LKDFN WLED	Stories, ideas, and recommendations shared during knowledge exchanges
Encourage and support harvesters to continue to live off the land	Harvester training	LKDFN harvesters living in Lutsel K'e	Once a year or when needed	LKDFN WLED and HR	Comments and recommendations received at the training
(a) Summarize key aspects of this Plan, (b) Summarize changes to this Plan, and (c) Communicate aspects of this Plan that apply to other Indigenous peoples	Bi- and multi-lateral communication	Stakeholders	When needed	LKDFN WLED	Comments and recommendations received from stakeholders

9.1 Meetings

Meetings will be held on a regular basis to share information; obtain feedback and recommendations; and engage in open dialogue with our members and federal, territorial, and indigenous governments and organizations. Meetings include community meetings, Akaitcho-wide meetings, and information sessions with federal, territorial, and/or indigenous governments and organizations.

A ʔetthën (caribou) Talk will be held at least once a year to report back to our member about the findings from our monitoring program, and at least every two years or sooner to discuss any changes to key aspects of this Plan. All members are invited to the ʔetthën Talks.

Every quarter, the LKDFN administration provides our members with an update on each department's finances, and programs and projects. These quarterly update meetings provide a good opportunity to share information about the development, implementation, and enforcement of this Plan. At the quarterly update meetings, our members will be provided with more in-depth information than what can be communicated in a poster or newsletter. Our members will also have an opportunity to ask questions, and provide feedback and recommendations. The format of the quarterly update meetings will be a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation and a question and answer period. Update meetings will be an ideal opportunity to engage in dialogue with community members regarding the Plan.

Throughout the year, there are various Akaitcho First Nations meetings and an Annual General Assembly. At these gatherings, LKDFN has and will continue to share information on the development, implementation, and enforcement of this Plan.

Information sessions will also be planned and organized by the LKDFN WLED. Information sessions are public meetings that will be used to verbally communicate federal, territorial, and/or Indigenous government and organizations survey, monitoring program, or research findings regarding caribou and other animals.

9.2 Print media

Multiple posters will be created as part of the education and communication component of this Plan. A poster will be produced outlining the reasons for the creation of the Plan and the planning process. A series of posters will also be made for the four major sections of the Plan – the nálze (harvest) policy; the nálze protocol; Denesoline ʔetthën stories, laws, and names; and monitoring and enforcement. Posters will also be used to inform community members about public meetings pertaining to this Plan. Posters will contain images, quotes, and text. The information provided on the posters will be clear, concise, and informative. Posters will be displayed on bulletin boards throughout Lutsel K'e. Bulletin boards are important sources of information for community members. Posters on the nálze policy and protocol will be hung in LKDFN-owned nálze cabins that are typically used for ʔetthën nálze.

Newsletters will also be used to convey written information on the Government of Nunavut and the Government of the Northwest Territories ʔetthën survey results, and LKDFNs Wildlife Monitoring Program, the Tlicho Government's Boots on the Ground Bathurst ʔetthën Summer Monitoring Program, and the Athabasca Denesoline ʔetthën Monitoring Program results. This information will provide LKDFN members with the knowledge they need to understand the state of the herds and the various factors affecting the herds, such as mineral resource exploration and development, roads, nálze (harvesting), and predation, among others. Newsletters are also used to inform community members about upcoming ʔetthën Talks or information sessions, and the outcomes of public meetings pertaining to this Plan. Newsletters will be no more than two pages in length and will contain images, quotes, and text. The information provided in the newsletters will be clear, concise, and informative. Newsletters will be placed in every household's post office box.

9.3 Internet and social media

Social media platforms can be effective communication tools for disseminating information to our members living in and outside of Lutsel K'e. The Facebook page for the LKDFN has a large number of members and is actively used by many people. People must request to join the Facebook page and be approved by the administrator. The Facebook page is and will continue to

be used to share information and inform our members about upcoming meetings, findings from monitoring programs, training opportunities, and other pertinent information.

