

# **Working Group Report**

Prepared by the

**Dinàgà Wek'èhodi Candidate Protected  
Area Working Group**

**March  
2016**

## **Dedication**

This report would not have been possible without the support and vision of protecting Dinàgà Wek'èhodi by many Elders involved with this project. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Edward Camille, Isadore Willen, Francis Williah, Moise Rabesca, Annie Apples, Dora Migwi, Melanie Lafferty, Jimmy B. Rabesca, Joe Zoe (Gameti), Louis Zoe, Jimmy Kodzin, Joseph Judas, Louis Franki, Michel Louis Rabesca and Charlie Apples. We would like to honour the memories of the late Harry Apples, Harry Mantla, Robert Mackenzie and Joyce Rabesca. This report is dedicated to all their hard work and wisdom towards protecting Dinàgà Wek'èhodi.

## Words from the Elders

Elder's messages on the importance of protecting Dinàgà Wek'èhodi candidate protected area:

*"We want [the] land protected for animal habitat and to protect burial sites. It's [a] good hunting and fishing area, there is lots of woodland caribou, moose and fishing. We love the land, elders said in past time to protect the land. Not for the land to be destroyed, and once it's destroyed, it will be hard to reverse and fix the land. It takes many years before the land heals and to fix the problem."*

- **Elder Michel Louis Rabesca**

*"The land looks after us. I grew up with traditional food, as young man we lived on the land for long time, lots of good timber. Later, I fought fire on that land surveyed all burnt areas. Used dog team in that area, fished, hunted and trapped in that area."*

- **Elder Louis Franki**

*"Across from White Beach, at Whòsìwekòò (Blackduck Camp) my parents had a cabin, it is all sand, very beautiful, sandy ground (Whagwee) everywhere. We saw moose tracks, we went further to Bella camp. Good fish across from Whòsìwekòò (Blackduck Camp)."*

- **Elder Charlie Apples**

*"We're talking about Old Fort Island, and White Beach. I grew up in Blackduck camp and also lived in Enodaa. We went hunting for moose, we went fishing every day. Enodaa used to have 20 houses. This is very important, White beach is very beautiful area. There is a lot of big game – moose, woodland caribou, lots of trout, white fish in abundance; that was Tł̄chq̄ livelihood."*

- **Elder Moise Rabesca**

## Executive Summary

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area is ecologically and culturally significant to people of the Great Slave region of the Northwest Territories. The people of Behchokò and other Tłìchq communities, the Yellowknives Dene, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation and the North Slave Métis Alliance all have claimed/stated ties to the area. Traditional knowledge of the above listed, identify Dinàgà Wek'èhodì as a place of spirituality, history, bountiful hunting, trapping and fishing, and a place where people go to teach and share; the area is valued for these reasons today. Dinàgà Wek'èhodì is located within the Wek'èezhìi area, and the northeast and southwest boundaries are adjacent to Tłìchq lands.

In aspiring to protect the cultural and environmental value of the region, on the recommendation of local elders, the Tłìchq Government initiated the process to protect Dinàgà Wek'èhodì through the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) in 2008. The Tłìchq Government requested that Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) act as sponsor for this area in April 2010. CWS reviewed the proposal for sponsorship put forward by the Tłìchq Government and determined that Dinàgà Wek'èhodì contains significant ecological value that fall within its legislative mandate. The area supports over 1% of the national populations of a number of migratory bird populations, making it an ecologically significant habitat within the country as it is a migratory stopover and breeding area for waterfowl, waterbirds, raptors and songbirds (Latour et al., 2008). It also supports several federally listed species at risk. CWS identifies those sites that support of over 1% of a national population of migratory birds as places that represent important habitat within the country; these areas attract relatively large proportions of a population and are considered to have specific characteristics key to supporting these species. CWS agreed to be the sponsoring agency and to work toward establishing the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì National Wildlife Area through the *Canada Wildlife Act*.

In December 2010, the Tłìchq Government and Métis organizations along with other stakeholders combined their efforts to advance Dinàgà Wek'èhodì through the PAS. The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group (DWWG) was formed to assess the ecological, cultural, and economic value of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì area and to make recommendations on its establishment, completing Step 5 of the PAS (Appendix 1). The DWWG was formed according to guidelines of the PAS and consists of the Tłìchq Government, Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board, Community of Behchokò Government, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, North Slave Métis Alliance, the federal and territorial governments, and some commercial outfitters operating in the area (Appendix 2).

In early 2014, the Working Group asked for an extension on the Interim Land Withdrawal including Wait Island and the lakebed of the North Arm. Additionally on April 1, 2014, the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT's) became responsible for managing public land, water and resources in the NWT. With GNWT's new responsibilities, the possibility of protecting Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area using territorial legislation was discussed by the Working Group and Elders.

In May 2015, the Tłìchq Government requested that CWS no longer act as the sponsor for Dinàgà Wek'èhodì and agreed to collaborate with the GNWT on achieving a 'made-in-the-North' approach to conserving the value of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, rather than supporting a

future federally designated protected area.

This draft report summarizes the Working Group process, the site assessments conducted as part of the PAS, and visionary discussions regarding future boundary evaluations and management principles. This report uses data and results available at the time of finalizing. A final report prepared by the DWWG will make recommendations to the Tłı̨chǫ Government, along with the federal and territorial governments, will follow, addressing the following topics concerning Dinàgà Wek'èhodi:

- boundary
- vision
- management

## Summary of Dinàgà Wek’èhodì PAS Site Assessments

Five assessments were completed as part of Step 5 of the PAS (PAS, 1999). The assessments summarized the cultural, ecological and economic value within Dinàgà Wek’èhodì. The DWWG coordinated the assessments and key findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Dinàgà Wek’èhodì PAS Site Assessments

Assessment	Key Findings
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive traditional use is due primarily to the abundance of wildlife, including fish, game, and furbearing animals.</li> <li>• Strong cultural and spiritual connection to Dinàgà Wek’èhodì, including many birth and burial sites, spiritual power, personal experiences, and cultural stories.</li> <li>• Use by all surrounding communities gives Dinàgà Wek’èhodì</li> <li>• An intrinsic and shared value among these communities.</li> <li>• Passing traditional knowledge and cultural stories on to young people is very important to the Elders of the past and present, and clearly directed the current generation of Elders to protect Dinàgà Wek’èhodì for future generations.</li> </ul>
<b>Ecological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine Species at Risk listed under the federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> occur there, including Little Brown Myotis, Wood Bison, Woodland Caribou, Common Nighthawk, Yellow Rail, Rusty Blackbird, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Short-eared Owl, and Peregrine Falcon.</li> <li>• The North Arm Important Bird Area (NT086) (IBA Canada, 2010) overlaps with Dinàgà Wek’èhodì.</li> <li>• Dinàgà Wek’èhodì includes part of the CWS North Arm Key Migratory Bird Terrestrial Habitat Site; it supports over 1% of the national populations of a number of migratory bird populations (Latour et al., 2008).</li> <li>• Waterfowl and other waterbirds, raptors and songbirds use the area as a migratory stopover and for breeding and brood rearing.</li> <li>• 223 bird, 33 mammal, 29 fish, and one amphibian species inhabit Dinàgà Wek’èhodì and surrounding area.</li> <li>• 15 land cover classifications have been identified, with coniferous forest covering about half the land within the area.</li> <li>• 539 species and 72 families of vascular plants occur in the area.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Non-Renewable Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential is low in the cases of Iron Oxide Copper Gold (IOCG), giant quartz vein/uranium, and unconformity related uranium deposits.</li> <li>• The potential for dimension stone is high, but this stone is abundant outside the candidate area as well.</li> <li>• The potential for a small scale craft clay industry and for silica sand are high. Silica sand currently represents the most viable non-renewable resource commodity with development potential, and this potential extends into the southern part of the candidate area (Figure 4).</li> <li>• The overall potential for finding mineral resources within the candidate area may be summarized as low (Watson, 2013).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Renewable Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife and plants are the most important renewable resources due to their cultural and traditional value.</li> <li>• Subsistence harvesting and trapping have the highest present and future economic potential.</li> <li>• Timber has limited economic value and future potential.</li> <li>• Non-timber forest products are important to local harvesters.</li> <li>• Economic value from tourism, both current and potential, is high with four licensed operators using the area.</li> <li>• Renewable energy generation (wind, hydro, geothermal, solar) has limited potential.</li> <li>• There are wide data gaps in the renewable resources knowledge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Socio-economic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dinàgà Wek'èhodi candidate area was estimated to provide between \$389,000 and \$437,400 of socioeconomic benefits on an annual basis (AMEC, 2012).</li> <li>• Formal designation would continue to allow residents of Behchokò to use the area as a source of country foods, trapping and the production of Northern arts and crafts.</li> <li>• Potential for changes in socio-economic conditions comes from employment opportunities and income resulting from tourism interest in the area following a formal designation of the area (AMEC, 2013). The final designation of the candidate area will influence the type of allowable activities.</li> </ul>

## Recommendations

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group directs the following recommendations (Table 2) to the Tłìchq Government and the designating authority. These recommendations mark the advancement of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì towards establishment as a protected area.

**Table 2 Summary of DWWG Recommendations and Positions**

<b>Issue</b>	
<b>Boundary (Individual Organization Positions)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Tłìchq Government recommends the boundaries of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì be extended to include significant areas of traditional use and ecological importance, to the south of the original interim protected area. This expanded area is reflected in the current interim land withdrawal.</li> <li>• The Yellowknives Dene First Nation support protection for all the cultural resources of the North Arm and especially for the rich ecological resources that make (Dinàgà Wek'èhodì) a special place. For the Yellowknives Dene protection is important but only if that protection does not interfere with our rights to pursue any, and all, traditional activities in that area.</li> <li>• The NWT Métis Nation offers a letter of support for the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area. The Northwest Territory Métis Nation continues to support these efforts to move forward, due to the fact that it is ecologically and culturally significant to the people around Great Slave Lake.</li> <li>• The North Slave Métis Alliance supports the general description of the proposed boundary. The proposed protected area will include a number of culturally and ecologically significant areas to the Métis people of the Great Slave Lake area. Establishment of the territorial park will protect some of the most important Métis heritage sites in the North Slave region of the NWT.</li> <li>• The Government of Canada provided no recommendations.</li> <li>• The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that the working group has reviewed the assessment information presented on land value in the vicinity of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area in a manner consistent with the processes agreed upon by all members of the working group. The GNWT acknowledges the boundary evaluations and management principles that have been proposed by the working group based on the assessments. Based on the content of the working group report, the GNWT</li> </ul>



	<p>supports the submission of the report to the Tłı̨chǫ Government, as per the next step of the agreed upon process by the members of the working group.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group</b></p>	
<p><b>Vision</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinàgà Wek'èhodì has powerful historical, spiritual and cultural significance.</li> <li>• It is a home, a place of legends, sharing, teaching and learning.</li> <li>• It is an important area ecologically for migratory birds, habitat for other birds, fish and wildlife, and species at risk. It is rich in flora and fauna which provides a foundation for harvesting and recreational opportunities.</li> <li>• Cooperative management of the area will ensure all people have the opportunity to respect and enjoy this unique area for generations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area agreement be established between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tłı̨chǫ Government as per Chapter 16 of the Tłı̨chǫ Final Agreement.</li> <li>• A Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Management Committee should be established to manage a Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area.</li> <li>• Management goals and objectives should be based on the partner communities' and designating authorities' shared vision for the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area.</li> <li>• Aboriginal harvesting rights, including hunting and trapping, would be allowed to continue.</li> <li>• Communicate and foster public awareness and appreciation of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area.</li> </ul>

## Acknowledgements

This report represents the valuable contributions and dedication of the Tłı̨chǫ, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation and the North Slave Métis Alliance, stakeholders and their representatives on the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi Working Group, as well as both government and non-government organizations. Mahsi cho!

The Working Group:

- Tłı̨chǫ Government
- Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board
- Community of Behchokò
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA)
- Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada)
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)
- Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)
- Rabesca's Resources
- True North Safaris
- NARWAL Northern Adventures
- Enodah Wilderness Travel Ltd

## Notes

This report was prepared by the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi Candidate Protected Area Working Group (DWWG).

Nothing in this report is legally binding.

This candidate area was originally named Kwets'ootlàà, but, in early 2013, Tìjchq Elders proposed that the name be changed to Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, and this new name was approved by the DWWG. The name refers to the protection of the largest island situated in the middle of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake, Waite Island.

Much of the work, including most assessment reports, was completed before the name was changed to Dinàgà Wek'èhodi. To simplify presentation in this report, we refer to the candidate area as Dinàgà Wek'èhodi as much as possible. However, the name Kwets'ootlàà still appears in this report in reference to assessment reports and supporting documents that were produced before the aforementioned name change.

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## Vision Statement

*Dinàgà Wek 'èhodì has powerful, historical, spiritual and cultural significance. It is a home; a place of legends, sharing, teaching and learning.*

*The area is important for migratory birds, and provides habitat for other birds, fish and wildlife, including species at risk. The rich flora and fauna are the foundation of this spectacular natural environment with many harvesting and recreational opportunities.*

*Cooperative management of a protected area will ensure that all people have the opportunity to respect and enjoy this unique area for generations.*

Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group, September 2012

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The scope and purpose of this report

Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area (formerly Kwets'òtł'àà candidate protected area) is an important ecological, cultural and spiritual place for the Dene and Métis peoples of the Northwest Territories (NWT). Protected areas aim to conserve important cultural and ecological resources. This area of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake is associated with shallow waters, wetlands and islands, which, along with the plentiful wildlife, make it a very rich and diverse area. The area did, and continues to, support hunting, fishing, trapping, and other traditional activities. The many cultural sites, harvesting areas, and traditional trails show the strong link the surrounding communities have with Dinàgà Wek'èhodì.

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì (790 km<sup>2</sup>) is located entirely within Wek'èezhii, south of the community of Behchokò (Figure 1). Dinàgà Wek'èhodì includes water, islands, and shoreline of the North Arm. The candidate area boundary overlaps slightly with the Akaitcho asserted territory, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation's Chief Drygeese Territory (asserted), the Northwest Territory Métis Nation's IMA area and the North Slave Métis Alliance's asserted territory.

Dinàgà Wek'èhodì had been advancing towards establishment through the NWT Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) planning process in protect the ecological and culture value of the area. Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area is a part of the NWT's conservation areas network, which conserve diverse and healthy ecosystems in a network of areas that maintain the integrity of ecosystems and biological diversity. The PAS planning process focused on partnership among communities, governments (Aboriginal, territorial, and federal), environmental non-government organizations, industry, and other stakeholders. There are eight steps in the PAS process and Dinàgà Wek'èhodì was completed up to the end of Step 5 (PAS, 1999). In May 2015, the Tłı̄chq̄ Government requested that CWS no longer act as the PAS sponsor for Dinàgà Wek'èhodì and agreed to collaborate with the GNWT on achieving a 'made-in-the-North' approach to conserving the value of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, rather than supporting a future federally designated protected area.

When this final Working Group Report is completed, the next step will be summarizing the Working Group's recommendations to the Tłı̄chq̄ Government on the following, with respect to a future Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area:

- boundary
- vision
- management

All recommendations are without prejudice to future negotiations regarding the future



establishment of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì as a permanently protected area and development of a management plan. All Aboriginal treaty rights and land claim agreements take precedence over this planning process. If there is any inconsistency between these treaties and agreements and this report, the treaties and agreements take precedence.



Figure 1: Location of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area in the Northwest Territories.

## 1.2 Regional land management

In 2003, the Tłıchq Government and the Government of Canada completed negotiations leading to a final agreement on land, self-government and financial compensation. The Tłıchq Agreement also established the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board to manage wildlife within the Wek'èezhìi boundary in the interest of the public.

Wek'èezhìi is the area of land for which regulatory management boards (under the provisions of the Tłıchq Agreement and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act) are established. Wek'èezhìi includes Tłıchq lands, the four Tłıchq communities of Whatì, Gamèti, Wekweèti and Behchokò, as well as Crown land.

Land Use activities in the Wek'èezhìi are subject to a preliminary screening, environmental assessment and permitting process. A proponent is required to submit an application to the Wek'èezhìi Land and Water Board (or the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board if a project overlaps with another region), which is then distributed to the management authorities for review.

The Tłıchq Agreement provides authority for the Tłıchq Government to develop and implement a Land Use Plan for Tłıchq Lands that reflects the value and traditional land uses of Tłıchq citizens. The purpose is to protect the land for future generations by developing goals, planning statements, and a set of rules and regulations that are administered by the Department of Culture and Lands Protection (DCLP) and followed by all parties and individuals. The Tłıchq Agreement provides that "Government may establish a mechanism for the preparation, approval and implementation of a land use plan that applies to all parts of Wekeezhii, other than Tlıcho lands, national parks and lands in a community (22.5.1). As this proposed protected area covers public lands in the Wek'èezhìi resource management area, any future land use plan would require that the conservation area be integrated with a final plan. The Tłıchq Land Use Plan was completed in 2013.

