

# Summary of the Dene Nahodhe Workshop

## Fort Providence, NT

*March 29 – April 2, 2004*



**Summaries and Reflection prepared by Gladys Norwegian  
Report Compiled by Heidi Wiebe**

**Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee  
June 2004**

**DEH CHO LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
*One Land One Plan*



*Ndéh Lié - Mek'ée Ats'et'í Lié*  
**Dehcho Ndéhé T'áhagot'í gha Sááhniogpáh-ké**



## Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee

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### LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee is responsible for developing a land use plan that promotes the social, cultural and economic well being of the residents and communities in the Deh Cho territory, having regard to the interests of all Canadians. The plan will outline what types of activities should occur, generally where they should take place, and terms and conditions necessary to guide land use proposals and development projects over time.

Our planning process involves gathering information on the current use and long-term resource potential of the Deh Cho. We do this by mapping the location of oil and gas and mining deposits, productive timber stands, good soils for agriculture, good tourism sites and important spots for traditional use and wildlife habitat. This process is quite technical and tends to breakdown the environment into little pieces that provide goods for human use – gas, timber, tourism dollars, etc. It doesn't recognize the value of the land as an intact ecosystem or the cultural or spiritual values that exist in the relationship between the Dene people and the land. It asks what resources we can extract from the land, how much value we can get from it and how many jobs we can create in the process.

Dene people see the land as a whole system – Mother Earth - which provides for their physical, cultural and spiritual needs. The Dene people are stewards of the land and are responsible for looking after it. Any process which seeks to fragment the land into smaller components and extract the resources will not be acceptable to the Dene people. Some people have begun to question our process. How can a plan developed through such a process promote the social and cultural well-being of residents?

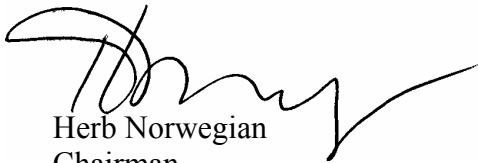
The Committee felt this was an important question that had to be addressed. While we understand that our process cannot easily be changed, we can incorporate Dene values and beliefs into our vision for the future and the land use decisions we make along the way. To do this, we held a workshop on Dene Nahodhe (Dene Culture and beliefs) in Fort Providence from March 29 – April 1, 2004. We invited Elders and Youth from each Deh Cho community, and recognized Spiritual Leaders to help us understand Dene Laws and beliefs and determine how to apply these to make culturally appropriate land use decisions.

Many of the workshop's objectives were met. We had great discussions about all aspects of Dene laws, beliefs and experiences and how they relate to traditional uses of the land –

harvesting animals and plants and living on the land. However, when we asked participants how we might apply these laws to new uses like oil and gas development or timber harvesting, very little discussion followed. We asked for some guidelines that we could use when making land use decisions. No one knew how to do this. However, some clear messages did come through again and again – “Show Respect”, “Don’t take more than you need” and “Share what you have”.

The Committee sees this workshop as the starting point for incorporating Dene Nahodhe into our planning decisions. We will remember the messages given to us at this workshop when we are making decisions that affect the land. We will have more discussions on this when we go into communities, to explore new ideas about how we can better reflect Dene values. When we start to develop terms and conditions for future development, we will ask communities for guidance to ensure that development proceeds in a manner that truly reflects and promotes their social, cultural and economic well being.

Mahsi Cho,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Herb Norwegian', written over a white background.

Herb Norwegian  
Chairman

Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who made this workshop a success. Much planning and effort went into this event in a very short time. We certainly couldn't have done it alone!

The following people assisted us in planning and coordinating: Joachim Bonnetrouge, Raymond Sonfrere, Victor Constant, Margaret Leishman, Gladys Norwegian, Margaret Thom, Walter Landry, and Pat Thagard. Joachim and Raymond also facilitated the workshop while Alex and Victor translated for us.

Special thanks go to our Guest Speakers - George Blondin, Modeste Pierre, Margaret Vandell, and Daniel Sonfrere - for sharing their stories, knowledge and experiences with us.

The drummers played an important role throughout the workshop, sharing prayer songs, demonstrations and entertainment. They were: Joe Tambour, Mike Nadli, Dion Elleze, Alan Farcy, Michael James Landry, Gabe Hardisty, Darcy Moses, Joachim Bonnetrouge, Pat Martel, Arthur Martel Jr., Herb Norwegian, Tim Lennie, and Walter Landry.

Other musical entertainment was provided by the Zhahti Kue Friendship Centre Fiddle Group and John Bonnetrouge, Fred Christie, Alex Tambour and Raymond Sonfrere. Thanks also go to Cliff McLeod for organizing traditional handgames.

The wonderful food was provided by the Friendship Centre (lunch and dinner), Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School (snacks and refreshments), and Melanie Thom (Breakfast). Thanks to the youth who served Elders during the community feast: AJ Nadli, Sammy Gargan, Malcolm Farcy, Daylon Matto, Lawrence Sabourin, and Darren Minoza.

We'd like to recognize the recording efforts of Mike Chemerys (sound) and Paul Gordon and Pierre Label (video). The entire workshop was sound and video recorded for archival purposes. The workshop video is recorded on a set of 10 DVDs and can be viewed at our office in Fort Providence.

We'd like to thank Gladys Norwegian for assisting with facilitation, diligently taking notes each day and writing the bulk of this summary report.