Email will be used to inform federal, territorial, indigenous governments and organizations regarding the development, monitoring, and enforcement of this Plan. In-person meetings will be held, as requested. The initial draft of this Plan has submitted electronically to the other Akaitcho First Nations, Government of Canada's Parks Canada agency, and GNWT ENR to review and submit comments to the LKDFN WLED.

Once this Plan is finalized, an electronic copy of the final Plan will be distributed to the other Akaitcho First Nations, Athabasca Denesoline, Tlicho Government, NWT Metis Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, the GNWT ENR, Government of Nunavut, and Government of Canada's Parks Canada Agency.

At the start of each ʔetthën nálze season, the LKDFN WLED will send an email and poster to Indigenous governments and organizations Wildlife, Lands and Environment Departments requesting that, in accordance with this Plan, nálze dëne (hunters) inform LKDFN WLED if they will be traveling to and nálze within nuwé néné (our territory), and nálze information.

9.4 On-the-ní activities

If funding is available, the LKDFN WLED will plan and organize an annual family ʔetthën nálze in springtime. Based on funding, a few families will be selected to go on a family ʔetthën nálze. The LKDFN WLED will cover the costs of the airplane charter, gas and oil, and food. Family ʔetthën nálze are multi-generational, multi-day camps struck at a key ʔetthën crossing. Family ʔetthën nálze provide an excellent opportunity to teach young nálze dëne (hunters) respectful nálze practices based on Lutsel K'e Denesoline ways of being on the ní (land), as outlined in the nálze protocol. Youth can also learn how to make dry meat from fresh ʔetthën. Family ʔetthën nálze are vital for the transmission of traditional knowledge from elders and nálze dëne to youth.

At the second ʔetthën Talk, elder Madeline Catholique recommended that elders and youth should get together on a regular basis so that youth can learn from elders. Based on Madeline

Catholique's recommendation, elders and youth will be invited to participate in storytelling circles at the Lutsel K'e Dene School's culture camp near Snowdrift River or at the school. The first storytelling circle was held on February 12, 2019 as part of the development of this Plan. These storytelling circles provide an excellent opportunity for inter-generational transfer of traditional knowledge from elders to youth. Storytelling circles can also happen during family ʔetthën nálze.

9.5 Training

In addition to training targeted at Lutsel K'e Denesoline Guardians, the LKDFN WLED will host training workshops and courses for hunters. LKDFN WLED will work with GNWT ENR and other institutions to deliver hunter education courses in Lutsel K'e on an as needed basis.

9.6 Research / knowledge exchanges

Through LKDFN WLED's relationships with post-secondary institutions, GNWT, Parks Canada, renewable resource boards, and affected ENGOs in Canada and elsewhere, LKDFN WLED will pursue opportunities for research partnerships and knowledge exchanges between LKDFN and other Indigenous Peoples in Canada and around the world. The focus of the research partnerships and knowledge exchanges will be on causes of and solutions to the decline of ʔetthën; Indigenous guardianship programs and networks; and relationships and connections between ʔetthën and people.

10.0 Monitoring

“Elders said watch the caribou” – Joseph Catholique at the second Caribou Talk on January 28, 2019 at the Z’ah Community Hall

“In the past we never threw meat away. We brought back all the meat in the sleigh. Monitors need to watch everybody. If they see people leaving meat, they need to tell them to take the meat. People need to respect the caribou. We’re doing something good for our people.” – Albert Boucher at the fifth Caribou Talk on April 17, 2019 at the Z’ah Community Hall

“Our monitors provide vital information on what’s happening to the caribou” – Chief Darryl Marlowe at the fifth Caribou Talk on April 17, 2019 at the Z’ah Community Hall

10.1 LKDFN’s current environmental monitoring programs

At the fourth ʔetthën Talk, the facilitators provided an overview of our current ʔetthën monitoring programs and provided some ideas to enhance them, and participants were asked to provide suggestions on how to improve our ʔetthën monitoring programs.

