



# Community Update

- Updates on negotiations
- Information about our Agreement
- Upcoming events

March 2021

## Welcome to our Community Update!

*The Athabasca Denesuline negotiation team is pushing hard to finalize our North of 60 Agreement and get it ready to be voted on by our members. We will be providing regular community updates like this one and doing other communications activities in the weeks and months ahead to help you stay informed as we get closer to a vote.*

### Full negotiation team meeting



*On March 23-24, the full negotiation team met in Prince Albert. Due to COVID travel restrictions, some of the technical advisors participated by Zoom.*

The team received updates on many important issues and had some good discussion. We also talked about our plans for increased communications with community members in the months ahead.

The full negotiation team includes people from every community who help guide the negotiations and communicate with their communities. The team members from Hatchet Lake are: Chief Bart Tsannie, Flora Natomagan, Paul Denechezhe, Edward Benoanie, Louie Josie and Jean B Benoanie. The members from Black Lake are: Chief Archie Robillard, Travis Boneleye, Ambrose Boneleye, Greg Disain, Martin Broussie, Louie Disain.

The North of 60 Chief Negotiator is Ron Robillard. He was supported by technical advisors: David Knoll (legal counsel), Barry Hunter (advisor), Tina Giroux (advisor), Freda Randhile (Office Manager) and Roxane Poulin (Communications).

The members from Fond Du Lac will be confirmed following the upcoming election and new leadership and members will get a full briefing on the North of 60 negotiations.

*Have questions? Want to know more?*

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Email: [northof60@adnlc.ca](mailto:northof60@adnlc.ca)

Phone: (306) 953-7287

## Court supervised mediation with Canada

### *Canada has almost finished consultation with Indigenous groups in the NWT*

When Canada negotiates a land claim agreement, it has a legal duty to consult other Indigenous groups who assert treaty or Indigenous rights that might be affected. Canada has been doing consultation on our agreement since 2016. However, some groups have said Canada's consultation was not adequate and, in June 2019, Canada decided it had to pause our negotiations to ensure it met its duty to consult.

Canada has now shared the AD Agreement (Part B - NWT) with about 20 Indigenous groups. This process is confidential and supervised by a federal judge through the mediation process. Though it has been very frustrating to face these additional delays, having a judge supervise the process has been positive. Canada is setting strict timelines which the judge keeps track of and he reviews all the comments that come in.

It is important to understand that this process is *not* about proving the rights of other Indigenous groups, it is just about ensuring our agreement does not have an adverse (negative) impact on their rights.

## Meeting with the NWT Premier

### *Possibility of a government-to-government agreement*

Our negotiation team and Chiefs had a virtual meeting with the NWT Premier Caroline Cochrane in November. The meeting was positive and the Premier is open to working more cooperatively with us. We agreed to work with the Government of the NWT to develop a government-to-government agreement similar to the agreements the GNWT has with other Indigenous groups in the territory.

**Canada has now completed most of the consultations and has set deadlines for final comments.**

Our agreement already specifically says that it is only about our rights and that it will not take away or change the rights of other Indigenous groups. We anticipate that Canada's consultations will not result in significant changes after which we will focus on concluding our negotiations.

Any group that claims rights in the same area as our agreement in the future will need to prove those rights and cannot impact ours through their agreement. Proper consultation with us will be required.

Our negotiators continue to push hard to finalize our North of 60 Agreement. Our goal is to get an agreement for members to vote on as soon as we can, but there will still be important work remaining to finish the agreement once the mediation is done.

**A government-to-government agreement would help improve communications, cooperation and coordination with the GNWT, and allow us to resolve issues that come up in a more effective way.**

## Other news

The negotiation team is doing a lot of work outside the formal negotiations to defend our rights and our interests North of 60. Here are a few updates on that important work.

### Opportunities to protect caribou

Through our Interim Measures Agreement, we are able to participate in different resource management activities in the NWT. We sit on the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee (BCAC) and provide advice on the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan (BCMP) which is supported by the Government of the NWT (GNWT). This is very positive, but also contains a lot of information our communities need to understand, like what's proposed to manage predators and harvesting. Engagement with communities is tentatively scheduled to occur between April-May 2021.

ADNLC is also involved in an exciting new initiative to protect critical caribou habitat through the new *NWT Wildlife Act*. We have the opportunity to use the extensive information we have collected from our elders and land users on caribou and land use to provide suggested areas to the Government of the NWT on what habitat they should make a priority for protection.

### The Michael Brown facilitated process

We continue to be very active in a facilitated discussion process with the Ghotelnene K'odtineh Dene (Manitoba), the Akaitcho Dene, the Northwest Territory Metis Nation, Canada and the Government of the NWT that is looking at how resource management could work in the southeastern part of the NWT with so many overlapping interests.

## The Bathurst Caribou Management Plan



(Source: Photo: Jacobson, Elise) Wildlife CT program, Tchy Government)

#### We want to hear from you!

##### In person:

Check with your local ENR office for the closest community meeting.

##### By mail:

Government of the Northwest Territories  
c/o Karin Clark, Wildlife Biologist  
Wildlife Division, ENR, GNWT  
P.O. Box 1320  
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##### By email:

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Developed by the  
Bathurst Caribou  
Advisory Committee  
(BCAC)

SOURCE: DRAFT Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

Though it is not part of our North of 60 negotiations, the outcomes could be linked to our agreement in the future. The Indigenous groups have been working well together. We are pushing the governments to be creative in looking at ways to maximize our role and authority in resource management decisions and land use planning.