## 1.3 History of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area has very significant cultural and natural value for the Tłıchq; it is a place they call home and feel a strong sense of belonging to. Dinàgà Wek'èhodì has many spiritual, historical, and archaeological sites, and the stories associated with them provide insight into the long and close relationship the Tłıchq have with this area. In addition, the Yellowknives Dene and the Métis have strong spiritual and cultural ties to this area. Many archaeological sites are found along the shoreline and islands of the North Arm along with many other important sites which are reflected in the place names and stories linked to those areas. Notable cultural sites within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì include cabins, burial sites, hunting and fishing sites, and trails. Traditional hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering occurs in the area.

In 2008, Elders and representatives from the Tłıchq Government met with members of the federal and territorial government to express their interest in protecting several sites in the Tłıchq region, including the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì area. Those Elders developed a preliminary study area for the candidate protected area in January 2008 (Figure 2a). The Tłıchq Government, GNWT and

Environment Canada representatives met in 2010 to discuss the PAS process and to agree on a study area boundary (Figure 2b). The proposal to study the value and seek protection for Dinàgà Wek'èhodì through the PAS was supported in 2010 by the Tłıchq Government, and they requested that Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) sponsor and advance the area as a candidate National Wildlife Area (NWA); in August 2010, CWS agreed.

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Candidate Protected Area Working Group (DWWG) was formed in 2010 to guide and oversee the ecological, cultural, and economic assessments of the area, and the DWWG met for the first time in December of that year. In 2011, CWS requested for an interim land withdrawal of the area, which was approved in 2013 (Figure 2c). This area was originally named Kwets'ootlàà, but it was determined that this name only referred to the bay at the north end of the North Arm and not the entire area the DWWG was proposing for protection. In addition, the importance of including all the water and islands in this area was raised during boundary discussions. Consequently, Tłıchq Elders proposed that the name be changed to Dinàgà Wek'èhodì in early 2013, referring to the protection of the largest island situated in the middle of the North Arm, Waite Island. The new name was approved by the DWWG in March 2013. In May 2015, the Tłıchq Government requested that CWS no longer act as the sponsor for Dinàgà Wek'èhodì and agreed to collaborate with the GNWT on achieving a 'made-in-the-North' approach to conserving the value of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, rather than supporting a future federally designated protected area.

In September 2015, GNWT approved a renewal of the interim withdrawal order for the revised boundary of Dinaga Wek'ehodi candidate protected area that includes Waite Island and the lakebed (Figure 2d), as well as a phased northern tools approach for concluding the establishment of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì. This interim protection will expire on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



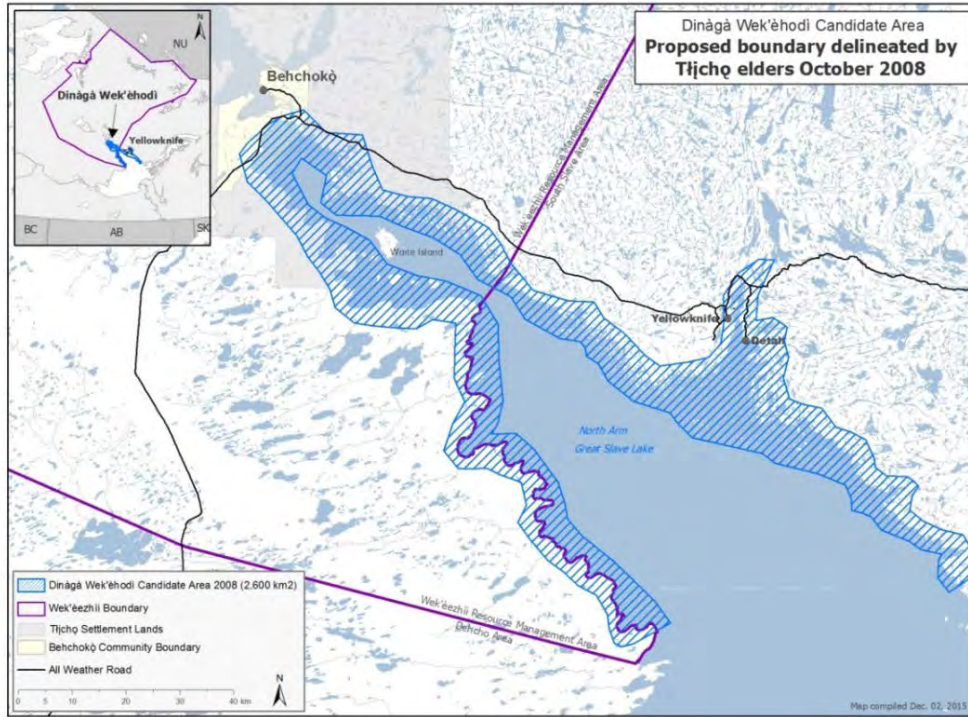


Figure 2a: Dināgā Wek'èhodi candidate protected area study area boundary proposed by Tìjchō

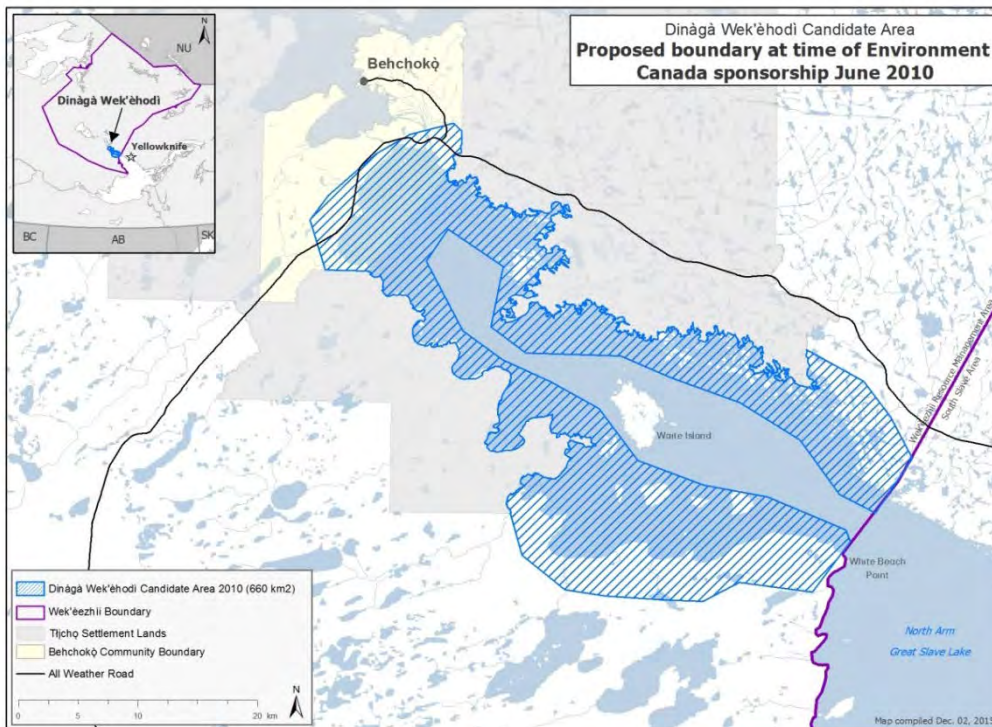


Figure 2b: Dināgā Wek'èhodi candidate protected area study area boundary as proposed by Tìjchō Government to Canadian Wildlife Service for sponsorship in June 2010



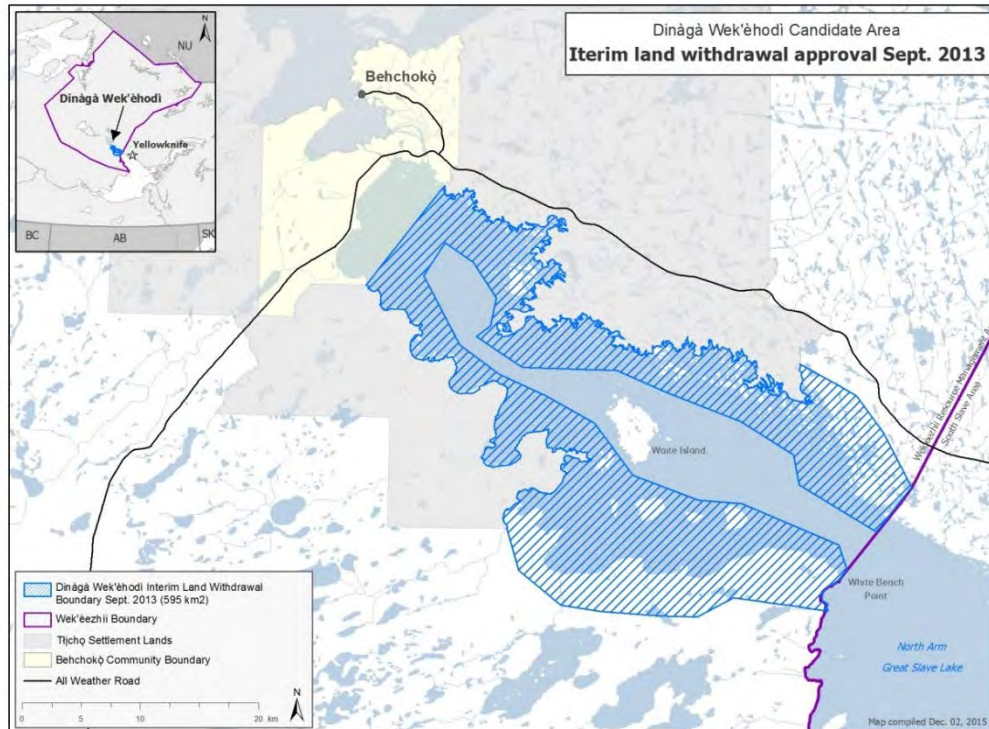


Figure 2c: Dināgā Wek'èhodi interim land withdrawal boundary, Sept. 2013 to Sept. 2015

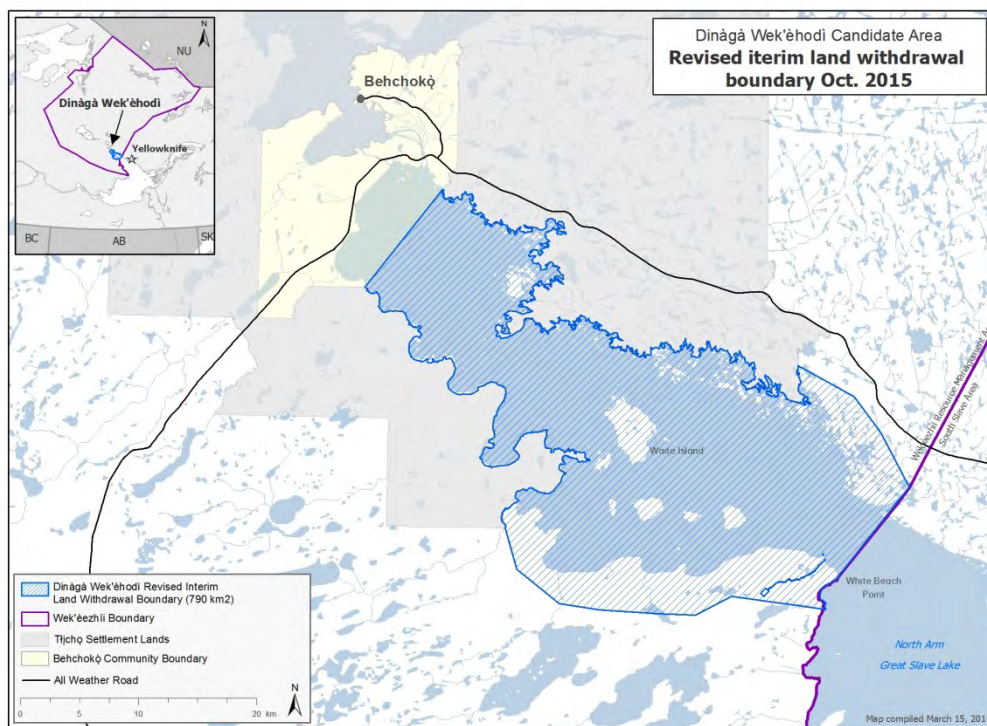


Figure 2d: Dināgā Wek'èhodi renewed and revised interim land withdrawal boundary Oct. 2015 to Oct. 2016

## 1.4 The Dinàgà Wek'èhodi Working Group (DWWG)

The DWWG was established to guide and oversee the ecological, cultural and economic assessments of Dinàgà Wek'èhodi candidate protected area, as part of Step 5 of the PAS process (Terms of Reference – Appendix 2). The DWWG is made up of the following Aboriginal organizations and governments, territorial and federal government departments, communities, environmental non-government organizations, and outfitter representatives:

- Tłı̨chǫ Government
- Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board
- Community of Behchokò
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA)
- Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada)
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)
- Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)
- Rabesca's Resources
- True North Safaris
- NARWAL Northern Adventures
- Enodah Wilderness Travel Ltd

## 2. DWWG Outcomes

### 2.1. DWWG Engagement and Workshops

Engaging with Aboriginal organizations, stakeholders, and the general public is a critical component of the PAS process. A key function of the DWWG was to ensure member organizations, including Tłı̨chǫ representation and other Aboriginal groups, were engaged throughout the evaluation process. The DWWG held 15 meetings in Behchokò and Yellowknife, NT. All working group meetings were open to the public.

### 2.2. PAS Site Assessments

As part of Step 5 of the PAS process, several assessments of the study area were conducted to identify the ecological, cultural, and economic value of the area. The results from these assessments are summarized below.

### 2.2.1. Cultural Documentation and Review

The *New Research and Documentation Relating to Kwets'òtt'àà* report (Gagos Social Analysts, 2012) involved interviews with Tłı̄ch̄q Elders during an on-the-land site visit. The purpose of this trip was to gather oral history, including place names, traditional uses, and cultural stories. Trails and travel routes, camps, cabins, burial sites, archaeological sites, and sacred areas associated with important cultural stories and uses were mapped. In addition, information from numerous cultural sources, including the Tłı̄ch̄q Lands Protection Department and the Traditional Knowledge Research and Monitoring Division, exists for this area and supplements the site visit report.

The North Slave Métis Alliance also completed *Documentation of North Slave Métis Culturally Important Areas within the North Arm of Great Slave Lake* (North Slave Métis Alliance, 2012) which reviewed information from various existing information sources, including maps, documents, and audio/video recordings.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for cultural documentation titles from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

#### **Summary:**

Traditional land use patterns within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì reflect the abundance and distribution of wildlife, birds, fish, game, and furbearing animals. Traditional use is evident by trails, seasonal and semi-permanent camps, centered along the shorelines and islands of the North Arm. Ongoing use has resulted in a cultural and spiritual bond to the lands within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area, including many birth and burial locations, spiritual sites, personal experiences, cultural stories, and legends. Many of the Tłı̄ch̄q Elders who participated in the trip described important family events that occurred in Dinàgà Wek'èhodì. Numerous trails link hunting, fishing, and trapping locations with camps, and gathering places.

Continued harvesting of animals, fish, birds, and plant resources provide food, clothing, materials, and medicines for the community members. The Tłı̄ch̄q Elders who visited the area recounted stories and identified and located culturally important sites, including hunting, fishing, and trapping areas. The Elders noted the area was important for providing many families with plentiful fish, waterfowl, and furbearing animals.

The North Slave Métis Alliance also documented the importance of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area. Old Fort Island, trails, and other sites of significance were noted for their cultural, ecological, socioeconomic, and heritage value.

Ensuring these culturally important sites and the abundant natural resources of the area remained intact were key reasons to advance Dinàgà Wek'èhodì as a candidate protected area.

### 2.2.2. Ecological Assessment

The *Ecological Assessment of the Kwets'òtt'àà Candidate National Wildlife Area* (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2011) describes the diversity and distribution of plant and animal species in Dinàgà Wek'èhodì. This information ensures the candidate area includes a wide range of successional stages, habitat types, self-sustaining land and water systems, along with sensitive or rare species.

#### **Summary:**

Key ecological features of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area include:

Key Migratory Bird Habitat Sites: The area contains nationally and internationally ecologically significant areas including part of the North Arm Key Migratory Bird Habitat Sites (Latour et al., 2008) and Important Bird Area (NT086, IBA Canada, 2010) designated by Canadian Wildlife Service and BirdLife International, respectively.

Water Drainages: Dinàgà Wek'èhodì is located within the Great Slave sub-basin of the Mackenzie River Basin (Mackenzie River Basin Board, 2004) and includes portions of three watersheds; Westshore (2.5%), Snare (0.7%) and Yellowknife (0.6%). The Westshore, Snare and Yellowknife watersheds drain 49%, 29% and 22% of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, respectively.

Ecoregion Representation: Dinàgà Wek'èhodì represents both the Great Slave Plain High Boreal (281 km<sup>2</sup>, 1.8% of total ecoregion) and the Great Slave Lowland High Boreal (312 km<sup>2</sup>, 2.8% of total ecoregion) ecoregions.

Species at Risk<sup>1</sup>: There are nine species that occur within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì that are listed on Schedule 1 or the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under the SARA and there are an additional four species that have been assessed by COSEWIC as at risk; these “at risk” species are found in or have their range extend over Dinàgà Wek'èhodì and includes residents and migrants. The federal SARA schedule list includes those listed as ‘Special Concern,’ ‘Threatened’ and ‘Endangered’ and contains: Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), Wood Bison (*Bison bison athabascae*), Woodland Caribou (boreal population; *Rangifer tarandus caribou*), Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*), Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*), Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*), Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), and Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus; anatum subspecies*). Additionally, five species have been assessed by COSEWIC as being at risk and are eligible for addition to Schedule 1 of the federal SARA: Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), Shortjaw Cisco (*Coregonus zenithicus*), Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), and Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*). The four mammalian species at risk, Little Brown Myotis, Wood Bison, Boreal Woodland Caribou, and Wolverine, and the fish, Shortjaw Cisco, can occur within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì year round.