10.1.1 LKDFN’s Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirjuaq ʔetthën monitoring program

Since 2008, the LKDFN has operated a winter ʔetthën monitoring program focused on monitoring ʔetthën, namely the Beverly-Ahiak and Qamanirjuaq herds that come into our nuwé néné (traditional territory). The winter ʔetthën monitoring program has operated on a seasonal basis, when ʔetthën are present. In recent years, the winter ʔetthën monitoring season is from January to April. Due to insufficient funding, our ʔetthën monitors are required to use their personal snowmobile, sled, and equipment for monitoring. The LKDFN WLED provides a satellite phone and GPS. Typically, four ʔetthën monitors are hired for the season. Ideally, two adults and two youth are hired as ʔetthën monitors. A crew of two ʔetthën monitors will work on a one week on, one week off rotation. The crew is usually based at the LKDFN-owned cabin on Timber Bay, Artillery Lake. This location is an important ʔetthën water crossing, and is also a historical town site of the Lutsel K’e Denesoline. ʔetthën monitors are supposed to record, in a notebook or hand-held unit, their observations and the number, sex, and estimated age of ʔetthën nálze (harvested) by nálze dëne (hunters) on a daily basis. Our monitors play a critical role in

promoting *besúdı* (respectful) *nálze* (hunting) practices, recording *nálze* (harvest) data, and documenting the health of the herd(s). The GNWT ENR typically funds the winter *ʔetthën* monitoring program. Other funding sources are sometimes secured through other governments, NGOs, or companies. Observations and other information are stored in the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation's Traditional Knowledge Archive. This information is used to inform decision-making pertaining to environmental co-governance.

10.1.2 Moccasins on the Ground

In 2017, LKDFN started a Bathurst *ʔetthën* herd winter monitoring program called *Moccasins on the Ground*. The *Moccasins on the Ground* program operates for a one-month period in the winter, when the ice road is open. Due to insufficient funding, *ʔetthën* monitors are required to use their personal snowmobile, sled, and equipment for monitoring. The LKDFN WLED provides a satellite phone, GPS, and a camera. Typically, four *ʔetthën* monitors are hired. Ideally, two adults and two youth are hired. The entire crew monitors the herd for a four-week period. For the last two years, the four monitors have been stationed alongside the ice road. The location of base camp is based on the latest collar data provided by the GNWT ENR. The first year of the program, the LKDFN WLED was able to rent a mobile shelter for the monitors to live in while monitoring. The second year of the program, the monitors stayed in a wall tent. The monitors are suppose to record, in a notebook, their observations of the Bathurst *ʔetthën* herd and their interactions with the landscape and disturbances, such as the ice road, traffic, exploration camps and mines, hunters, predators, and other factors. Monitors are also supposed to take photographs and videos of the herd and their interaction with the environment, when environmental conditions permit. Funds for the *Moccasins on the Ground* program were secured for a three-year period, starting in 2017 and ending in 2019, from the GNWT ENR and Dominion Diamond Mines. Observations and other information is stored in the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation's Traditional Knowledge Archive. This information is used to inform decision-making pertaining to environmental co-governance.

10.1.3 Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers

In addition to the winter ʔetthën monitoring programs, LKDFN also operates a summer monitoring program called the *Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers*. This program has been operating since 2008. Typically, the summer monitoring program has operated from late June to early September. The Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranger's are provided with a powerboat and safety equipment, camping gear, a satellite phone, GPS, and monitoring equipment. Typically, eight Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers are hired for the season. Ideally, four adults and four youth are hired. Usually, an equal number of males (4) and females (4) are hired. A crew of four Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers – two youth and two adults - will work on a two week on, two week off rotation. The crew is based at the LKDFN-owned cabins at Kaldele (Talthelei Narrows) and Kache (Fort Reliance) on Great Slave Lake. These are important traditional and contemporary sites for the Lutsel K'e Denesoline. Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers are supposed to monitor environmental change through water quality and fish sampling, take care of important cultural sites, and interact with visitors. Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers' observations and other information that is gathered are stored in the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation's Traditional Knowledge Archive. This information is used to inform decision-making pertaining to environmental co-governance.

