

# ATHABASCA DENESŪLINÉ NĒNÉ LAND CORPORATION COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

- ATHABASCA INITIALING CEREMONIES
- RANKIN INLET & CAMBRIDGE BAY HEARINGS
- NUHENÉNE TRIP SUMMER 2023



Protecting  
Nuhenéne

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE NORTH OF 60 FINAL AGREEMENT

*and a message from our President Chief Negotiator, Ron Robillard*

This newsletter is one of the ways Athabasca Denesų́liné Néné Land Corporation (ADNLC) communicates with Athabasca members about the North of 60 Settlement Agreement. This past year, we reached significant milestones in the Agreement's negotiations.

In the spring, the negotiations team and community leaders initialed the Agreement. It means that the negotiators are recommending the Agreement for ratification by members, and there won't be any other substantial changes to the document.

We've presented most of the Agreement's content at community meetings in the three communities of Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake and during urban meetings in La Ronge, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. Our ADNLC staff, Legal, Land and Environment Advisors, Legacy Agreement Team, and Communications Committee presented on the Land, Water, Harvesting, Resource Management and Protected Areas.

In 2024, we will continue to inform Athabasca members through community meetings and workshops. We will review the information we provided in the past, share detailed information about the various sections of the agreement, and provide information on the North of 60 Ratification Process and the Trust Agreement.

We are currently looking for community members to put their names forward to be considered for appointment on the North of 60 Ratification Committee. Once the Ratification Committee is in place, we will assist them in communicating about the Ratification process and help make the agreement available to Athabasca Members.

We currently have three vacancies within the ADNLC staff team. We are looking for Black Lake members to apply for the role of Community Liaison. We also seek people to apply for Director, Administration, Bookkeeper and Dene Language Specialist roles. We invite you to read the job postings on our Facebook page and the posters in your community job boards.

This year will be exciting as we share more information on the North of 60 Agreement and Legacy Agreement and prepare for the Ratification Vote, which the Ratification Committee will announce in the coming months.

What started as litigation in 1991, then moved to an out-of-court negotiated process in 2001 and went through 21 years of negotiations to reach the initialing of the agreement this year, is slowly ending when Athabasca rights North of 60 will be settled. The coming year will be great for information sharing with community members. We look forward to meeting everyone and answering your questions in the coming months.

On behalf of the entire team at ADNLC, thank you for attending the events we organized this past year; thank you for your engagement at the events, on social media and through your phone calls and emails.

*Ron Robillard*  
*President*

# TRADITIONAL INITIALING CEREMONIES

On June 14, 2023, in Fond du Lac, June 15, 2023, in Hatchet Lake and September 21, 2023, in Black Lake, the Chief Negotiators for Canada, Athabasca Denesųliné, Government of Northwest Territories and Government of Nunavut, the Chiefs of all three First Nations, the board and staff members of the Denesųliné Néné Land Corporation, and representatives of the legal, land and environment, trust agreement and communications teams gathered with community members to celebrate a milestone in the North of 60 Agreement negotiation process - the initialing of the agreement.

The initialing of the North of 60 Final Agreement is the first step in finalizing the Agreement between Canada and Athabasca Denesųliné.



Top left to right: AD Chiefs Kevin Mercredi (FDL), Coreen Sayazie (BL), and Bart Tsannie (HL)  
Bottom left to right: Chief Negotiators Gov. of NWT Kelly Slack, Gov. of Nunavut Susan Woodley, Gov. of Canada Danica Weir, and Athabasca Denesųliné Ron Robillard



Black Lake Chief, Coreen Sayazie during the sacred fire ceremony at Black Lake Intialing Ceremony

The initialing of the Agreement by the Chief Negotiators for Canada, Athabasca Denesųliné, Government of Northwest Territories and Government of Nunavut confirms that the negotiations are complete. It means that the Ratification process can start.