Wildlife Species: In addition to the “at risk” species present within the area, there are numerous other bird, mammal and fish species found within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì.

Dinàgà Wek'èhodì is used extensively by waterfowl and other waterbirds, raptors and songbirds as a migratory stopover, and for breeding and brood rearing. During gull and tern surveys in July 2010, 1,050 nests of six different species were located. Nests of Common and Arctic Terns (*Sterna hirundo* and *S. paradisaea*, respectively) were the most numerous. Spring and autumn



aerial waterfowl surveys were also conducted. In 2010, peak numbers of 13,000 and 7,440 individual waterfowl were recorded in the spring and fall, respectively. There were 21 species observed, including geese (primarily Canada and Cackling geese, *Branta Canadensis*, *B. hutchinsii*), swans (primarily Tundra Swans, *Cygnus columbianus*), and numerous duck species (including Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*, American Wigeon *A. Americana*, Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, Merganser *Mergus* spp., and scaup *Aythya affinis* and *A. marila*). Other birds observed included Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Horned Grebes (COSEWIC – Special Concern), and Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*; GNWT Status Ranking – Sensitive).

There are many mammals which use the area for at least part of their annual cycle, including Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), Beaver (*Castor Canadensis*), Common Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Moose (*Alces americanus*), Boreal Woodland Caribou, Wood Bison, Little Brown Myotis and Wolverine.

Overall, the fish community within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì is similar to that found in the main body of Great Slave Lake, with 29 fish species from 11 families including Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*), White Sucker (*Catostomus commersonii*) and Walleye (*Sander vitreus*) which favour the warmer, shallow waters within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì.

The Wood Frog (*Rana sylvatica*) is the only amphibian known to occur within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì.

Plant Communities: There are two ecoregions within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì: the Great Slave Plain High Boreal to the southwest and the Great Slave Lowland High Boreal to the northeast.

The Great Slave Plain High Boreal ecoregion covers the southeastern land base of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì; it is characterized by jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) forests with an understory of dwarf birch (*Betula glandulosa*), Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), lichen and moss. White spruce (*Picea glauca*) stands are found throughout the area, typically adjacent to small streams and wetlands. Trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) are more abundant near the shores of Great Slave Lake. Bog and fen vegetation cover wet areas, including black spruce (*Picea mariana*), Labrador tea, ericaceous shrubs, and mosses. Sparse communities of common bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) and shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa*) grow along low north-south ridges of till deposits (Ecosystem Classification Group, 2007 (rev. 2009)).

The Great Slave Lowland High Boreal ecoregion covers the northeastern shore lines of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì and is influenced by numerous wetlands, lakes, shallow bays, fens and marshes. The discontinuous forest vegetation is distinguished by jack pine and aspen, with white spruce and white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) dominating moist areas (Ecosystem Classification Group, 2008). Extensive shrubby and graminoid fens are present along with bogs and peat plateaus with large collapse scars. Dense variegated pond lily (*Nuphar variegata*) colonies can be found on shallow wetlands.

There are 15 land cover types within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì (Earth Observation for Sustainable Developments of Forests, 2006 modified with a minimum mapping unit of 0.5 ha by NWT PAS). Coniferous forest covers 50.6% (85.4 km<sup>2</sup>) of the land within the area, represented by both open and dense canopies (26-60% and >60% crown closure, respectively; (Wulder and Nelson, 2003). Upland broadleaf trees cover 10.8% (18.3 km<sup>2</sup>) of the land base. Exposed land

dominated by rock/rubble and <5% vegetation cover accounts for 16% (27 km<sup>2</sup>) of the land within the area.

**Plant Species:** Up to 539 different plant species from 72 families can be found within a 200 km radius of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì (Porsild and Cody, 1980). Of the plant species potentially within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, the NWT Species 2011-2015 – General Status Ranks of Wild Species in the Northwest Territories, identifies 372 (69.0%) as secure, 63 (11.8%) as sensitive, and 26 (4.3%) that may be at risk, 66 (12.2%) are undetermined and 15 (2.8%) were determined to be alien species (Working Group on General Status of NWT Species, 2011). Of the 23 plant species ranked as may be at risk, six species have been confirmed within the area or near the boundary, including Several Vein Sweetflag (*Axorus americanus*), Small-flowered Bittercress (*Cardamine parviflora*), Red Pigweed (*Chenopodium rubrum*), Water Pygmy Weed (*Crassula aquatica*), Water Loelia (*Lodelia dortmanna*), and White Adder's Mouth (*Malaxis monophylla* var *brachypoda*). Additionally, there are 22 plant species potentially located within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, which are listed as rare by the Canadian Museum of Nature (McJannet et al., 1995).

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**Note:** <sup>1</sup> This section has been updated since the completion of the ecological assessment to reflect changes to the SARA listing (for more information, visit [http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/default\\_e.cfm](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/default_e.cfm)).

### 2.2.3. Non-Renewable Resource Assessment

The non-renewable resource (mineral) potential of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area was evaluated by the Northwest Territories Geoscience Office (NTGO; Watson, 2013). Non-renewable resource assessments also support the Government of Canada's Minerals and Metals Policy (1996) that states the mineral potential of an area should be fully considered before the decision to create a protected area on federal lands is taken.

Dinàgà Wek'èhodì lies in an area that has been of interest both for economic geology reasons and for its position at the edge of the Slave province and the extension of the Wopmay Orogen/Great Bear Magmatic zone. As a result it has been the target of reports by both researchers and mining company geologists. Although there have been no developments associated with deposits within the study area, there has been activity in the immediate surrounding area. Drilling has been conducted on claims adjacent to and west of the study area, and claims have recently been staked east of the study area.

Within the study area itself, there has been little exploration for mineral commodities. Exploration in the surrounding area has been for a variety of commodities ranging from Uranium and base metals to granite for building stone. Specific deposit types that have been investigated include: Iron Oxide Copper Gold (IOCG) to the north and west, giant quartz vein/uranium in the north and west, dimension stone to the east of the study area, clay minerals in North Arm, silica sand on the southwestern shore of North Arm and unconformity associated uranium to the west of the study area in the Dessert Lake Basin.

During the 2010 field season, two weeks were spent doing geological reconnaissance and

sampling in the study area. Rocks exposed along the shoreline of North Arm were studied and sampled as well as outcrops accessible from roads on the north and east sides of the area (Figure 7). An additional trip was made to the area in the winter of 2010 to sample clay from the lake bottom in the vicinity of North Arm Territorial Park. The geology observed during this field work is consistent with previously published work. Nothing was observed to indicate the possibility of economic mineralization or to encourage further work in this area. However, more recent claim staking and geological work by industry makes it clear that economic mineralization, in the form of high-quality silica sand deposits, is present in the area. Figure 4 shows the area where this silica sand potential is highest.

As part of the assessment of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, an airborne geophysical survey was flown over the area. The results of this aeromagnetic survey have been released as NTGO Open File 2011-04 (NTGO, 2011). The survey outlined known geological units and structures and traces their extensions beneath the North Arm and younger rocks to the west.

As a result of this study, it was determined that although there is limited potential for some of the resource types investigated, the potential is low in the cases of IOCG, giant quartz vein/uranium, and unconformity related uranium deposits. The potential for dimension stone is high, but because this stone is abundant outside Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, the likelihood of development is low.

The potential for a small scale craft clay industry or for silica sand are likewise high. Silica sand is observed along the shores of North Arm while clay from the bottom of the lake has been used locally in the past. Both commodities need further evaluation, but fall largely outside the proposed protected area (Watson, 2013). Additionally, Levson et al. (2012) summarize the North Arm region, as having exceptionally well developed paleo-beach ridges and associated dunes on the western shore of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake and therefore are a high potential frac sand target.

According to AMEC (2013), the overall potential for finding mineral resources within the candidate area may be summarized as low. However, silica sand currently represents a commodity with development potential, and this potential extends into the southern part of the candidate area (AMEC, 2013) and high potential frac sand (Levson et al, 2012).

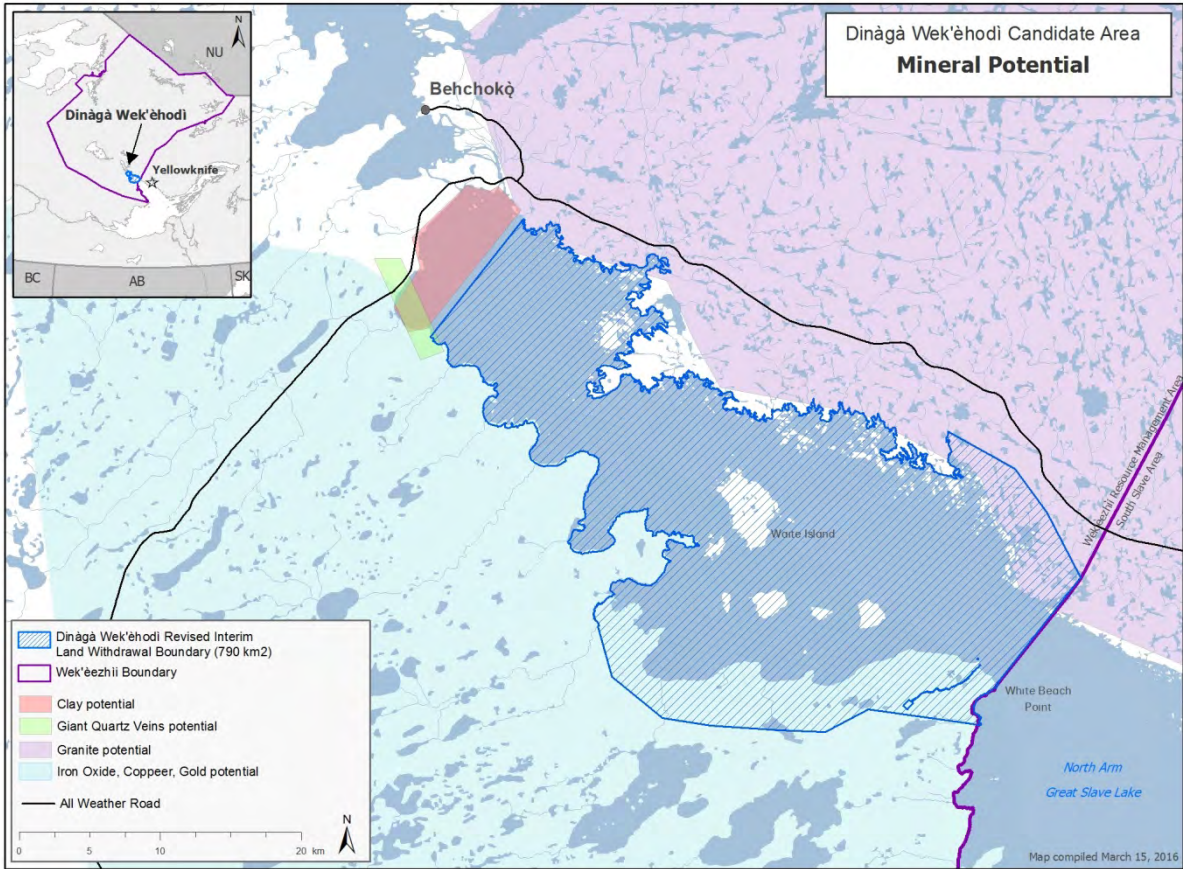


Figure 3: Areas with potential clay, quartz veins, granite and iron oxide copper gold ore (IOCG), (dimension stone) deposits near Dināgā Wek'èhodi (Watson, 2013).



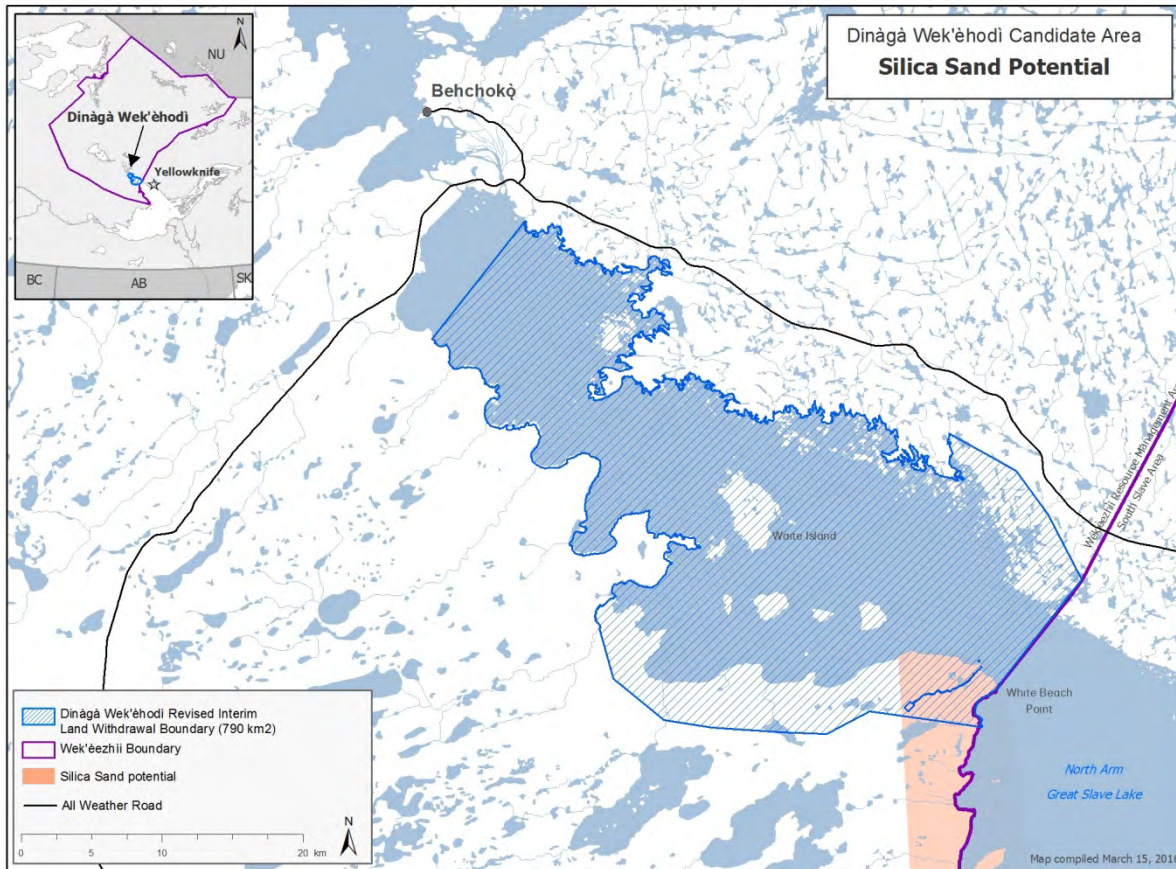


Figure 4: Potential Silica Sand in Dinàgà Wek'èhodi (Watson, 2013).

#### 2.2.4. Renewable Resource Assessment

The *Renewable Resources Assessment of the Kwets'òotl'àà Candidate National Wildlife Area* (SENES, 2011) examined where renewable resources are found in Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, their current and potential future uses, and their economic importance.

Existing information was reviewed and summarized, and individuals from the Tłìchq Government, various departments within the GNWT, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre were interviewed (see SENES, 2011 Appendix 1 for a complete list).

Information specific to Dinàgà Wek'èhodi is limited and used the best available information, with knowledge gaps in traditional, current, and potential renewable resource stocks and area uses, so conclusions were based, in part, on information from the region (SENES, 2011). Further research can be completed as the proposed candidate area moves forward with the vision, boundary and management report.

### **Summary:**

Subsistence fishing, harvesting, and trapping are important activities and have cultural and economic value in Dinàgà Wek'èhodi and surrounding area. Large game, including Moose, Boreal Woodland Caribou and Wood Bison, are harvested in the area. Residents from Behchokò also harvest waterfowl and other birds in this area, but data are limited. Trapping is not a primary activity within Dinàgà Wek'èhodi given the limited land base of the area but remains important culturally and economically.

Recreational hunting within Dinàgà Wek'èhodi is primarily for waterfowl, and the area is used by many Yellowknife residents for fall waterfowl hunting, but the economic value is low. There are two outfitters operating within Dinàgà Wek'èhodi that offer big game and waterfowl hunting opportunities. Recreational fishing also occurs in this area, but no area-specific fish harvest data are available, and the area is currently closed to commercial fishing.

Timber has limited current and potential economic value in the area due to the small land base, low timber volume, and limited road access. However, the area is used by some residents of Behchokò and others for firewood.

Non-timber forest products, including berries, mushrooms and medicinal plants are an important renewable resource, and the area was and is a source of these products to local harvesters.