Thanks to Darcy Moses for drawing the cover art. Other pictures in the report were done by youth participants Arthur Martel Jr., Eric Kotchea and Skylar Deneyoua.

And finally, a big thanks to all the delegates, young and old, from each community for coming, sharing your knowledge and experiences and helping us in this very important process. We look forward to working with all of you to ensure the lessons learned during this workshop are carried through our process.

**Mahsi Cho!**

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# DAY ONE SUMMARY

*Tuesday, March 30, 2004*

The day started with the designated elder Modeste Pierre discussing in broad terms the importance of the fire feeding ceremony. Key components identified and discussed are as follows: the importance of the use of drumming during the ceremony as well as the care of it. Drums should be kept in a plain canvas bag without any design or embroidery. This is to symbolize the pureness of the Creator. For that reason, drums used for fire ceremonies should not be used for hand games. Examples of items to include when feeding the fire consist of potatoes, moose fat, tobacco, sugar etc. Offerings should not include medicinal plants. The selected people to offer the servings of food and other items should make a circle around the fire pausing at four directions before feeding the fire. The offerings should be presented in a white or steel container again to symbolize the purity of the Creator. The fire feeding ceremony presented is universal, but acceptance and use of the fire feeding ceremony varies from community to community. Fire feeding is an integral part of the belief that is based on our distinct traditional way of life with respect to land, water, wildlife and the environment.

The purpose of the workshop was presented by the Deh Cho First Nations Grand Chief Herb Norwegian and Wrigley Chief Tim Lennie; both are members of the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee. Herb talked about the work done since the existence of the Land Use Planning Committee which began two years ago (2002). Land use mapping is consistent with the standard method, which encompasses all the areas where certain fish can be found and where moose regularly forage. However, one component is missing which is “nahodhe”. This important component cannot be a part of the land use planning it needs to be the base. It is like building a house it needs to have a solid foundation to hold the walls and the roof together to complete the house. This inclusion of ‘nahodhe’ will take time which would not be in favor of those that want to see quick results, however it is important to ensure the validity of our distinct perspective. Tim reiterates the importance of “nahodhe” in land use planning in order to preserve the water, wildlife and the environment.

This was followed by the telling of the Yamoria legend by George Blondin in which it tells about how and why ‘Dene laws’ were created. In summary, this legend has been around for 180 thousand years at the time when the Aboriginal people found themselves in a state of confusion, which created consistent horrendous fights. They had no sense of how to co-exist; the use of clubs in fights was common. There was no leadership and order. For that reason, two boys came to a young girl that was returning from a hunt. One of the two boys was said to be Yamoria specifically assigned to help the Aboriginal people of the North to have law and order. In his efforts to help the people, ‘Dene laws’ were established and implemented. Copies of the laws were distributed and George reviewed them.

Discussions that followed consisted of Modeste and Felix telling various versions of the legend as they know it. Other discussions covered a wide range of topics. Topics addressed the verification of the importance of ‘Dene laws’, the experience of abiding by the laws as a child, the messages passed on by fathers reflective of the Dene laws. Furthermore, some participants expressed that ‘the new people’ should be taught by the Dene laws - that is the only way. Many

of the comments made at times came across metaphorically however it is a way to describe reality at the level of life. For example, showing disrespect to the elders is like hitting someone with a big stick. Ripping the ground for development is like causing injury to another living being, the Mother Earth.

In general, the message from the day's discussion confirmed for some and reconfirmed for others how our perspective, values and beliefs are interrelated to the whole of Creation. They point to ways of reorganizing our present being that would allow us to live in a harmonious relationship with the creation rather than destroying it.

The last part of the day - how we can bring the idea of using Dene Nahodhe to reality in land use planning - received no suggestions and very little discussion. The question remains how can we identify sources of support for the change and develop strategies to arrive there.

## **DENE LAWS**

Dene Law #1: The sharing law is like a tree. There are many branches attached to the central tree or sharing law.

- Share all the big game you kill.
- If you catch more fish than you need, share it with others.
- Help Elders get firewood and with other heavy work.
- Help the sick and other people in need to do their work and to get food.
- Share the sorrow with relatives when someone dies, so families do not mourn alone.
- Help widows and their children with everything they need.
- Orphans should be looked after by their parents' next of kin.
- The leader of each tribe should help travelers in need who are far from their homeland.

Dene Law #2: Do not run around when Elders are eating.

Dene Law #3: Love each other as much as possible.

Dene Law #4: Do not harm people with actions.

Dene Law #5: Be polite. Do not use words which hurt people.

Dene Law #6: When children start to talk, parents are to teach them to be good citizens, to love one another, and to use medicine power only to help people in need.

Dene Law #7: Elders should gather each day to teach the laws. Elders must teach children to be good citizens and to act like human beings. Elders must tell stories about the past each day because stories shape behaviour and attitudes. Through stories about mistakes made in the past and present, Elders can prevent people from making mistakes in the future.