10.2 Amalgamating LKDFN's environmental monitoring programs

Changes to our existing winter and summer monitoring programs are based on the discussion and outcomes of the fourth ʔetthën Talk. The LKDFN WLED has initiated the process of amalgamating the existing monitoring programs in order to create a single Lutsel K'e denesoline guardianship program to monitor the ní (land), k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals), birds, tué (water), and fish throughout the different seasons to protect and restore the cultural and natural resources of our nuwé néné (traditional territory). Lutsel K'e denesoline guardians will play a central role in ensuring that natural resources are sustainably managed; sacred sites are protected; visitors are welcomed and informed; and that our laws and regulations are followed.

The Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranger guardian program measures are:

10.1 The LKDFN WLED will identify and apply for funds to support a year-round Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranger guardian program, with ʔetthën and other k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals) monitoring as one of the main components of the winter monitoring season.

10.2 The LKDFN WLED will use secured funds to purchase at least two snowmobiles and sleds, a powerboat, camping equipment, and other necessary equipment for Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers to use for monitoring purposes only. Funds will also be allocated to the ongoing maintenance and repairs of the equipment. Some funds will be used to build a storage facility in Lutsel K'e. All equipment purchased for the Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranger guardian program and will be stored in an LKDFN WLED storage facility when not being used for monitoring.

10.3 The LKDFN WLED, in partnership with Thaidene Nene Superintendent and staff, will undertake a Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranger guardian program evaluation every five years, or when needed.

10.4 Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers will be provided with adequate training in both traditional knowledge and scientific methods; equipment operating procedures; and safety practices and protocols to perform job duties and be safe.

10.5 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges are permitted to nálze (harvest) ʔetthën or other k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals) for monitoring purposes.

10.6 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges are not allowed to consume drugs or alcohol when working.

10.7 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges play a critical role in protecting ʔetthën and other k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals) by educating nálze dëne (hunters), and embodying and enforcing the nálze (harvest) policy and protocol measures.

10.8 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges are required to provide a detailed written or verbal report of their observations to the program coordinator at the end of each monitoring trip, and take photographs and/or videos of their observations.

10.9 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges are required to track their travel route, and daily monitoring travel routes and sites using a hand-held unit. Guardians should take geo-referenced photographs, videos, and/or audio recordings using this hand-held unit. This information is automatically uploaded into the LKDFN's Traditional Knowledge Archive.

10.10 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges are required to check all kill sites for meat wastage. If meat wastage is found, guardians are required to:

10.10.1 take photographs of the scene at near, medium, and far viewpoints;

10.10.2 record the GPS coordinates of the incident;

10.10.3 record who was in the area at the time of the incident;

10.10.4 description of the snowmobiles, plane or other form of transportation used by hunters. This should include the make, model and color of the snowmobiles, or the type of airplane and number; and

10.10.5 provide a written or verbal report of the incident to the Thaidene Nene Manager.

10.11 Wasted meat that is still edible will be brought back to Lutsel K'e by Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges and will be donated to the Lutsel K'e Elders Home and/or the Lutsel K'e Dene School.

10.12 A remote k'ech'aǰıdı (animal) camera will be placed on the Timber Bay, Artillery Lake cabin to monitor the k'ech'aǰıdı and people that travel through the area.

10.13 All non-LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) should be accompanied by Lutsel K'e denesoline guardians when nálze (hunting) in our nuwé nënë (traditional territory). This is to help ensure the safety of the nálze dëne, help LKDFN monitor k'ech'aǰıdı (animal) in our nuwé nënë, and be responsible stewards of our ní (land) and k'ech'aǰıdı.

10.14 Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges will approach any un-accompanied group of nálze dëne (hunters) in our nuwé nënë (traditional territory) to inform them of the LKDFN's nálze (harvest) policy and protocol that apply to them, and will seek information from those nálze dëne about the type,

number, and sex of k'ech'áídi (animals) nálze (harvested) and the location(s) where the animal(s) were nálze. This information will be reported to the LKDFN WLED. This information helps LKDFN monitor k'ech'áídi in our nuwé néné and to be responsible stewards of our ní (land) and k'ech'áídi.