The current and potential economic value for tourism is high for Dinàgà Wek'èhodi with four licensed operators providing hunting, fishing, and ecotourism opportunities in and around the area. Overall, it is estimated that the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA generates quantifiable economic benefits in the range of \$361,900 to \$370,200 per year, with the majority of these benefits being associated with tourism. Based on these amounts, the CPA appears to account for about 3% of all renewable resource uses by residents of Behchokö, Yellowknife and other residents of the NWT. It is believed that the area could support additional use of the renewable resource base, including traditional harvesting, recreation and tourism (ANEC, 2012).

Finally, renewable energy generation, such as wind, solar, geothermal, and hydroelectricity generation have minimal potential in the area. The area is not known for high winds, and potential wind power is low due low wind speeds, of a below average of 3.33 m/s. The current use of solar systems for electricity generations in and around the communities is unknown – any future solar power would be used for individual residences with the CPA leading to small energy demands. Geothermal power potential is low due to the region's Taiga Shield characteristics (low porosity, low permeability and low geothermal gradients). Finally, hydro-electric power for the candidate protected area has low potential at the northern tip with the Emile and Sare River. Accurate data on the stream flow and power potential of these water bodies when they enter the CPA is not readily available (SENEC, 2011).

### 2.2.5. Socio-Economic Assessment

The socio-economic effects of establishing Dinàgà Wek'èhodì as a National Wildlife Area <sup>2</sup> were assessed through the completion of two volumes of research. Volume 1 (AMEC, 2013) reports social statistics from the communities of Behchokò and Yellowknife and related them to the same statistics for the NWT. *Volume 2* estimated the social and economic potential of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì (AMEC, 2013), describing the effects of five development options ranging from no permanent protection for any of the area to full protection of an expanded area.

It should be noted that the socio-economic assessment scenarios took into account existing mineral claims, which have since changed – please see map Figure 10, for the updated mineral claims. Additionally, since the completion of the AMEC report, further studies by Watson (2013) and Levson et al. (2012) have documented the potential for possible silica sands exploration and development, as silica is a potentially valuable resource. Also, the AMEC (2013) report came to various conclusions using a National Wildlife Area (NWA) as a selected Candidate Protected Area (CPA). With the change in sponsorship, clarification around the types of tourism will be addressed in future management reports.

#### **Summary:**

Volume 1 provided an overview of current socio-economic conditions in Behchokò and Yellowknife, and compared these to the overall conditions in the Northwest Territories. Volume 1 also examined the value of subsistence, recreation and economic activities for residents of Behchokò, as well as leisure tourism and recreation value for residents of Yellowknife (Table 3). Combined, these activities were estimated to have an annual value of \$10.74 to \$11.96 million. For the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area in particular, an annual benefit of \$389,500 to \$437,400 per year was estimated. The majority of these benefits are associated with tourism. The assessment was limited to existing data, and notably, there was a lack of data for the value of firewood, fur harvesting, and resources used for arts and crafts collected from within the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area.

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<sup>2</sup> The Terms of Reference for the Socio-Economic Assessment specified evaluation of the socio-economic impacts of establishing the area as a National Wildlife Area.

**Table 3 Current Resource Use Value in Dinàgà Wek'èhodì (AMEC, 2013)**

Nature of Benefit	Regional Estimate	Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Est.
<b>Subsistence</b>		
Country Food (Behchokò)	\$3.80 million to \$4.07 million	\$113,900 to \$122,200
Fuel (Behchokò)	\$263,000	Unknown
<b>Recreation</b>		
Expenditures	\$539,300 to \$1.36 million	\$22,400 to \$56,500
Extra-market benefits	\$196,700 to \$328,700	\$8,200 to \$13,700
<b>Economic</b>		
Trapping	\$77,200	Unknown
Commercial Fishing	None	None
Tourism Spending	\$5,813,500	\$245,000
Arts and Crafts	\$51,300	Unknown
Commercial Logging	None	None
Renewable Energy	None	None
<b>Total</b>		
	<b>\$10,741,000 to \$11,963,700</b>	<b>\$389,500 to \$437,400</b>

Volume 2 of the socio-economic assessment described the potential social and economic effects of five development options for Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, ranging from a 'Baseline Development Scenario' (no permanent protection for any of the area) to full protection an expanded area. The five scenarios evaluated are described below, and shown in Table 4 and Figure 5.

#### 1. Original Candidate Protected Area (CPA) Boundary Scenario

This scenario would involve designating all of the original Dinàgà Wek'èhodì CPA (593 km<sup>2</sup>) as an NWA. The quantifiable economic benefits of establishing an NWA with boundaries based on the CPA boundary are estimated to have a present value of \$50.4 million. This scenario would result in formal protection of 15.3 km<sup>2</sup> of wetlands, 42.9 km<sup>2</sup> of habitat known to be of moderate or higher importance for migratory waterbirds and 353.6 km<sup>2</sup> of areas of high or highest importance to Behchokò.

#### 2. CPA Boundary Excluding Silica Sand Potential Scenario

This scenario would be similar to the CPA Boundary Scenario but would exclude the areas having silica sand potential. The resulting NWA would be slightly smaller (563 km<sup>2</sup>) and would protect less wetland area (14.4 km<sup>2</sup>) and areas of high or highest importance to Behchokò (339.6 km<sup>2</sup>). The area being protected that is known to support medium to highest concentrations of migratory



waterbirds would be the same, and the NWA would generate the same economic benefits (\$50.4 million) as the CPA Boundary Scenario.

### 3. Expanded CPA Boundary Scenario

This scenario would see the boundaries of the NWA expanded to include the all the land and water in the centre of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake, resulting in protection of 793 km<sup>2</sup>. This scenario would increase the amount of wetlands being protected (15.8 km<sup>2</sup>) and protect more areas of high or highest importance to Behchokò (470.7 km<sup>2</sup>) but would protect the same area of moderate to highest importance to migratory waterbirds and generate the same economic benefits (\$50.4 million).

### 4. Expanded CPA Boundary, Excluding All Competing Claims Scenario

This scenario would involve expanding the NWA to include the all the land and water in the centre of the North Arm of Great Slave but would exclude lands within the Chief Drygeese boundary or the Akaitcho asserted Territory area and lands that are the subject of existing mineral claims.

The resulting NWA would be 606 km<sup>2</sup> but would exclude some important wetland areas (7.6 km<sup>2</sup> would be protected) as well as some areas having medium to highest known concentrations of migratory waterbirds (30.1 km<sup>2</sup> would be protected). ). This scenario would also protect less area of high or highest importance to Behchokò (8.7 km<sup>2</sup> of the 20.7 km<sup>2</sup> that would be protected under the CPA Boundary Scenario), although the quantifiable economic benefits (\$50.4 million) would be the same.

### 5. Expanded CPA Boundary, Excluding Silica Sand Potential and Competing Mineral Claims Scenario

This boundary would see the NWA boundaries expanded to include all the land and water in the centre of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake but would exclude areas having silica sand deposits and lands that are the subject of existing mineral claims. This NWA would be 704 km<sup>2</sup> in area. Although these boundaries would protect more areas of high or highest importance to Behchokò (434.8 km<sup>2</sup>) and the same amounts of known migratory waterbird habitat of medium to highest importance (42.9 km<sup>2</sup>), it would protect less wetland area (13.8 km<sup>2</sup>). The value of future quantifiable economic benefits (\$50.4 million) would be the same as for the other NWA scenarios. Each of the above scenarios was compared with the Baseline Development Scenario and ranked in terms of how well it addressed each of the following five criteria (Table 4):

- the possibility of non-renewable resource (silica sand) development;
- the extent to which important migratory waterbird habitat would be protected;
- the extent to which wetland areas would be protected;
- the extent to which areas of high importance to the community of Behchokò would be protected; and
- the economic value of present and future quantified benefits that would be generated by the area.

A ranking of “5” was given to the scenario that best achieved the criterion and a “0” if the boundary scenario completely failed to address the criterion. For non-renewable resource development, a score of “3” was assigned to all the options that would allow silica sand development (this score was given because AMEC (2013) concluded such development was unlikely. It is noted, that Watson (2014) indicates that Whitebeach Point has the only sand deposit identified in the NWT with sands that potentially be used for higher grade silica purposes such as frac sand or glass). Total scores were calculated for each boundary scenario by adding the scores (to a maximum of 25 points), on the assumption that each criterion was given equal weight.

**Table 4 Evaluation of Boundary Scenarios for Dinàgà Wek’èhodì**

Evaluation Criteria	No Protection	Boundary Scenarios				
		1. Candidate Protected Area Boundary	2. CPA Boundary Excluding Silica Sand Potential	3. Expanded CPA Boundary	4. Expanded CPA Boundary Excluding All Competing Claims	5. Expanded CPA Boundary Excluding Silica Sand Potential and Competing Mineral Claims
Non-renewable Resource Development	3	0	3	0	3	3
Protection of Migratory Waterbird Habitat	0	5	5	5	3	5
Protection of Wetlands	0	4	3	5	1	2
Protection of Areas of Importance to Behchokq	0	3	1	5	2	4
Economic Benefits	2	5	5	5	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>

The socio-economic assessment (Volume 2) concluded that none of the boundary scenarios or even the Baseline Development Scenario (no protection) would likely result in significant changes in regional or local socio-economic conditions.

Recognizing that the formal designation of Dinàgà Wek'èhodi would continue to allow residents of Behchokò to use the area as a source of country foods, trapping, and the production of Northern arts and crafts, it was predicted that incremental employment and income benefits would be relatively small and unlikely to improve economic conditions in the community.

Potential increases in employment opportunities and income resulting from increased tourism interest in the area following formal designation of the area would offer the greatest potential for changes in socio-economic conditions (AMEC, 2013).

### 2.2.6. Uncertainties and Issues

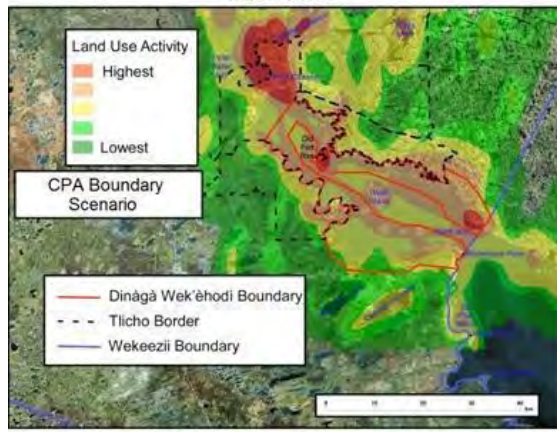
To note, there are many uncertainties inherent in undertaking this type of analysis. To begin, the assessment of the benefits that residents of Behchokò , Yellowknife and the Tłı̄chǫ Region and the NWT derive from the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA relies on information about renewable resource use and values that is known to be incomplete, especially in terms of actual use of the area. In addition, there is even less information about the spatial distribution of these activities within the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA. Despite these problems, this analysis has used whatever information is available to describe the use and value of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA (AMEC, 2013).

The second challenge is to develop reasonable non-renewable resource development scenarios given the uncertainties related to the extent of economically developable resources in the area as well as the range of complex factors that will determine if and when such development actually occurs. The assessment of non-renewable resource development presented represents a best guess based on available information (AMEC, 2013).

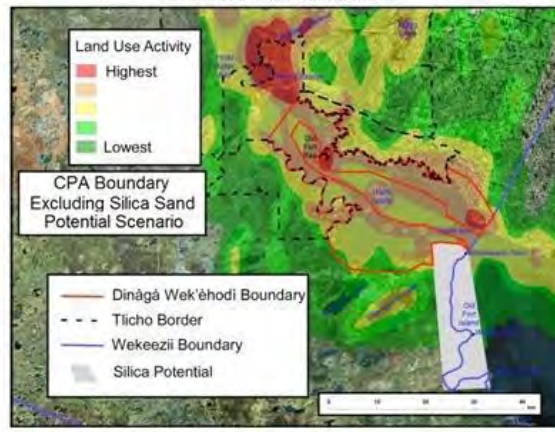
A third challenge is to look forward and describe the extent to which the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA will continue to provide benefits for residents of Behchokò and the surrounding region. It is challenging to even speculate on what the future will bring, but all or partial protection of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA would at least provide current and future residents of Behchokò with the option of participating in various activities, whereas opening the area to development may preclude or impair these opportunities (AMEC, 2013). A partial or full protection would also preclude or impair other opportunities i.e. exploration opportunities

There is no easy way to address these methodological issues and information gaps. The only approach involves clearly laying out all of the assumptions and data sources used in the analysis so that the readers can fully understand the strengths, weaknesses, and implications of the study and its findings so that they can draw their own conclusions about the future of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi CPA (AMEC, 2013).

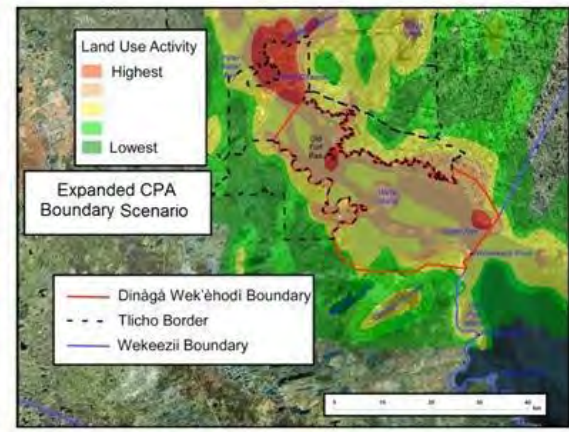
**Candidate Protected Area Boundary Scenario**



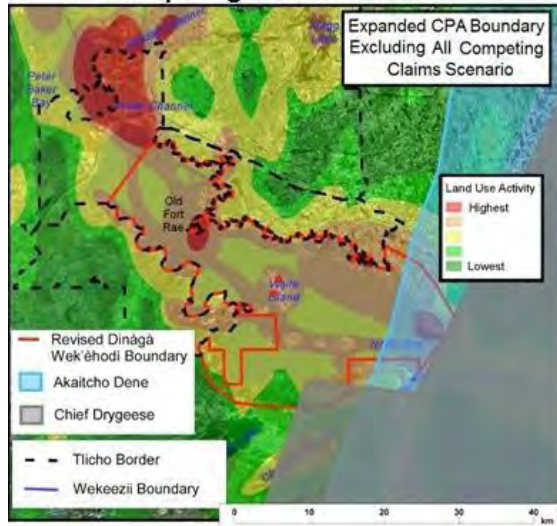
**CPA Boundary Excluding Silica Sand Potential Scenario**



**Expanded CPA Boundary Scenario**



**Expanded CPA Boundary Excluding Competing Claims Scenario**



**Expanded CPA Boundary Excluding Silica Sand Potential and Competing Mineral Claims Scenario**

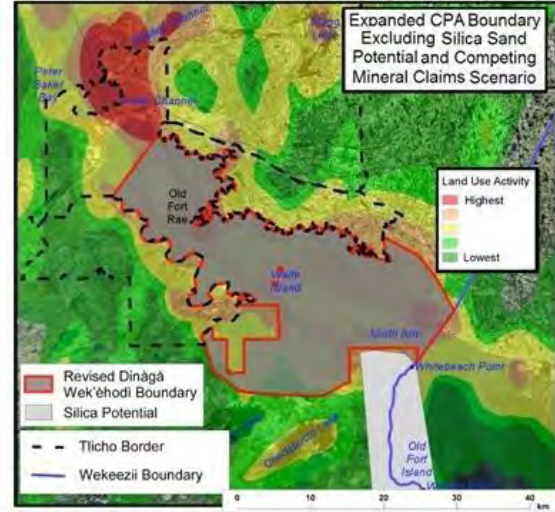


Figure 5: Boundary Scenarios for Dinàgà Wek'èhodi

### 3. Conservation and Economic Value of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì

The DWWG considered the cultural, conservation, and economic value of the area when deciding on the boundaries of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì. The DWWG discussed the value of the area and considered all available information, including information presented in area assessments and other reports, along with information held by individual working group members. Many working group members, particularly the Elders, and the cultural and socio-economic reports for the area provided the DWWG with a deeper understanding of the importance of Dinàgà Wek'èhodì to the Dene and Métis peoples. The DWWG used Ecological Assessments and traditional knowledge to identify areas with high importance to wildlife. Finally, the DWWG used maps produced by the non-renewable resource and renewable resource assessments to determine locations of high economic value

#### 3.1. Conservation Considerations

The DWWG had many discussions regarding conservation of culturally and ecologically important sites around the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì area. Areas of spiritual, historical, and cultural significance were highlighted both within the cultural reports and from personal accounts relating to the area.

At the initial meeting in 2008, Elders from the Tłìchq communities of Behchokò and Wekweèti noted the importance of this area for birds and for all other kinds of wildlife (Dillon Consulting Limited, 2008). The Elders noted that the Tłìchq people used to travel along the east side for week-long hunts. The area provided the hunters and their families with ample food, which they would dry at island camps before they returned home. Community members used the area for fish, waterfowl, and trapping opportunities. Tłìchq families have lived and camped on the many islands in the area for generations. Locations of births, deaths, and other significant events were brought up by Working Group members on multiple occasions.