(Provided by the Dene Cultural Institute)

## **DAY TWO SUMMARY**

*Wednesday, March 31, 2004*

Elder Daniel Sonfere started the first session on 'Respect for the Land'. In his talk Daniel shared what respect for the land looks like and means. He did this by referring to the various lessons he experienced with the land as his father and other knowledgeable elders guided him as his mentors. Much of his knowledge centers around the inner sense of value which embodies many of the fundamental principles of people effectiveness. He emphasized these principles are primary if a person is to respect the land and all other things. Value and respect has to come from within first. His ancestors demonstrated this in many ways. They believed that wherever people find themselves, whether it is a good or bad place, they put themselves there and no one else. Daniel talked about when the people got together they fed the fire to show their gratitude and thanks from all the wealth that came their way in the past year. They celebrated together with their best clothes. They always treated each other as brothers and sisters.

He also shared how they left their camp area as naturally as they found it. No garbage was left behind. They did not over kill animals. They ensured any game that they killed was shared with everybody - no parts of the animal were wasted. He recalled as an 18 year old he traveled a long time with his father - that is how he learned many things. He emphasized that he wanted to put forth a strong message and that is to say, our ancestors respected the land and all creations. They left the land healthy and its abundance of natural resources in tact. It is up to us to carry out the same respect.

Working cooperatively with the park's policy to ban beaver hunting in the park was another important topic Daniel shared. In conclusion, he wondered how 'the new people' will move ahead given the negative behaviours and attitudes they possess. They do not have the teachings of the traditional ways.

This was followed by Herb Norwegian recapping yesterday's discussion by the elders which gave much to think about. However, we still need to have further discussion on how we will build on 'nahodhe' as a base for land use planning.

Gabe Hardisty shared his personal experiences of when dependency on country foods was the only way and how severe winter weather conditions created hardships.

Roy Fabian shared his version of the meaning of the fire feeding ceremony. It is for personal reflection. The tobacco offer is to recognize and pay our respect to our ancestors that passed on, our 'nahodhe'. The food is to give thanks to the Creator. He emphasized how English interpretation of discussions weakens or loses the real meanings of our Slavey language. We need to start writing our discussions in Slavey.

George Blondin stated that land use discussions are at the talking stage. We need to become much stronger to progress to the next stage. He outlined in English the advantages and disadvantages of the Indian Act, Treaty and land claims.

Margaret Vandell enlightened the participants after lunch on how our land is healthy. She used a flipchart of Mother Earth to demonstrate how we need to be ‘in sync’ with it by balancing our spiritual, physical, mental and emotional well being in a holistic approach. This is the way to heal and make a road for our children. We need to examine ourselves and work to get rid of the negative substance in us and replace it with positive and healthy habits. She shared her personal experience of how she passed on her disloyal behaviours to her children unknowingly which she is only now aware of and is working to heal. She went on to talk about the ritual rites of womanhood in the traditional way. She shared her experience of how she accommodated the womanhood rituals that she missed during her stay in residential school. She talked about the help she received from her mentor that she seeks out. She talked about many other ways Mother Earth can provide for us which we in turn need to respect. We cannot say the kids don’t listen. We need to work to re-awakening their spirit.

Other discussions included Modeste Pierre talking on how development can be positive, providing people take it seriously. Carolyn Bonnetrouge expressed her concerns of how things are now, compared to how it use to be. Pat Martel discussed his concerns of the inconsistency in the players at the table. The vision of our “new people” is unfocused and strength is needed in leadership – those are what we are traveling with. He asked how things are going to work.

Roy ended the day with the question of how we are going to use ‘nahodhe’ as a base in land use planning. He repeated, that is where we need the elders help.

The workshop came to a close to allow the facilitators and Land Use Planning Committee to work out an action plan to present to the elders for their input and approval. The notes from this session are included in Appendix 3.



By Eric Kotchea

## DAY THREE SUMMARY

*Thursday, April 1, 2004*

After the Morning Prayer, George Blondin discussed the meaning and use of drum songs. He based his knowledge on receiving drum songs as told to him by an elder from Tulita. George said that drum songs guide prayers. Drum songs are sacred. The drum songs come naturally to people in many occasions especially in time of need. George talked about a time when it was minus 40 to 50 and animals were scarce for food; a drum song was used. When a drum song comes naturally to a person, he/she should be able to sing it without practice. The elder that George referred to knew fifty-three songs. To give an example of receiving songs the elder used to sing songs with people and would tell them that they should be able to know the song by the end of the night. People traveled from communities to Tulita to obtain the drum songs from the elder to strengthen their prayers. The late Paul Wright knew twelve songs, which George recorded on tape. George concluded by saying that the drum songs are becoming fewer and fewer as they are not being passed on. He commented that with disappearance of more songs we would become weaker as Aboriginal people.

Phillip Betthale followed George's discussion. Phillip delivered a very strong message of encouragement, which he said he received in his dream. The need to share the message was so great that he felt it in his palms. It came in the form of redness and pain in his palms. He spoke of the importance of the discussion on 'nahodhe' as a foundation of land use planning and encouraged the participants to continue to record all of the stories. He believed the recordings of the stories and discussions were a positive direction. He said that our relatives that passed on are guiding and watching us. He believed he can contribute by guiding spiritually, however he discouraged people from asking him any questions about how he can help; it is difficult to understand the messages he receives, all he knows is he needs to deliver the messages that come to him. As the Creator said to his disciples, Phillip said if you want your footprints to look freshly tracked when you look back rather than seeing blown over cracked ground, then everyone must continue with the recording of stories.

Margaret Vandell further added that drum songs are like prayers for us. When we are going to release anything on the land we should accompany it with a song.

