



October 9, 2020

Heather Bourassa, Chair
Sahtu Land Use Planning Board
P.O. Box 235
Fort Good Hope, NT X0E 0H0
Email: chair@sahtulanduseplan.org

Dear Heather,

RE: Amending the SLUP's Zone 65 PCI (Proposed Conservation Initiative) Following the Creation of Ts'udé Nı́lné Tuyeta' Protected Area

On behalf of Ducks Unlimited Canada, we would like to formally congratulate the Sahtu Land Use Planning Board on the establishment of the Ts'udé Nı́lné Tuyeta' Protected Area. Ducks Unlimited Canada has worked hard with the community of Fort Good Hope over the last 20 years to achieve a protected area for the K'asho Got'ı́ne Dene and Metis people.

As you know, the Ts'udé Nı́lné Tuyeta' Protected Area is a major wetland habitat sanctuary for waterfowl birds, animals and fish. The Ramparts River wetlands are considered by Ducks Unlimited Canada as a 'key migratory bird terrestrial habitat site'. These wetlands annually support over 1% of the national populations of Scaup and Scoter spp. and the Pacific Loon. This wetland, along with the other large wetlands at Slave/Taltson Delta, Mills Lake, Brackett Lake and Mackenzie Delta constitute the most significant wetlands in the Mackenzie Valley migration corridor.

A total of 675 plant species representing 68 families of vascular plants are known to or very likely occur in the Ts'udé Nı́lné Tuyeta' Protected Area. Ten plant families account for over 63% of the total species. There are potentially 37 species of rare plants in the area as well. (Cody, 1979; McJannet et al., 1995).

An ecological assessment by the Canadian Wildlife Service documented one species of amphibian, 67 species of birds and 13 species of mammals. For birds, a wide range of waterfowl, water birds, raptors (including 2 'species at risk') and forest birds (primarily song birds) were observed. The data indicated that there are at least 4 distinct forest bird communities based on vegetation characteristics.

Recent enhanced wetland mapping inventory of the Ramparts region (please see attached document) was undertaken by Ducks Unlimited Canada, contractually, in support of the Government of Northwest Territories environmental monitoring, assessment, and protection of the area. The project involved the classification of 847,581 hectares (~2.1 million acres) using a multi-date, multi-sensor approach.

Address

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Wetlands are recognized as one of the world's most valuable natural resource. With the increasing human demands on wetland habitat for resource extraction and development in or near the protected area, decreases in wetland habitat are beginning to appear. In addition, climate change has begun impacts on wetland ecosystems in the north through alterations in hydrological regimes. To better manage and conserve wetland resources, inventory wetland maps provide crucial information for wetland conservation, restoration, and management.

With this new wetland mapping data information of the Ts'udé Nı́lıné Tuyeta' Protected Area, we *FULLY Complement, Support and Endorse* the Sahtú Land Use Planning Board (SLUPB) need to amend and rezone (expand) the Sahtú Land Use Plan (SLUP) Zone 65 Proposed Conservation Initiative to a 'conservation zone'. We believe the recent wetland data information specifies high waterfowl habitat nesting areas, high vegetation volume and the need to protect migration habitat and endorse climate change mitigation measures. The rezoned sites designated to 'a conservation zone' will reinstate the original protected area site that was championed by the K'asho Got'ıne Dene and Metis people. It is of great ecological and cultural importance of the Sahtu people and the community of Fort Good Hope and to Ducks Unlimited Canada as well.

Throughout the SLUPB process, it is evident that the Sahtu people cherish their land and water resources and are willing to work together with agencies such as Ducks Unlimited Canada to make the best possible decisions for the Ts'udé Nı́lıné Tuyeta' Protected Area. We want to say 'MAHSI CHO' for your ongoing dialogue with us and the effective implementation of the protected area. Your continued hard work can only improve on what we believe is a solid foundation on which to move forward.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Kevin Smith, National Manager, Boreal Programs, DUC

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