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì area is rich in cultural history, linked to numerous stories. The area is a sacred place to the Tłìchq and continues to be important in defining the Tłìchq and to the transmission of their culture (Gagos Social Analysts, 2012). Along with many sites on the mainland, many shorelines and surrounding islands contain spiritual power for the Tłìchq. The area provides a place for all people to go where they can better understand the Tłìchq people and their history. During the many discussions, as documented in the Cultural Values document (Gagos Social Analysts, 2012) and during working group meetings, the Tłìchq Elders noted their strong connection to Waite Island (Figure 6). On many occasions, the Tłìchq Elders emphasized the need to include Waite Island in the protected area (Gagos Social Analysts, 2012). This request is echoed in the name of the area, which refers directly to the protection of Waite Island (Dinàgà (Waite Island) Wek'èhodì (to protect)).



The North Slave Métis Alliance (2012) places a high cultural value on many sites around the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì area. The NSMA cultural value executive summary focuses on the area's many trails, Old Fort Rae, Old Fort Island, the Underground River, Trout Rock, and the Cliffs That Give Children. Old Fort Rae trading post is historically important for many peoples, including the Tłìchq and Métis (Gagos Social Analysts, 2012; North Slave Métis Alliance, 2012). The site was used in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and there is evidence that a trading post was operating there as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Trading posts, such as Old Fort Rae, encouraged harvest, travel, trading and gathering within the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì area. There are also many other important sites not in but adjacent to Dinàgà Wek'èhodì. A network of many trails in Dinàgà Wek'èhodì links important cultural, heritage, and ecological sites together, strengthening the Tłìchq and Métis connection to this area.

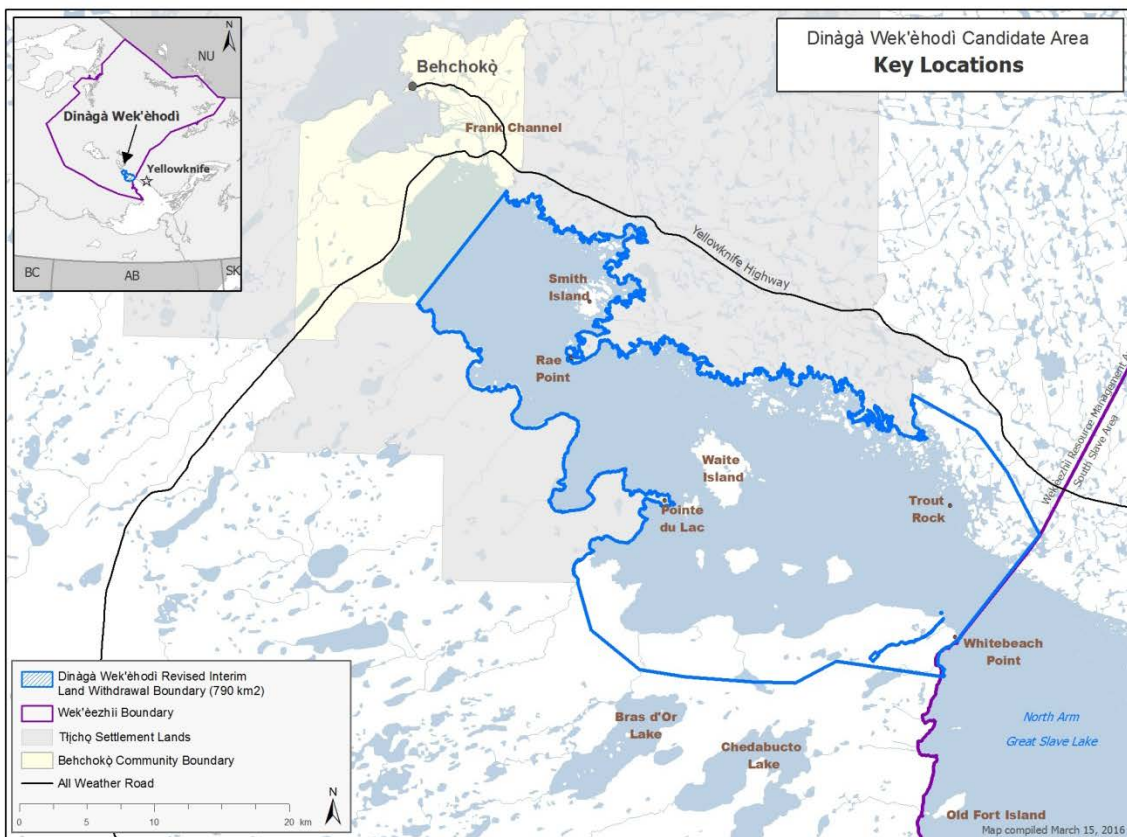
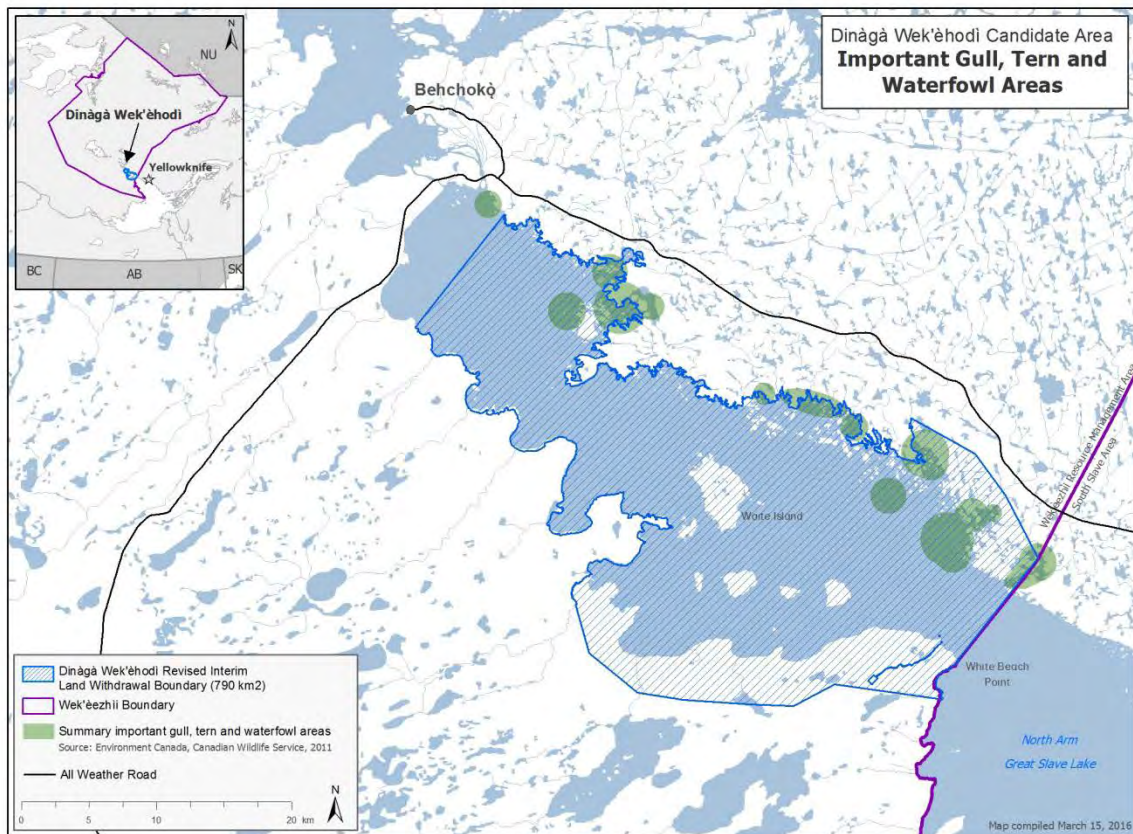


Figure 6: Key locations within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì.

Both traditional knowledge and wildlife population assessment data were used when considering areas important for wildlife conservation within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì. Elders, harvesters and other land users provided information regarding wildlife experiences within the area. Elders and harvesters identified locations of historical or current harvesting importance for fish, wildlife and plants. Working group members were encouraged to share all relevant wildlife and habitat knowledge with the group. Several locations along the north

and south shores, and on and around the islands were identified as being good habitat for Boreal Woodland Caribou, Wood Bison, numerous fur bearing mammals, waterfowl and fish. The DWWG used information presented in the *Ecological Assessment of the Kwets'òot'jàà Candidate National Wildlife Area* (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2011), which focused on wildlife data collected within the area, when discussing various boundary options. This assessment reported numerous waterfowl and other waterbird nesting locations along the northeast shoreline. In a survey done in July 2010, 1,051 gull and tern nests were observed on islands. In addition, aerial waterfowl surveys have highlighted the importance of the northeast shoreline for many ducks, geese, and swans, which use the area for breeding and as a migratory stopover sight (Figure 7).



**Figure 7: A summary of important gull, tern and waterfowl areas in Dinàgà Wek'èhodi; based on information presented in the Ecological Assessment of the Kwets'òot'jàà Candidate National Wildlife Area (Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service).**



Due to the importance to waterfowl and other waterbirds, much of this northeastern shoreline has been designated by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area Site (The North Arm, NT086; Figure 8) (IBA Canada, 2010) and by Canadian Wildlife Service as a Key Migratory Bird Terrestrial Habitat Site (The North Arm, NT Site 20; Figure 9) (Latour et al., 2008). These designations and associated boundaries were used by the DWWG when considering potential boundaries.

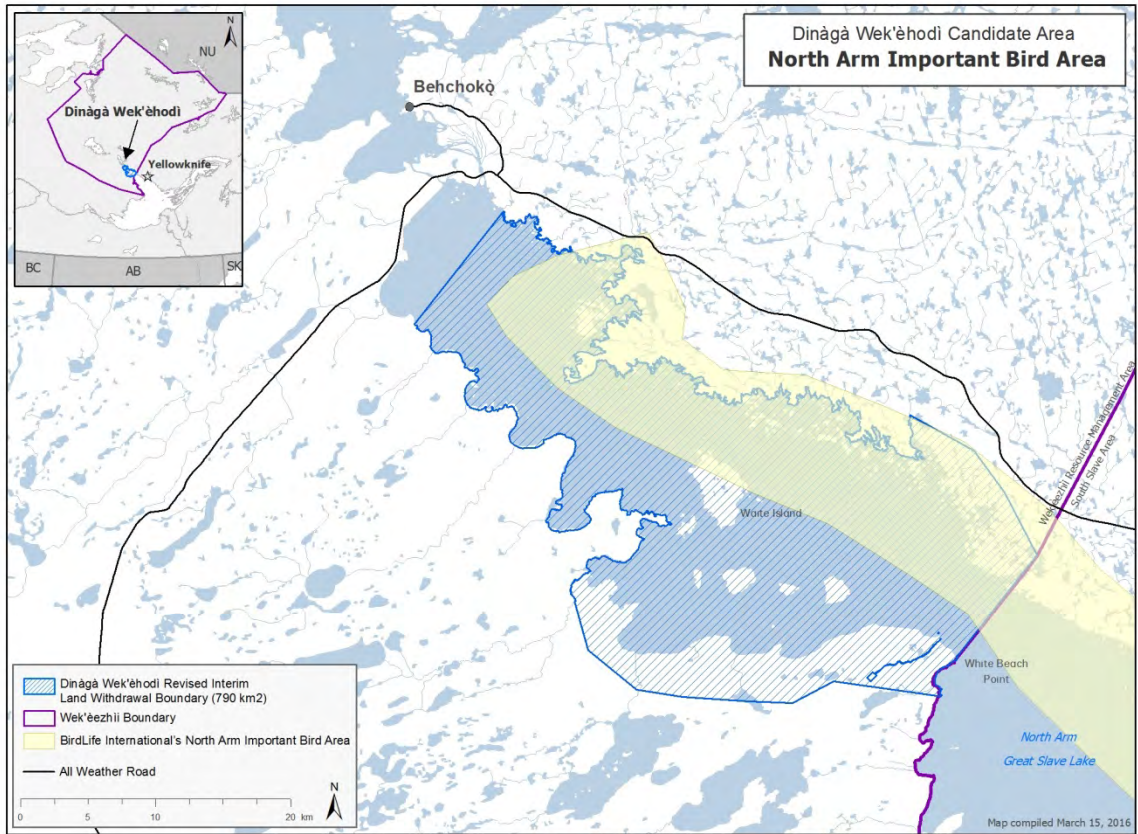


Figure 8: Location of the BirdLife International's North Arm Important Bird Area (NT086; IBA Canada, 2010).



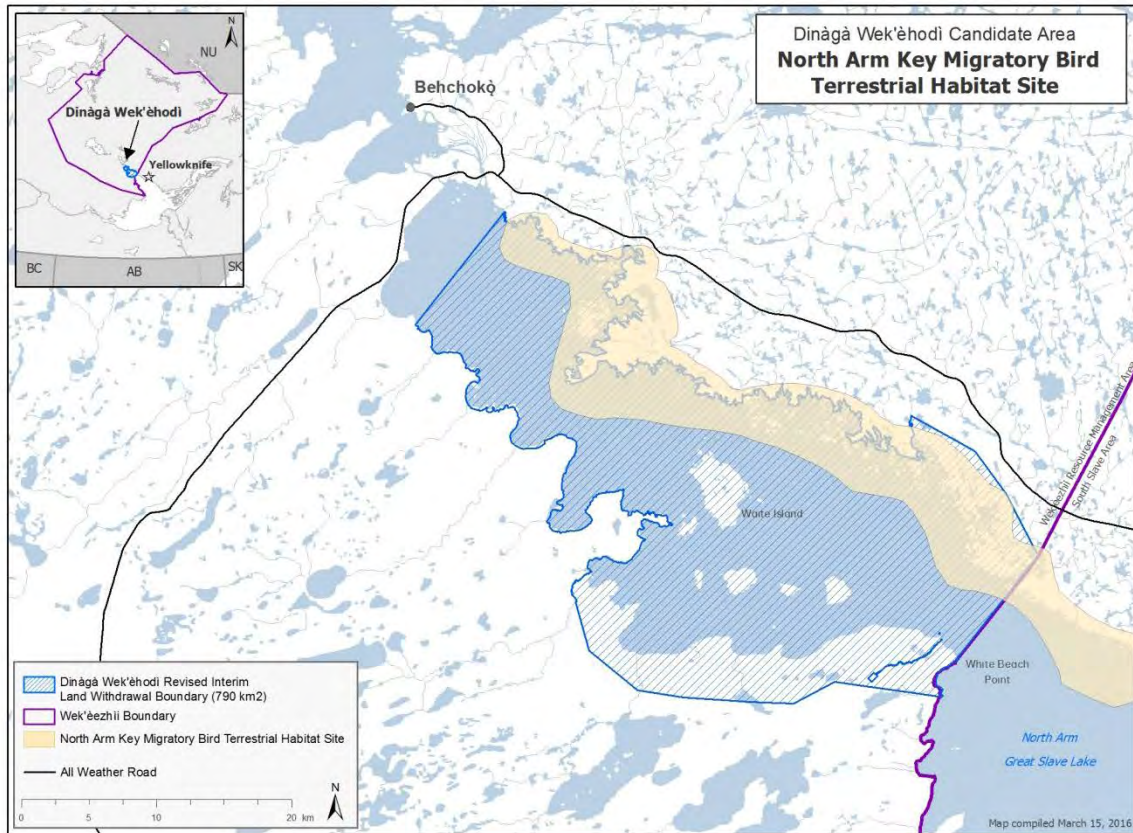


Figure 9: Location of the Canadian Wildlife Service's North Arm Key Migratory Bird Terrestrial.

### 3.2. Economic Considerations

The DWWG used the renewable resource assessment (SENES, 2011) and the non-renewable resource assessment (Watson, 2013) to evaluate potential economic impacts of establishing Dinàgà Wek'èhodi. Members of the DWWG also provided additional information regarding tourism activities, subsistence hunting and fishing, plant gathering, and other economically important renewable land uses within the area.

The renewable resource assessment identified general locations within the area that had economic importance (SENES, 2011). Fishing and wildlife harvest were reported to have medium to high importance in the area, especially around the islands. Waterfowl hunting along the northeastern shore was also noted for its economic importance as both community members and commercial outfitters use this area. Marten, mink, muskrat, and beaver are the most common furbearing species harvested and are found throughout Dinàgà Wek'èhodi. Berry picking and medicinal plant use was also reported to have high importance in the area. In particular, good berry harvest locations were found on the southwest shore and medicinal plants were reported to be throughout the area. Dinàgà

Wek'èhodì also provides tourism opportunities, and four licensed tourism operators currently guide in the area. The outfitters use various parts of the area with overlapping use occurring along the northeastern shoreline. The report acknowledged that overall the area was an important source for renewable resources. Most of the renewable resource activities currently occurring in the area would not be negatively impacted by the establishment of a protected area as many of these activities are Aboriginal Rights established in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, which is and will continue to be respected if a protected area were established.

The *Non-renewable Resource Assessment* (Watson, 2013) was presented to the DWWG in March of 2012, prior to the completion of the final report in 2013. The assessment of the area consisted of a review of previous work and new field research. It reported that the geological potential for non-renewable resources within Dinàgà Wek'èhodì shorelines was similar to the geological potential outside of the area. Silica sand significantly occurs in the Whitebeach Point area (see Figure 10 for location of active mineral claims). Overall, the report concluded that the potential for finding mineral resources within the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area was low (Watson, 2013).