Leo Norwegian reiterated his appreciation of all the sharing of the legend of Yamoria, which he knows himself from Grandpa Norwegian. The Yamoria legend as he knows it extends as far as Tulita. He shared his knowledge of a sacred area known as Bear Rock which symbolizes the beaver pelts that Yamoria nailed. He recalled a time when Grandpa Norwegian told the Yamoria legend from sun down to sun up the next morning. For Leo, his grandpa's storytelling was as vivid as watching television so that he becomes unaware of the many hours that passed.

Leo then defined our land. He said when we refer to our land we do not mean just the soil that makes the ground; we understand it to include the wind, the water and the ecosystem as a whole as well as the utmost respect of it all. Leo recalled, when in the bush, utterance of negativity in the name of any animals was disrespectful as the animals would hear. He was told when experiencing problems such as with snowshoe strings, patience and time was the answer, as opposed to cursing about it loudly. Respect was emphasized at all times. Another one would be

to 'keep your mouth' which when written in English loses its real meaning. Leo indicated the land is not ours - it is here to live on.

Joe Tambour added that drum songs are strong and spiritual. Words cannot describe the power of it. We can only explain how to use it. Drumming is the center of our being. Ownership of drum songs is of vital importance even if it seems like nonsense, one needs to sing it. Drum songs can serve many purposes. We continued to use the drum songs for funerals, entertainment and wellness. Today, drumming with relatives is most enjoyable and gives the power of unity.

Tim Lennie thanked George for the drum song stories he shared. The elder that George referred to raised him. Tim talked about always welcoming a young boy that joins drumming. We need to acknowledge him to encourage more participation. Our elders were adamant in passing on their teachings of our traditional ways however now that it is 2004 many things changed; he questioned how would we teach our young people.

In talking about the land use planning committee Tim said the need to record our nahodhe was not the responsibility of the land use planning committee only, it involved everybody.

Stanley Bertrand talked about how the seasons came about. He told about it in using the beaver and frog as key animals that identified seasons. He also talked about how things are very different today in comparison to long ago. Too much reliance on store bought food causes the blood to be weak.

Raymond Sonfrere talked about the difficulty of blending the traditional ways with the new. He then reviewed the previous day.

Joachim Bonnetrouge asked the question, how we are going to integrate nahodhe with land use planning. This was the subject of the previous night's discussion session by the organizers. The organizers involved the facilitators, two Land Use Planning Committee members and other interested workshop participants. The evening session was to refocus on the objective of the workshop, which is how to integrate nahodhe with land use planning as well as draft up a work plan to present to the participants the next day.

Gladys presented on behalf of the organizers. She stated that the work ahead is heavy. In order to do a good job of recording all the information given on nahodhe a team approach with qualified team members and time are crucial. The work requires people that are knowledgeable in the Aboriginal traditions and the English culture as well as fluency in the old Slavey language to capture the true meanings of the elders' stories. Until such time as a final document is in place, the organizers proposed an interim document to protect the land from further industrial development. In addition, information should be prepared to educate, inform and provide awareness of nahodhe to our young people in the schools.

Herb Norwegian reiterated what Gladys covered. He also said the assistance of the elders is crucial as some people see nahodhe as part of the land use planning, some others see nahodhe with it and others see it as the foundation to build on. Herb supported the latter. He used a house analogy to explain that idea. He said that nahodhe should be the foundation of land use

planning just like the floor is the base to keep the walls of a house together. He then explained the land use planning logo.

Pat Martel saw progress; however he strongly emphasized the need for work to continue after the workshop. He felt that things are not going to fall into place from one meeting - it needs to be continued. He suggested that additional people aside from the committee members be assigned to carry out the work. If not, he felt the work would fray.

Albert Bonnetrouge told two stories. He talked about a moose-hunting trip that stranded his hunting party due to high waves on the lake but after a day of prayers, the trip ended positively. They were able to shoot a moose. The other story he told was about a dream. In his dream, he was to make a drum but upon completion of the drum, his dog would die. It came true.

Margaret Vandell brought back the discussion to integrate nahodhe and land use planning. She expressed similar ideas as in the interim proposal.

Elsie Marcellais expressed her sincere appreciation of the worthwhile discussions, thanked the cooks and many others that made her stay very enjoyable.

George shared that although he felt that this land use planning should be for all of the other regions he thought the Deh Cho Land Use Planning would serve as a model for the other regions.

Gabe Hardisty said we needed to make firm decisions concerning the integration of nahodhe. He suggested five people would be adequate to work strictly on the stories shared here.

Gladys Norwegian highlighted some points in a letter given to her by Skylar Deneyoua, youth participant. She explained that the young boy wrote that as young people they are fully aware of their unacceptable behaviour however, Skylar indicated that nobody talks to them to guide them – not their parents or the elders. The elders just walk by us. They have no choice but to involve themselves in the way the town kids behave. They are interested in knowing about the way of life of our people. Skylar suggested that young people with kids should teach their kids about our way of life. He also recommended more young people be invited to workshops in the future so that they can have fun together.

Jim Thomas agreed that nahodhe and land use planning should be together.

Laura Gargan took the time to thank workshop workers for their hospitality. She praised Mike Chemerys, the sound person, for his patience and cheerful attitude in setting and taking down microphones and speakers each day to provide for social functions in the evenings.