Now that the Agreement has been initialed, there will no longer be any major changes made to the agreement. There might be a few minor edits to the wording and spelling, but nothing that would change the items agreed upon.

The members of all three communities will have an opportunity to review the agreement in the coming months. In addition, we will continue to host informational sessions to explain the details of the agreement. We invite you all to attend the session held in each of the communities and the urban centres.



# GET TO KNOW OUR

# NORTH OF 60 FINAL AGREEMENT

## What is the purpose of the Agreement?

The purpose of the Agreement is to give Athabasca Denesųliné formal recognition of certain rights throughout their traditional territory North of 60 covering parts of Northwest Territories and Nunavut under terms of a new modern treaty. It covers, among other things, a settlement area, settlement lands, resource management, harvesting rights and financial compensation.



## Are we giving up rights to our land?

We are not giving up rights to land South of 60 under the historical treaties with this agreement. We are getting more land North of 60 that were not included in the historical treaties. The treaty rights we have south of the 60th parallel will not change. Through the North of 60 Agreement, Canada will give AD more land, settlement area, and the right to participate in resource management North of 60, and also include a financial component. With this additional agreement, we have more say over our traditional territory North of 60.

## What is a “Modern Treaty?”

- The difference between modern and historic treaties in Canada is that:
- Historic treaties were signed by Indigenous peoples between 1701 and 1923, while modern treaties refer to agreements negotiated since then.
  - Modern treaties are more detailed than historic treaties. For example AD land parcels are explained in detail such as the access to AD lands, land management, and rights to land parcels, including water and what AD can do on the land. Whereas historical treaties such as Treaty 8 and 10 do not provide specifics of the land nor clearly identify them.
  - Modern treaties are negotiated over a period of years rather than days.
  - All parties are represented by lawyers and professional negotiators in modern treaties.

## THEMES WE HAVE COVERED WITHIN THE NORTH OF 60 AGREEMENT

### Land Protection



### Water



### Harvesting



### Resource Management



## DATES OF UPCOMING URBAN & ATHABASCA UPDATE MEETINGS

**January 23**  
Saskatoon

Holiday Inn Express & Suites  
315 Idylwyld Drive N., Saskatoon, SK S7L 0Z1  
6-9PM

**January 24**  
Prince Albert

Coronet Hotel  
3551 2 Ave W, Prince Albert, SK S6V 5G1  
6-9PM

**January 25**  
La Ronge

JRMCC Community Centre  
409 Far Reserve Rd, La Ronge, SK S0J 1L0  
6-9PM

**February 6**  
Fond du Lac

Band Hall  
6-9PM

**February 7**  
Black Lake

Joe Cook Memorial Youth Centre  
6-9PM

**February 8**  
Hatchet Lake

Band Hall  
6-9PM



# RANKIN INLET & CAMBRIDGE BAY HEARINGS

BY: KATIE RASMUSSEN



Left to right: Nancy Paquette, Peter Gazandlare, Napoleon Paquette and Mary Denecheze

## Athabasca Denesųtiné Communities Participate in Reviews of Wind Energy and Mine Developments in Nunavut

This has been a busy fall for the Athabasca Denesųtiné Néné Land Corporation (ADNLC) and Athabasca Denesųtiné community representatives who travelled to both Rankin Inlet in September and Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, in early October, to participate in the review processes for proposed developments that may impact caribou. AD community representatives showed great leadership in advocating for the caribou, for local Inuit harvesters and communities, and for Athabasca Denesųtiné communities.

## Meliadine Gold Mine Extension Project Proposal, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, September 2023

The Meliadine Gold Mine is located 25km North of Rankin Inlet. It is owned by Agnico Eagle, was originally approved in 2015, and has been in commercial operation since 2019. Last year, Agnico Eagle submitted a proposal to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) to add to the existing mine. Their proposal included the development of up to 13 wind turbines and the addition of underground mining to extend the life of the mine another 11 years until 2043. An information session was held in three Athabasca Denesųtiné communities in March of 2023.