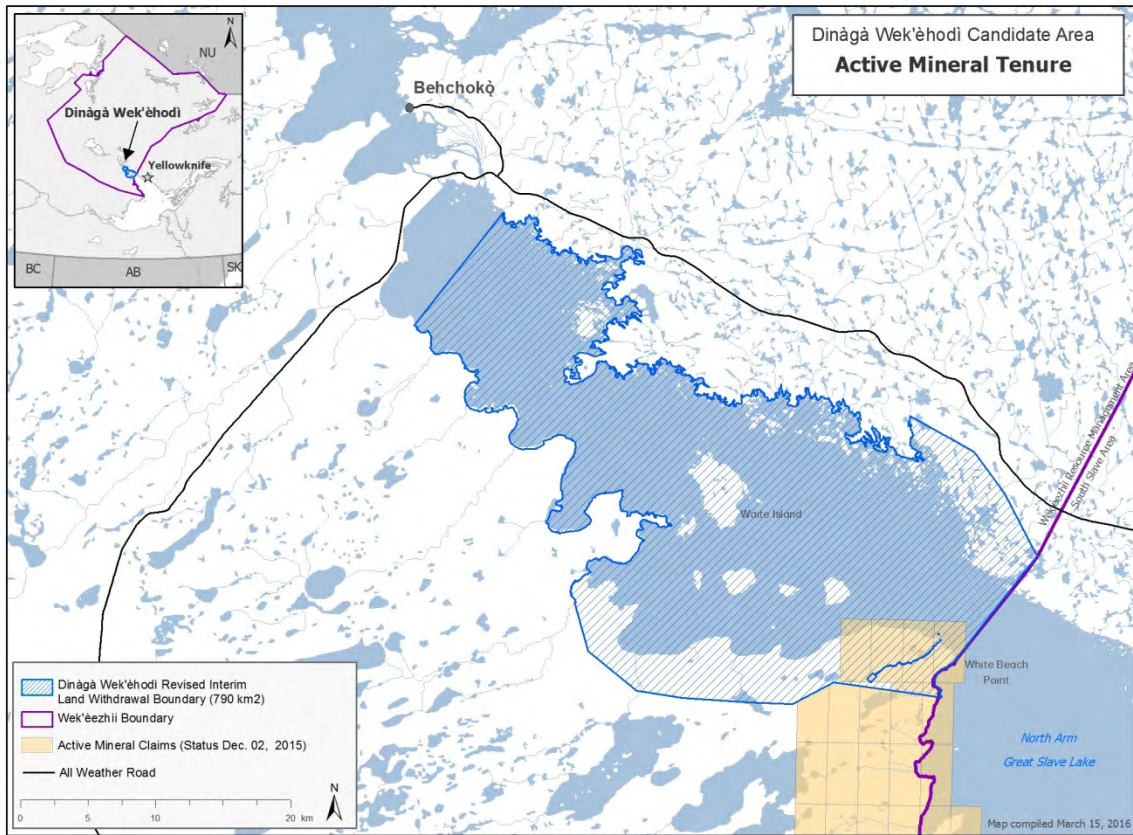
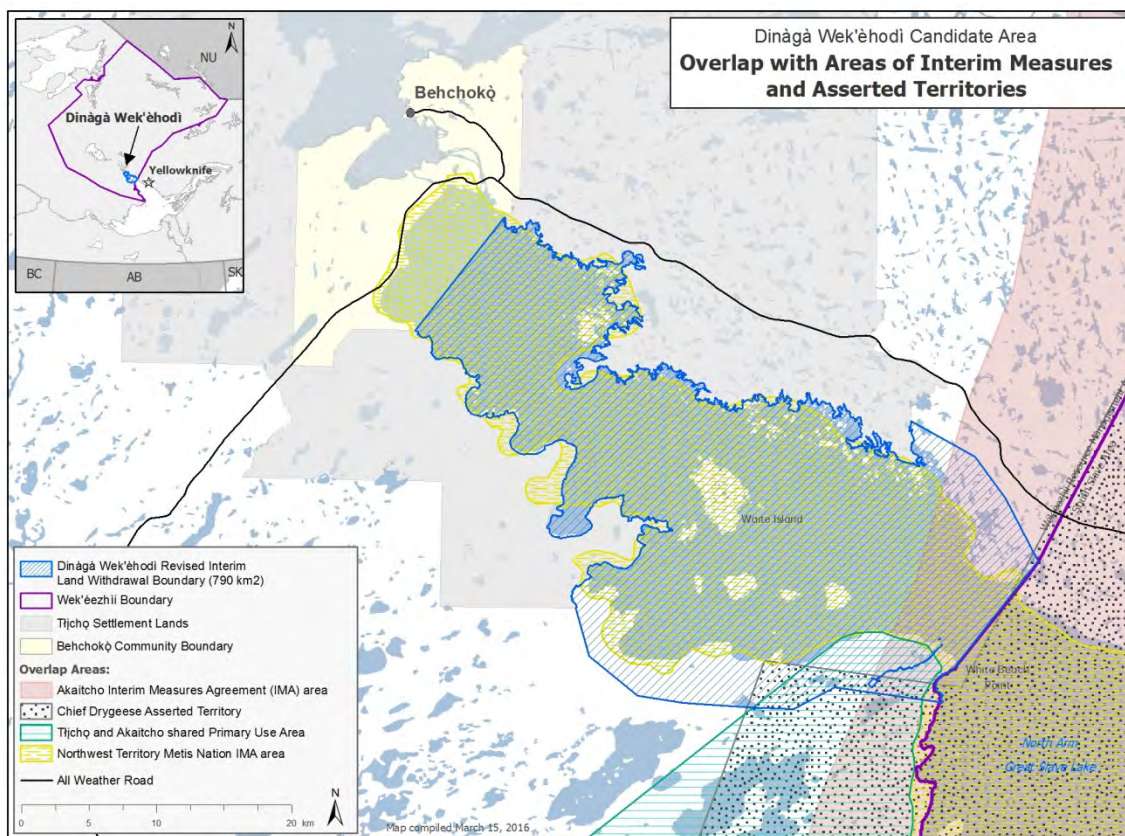


Figure 10: Active mineral claims near Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, as of December 2, 2015.

### 3.3. Other Considerations

Dinàgà Wek'èhodi is important to many local peoples, including the Dene and Métis. Although the candidate area is located entirely within Wek'èezhii, portions of the candidate area also fall within the Akaitcho asserted territory, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation's Chief Drygeese boundary and the Northwest Territory Metis Nation's IMA area and the North Slave Métis Alliance's asserted territory (Figure 11). Further discussion with Aboriginal partners on the Working Group is required to complete this section.





**Figure 11: Dinàgà Wek'èhod candidate area and boundaries of the Akaitcho asserted territory area, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation's Chief Drygeese Asserted Territory and NWT Métis Nation IMA area (NSMA Asserted Territory not shown).**

Dinàgà Wek'èhodi is ecologically important with significant traditional use and cultural value for the Tłìchq people. In an indication of support for Dinàgà Wek'èhodi candidate area, the Tłìchq Government extended protection to roughly 280 km<sup>2</sup> of adjacent Tłìchq private lands in the creation of the Habitat Management Zone, Dèk'easiì?edaà wèh dia, through the Tłìchq Land Use Plan (Tłìchq Government, 2012). This Habitat Management Zone buffers a portion of Dinàgà Wek'èhodi ( Figure 12)), and the goal of this Zone is to protect areas of permanent or seasonal wildlife and bird habitat by restricting land use activities to: 1) camps or cabins, 2) non-exploitive scientific research, 3) transportation corridors, and 4) eco / cultural tourism (Tłìchq Government, 2012). The Zone includes important habitat for a variety of birds, fish, and other animals, overlapping with portions of the North Arm Important Bird Area (IBA Canada, 2010) and North Arm Key Migratory Bird Habitat Area (Latour et al., 2008). In addition to ecological importance, the area has significant traditional use and cultural value for the Tłìchq people making it an important area to protect.

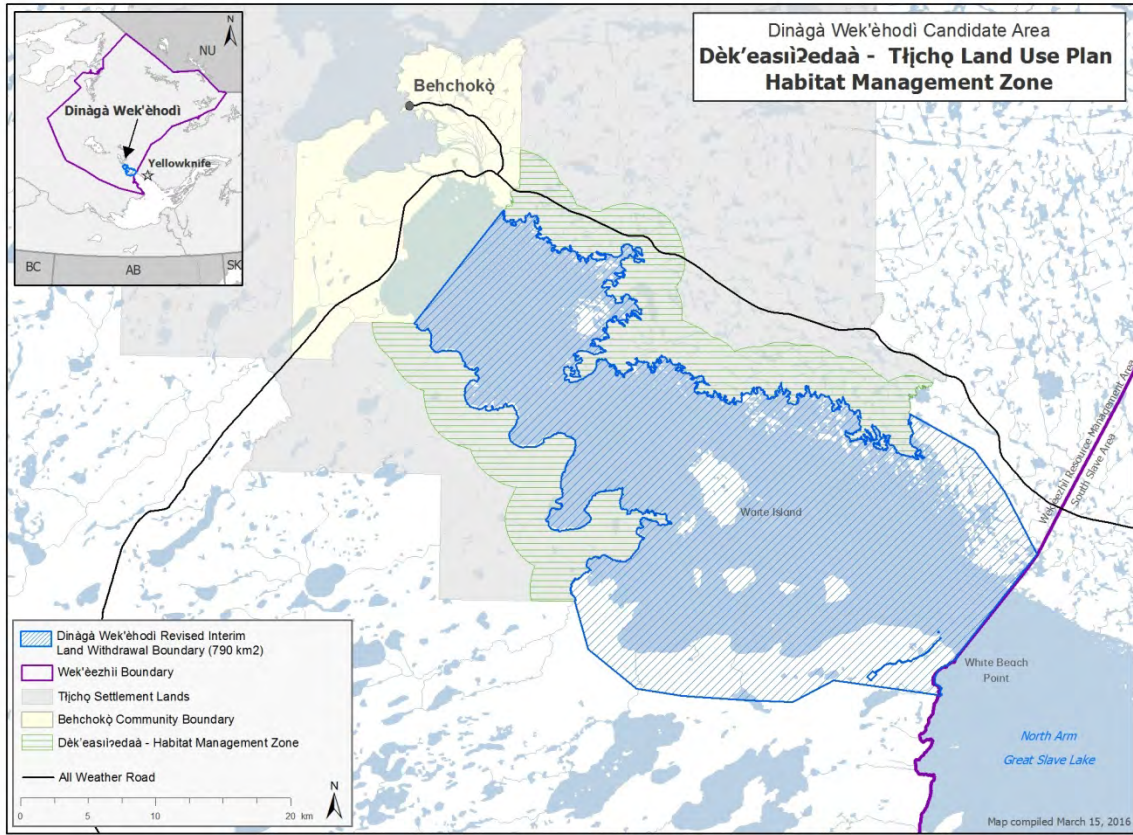


Figure 12: Dinàgà Wek'èhod candidate area boundary bordered by Tìjchq Land Use Plan Habitat Management Zone.

## 4. Recommendations

The DWWG directs the following recommendations (Table 2) to the Tłıchq Government, the establishing authority, and the GNWT, to the extent that the recommendations fall within their respective mandates.

### 4.1. Boundary

The DWWG used the results of the discussions described in Section 2.2 as the basis for making a recommendation for a protected area boundary. The Working Group as a whole has discussed a revised boundary option. As a result, the following section includes a summary of the Working Group discussions and is then followed by specific recommendations from each Working Group organization where those have been put forward.

#### 4.1.1. Summary of Discussion

The Working Group discussions focused on finding a boundary that would ensure culturally and ecologically important areas would be protected while including as little area of economic potential as possible. DWWG discussed an area covering 790 km<sup>2</sup> be considered for establishment as a protected area (Figure 13). This area represents a compromise between cultural and ecological conservation and maintaining economic potential around the original candidate protected area.

As with the original interim land withdrawal boundary, the revised boundary excludes all privately owned land, including Tłıchq and the community of Behchokò lands, which bound the area to north, east and west (Figure 2). The revised boundary for the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area is entirely within the Wek'èezhii boundary.

The two most significant changes to the boundary the working group discussed were to include Waite Island and the central lake area, and to exclude all active mineral claims. Details on the rationale for these modifications are provided in sections 4.1.2, 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 below.



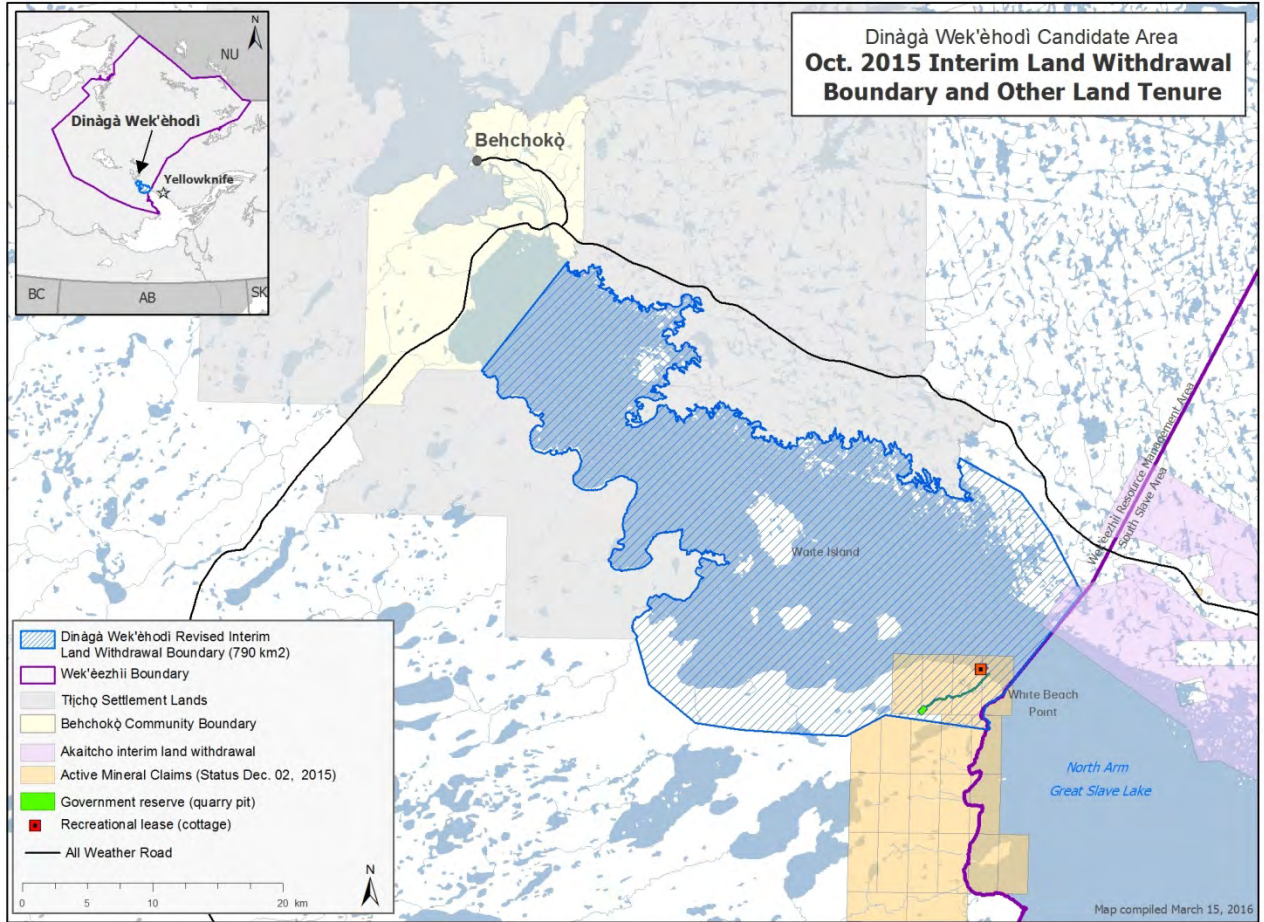


Figure 13: The Dināgā Wek'èhodi Working Group's revised boundary in relation to other land tenures.

#### 4.1.2. Conservation Rationale

The revised boundary area includes water, islands and wetlands of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake, which provides homes to numerous birds, mammals, fish and plants; protecting this was the main goal to be achieved by establishment of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi candidate area as articulated by the Tìchq̄ Government. The area within the revised boundary protects almost all the conservation value in the original candidate area including Boreal Woodland Caribou and Moose habitat described by DWWG members and the area's ecological assessment (Canadian Wildlife Service, 2011), the North Arm Lake Key Migratory Bird Habitat Site (Latour et al., 2008; Figure 9), and an enlarged portion of the Important Bird Area (IBA Canada, 2010; Figure 8) and important traditional use areas.