Sarah Chicot spoke of her experience with her foster child who was eventually sent to Red Deer, Alberta. She indicated that with the help of the child protection agency things turn out for the better. The child now appeared more settled. Negative behaviour kids parallels the parents - we taught them that way. For that reason and for my grand kids alcohol is no longer in my life.

Daniel Sonfrere thanked everyone. He encouraged all to think seriously about what was said here for the benefit of our children. Furthermore, he encouraged all to cherish and help one person that appears special among us. For that person will be the one to help our nation. He strongly advised not to fill that particular person's mind with nonsense such as gossip.

Joachim Bonnetrouge announced a suggestion to write a statement as a form of interim protection against further industrial development.

Herb Norwegian read the statement. He read, "Deh Cho Dene Nahodhe - Yamoria came to the homeland of the Deh Cho Dene with laws from the Creator. These laws were given to the Dene to live by. The most important law was respect for Creation-Mother Earth. We were put here by the Creator to take care of Mother Earth. The foundation of our Deh Cho government and Mother Earth is Nahe Nahodhe. Nahe Nahodhe is who we are and where we came from. We stand firm behind this belief."

In addition, Herb addressed the suggestion to do further work in the form of a workshop. He indicated it would be up to the land use planning committee as to how they will proceed.

Gabe, Raymond, Pierre, Margaret and Joachim all contributed to how the procedure can be resolved. They made suggestions such as putting the mission statement on a chart, rereading the mission statement and voting acceptance by a show of hands.

Gabe Hardisty repeated that continual work on the stories shared here is of vital importance. He said if left for a long time it would seem unimportant.

Tim Lennie said that they, the Land Use Planning Committee realized they had a surplus that was how this workshop came about. Another workshop depends on whether you request it. The decision to have a workshop does not depend on the committee solely it involves the elders too.

Pat Martel commented that one person be agreed upon to report on this workshop to the media. Too often people expressed their personal thoughts on workshops, which does not represent the majority. He again suggested a working group be selected to work on the stories before it goes to leadership meeting.

In response to Pat's suggestion, Tim Lennie stated that continued work would depend on finance availability. He added the committee has three years to complete the work on land use planning.

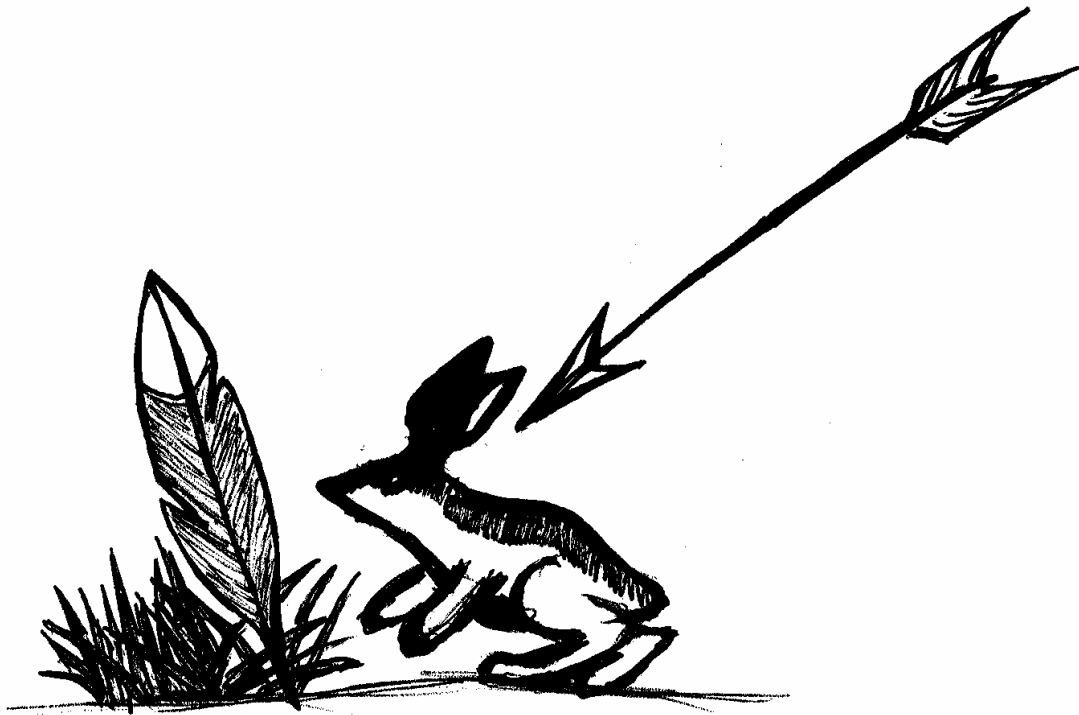
Herb indicated that the committee realized that Dene nahodhe was not included in the land use planning that was the reason why this workshop came about. Furthermore, he indicated along with Tim, they can easily do the work but it was only right to ask for the input of the elders. He thanked everyone for his or her participation in the workshop.

Gladys Norwegian interpreted some key points from a letter another youth participant wrote. The youth questioned the damage oil drilling might have upon our land and wrote about the interrelationship of all living things including insects. He wrote about the ecosystem; how it is

meant to be and that we should not be disturbing it. He talked about the Indian Act and lack of jobs.

Joachim Bonnetrouge read the Deh Cho Dene nahodhe mission statement. It was moved by Gabe Hardisty and seconded by Jim Thomas. The majority of the workshop participants accepted the statement by a show of hands. The poster on the next page was printed and given to participants before they left.