ADNLC reviewed the proposal and had some serious concerns about the development of the wind turbines in a location that is within 15 - 20 km of where caribou from the Qamanirjuaq herd have been calving the last three years. When the mine was initially approved, caribou were calving much further away, but the calving location has been shifting closer to the mine in recent years.

AD community reps at the public hearing spoke strongly about the need to protect the caribou during sensitive calving and post-calving times, and the need to protect people and the environment from the impacts of gold mines. Athabasca Denesųtiné community reps and Inuit community reps supported each other throughout the hearing and connected over the shared responsibility to protect the caribou. We look forward to continuing to build strong relationships with Inuit hunters and trappers' organizations to discuss the caribou that we all share.



Mary Denecheze and Peter Gazandlare

## Back River Energy Center Proposal, Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, October 2023

In October, AD community reps and N of 60 travelled to Cambridge Bay to discuss the proposal for the development of a wind farm to power B2 Gold's Goose Project Gold Mine. The mine has already been approved and is expected to finish construction in 2025. AD had the opportunity to review the proposal to add a renewable energy center which would include wind turbines and solar panels. This project is within the spring/summer/fall and winter ranges of the Beverly caribou herd and has potential to overlap with the Bathurst herd during spring migration.

AD community reps had some concerns about how the wind turbines might cause the caribou to avoid the area, and advocated for stronger protection measures for the caribou, such as turning off the wind turbines when caribou were in the area. This meeting was only the first meeting to discuss the project, and AD will have another opportunity to provide comments and attend a final public hearing in the coming months. An information session is planned for AD communities in November.

## Next Steps

The Nunavut Impact Review Board is now in a decision-making period for both files.

For the Meliadine Mine Extension Proposal, the meeting in September was the final hearing on the topic and the Board is now in discussions to make their final decision on whether to approve the proposed activities and with which conditions.

The meeting in Cambridge Bay in October was a middle-step, an opportunity to hear from community representatives and technical support staff to determine if there are any outstanding technical issues. The Board is now making their decision about when a final Public Hearing will be held. ADNLC will have another opportunity to make final written statements and a final community roundtable at the public hearing early in 2024.

A community information session about the Back River Energy Proposal will be held in Fond-du-Lac, Black Lake, and Hatchet Lake in November of 2023. And, North of 60 staff and consultants are also planning a community tour for early January to provide information and updates about these projects.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the N of 60 office. All information about these projects is also publicly available at [www.nirb.ca](http://www.nirb.ca).



Left to right: Jimmy Laban, Theresa Donard, and Freddie Throassie





# MEET ADNLC STAFF

# MEET ADNLC STAFF



## **RONALD ROBILLARD** president/chief negotiator

*Ron is a band member of Black Lake First Nation and currently living in Prince Albert. He has served with the Athabasca Denesų́łiné First Nations in Negotiations with the government of Canada related to AD Treaty and Aboriginal Rights North of the 60th parallel since 2001. Ron enjoys working with the Elders, leaders and team. Always learning something new everyday.*



## **KRISTEN MACDONALD** communications coordinator

*Kristen currently serves as the Communications Coordinator for ADNLC and is a member of Fond du Lac Denesų́łiné First Nation, currently residing in Prince Albert with her 2 children. Kristen is a Business Admin. graduate from the Saskatchewan Polytechnic with a growing background in administration and communications.*



## **LORNA MERCREDI-CHARLES** human resource generalist

*Lorna Mercredi-Charles grew up in Fond du Lac and now reside in Prince Albert with her husband Ron and their children. She is the Human Resources Generalist for Denesų́łiné Né Né Land Corp.*



## **DANIELLE CHARLES** administrative assistant

*Danielle is a Montreal Lake band member and business administration graduate from the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology. Over the past 6 years, Danielle has worked in various administrative roles and enjoys assisting in any capacity that she can.*