The revised boundary also includes area that was not part of the original candidate protected area, but was identified as having significant value in one or more of the assessment reports. The expansion of the boundary to include Waite Island, various

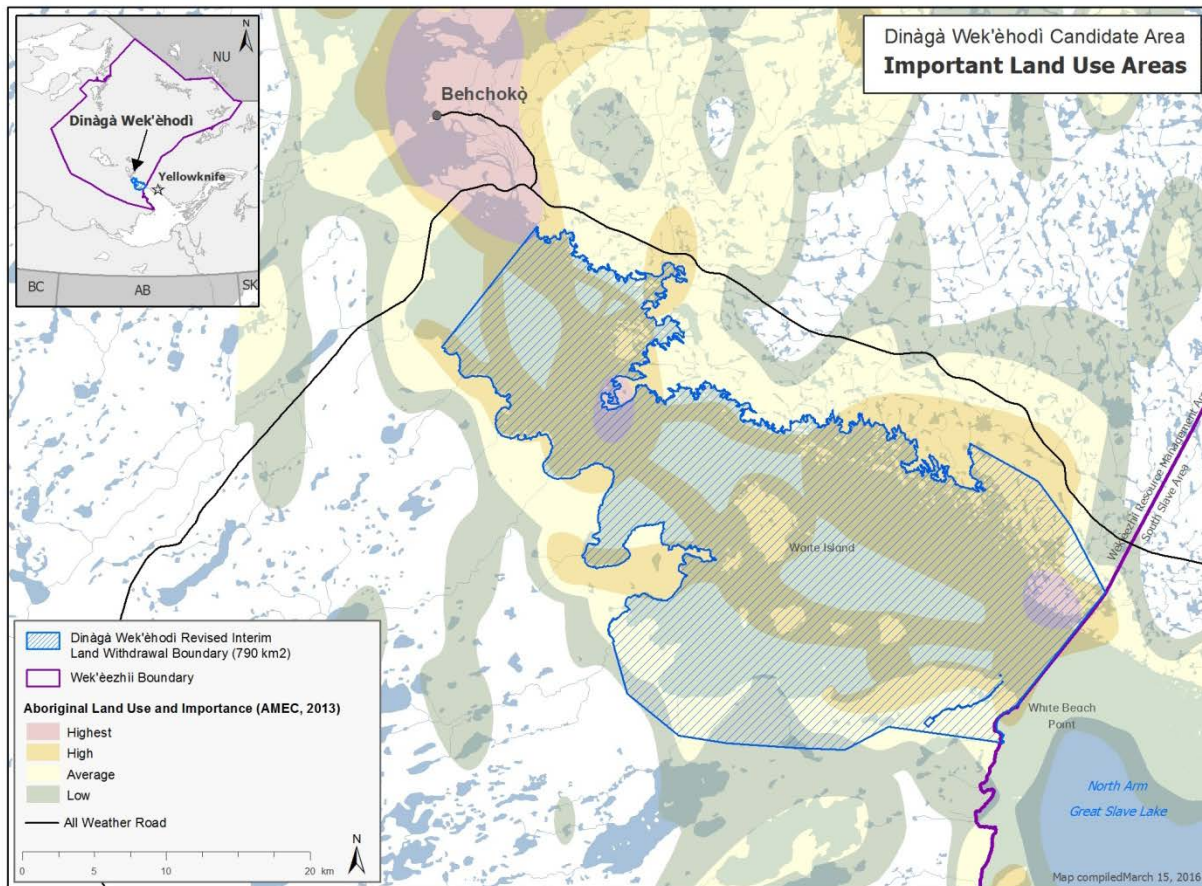


Figure 14 The Dinàgà Wek'èhodi Working Group's recommended boundary in relation to important land use areas (AMEC, 2013).



smaller islands and the surrounding water was suggested by the Tłıchq Elders because of the island's cultural significance to the Tłıchq. In addition, Working Group members agreed that it was preferable to modify the boundary so that all of the water between the northeast and southwest shoreline was included in the protected area, as this would simplify area management and would allow visitors to more easily know if they are within the protected area, enhancing respect of the site.

The area within the revised boundary contains additional area identified as being of high and highest importance for traditional use compared to the original Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area (AMEC, 2013; Figure 14).

#### **4.1.3. Economic Rationale**

The mineral leases on the southwestern side of the original candidate protected area are not included within the revised boundary (Figure 10). All of the silica sand potential (100%) in the original Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area is included within these mineral leases and is therefore excluded from the revised boundary (Figure 4).

#### **4.1.4. Specific Recommendations by Working Group Organization**

The statements below reflect each organization's recommendations in relation to Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate area.

##### **4.1.4.1. Tłıchq Government**

Tłıchq Government is of the position that the boundaries for a future Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Protected Area be extended to include significant areas of traditional use and ecological importance, to the south of the existing interim land withdrawal.

Rationale:

The rationale for this extension is three-fold:

1. Through Tłıchq Government's Traditional Knowledge research, Tłıchq elders have identified two lakes which they note are worthy of protection: Ts'ooti and Lieti. The immediate area surrounding the lakes contains a number of traditional cultural and camp sites, cabins, and a grave site. An additional set of 16 winter and 24 summer trails connect from the North Arm of Great Slave Lake and towards winter road and boat access. To continue the traditional uses in this area and on the land, protection would need to be extended to the south and east of the existing interim land withdrawal.

2. In the Tłıchq Land Use Plan (Tłıchq Wenek'e) a protection zone named Dèk'èasiìpedaà wèhòqdia (Habitat Management Zone) extends along the North Arm of Great Slave Lake for 280km<sup>2</sup>, and should meet with the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area. The only

land uses considered in this zone are: Camp or cabin; Non-exploitive scientific research; Transportation corridor; and Eco/cultural tourism. TG's position is that the protection for Dinàgà Wek'èhodi should align with the southern boundary of the Dèk'èasiì?edaà wèhòqdia (Habitat Management Zone).

3. GNWT has assessed through multi-layer mapping the most efficient way (i.e. using the least area on the ground) to achieve ecological representation in ecoregions intersecting Dinàgà Wek'èhodi. The results were generated using a computer program that tries to find the most efficient way to protect samples of all the ecological features in an ecoregion. The results show that areas to the south and east of the existing interim land withdrawal are areas that are most important for achieving ecological representation and 'Not Flexible' (i.e. areas where the ecological features found there cannot be found elsewhere in the ecoregion) and areas that are very important for achieving ecological representation but are somewhat more flexible.

All three areas named above overlap/intersect as additional areas to be included in Dinàgà Wek'èhodi

#### *4.1.5.3. Yellowknives Dene First Nation*

Rationale:

We, the Yellowknives Dene, are descendants of the Tsetsòt'iné people. Our use of the rich resources of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake (Dinàgà Wek'èhodi) dates back many millennia, to a point in time long before the arrival of the Tłìchq in the area.

We recognize that the pursuit of protection for the North Arm is an initiative of the Tłìchq Government and we commend them for this. The Tłìcho and Métis have each produced reports on their cultural resources in the North Arm and even though the trails, camps and graves of our ancestors are numerous in the area there is no documentation of this.

Regardless, we support protection for all the cultural resources of the North Arm and especially for the rich ecological resources that make this a special place.

For the Yellowknives Dene protection is important but only if that protection does not interfere with our rights to pursue any, and all, traditional activities in that area.

#### *4.1.5.4. NWT Métis Nation*

Rationale:

[The Northwest Territory Métis Nation] offers a letter of support for the Dinàgà Wek'èhodi candidate protected area. The Northwest Territory Métis Nation continues to support these efforts to move forward, due to the fact that it is ecologically and culturally significant to the

people around Great Slave Lake.

If there will be any changes to the candidate site or any level of protection, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation wants to be engaged through its Land and Resource Office.

#### **4.1.5.5. *North Slave Métis Alliance***

Rationale:

##### Proposed Boundary

The North Slave Métis Alliance supports the general description of the proposed boundary. The proposed protected area will include a number of culturally and ecologically significant areas to the Métis people of the Great Slave Lake area. These areas include, for example, Mountain Island, Old Fort Island, and Whitebeach Point. Establishment of the territorial park will protect some of the most important Métis heritage sites in the North Slave region of the NWT.

The NSMA also understands that the consultation with the NSMA, based on the Section 35 of the Constitution Act, is forthcoming in relation to Dinaga Wekehodi.

##### Proposed Expansion

The proposed expansion to include Whitebeach Point in Dinaga Wekehodi is a significant change of scope from the original proposed boundary. In order to adequately weigh and assess various options and implications of such change, the NSMA recommends a new Working Group similar in composition to the DWWG to be established for this purpose.

Furthermore, in view of the recent Land Use Permit application by Husky Oils Ltd. to the Wekeezhi Land and Water Board, the NSMA recommends relevant segments of Non-Renewable Resources Assessment to be revised and updated. This will reflect current and future commercial development potential of the silica sands in and around Whitebeach Point more accurately.

##### Old Fort Rae

The lot in Old Fort Rae ("Lot 12"), which is owned in fee-simple by the NSMA, has been included in the proposed Dinaga Wekehodi boundary and the Interim Land Withdrawal. NSMA would like to table this matter during the forthcoming S35 Consultation with the GNWT. Our preference at this time is to have the privately owned land excluded from the proposed protected area.

##### NSMA's View on Management

The area inside the proposed Dinaga Wekehodi and the expansion is entirely within the NSMA members' asserted traditional territory. To ensure the NSMA members' Aboriginal rights as

Métis will be honored and respected in Dinaga Wekehodi, the NSMA has always maintained that the NSMA be included in the final management body of the proposed Dinaga Wekehodi. The NSMA has been consistently pleased by the positive responses from the other parties respecting this point. For this reason, the NSMA recommends a co-management agreement be signed between the implicated governments, Management Authorities, and the NSMA. The agreement should establish a co-management body, where decisions are made collaboratively in relation to the implementation and review of the park's management plan.

The NSMA understands that the GNWT is in the process of updating the Territorial Parks Act; and this new Act will form the basis for the establishment of Dinaga Wekehodi. The NSMA looks forward to the GNWT's consultation with us respecting this matter. The NSMA hopes that the new Act will meet the requirements of the vision and objectives that are articulated in this report.

#### **4.1.5.10. *Wek'èzhii Renewable Resources Board***

The WRRB has responsibilities for wildlife, plant, forest and protected area management in Wek'èzhii and adheres to the principles and practices of conservation in fulfilling its duties. As such, given the biological, ecological and cultural importance of the area, the WRRB supports the boundary, vision and management goals and objectives for the proposed Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Protected Area (Motion #442-24-09-2015).

Rationale:

For clarity, the boundary, vision and management goals and objectives include:

Boundary:

The boundary covers 790 km<sup>2</sup>, includes Waite Island and all the water in the North Arm and excludes the mineral claims and all privately owned land, including Tìjchq and the community of Behchokq lands, which bound the area to the north, east and west. The boundary for the proposed Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Protected Area is entirely within the Wek'èzhii boundary.

Vision:

Dinàgà Wek'èhodì has powerful, historical, spiritual and cultural significance. It is a home; a place of legends, sharing, teaching and learning. The area is important for migratory birds, and provides habitat for other birds, fish and wildlife, including species at risk. The rich flora and fauna are the foundation of this spectacular natural environment with many harvesting and recreational opportunities. Cooperative management of a protected area will ensure that all people have the opportunity to respect and enjoy this unique area for generations.

Management Goals (in italics) and Objectives:

1) *Maintain wildlife populations and habitat*

- a) Manage the area to maintain wildlife populations and protect their habitat

- b) Implement a long-term monitoring plan to track the status of wildlife populations and their habitat (if applicable)
  - c) Implement recovery actions for Species at Risk in accordance with recovery documents under the federal or territorial Species at Risk Act
- 2) *Protect traditional uses, cultural value, and historical, archaeological and sacred sites.*
- a. Manage the area so that traditional cultural uses can continue
  - b. Ensure that proposed land and water uses do not interfere with cultural value or historical, archaeological and sacred sites
- 3) *Promote public awareness, education and appreciation of the area.*
- a. Ensure that the public is aware of and respects the resources and value of the area
  - b. Ensure that the public is aware of the management goals and policies for the area
  - c. Promote low impact, responsible use and ensure compliance with the Management Plan (if applicable), the enacting regulations and any applicable policies
- 4) *Maintain the natural landscape and the current land and water uses which depend upon it.*
- a. Manage the area to maintain its natural landscape
  - b. Monitor land and water uses within the area to ensure that they are the acceptable uses as identified in this management plan (if applicable)
- 5) *Manage the area in a cooperative and respectful manner using all knowledge.*
- a. Ensure that all interested parties are consulted when developing the area management policies (if applicable)
  - b. Establish an area Management Committee to provide guidance to the Management Authority (if applicable)

#### 4.1.5.11. *Government of the Northwest Territories*

##### Rationale:

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has participated in the working group for the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area by providing technical and expert advice within its mandate. The GNWT recognizes that the working group has reviewed the assessment information presented on land value in the vicinity of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area in a manner consistent with the processes agreed upon by all members of the working group. The GNWT acknowledges the boundary evaluations and management principles that have been proposed by the working group based on the assessments. Based on the content of the working group report, the GNWT supports the submission of the report to the Tłı̄chq̄ Government, as per the next step of the agreed upon process by the members of the working group.

Upon approval of the report by the Tłı̄chq̄ Government, the GNWT will undertake a public consultation regarding the proposed Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area. The feedback provided in the public consultation, as well as the contents of the working group report, will be taken into consideration to inform a final GNWT position. This position will be reviewed and approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the GNWT before being offered.

## 4.2. Management

### 4.2.1. Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Management Committee (establishment of committee dependent on type of legislation used to protect Dinàgà Wek'èhodì)

The Working Group supports having a management committee for any type of protected area, whether it is a requirement of the legislation or not. The composition of a management committee may vary depending on the legislation used to establish the protected area.

### 4.2.2. Management Principles Goals and Objectives

The Working Group discussed how they would like to see a Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area managed. They suggested management should be based on the following principles:

- Rights related to the traditional and current use of the area by First Nations and Métis as recognized under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* are and will continue to be recognized and respected and the Tł̓chq Final Agreement.
- Management should be based upon traditional knowledge and scientific ecological information
- Management should be ecosystem-based and respectful of natural processes that maintain the northern boreal forest and its biodiversity.
- Dinàgà Wek'èhodì should be managed within the context of the broader landscape and in accordance with other conservation plans (e.g., Forest Management Plans, Species at Risk Documents).
- Nationally and locally important wildlife and wildlife habitat will be conserved for the benefit of all Canadians.
- Public awareness and appreciation of the ecological and cultural value of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area should be communicated and fostered.

Recognizing that an area management plan would be finalized after an area is established. The management approaches will vary depending on the final designation and will reflect the final outcome of the site. The Working Group discussed and identified goals and objectives for a Dinàgà Wek'èhodì protected area. These include:

1. Maintain wildlife populations and habitat;
  - 1.1. Manage the area to maintain wildlife populations and protect their habitat

- 1.2. Implement a long-term monitoring plan to track the status of wildlife populations and their habitat (if applicable)
- 1.3. Implement recovery actions for Species at Risk in accordance with recovery documents under the federal or territorial Species At Risk Act
2. Protect traditional uses, cultural value, and historical, archaeological and sacred sites;
  - 2.1. Manage the area so that traditional cultural uses can continue
  - 2.2. Ensure that proposed land and water uses do not interfere with cultural value or historical, archaeological and sacred sites
3. Promote public awareness, education, and appreciation of the area;
  - 3.1. Ensure that the public is aware of and respects the resources and value of the area
  - 3.2. Ensure that the public is aware of the management goals and policies for the area
  - 3.3. Promote low impact, responsible use and ensure compliance with the Management Plan (if applicable), the enacting regulations and any applicable policies
4. Maintain the natural landscape and the current land and water uses which depend upon it;
  - 4.1. Manage the area to maintain its natural landscape
  - 4.2. Monitor land and water uses within the Area to ensure that they are the acceptable uses as identified in this management plan (if applicable).
5. Manage the area in a cooperative and respectful manner using all knowledge.
  - 5.1. Ensure that all interested parties are consulted when developing the area management policies (if applicable)
  - 5.2. Establish an area Management Committee to provide guidance to the Management Authority (if applicable).

In 2013, the DWWG had multiple preliminary discussions regarding potential future management issues and allowable activities. The outcome of this brainstorm is presented in the following points and aims to capture a snap shot of ideas of the working group discussed around potential future management issues. It is noted this discussion does not capture all future management activities (i.e. potential trail creation, boat launches, etc).

Potential activities to allow:

- Snow machines
- Motor boats
- Non-Aboriginal hunting
- Outfitted hunting
- Berry picking
- Ecotourism
- Swimming
- Camping
- Canoeing/kayaking



Potential to not allow:

- Commercial forestry
- Seismic activity
- Oil and gas activity
- Commercial fishing

Potential to still be determined:

- New cabins
- ATVs
- Commercial plant/berry harvest
- Cutting trees
- Campfires

## 5. Summary

This Working Group Report has been developed with the input of the DWWG organizations.

The DWWG and the representatives have discussed all the options with their leadership before making statements on behalf of their organization.

The Tłı̄chǫ Government could use the Working Group Report to request the establishment of the protected area. The GNWT would work with the Tłı̄chǫ Government to set up any necessary protected area agreements and work through the establishment process, including the establishment of a management committee or body if needed.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Steps in the NWT Protected Areas Strategy

1. Identify the main areas to be protected.
2. Prepare a proposal for a protected area. Get support from community and regional organizations.
3. Regional and government review of the proposal. Send proposal to a sponsoring agency.
4. Apply for short term (5 year) protection of the candidate area, if needed.
5. Study and assess the ecological, cultural and economic value of the candidate area. Write a final recommendations report for the area.
6. Apply to sponsoring agency to set up an official protected area.
7. The sponsoring agency approves and sets up the protected area.
8. In partnership, implement, monitor, and review the protected area.