Pat Martel closed the workshop with a prayer. The participants then moved outside to participate in the feeding of the fire by Pierre Modeste for a final closure of the meeting.



By Arthur Martel Jr.



## Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee

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# DEH CHO DENE NAHODHE

“Yamoria came to the homeland of the Deh Cho Dene with laws from the Creator. These laws were given to the Dene to live by. The most important law was respect for Creation – Mother Earth. We were put here by the Creator to take care of Mother Earth. The foundation of our Deh Cho government and Mother Earth is Nahe Nahodhe. Nahe Nahodhe is who we are and where we came from. We stand firm behind this belief.”

Accepted by the Elders and Youth at the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee's Dene Nahodhe Workshop in Fort Providence on April 1, 2004.

## YOUTH COMMENTS

While there were youth invited from each community, not all communities sent youth delegates so there were only a few present. Though they remained quiet throughout most of the workshop, they listened intently and took notes. Three of the youth presented us with their notes, thoughts and drawings at the end of the workshop. A few of their thoughts were read out to the other delegates. Their comments have been transcribed here as written.

### **Eric Kotchea**

- How is the land healthy. With it's strong knowledge.
- Physical Being/Land can protect itself
- Love, respect land, care of areas where vegetarian bush medicine, places of berries.
- (Our Elder) giving out tobacco to the land, by saying thanks and placing 4 different directions.
- In order to have a solid land use plan, you have to have the base set up.
- For a teepee/tent post you have to have 13 posts, because there are 13 communities in the Deh Cho region. [refers to Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee logo design]
- There's still 3 yrs left on land use planning. Ten years down the road this workshop will be good use for others such as Deh Cho First Nations.
- Our land is there, but how come we are unable to use the land.
- Today our youths are not able to use the land operatively, since our Elders used to use it.
- Strong language; teach youth language, writing, plus giving thanks for what you receive
- Employment and education are some problems in the Deh Cho region
- Destroying our land (Traditional/Medicine) use in our ancient days (medicine will vanish) unless you do not know how to use the medicine.

### **Skylar Deneyoua**

The future generation are different these days because no one talks to them these days because there's too much drinking and other things are going on right now, because there parents don't pay attention to them. There's work. Not that much Elders stop to talk to them. They just walk by, and some young people want to learn the bush skills but they don't know what we want these days. We all young people want to go back to the land. I've been going back in the bush because it feels good there – no drinking and a lot of young people want to go with other youth because it's fun going back with friends and Elders. If one listens they all might follow your footsteps too. Maybe we young people that have kids got to bring back kids to the land and grow them up in the bush again. There's too much youth that are growing up following their friends in town and older people too. That's why youth don't talk their Dene way anymore. Maybe the next time the Elders have another meeting you older people should bring more youth along to the meetings instead of just a few youth. Bring a lot of youth along to listen to the Elders talk. So we could have a chance to learn and talk.

## **Arthur Martel Jr.**

There are many people here from all over the Deh Cho mostly Elders and a few youth have come to express their view on the subjects of the land use study and science. To preserve sacred and spiritual places safe guards will be put up, and restrictions will be put on productions, on certain areas for land and mining.

We'll have to use the land resourcefully and insure it will still be there for the next 20 generations also protect the inhabitants of animals and other creatures like bugs cause they all do their part to cleanse the lands. This would be a main subject to face.

Others would have to cooperate and socialize to ensure the progress of the discussions made at these meetings. I know this is very important; also serious issues to protect so there can always be a future for on the land usage.

Most of native stories that natives have come from the land and if we get this progress finished it could be a story we can tell the youth.

### Stories – Medicine

To keep the language – tell the stories you have – share your knowledge – respect everything – show respect – have control – have patience – sit quiet – be one with nature – be a leader – never forget the Dene laws – help each other – be grateful for having good teachers – live peacefully – watch your actions

What do we have to do? – on the land – for the land – land projects

### On the land protection

Medicine  
Animals  
Sacred areas  
Water  
Peace  
Spirits

### For the Land

Preserve as much as we can  
Watch over the animals  
Mark down and safe guard areas  
Have a training course for camp cleanup  
Having respect for everything

### Land Projects

- Make certain camping grounds in the woods (cabins, traplines) to show youth where the land is sacred
- Bring people out on the land 2 times a month
- Have on the land community gatherings and have a ceremony and a drum dance
- Teach why we have these values to show respect
- Science on the land to find cures
- Bring tourists to show how nice the land is – show them the sacred grounds, tell them why it is sacred

### The Indian Act

- Is against the natives – they don't need native permission
- The Indian Act took over rights – its not up to us, its up to the government to make decisions

### Cost of Living in the North

Look at resources - find anything on the land that could make some kind of money to give back to the community. Create a community money cycle to circulate the money. Solar power roofs with wood stoves, water heating, pump action water systems, thermal flooring.

Me and my cousin were talking about the land one day – minerals, oil, gas were put here by God and we don't really know what would happen if all of it was taken out. I think its under the earth to hold it together. The earth has a ecological pull on it. Even if they do get the oil, gas its all going to go to the air and hit the ozone and melt the ice caps.

To have to look to the past and clean the future by showing old values in a new way. Remembering its all we want is control. I think the world is this way but its not control – its freedom to be you, freedom to be me.