10.15 Thaidene Nene Manager will work with GNWT ENR to train Ni Hat'ni Dene Ranges and hunters how to collect the CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment (CARMA) Level 1 ʔetthën samples and complete the form. The GNWT ENR will share the results of the ʔetthën samples with the LKDFN in a timely manner through a public meeting in Lutsel K'e and a poster.

10.16 At the end of the winter monitoring season, Ni Hat'ni Program Coordinator will provide a verbal and a plain language written report to LKDFN members. A poster will be created and displayed on community bulletin boards and social media.

10.17 LKDFN fully supports initiating an annual meeting with Bathurst ʔetthën herd Indigenous guardians from across the range to share information, stories, and ideas, and working towards creating a regional network of Indigenous Bathurst ʔetthën Guardianships Network to monitor the herd across their entire range and in each season.

11.0 Enforcement

“I don't like the word punishment. But there needs to be consequences if someone wastes meat or disrespects the caribou or other animals. We need to respect the animals. My grandparents taught me that. We can learn from our mistakes too.” – Roger Catholique, at the fourth Caribou Talk on March 5, 2019 at the Z'ah Community Hall.

Enforcement measures are based on the discussion and outcomes of the fourth ʔetthën Talk. At the fourth ʔetthën Talk, the facilitators shared with participants' ideas on how to enforce this Plan and members provided their suggestions and feedback.

The enforcement measures are:

11.1 All LKDFN nálze dëne (hunters) are required to report the type, number, sex, and estimated age of the k'ech'ą́ıdı (animals) nálze (harvested) and the locations where the k'ech'ą́ıdı were nálze. LKDFN hunters that do not report their nálze back to the LKDFN WLED will not be eligible for gas assistance the next time it is provided to nálze dëne.

11.2 A Discipline Committee will be struck by March 1, 2020. Chief and Council will appoint four (4) elders, one (1) representative from Chief and Council, and one (1) representative from the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Committee (WLEC) to the Discipline Committee.

11.3 A terms of reference will be developed for the Discipline Committee within three (3) months of this Plan being approved.

11.4 If this Plan has been violated, the Discipline Committee shall convene to determine an appropriate response.

11.5 The Discipline Committee, with the person suspected of violating this Plan, shall discuss:

11.5.1 the allegations that the person(s) did not comply with this Plan;

11.5.2 the impacts of that non-compliance with this Plan on the relationship between Lutsel K'e Denesoline and the ʔetthën or other k'ech'ą́ıdı; and

11.5.3 what steps should be taken to address the person(s) alleged non-compliance with this Plan.

11.6 The Discipline Committee may discipline any LKDFN member that has been suspected of or caught violating the *Wildlife Act, 2014* and/or the *Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádı* by imposing sanctions that are proportionate to the severity of the violations in accordance with the principles of restorative justice. Sanctions will focus on repairing the harm caused by violation(s), and promoting responsibility and respect for the relationship between ʔetthën and the person and First Nation.

11.7 Acceptable sanctions may range from mandatory community service and educational activities with elders for minor violations to suspension of nálze (harvesting) privileges for serious offences.

11.8 The rules of natural justice and procedural fairness apply to all disciplinary proceedings against an LKDFN member.

11.9 An LKDFN member who is sanctioned under this Plan may appeal the sanction to LKDFN Chief and Council, who will make a final determination on the matter.

11.10 In the event that an LKDFN member does not comply with this Plan and does not participate in a discipline committee meeting, or does not comply with this Plan and does not complete the actions identified by the discipline committee or Chief and Council, then LKDFN WLED shall refer the matter to federal or territorial enforcement officers.

11.11 If non-LKDFN member(s) are suspected of or caught violating the *Wildlife Act, 2014* and/or the *Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádi*, Lutsel K'e Denesoline guardians will document the infraction(s) by non-LKDFN members and report them to federal or territorial enforcement officers.

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