## Appendix 2. Terms of Reference for the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group

### TERMS OF REFERENCE Dinàgà Wek'èhodì NWT PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY WORKING GROUP August 2015

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#### 1. Background

Working Groups have been established for specific Candidate Protected Areas, such as Dinàgà Wek'èhodì.

The purpose in having a Terms of Reference for Working Groups is to provide consistent guidance on Working Group roles and responsibilities for evaluating candidate protected areas, and to clearly define relationships between the Working Group and the Conservation Planning Unit of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories (formerly known as the PAS Secretariat), and the Sponsoring Agency. The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Candidate Protected Area Working Group terms of reference will be reviewed once a year or as required.

#### 2. Mandate of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì PAS Working Group

The mandate of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group is:

1. To bring community, regional, land claim, territorial and national representatives, and other individuals or organizations with an interest in each candidate protected area together within a collaborative Working Group;
2. To guide and direct detailed evaluation studies of the Candidate Protected Area as required under the PAS planning process, working within established guidelines;
3. To guide public participation and consultation programs;
4. To prepare a report for submission to the Tłı̨chǫ Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Environment Canada with considerations for the future boundary for the candidate protected area, as well as develop a vision and management objectives.



### **3. Composition of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì PAS Working Group**

The composition of this Working Group is intended to reflect the ecological, economic, and cultural context of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Candidate Protected Area, as well as the Partner organizations in the PAS process. The size of this Working Group will be kept as small as is reasonably possible. The composition of the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Candidate Protected Area Working Group as of September 2015 is:

1. One representative from each of the following organizations:
  - Tłı̄chq̄ Lands Protection Department
  - Wek'èezhìı̄ Renewable Resources Board
  - Yellowknives Dene First Nation
  - NWT Métis Nation
  - Northwest Slave Métis Alliance
  - Community of Behchok̄ò
  - Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)
  - Government of the Northwest Territories
  - True North Safaris
  - NARWAL Northern Adventures
  - Enodah Wilderness Travel
  - Rabesca's Resources

Elder representatives from:

- Behchok̄ò / Tłı̄chq̄ (at least two)
- North Slave Métis Alliance (one)

Each organization should provide an alternate when the primary representative is unavailable.

Organizations to be informed of working group activities (these organizations will not actively take part in the working group, but will be kept on communication and distribution lists for the working group):

- Ducks Unlimited Canada Inc., Yellowknife Office
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Yellowknife Regional Office
- City of Yellowknife
- Husky Oil

#### **4. Selection of Working Group Members and Alternates**

Selection of Working Group members and alternates will be made directly by the organization to be represented. The notification of selection should be made in writing addressed to the Sponsoring Agency and the PAS Secretariat and should include both a primary representative for the organization as well as an alternate who will attend on behalf of the representative when they are not available.

Organizations selecting Working Group representatives are encouraged to maintain consistent representation on the Working Group, but may replace their member and/or alternate at any time by notifying the Sponsoring Agency and the PAS Secretariat in writing.

As required, resource people, traditional land users and/or elders, may be invited to participate in the meetings to provide information or expertise on a topic.

#### **5. Responsibilities of Working Group Members**

1. Familiarize themselves with the *Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy*, including the goals and principles and the eight implementation steps; the associated resource assessment guidelines; and the *Establishment Action Plan 2010-2015*;
2. Review the specific Proposal (and all work to date) for the Candidate Protected Area;
3. Actively represent the interests and viewpoints of their respective organizations;
4. Prepare for Working Group meetings and conference calls; this includes:
  - i. Reviewing the agenda and any materials provided ahead of the meeting;
  - ii. Reviewing minutes from the previous meeting and ensuring that any Action Items they are responsible for are completed; and
  - iii. Reviewing the meeting agenda with their leadership or supervisor to identify any concerns or issues that should be addressed at the meeting.

5. Attend all Working Group meetings and conference calls. If the member will be unavailable, ensure that the alternate will participate on their behalf and that this alternate is properly briefed ahead of the meeting;
6. Report to their organization's leadership following every Working Group meeting or conference call.

## **6. Responsibilities of the Working Group**

1. To develop a Candidate Area work plan for the evaluation studies required under Step 5 of the PAS;
2. Identify and request financial resources for the evaluation work in the annual Work Plan or timeline;
3. Develop a communications and consultation plan for review of assessments and on-going updates to Working Group member organizations, as well as distributing information amongst partners;
4. Develop a vision statement (which includes cultural, ecological, recreational and economic value) to communicate why Dinàgà Wek'èhodi is being considered for permanent protection as a National Wildlife Area and develop a draft management plan;
5. Support the Sponsoring Agency in coordinating the public review and contribute to its planning and implementation;
6. Submit a working group report on the boundaries and establishment of the protected area to the Tłıchq Government and the Government of the NWT;
7. Develop a Working Group termination plan and a plan for transitioning to a co-management committee/ advisory committee.

## **7. Responsibilities of the Working Group Chair and Spokesperson**

The Working Group will select one member for the role of Working Group Chair for a one year term. Alternatively, the Working Group can select a Chair at the beginning of each meeting. This person would fulfill the role of Working Group Chair until the next scheduled meeting.

### **The Working Group Chair:**

1. Chairs Working Group meetings with support from the PAS Secretariat;
2. Ensures that all Working Group members are given the opportunity to participate in discussions;
3. Works with the PAS Secretariat to develop agendas for the meetings;
4. Signs Working Group correspondence.
5. May represent the Working Group at related meetings, conferences or other public events.

## **8. Functioning of Working Groups**

Working Groups should function according to the following guidelines:

1. Working Groups will make every effort to conduct meetings within approved budgets. Activities requiring additional budgetary resources will only be undertaken if new funding sources are identified, and approved, in advance;
2. Working Group meetings will be held as required to review study results, related activities, work plans, and to plan future consultation activities. Meetings may be 'face-to-face' or by conference call.
3. Meeting locations will be selected by Working Group members from amongst the Working Group Communities. The first two meetings will be held in the community of Behchokò. After this point, meeting location will alternate between Yellowknife and Behchokò. Access and cost logistics will also be considered in meeting location decisions;

4. All meetings are open to the public. Meeting invitations are normally issued to Working Group members/alternates and special guests as required. Working Groups may invite the public to meetings or open houses as required;
5. Working Groups shall function and make decisions by consensus, where consensus means that there are no reasonable objections and all working group members have had adequate time and information to explain their objections and concerns;
6. A quorum for Working Group meetings is defined by the Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group to be 50% plus one Working Group members, and must include at least three Tłìchq̓ representatives \*, one representative from NSMA, one representative from Behchokò and one from the Canadian Wildlife Service;

If quorum is attained, decisions made at the meeting will be final. If, despite these provisions, quorum is not met at a Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group meeting, those in attendance will make conditional decisions. The PAS Secretariat will inform the absent members of the conditional decisions *immediately* after the meeting, and members/alternates not in attendance will have ten working days to respond to these decisions. If no input is received, the decisions will be considered final.

*\* Tłìchq̓ representatives are: Tłìchq̓ Government, Tłìchq̓ Lands Protection Department, Wek'èezhìì Renewable Resource Board, and Tłìchq̓ Elders.*

7. A Facilitator may be retained for a Working Group, if requested by the Working Group;
8. Alternates attend meetings when the regular member is unable to do so. Alternates may attend as observers along with regular members if additional PAS financial resources are not required;
9. Participation of Resource Persons in the Working Group will be by invitation;



10. Minutes of meetings will be recorded, approved and maintained by the Working Group; and
11. Wage replacement costs and meeting expenses for Working Group members shall be paid in accordance with PAS guidelines.
12. Summer meetings will not take place (June to end of September, but August is ok).

#### **9. Role of the Conservation Planning Unit, Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories (PAS Secretariat)**

The PAS Secretariat will support each Working Group by:

1. Arranging briefings for Working Group members on evaluation studies;
2. Provide support and assist in coordinating Working Group meetings, public communication, consultation and review;
3. Assisting in the preparation of work plans and budgets;
4. Monitor Working Group functioning to ensure that it operates within PAS guidelines;
5. Report on the activities of the Working Group to the Steering Committee; and
6. Compiling information and materials for the Working Group.

#### **10. Role of the Sponsoring Agency**

The Sponsoring Agency will:

1. Provide support for development and approval of protected areas proposals

2. Where necessary, request that GNWT withdraw the land for the candidate protected area (following established PAS Guidelines for Interim Land Withdrawal);
3. Select a representative to the Working Group who will participate in and provide feedback for the economic, cultural and ecological research;
4. Work to identify funds, or raise funding for, the approved work plan for the candidate protected area (this does not preclude funding contributions from other organizations);
5. Assist the Working Group in meeting community information and consultation needs;
6. With the assistance of the Working Group member organizations, coordinate and conduct a public review of the candidate area; including discussions of levels of development permitted and related funding;
7. Provide guidance to Working Groups on information needs and legislative requirements for interim and final land withdrawal;
8. Ensure their legislation is available for permanent protection of the Candidate Protected Area.
9. Initiate negotiations of protected areas agreements with land claim organizations (Tłıchq Government as per Chapter 16 of the Tłıchq Final Agreement);
10. In partnership, review and accept the Tłıchq Government's final proposal for a Territorial Protected Area;
11. In partnership, set up the protected area and manage it over the long term according to the management committee's recommendations.

#### **11. Review of Terms of Reference:**

The Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required.

## Appendix 3: Dinàgà Wek'èhodì candidate protected area chronology.

### Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Working Group and Area chronology. (Formally Kwets'ootl'àà Working Group and Area)

Date		Milestone
August	1996	• AANDC Minister announces the development of a NWT Protected Area Strategy (PAS) by the federal, territorial, Aboriginal governments, ENGO, and others at same time as approval of the first diamond mine in NWT.
April	1999	• NWT Cabinet approves PAS forwards to AANDC Minister for approval by Canada.
September	1999	• NWT PAS approved by AANDC and the GNWT
July	2008	• The Tłìchô Government approached the PAS to express their interest in pursuing protection of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake.
October 7-9	2008	• The Tłìchô Government hosted a Traditional Knowledge Mapping Workshop in Behchokò, NWT focused on identifying important areas in the Tłìchô area, including within the North Arm of Great Slave Lake. The document 'Protecting Our Environment the Tłìchô Way: Tłìchô Traditional Knowledge' was produced from this workshop.
March	2009	• Phase 1 Ecological Assessment for the North Arm of Great Slave Lake Area of Interest completed by AECOM Canada Ltd.
March	2009	• Phase 1 Cultural Assessment for the North Arm of Great Slave Lake Area of Interest completed by PAC Team Canada.
February	2010	• Follow-up mapping meeting with Tłìchô elders and PAS Secretariat to confirm boundaries of the area held in Behchokò NWT
April 7	2010	• Tłìchô Government sends a letter to CWS requesting sponsorship of Kwets'ootl'àà through the PAS process
June 2	2010	• CWS agrees to sponsor the site through the PAS
August	2010	• Letters outlining the protected area initiative were sent to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and to the Canadian Coast Guard by Canadian Wildlife Service. Letter inviting involvement in the Kwets'ootl'àà Working Group were sent to communities and other stakeholders
November 9	2010	• Community information session held in Behchokò to update the community on the PAS and Kwets'ootl'àà
December 1-2	2010	• First Kwets'ootl'àà working group meeting held in Behchokò. The PAS, working group responsibilities, NWAs, the assessments needed, timelines, interim land withdrawals and the working group Terms of Reference were discussed.
December 16	2010	• Conference call held with Working Group and they decide to apply for an interim land withdrawal for the Kwets'ootl'àà candidate NWA boundary
February 16	2011	• Working group meeting held in Behchokò. The working group Terms of Reference, renewable resources assessment were discussed
March 14	2011	• Conference call held with Working Group to provide updates, review working group Terms of Reference and work plan.
March	2011	• Phase 1 Renewable Resource Assessment for the Kwets'ootl'àà (North Arm of Great Slave Lake) Candidate Protected Area completed by SENES Consultants Ltd.
May 30, June 6	2011	• Notice of application for Interim Land Withdrawal is printed in News North.
June 1 & 3	2011	• Notice of application for Interim Land Withdrawal is printed in the Yellowknifer.

Date		Milestone
June 2 & 9	2011	• Notice of application for Interim Land Withdrawal is printed in Dehcho Drum.
September 7	2011	• Request for extension of Kwets'ootl'aa Interim Land Withdrawal submitted by CWS to AANDC.
September 12-13	2011	• Working group meeting held in Yellowknife. Goals of PAS, NWA, and NWA regulations are reviewed, cultural & ecological assessments were presented, vision statement drafted. Work plan was reviewed.
November	2011	• Phase 1 Renewable Resource Assessment for the Kwets'ootl'aa (North Arm of Great Slave Lake) Candidate Protected Area amended.
December	2011	• Phase II Ecological Assessment of the Kwets'ootl'aa Candidate Protected Area completed.
December 2	2011	• Working group meeting held in Behchokø. PAS, NWA, NWA regulations, and Kwets'ootl'aa timeline are reviewed, updates on the Renewable resources and socio-economic assessments were given. Recommendation Reports, Management Planning, NWA regulations and permitting were reviewed.
January 13	2012	• Elders meeting held in Behchokø. Review of last meeting and process discussions were held.
March 13	2012	• Working group meeting held in Yellowknife. Vision statement reviewed. Reviewed next steps for working group. Socio-economic assessment presented. Management plan development discussed.
March 29-30	2012	• Working group meeting held in Behchokø. Review of land and resource management, Presentations on Nistulin River Delta National Wildlife Area from Teslin Renewable Resource Council member, Non-renewable resource assessment, management plan. Vision statement reviewed. Management Plan Goals and objectives for area were discussed.
May 1	2012	• Elders meeting held in Behchokø. Review of last meeting and discussion regarding area name were held.
May 2-3	2012	• Working group meeting held in Yellowknife. Initial boundary revisions were considered, management planning continued, and recommendations report was discussed.
September 10	2012	• Elders meeting held in Behchokø, to review the last meeting and discussion agenda items to be covered in upcoming meeting.
September 11-12	2012	• Working group meeting held in Behchokø. Discussions regarding boundary revisions and management planning continued.
September 13	2012	• Working group communications sub-committee meet in Yellowknife to discuss
November 21	2012	• Elders meeting held in Behchokø, to review the last meeting and discussion agenda items to be covered in upcoming meeting.
November 29-30	2012	• Working group meeting held in Yellowknife. Discussions regarding management planning, and recommendation report were held, sub-surface withdrawal information was presented.
February 8	2013	• Naming workshop held to consider a new name for the candidate site
March 11-12	2013	• Working group meeting held in Behchokø. New name, Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, was presented to the Working Group. Presentation made on the Socio-economic Assessment. • The GNWT presented to the working group regarding the current implication of devolution and other mechanisms of protection.
October 7	2013	• Working group meeting held in Behchokø.
January 29	2014	• Working group meeting held in Behchokø. WG agreed to ask for an ILW extension, and to include Waite island and all the waters of the North Arm in

Date		Milestone
		the extension.
October 22 and 24	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elders and Working group meeting held in Behchokò. Discussed GNWT “Northern Tools” for conservation and the possibility of protecting the North Arm using both territorial and federal legislation. Husky Oil presents their plans for Whitebeach Point.</li> </ul>
December	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GNWT sent letter to Grand Chief of the Tłı̨ch̨ Government, requesting a meeting to discuss long-term protection options for Dinàgà Wek’èhodì.</li> </ul>
March 31	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada Wildlife Service submits application for an expansion and 5 year renewal of the surface and sub-surface interim land withdrawal of the area to the GNWT Department of Lands on behalf of the working group.</li> </ul>
May 22	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GNWT Minister of Environment and Natural Resources met with Tłı̨ch̨ Grand Chief Erasmus and members of the Chief and Executive Council to discuss a process for concluding the Dinàgà Wek’èhodì planning process and applying GNWT legislation to meet conservation objectives articulated by the Dinàgà Wek’èhodì working group.</li> </ul>
July 3	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Dinàgà Wek’èhodì working group teleconference was held to offer members an update on the Tłı̨ch̨ Government’s discussions with the GNWT and schedule an in-person meeting to finalize the working group report. The working group was officially informed of the Tłı̨ch̨ Government decision to pursue protection of the candidate area through territorial legislation, and that CWS was no longer the sponsoring agency.</li> </ul>
September 9 and 10	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Dinàgà Wek’èhodì Elders and working group meeting was held over two days to discuss finalizing the working group report.</li> </ul>
October 7	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A one year interim land withdrawal was established for the revised boundary of Dinàgà Wek’èhodì. The interim protection applies to the area of the original Dinàgà Wek’èhodì, plus the water and islands of the North Arm of Great Slave Lake. This interim protection will expire on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016.</li> </ul>



## **Appendix 4: Additional Cultural Documentation – Yellowknives Dene First Nation.**

To read the full document, please contact the Yellowknife Dene First Nation's office.

Report:

Èdaalà Preliminary Traditional Knowledge Report (for Husky Energy's Chedabucto Silica Project), Yellowknives Dene First Nation.