## **FREDA RANDHILE** logistics coordinator

*Freda Randhile is a member of the Fond Du Lac First Nation. She has been working with DNNLC since 2018, starting as the Office Manager. She is now the Logistics Coordinator working closely with the Communications Committee and the Community Coordinators.*



## **MELANIE LIDGUERRE** community liaison - Fon du Lac

*Melanie is a member of Fond du Lac Denesų́łiné First Nation. She currently serves as a community coordinator in Fond Du Lac. Melanie was raised in Fond du Lac most of her life, and graduated from Father Gamache School in 2018.*



## **GLORIA JOSEYOUNEN** community liaison - Hatchet Lake

*Gloria is a Hatchet Lake First nation band member and serves as the Community Liaison in HL. Gloria studied Business Administration at the U of R. Today, she's out in the community providing positive information regarding the Final Agreement. Outside of work, Gloria enjoys spending time with her four boys providing for her household.*



# NUHENÉNÉ YOUTH TRIP SUMMER 2023

by: Erika Quiring

The long hot days of July feels like only yesterday. Here are some photos from the trip to the NWT and Nunavut parts of Nuhenéné in July.

The purpose of the trip was to introduce environmental sampling and concepts to some young adult community members and for them to see and experience Nuhenéné. Traditional Denesų́łíné knowledge is very linked to environmental stewardship. Shared knowledge and living on the land is the first step in reclaiming ownership and continuing stewardship. It is hoped that the spark of the love of the land results in some participants following careers in land and environmental management for Nuhenéné.

Participants from all three Athabasca Denesų́łíné communities joined the trip. The participants had wilderness first aid certification (in Stony Rapids). In total they visited 6 of the 32 Nuhenéné parcels. A camp was established at Snowbird Lake, and they also visited Mosquito Lake, Dubawnt Lake, Anaunethad Lake, and other locations on Snowbird Lake. They learned about navigation, camp building, environmental sampling, and more.

Elder Joe Rennie shared his experiences and knowledge with the group. We were blessed to have Judy Tsannie and Jean-Marie Tsannie to take care of everyone in camp. Erika Quiring showed how to do environmental sampling and shared some scientific perspective on the land. Ron Robillard made sure everything happened and the trip could not have happened without him.

As you know the only way to get there in the summer is by plane, and a lot of coordination is required. ADNLC staff worked hard to support the trip, and everyone was grateful for the opportunity. It is hoped that the program will develop into a regular seasonal opportunity for community members, both youth and Elders, to share knowledge and enjoy Nuhenéné.



Photo: Erika Quiring



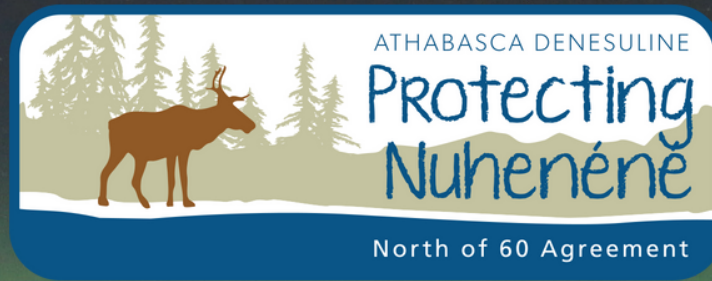
Elder Joe Rennie and youth in Snowbird Lake, NWT



From top left to right: Kyler Mercredi, Casey Throassie, Kane Tsannie, Terrace Jr. Mercredi, Robert Mercredi







Photo: Terrace Jr. Mercredi



## Athabasca Denesuliné Né Né Land Corporation

Have questions? Want to learn more?

-  [www.nuhenene.ca](http://www.nuhenene.ca)
-  Athabasca Denesuline Final Agreement- North of 60
-  [reception@adnlc.ca](mailto:reception@adnlc.ca)
-  (306) 953-7287