To say you want to help and then physically do the opposite is not how I want to teach the youth. Its all about unity, and courage to hold what you believe.

Make a land use structure for everyone like the laws of the land with reinforcements of law.



By Arthur Martel Jr.

## REFLECTION

This Dene Nahodhe workshop was one of the most successful workshops ever attended. What made it a success? For the exception of one or two participants, everyone else spoke in the South Slavey language. Slavey language in the finest was heard. Some elders clearly expressed themselves. It was easy for them to express what they meant by 'our way of life'. Certainly some of the elders are masters of our Slavey language and it was refreshing to see them at work with the language. They described vivid pictures, created hunger for more and drained minds as they articulated the most complex ideas of their past referred to as 'nahodhe' with relatively simple words.

Furthermore, success was felt in obtaining and recording the discussions and stories that the elders shared. It was more than enough to proceed on how it can be implemented in the land use planning for the Deh Cho.

In terms of meeting the objectives of the workshop, it is somewhat unclear whether it was achieved or not. Efforts were made by the organizers to refocus on the purpose of the workshop but it remained a challenge. The organizers had an evening session where they discussed another approach to firm up how 'nahodhe' can be used as a foundation for land use planning. Although some discussion took place, at the end of the workshop many questions were left unclear. There was no clear direction as to how to proceed from there forward. Although some elders and participants repeatedly suggested getting a group of capable workers together aside from the land use planning committee it was not addressed. To that end, no plans were confirmed to continue with transcribing the stories shared or determining how the 'nahodhe' work would be integrated with the land use planning.

Another concern was the few youth that came to participate. The workshop participants from each community was supposed to consist of one youth and one elder however; it did not turn out that way for some communities. Nahanni Butte particularly claimed they could not find a youth therefore came with a couple elders. Jean Marie River youth came a day later but it was not evident that he fully participated. With all elders' presenters, the workshop was dominated by elders. The handful of youths that were there did not actively participate. The organizers acknowledged that and allotted extra time in the evening for the youth to meet with one of the facilitators for a discussion but it did not happen.



By Eric Kotchea

## NEXT STEPS

The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee recognizes the difficulties ahead as we try to merge Dene laws and beliefs with a technical planning model based on very different values. We see this workshop as a major step, to share thoughts and build the foundation. We understand that the decisions we make must reflect and promote Dene values and we now have a better understanding of them.

We look forward to many more discussions on this topic as we begin consulting with communities and planning partners. Since workshop participants were not able to provide us with clear direction on the application of Dene laws and principles to newer land uses (e.g. oil and gas, mining or timber harvesting), we will be relying on these community meetings for guidance and direction at each step of our process. The Dene people are the best judges of where and how development should proceed in the Deh Cho so that all land use activities are done with respect for the land. If Elders, youth and community leaders participate fully in our process, we can ensure that the land use plan is developed properly, appropriately and will result in land use decisions that promote the vision we are creating together.

**Mahsi Cho!**



By Arthur Martel Jr.

## APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANTS

### **Delegates:**

Jonas Marcellais – Nahanni Butte  
Elsie Marcellais – Nahanni Butte  
Felix Tale – Wrigley  
Darcy Moses – Wrigley (Drummer)  
Stanley Bertrand – Fort Liard  
Joey Fantasque – Fort Liard  
Phillip Bethale – Fort Liard (DCFN)  
Leo Norwegian – Fort Simpson (DCFN)  
Jim Thomas – West Point  
Sarah Chicot – Kakisa  
Jennifer Simba – Kakisa  
Pat Martel – (Drummer) Hay River Reserve  
Arthur Martel Jr. – Hay River Reserve  
Laura Sanguéz – Jean Marie River  
Douglas Jr. Norwegian – Jean Marie River  
Peter Corneille – Fort Simpson  
Skyler Deneyoua – Fort Simpson  
Jonas Lafferty – Fort Simpson Metis  
Albert Bonnetrouge – Fort Providence  
Derek Gargan – Fort Providence  
Eric Kotchea – Trout Lake  
Tom Kotchea – Trout Lake  
Tim Lennie – Board Member  
Herb Norwegian – Board Member

### **Translators:**

Victor Constant – Hay River Reserve  
Alex Tambour – Hay River Reserve

### **Facilitators:**

Joachim Bonnetrouge  
Raymond Sonfere

### **Guest Speakers:**

Margaret Vandell  
Modeste Pierre  
Daniel Sonfere  
George Blondin

### **Committee Members:**

Chairman - Herb Norwegian  
Vice-Chairman - Tim Lennie

### **Staff:**

Heidi Wiebe – Executive Director  
Priscilla Canadien – Planner Trainee  
Monika Templin – GIS Analyst

### **Co-Coordinator:**

Margaret Thom

### **YK Films:**

Pierre Label  
Paul Gordon

### **Sound Recording:**

Mike Chemerys

### **Transcriber:**

Gladys Norwegian

### **Drummers:**

Joe Tambour  
Mike Nadli  
Dion Elleze  
Alan Farcy  
Michael James Landry  
Gabe Hardisty  
Darcy Moses  
Joachim Bonnetrouge  
Pat Martel  
Arthur Martel Jr.  
Herb Norwegian  
Tim Lennie  
Walter Landry

## APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP AGENDA

### Dene Nahodhe Workshop Fort Providence, March 29 – April 2, 2004

#### Monday, March 29th

Travel Day

6:00 PM      *Dinner*      *Nahecho Ke Centre*

#### Tuesday, March 30th

7:30 AM      *Breakfast*      *Deh Gáh Got'ie Kúé*  
*(Senior's Home)*

9:00 AM      Opening Prayer      Nahecho Ke Centre  
Fire Feeding Ceremony (Modeste Pierre)  
Talk about Meaning and Importance of Fire Feeding (Modeste Pierre)  
Offer Tobacco to Participants (Herb, Tim or Walter)  
Introduce Participants (Welcome from Fort Providence)

10:30 AM      *Nutrition Break*

10:45 AM      Housekeeping  
Introduce Workshop Purpose and Goals (Herb and Tim)  
Introduce Place Name Mapping (Herb and Tim)

12:00 PM      *Lunch*      *Nahecho Ke Centre*

1:00 PM      Yamoria Stories and Dene Laws (George Blondin)  
- Share stories that explain Dene Laws or tell why some places are very  
important.

3:00 PM      *Nutrition Break*

3:15 PM      How can we use Dene Laws and Stories to guide land use decisions? (Joachim  
and Raymond)

5:00 PM      Closing Prayer

5:30 PM      *Community Feast*      *Nahecho Ke Centre*

**Evening**      **Drum Dance and Fiddling**      **Nahecho Ke Centre**

### **Wednesday, March 31st**

7:30 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Deh Gáh Got'ie Kúé (Senior's Home)</i>
9:00 AM	Opening Prayer "Respect for the Land" (Daniel Sonfrere) -Definition of Dene Nahodhe -Traditional ways of showing respect for the land Talk about how to show Respect for the land when doing new land uses (Joachim and Raymond) -How can we show respect for the land but still have development? -Are there areas or times when we should not have development?	Nahecho Ke Centre
10:30 AM	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	
10:45 AM	Place Name Mapping (Herb and Tim)	
12:00 PM	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Nahecho Ke Centre</i>
1:00 PM	Healing Discussion (Margaret Vandell) -Healthy Land, Healthy People, Healthy Culture	
3:00 PM	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	
3:15 PM	What are the challenges in maintaining a healthy land, people and culture? How can we make good land use decisions to promote healthy land, people and culture?	
5:00 PM	Closing Prayer	
5:30 PM	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Nahecho Ke Centre</i>
<b>Evening</b>	<b>Traditional Handgames (male only)</b>	<b>Nahecho Ke Centre</b>

## **Thursday, April 1st**

7:30 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Deh Gáh Got'ie Kúé (Senior's Home)</i>
9:00 AM	Opening Prayer Importance of the Drum (Modeste Pierre) -Purpose of the Drum -Have Drummers perform some songs -Discuss songs, relevance, importance, why/when they are used	Nahecho Ke Centre
10:30 AM	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	
10:45 AM	What ceremonies or activities should people do before harvesting animals or resources from the Earth? (Joachim and Raymond)	
12:00 PM	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Nahecho Ke Centre</i>
1:00 PM	Summary of Discussions (Joachim/Raymond)	
3:00 PM	<i>Nutrition Break</i>	
3:15 PM	Recommendations for bringing Dene Nahodhe into Land Use Planning (Joachim/Raymond)	
5:00 PM	Closing Prayer	
5:30 PM	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Nahecho Ke Centre</i>
<b>Evening</b>	<b>Drum Dance</b>	<b>Nahecho Ke Centre</b>

## **Friday, April 2nd**

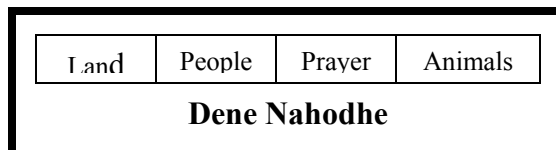
7:30 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Deh Gáh Got'ie Kúé (Senior's Home)</i>
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Travel home (with bag lunch)

# APPENDIX 3: FACILITATOR MEETING NOTES

March 31, 2004

- People asked for help
- Creator sent Yamoria
- Yamoria brought order and explained Dene Laws
  - Respect for each other and animals (very detailed)
  - How to pray
- How do you take care of the land?
  - Spirituality
    - Prayer Ceremony
    - Talk to the land
  - Physically
    - Don't litter, spit, throw garbage
- Traditionally there was development as well
  - Make camps, cut wood, build things
  - Followed protocols when doing so (very precise)
  - Cleaned up when done (reclamation)
- How do we apply this same thing to modern day development (e.g. forestry)?
  - Dene principles would suggest selective cutting over clear cutting (take only what you need)
  - Use it all (don't waste) – do salvage logging, build secondary processing industries
  - Do a ceremony to ask permission to take from the land
  - Have a monitoring group
  - Do full reclamation
  - Do a thank you ceremony
- If the teepee represents the one house concept of our plan, then Dene Nahodhe is the foundation on which it sits



How building on “Nahodhe” as a foundation for land use planning is going to look like

Nahodhe “Dene Laws”	Land Use Map
Law #1	Application
Law #2	Application
Law #3	Application
etc.	etc.

- Immediate Short-term Goal: To develop an interim document to protect further development
- Long-term Goal: To increase knowledge of “nahodhe” by targeting our “new people”