



**Pehdzeh Ki First Nation
GENERAL DELIVERY
WRIGLEY, NT X0E 1E0**

Phone: (867) 581-3321

Fax: (867) 581-3229

May 26, 2006

**Grand Chief Herb Norwegian
Dehcho First Nations
Box 89, Fort Simpson, NT
By Fax: 867-695-2039**

**Heidi Wiebe
Executive Director
Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee
Box 199, Fort Providence, NT
By Fax: 867-699-3166**

Re: Protection of Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh and the Dehcho Land Use Plan

Dear Mr. Norwegian and Ms. Wiebe,

This letter is in response to our discussions and as a follow-up to the community meeting in February, 2006.

As you are aware, Pehdzeh Ki First Nation has worked hard since 2000 to protect Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh as a cultural area through the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS). Pehdzeh Ki First Nation put faith that the PAS would be the best tool to address Dehcho-Sahtu Pehdzeh Ki Deh overlap issues, given that Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh included both Sahtu and Dehcho pieces of the Blackwater Lake watershed. We received strong support from the Dehcho First Nations and the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee in the past to protect this area and we thank you for this. However, after several years of trying to work to obtain support from the Sahtu leadership to protect Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh unsuccessfully, Pehdzeh Ki First Nation has decided to move forward with just the Dehcho portion of Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh. We are ready to move to the next step to protect Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh before it is too late.

While Pehdzeh Ki First Nation supports sustainable development, our membership has great concerns with the proposal to protect only a small portion (35%) of Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh through the Pipeline Settlement Agreement land withdrawals and through the designation of these land withdrawals as a Conservation Zone in the Final Draft of the Dehcho Land Use Plan. We cannot support this proposal as is. We cannot leave 65% of

our most important lands open to mining and oil and gas. We have worked too long and too hard over the years to lose ground on protecting Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh.

At the same time, we recognize that a lot of hard work has gone into both the land withdrawal negotiations and the development of the Dehcho Land Use Plan and we do not want to stop these. Therefore we are requesting that the proposed General Use Zones (areas completely open for development) within the Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh PAS Area of Interest be changed to Special Management Zones (where only renewable resource development is permitted). We feel this is the only option that is compatible with our plans to protect Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh. Non-renewable resource development such as mining or oil and gas is incompatible and will only make trouble in the future if they are allowed now.

To be clear, Pehdzeh Ki First Nation would be willing to accept and support the Final Draft of the Dehcho Land Use Plan if:

1. the Pipeline Settlement Agreement land withdrawals within Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh continue to be designated as a Conservation Zone;
2. the surrounding areas within the Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh PAS Area of Interest be designated as a Special Management Zone (whereby only Tourism, Forestry, and Agriculture would be permitted uses); and
3. the Pipeline Settlement Agreement land withdrawals and the zoning in the Dehcho Land Use Plan will not prejudice the size and boundary of the Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh PAS Area of Interest and our community's efforts to protect it.

On behalf my community, I ask that you respect this request and continue to support us in our efforts to achieve full protection of Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh.

Mahsi Cho,



Gabe Hardisty

Chief

Pehdzeh Ki First Nation