



**NIHADI XA**

Annual Report 2015



# CHAIR'S MESSAGE BY TOM UNKA

## WELCOME TO NI HADI XA'S FIRST ANNUAL REPORT!

As Chair, I am pleased to present this introduction to Ni Hadi Xa (NHX) - the arms length environmental monitoring group established for the Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine. Through this Annual Report, we would like to share with you how we came about, how we're structured, and what it is that we do. It has been a busy year for us, as we've been laying the foundation for the future.

A significant part of our effort to date has been to establish the Governance Committee, to hire staff, and to plan the Ni Hadi Xa cabin. The Ni Hadi Xa cabin will be used to undertake monitoring activities in the area around the mine site.

Since the beginning of 2016, we have been working to move our cabin building materials up the winter road. We are now starting to build the cabins as the summer approaches.

More work will remain for the summer, but our focus will shift towards developing and starting the Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Program and the Family Travel Program.

As the materials are moving north, so are our Traditional Knowledge Monitors. Starting from Lutsél K'e, they have been rebuilding the traditional trails and establishing the winter route up to the mine area where the Traditional Knowledge Monitoring and Family Program will take place. Many of the old trails needed to be cleared again - with logs and brush requiring attention. Some were not passable in this unusually warm winter we are having.

Our aim is to have the infrastructure built by summer and be hosting the first visitors in the Family Cultural Region by late summer. When there, our hope is to have families and community members hunt, trap and fish in the area. Our Traditional Knowledge Monitors will interview participants of the Family Travel Program, looking to participants to help understand how the land is reacting to the construction and operation of the mine. The Traditional Knowledge Monitors will also be monitoring the land, water, and animals around the mine through the use of their Traditional Knowledge.

We look forward to working with the communities and the members of all of our signatories - so please don't hesitate to contact our staff or the Governance Committee representatives if you have any questions or concerns!

## OBJECTIVES

Ni Hadi Xa was established by a stewardship agreement between five Indigenous Parties and De Beers Canada. The agreement is to provide ways to ensure that the impacts of Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine on the Indigenous Parties' rights, their traditional lands, their relationship to the land, water and wildlife, their social, cultural, economic and spiritual values, economic well-being, their way of life and the environment are avoided or minimized;

- ★ Respect and protect land, water, wildlife, plants and the land-based economy that is essential to the way of life and well-being of the Indigenous Parties, for present and future generations;
- ★ Ensure ongoing review of environmental monitoring and management plans, activities, and reports of De Beers and the regulators in relation to the Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine;
- ★ Use Traditional Knowledge to monitor the effects that the mine has on the land, water, fish, and wildlife;
- ★ Ensure ongoing review of priority issues and monitoring through provision of technical advisory resources and third party review;
- ★ Make recommendations to De Beers with respect to these objectives;
- ★ Equally use traditional knowledge in environmental monitoring of the mine;
- ★ Provide a formal mechanism to confirm De Beers' environmental and social commitments in the case of uncertainty or disputes; and
- ★ Communicate to the Parties and the public on activities and findings of the above objectives.



## STRUCTURE

Ni Hadi Xa (NHX) held its first official meeting on November 26, 2014, where the Governance Committee came together in Yellowknife. The Committee is composed of one member from each of the stewardship agreement's Signatory Parties. The Parties include the Tłı̨chǫ Government, the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, the Deninu Kué First Nation, the

Northwest Territories Métis Nation, the North Slave Métis Alliance, and De Beers Canada. Generally holding a meeting every month, the committee makes its decisions by motion and seeks to have consensus. Of the 30 motions passed to date, only one was not unanimous.

## STAFF

Staff were retained in May and June of 2015. Staff take direction from the Governance Committee and have three individual responsibilities or streams:

### TECHNICAL COORDINATOR

This first role is technical and office based –reviewing the environmental monitoring and management plans. The responsibilities of the Technical Coordinator is aligned to the current environmental and regulatory systems, but includes more thorough reviews for each of the communities to facilitate better and more frequent participation;

### ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR

This second role is observation based – one staff member will be on site 50% of the time, working with the De Beers environmental staff to observe and act as the eyes and ears for Ni Hadi Xa on site. This is to

ensure that NHX has experienced and professional staff at the operations level as often as possible, so that the Governance Committee is aware of incidents; and the Governance Committee is aware of incidents; and

### TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORS

This third role is Traditional Knowledge Monitoring – where our staff and land users are on the land as often as possible, observing what is occurring in the area around Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine. Two monitors are hired to support this effort using their own observations, as well as collecting and recording the observations of the people who participate in the Family Travel Program.

## EXISTING AND UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### TECHNICAL REVIEWS

Technical reviews include the review of environmental monitoring and management plans with regards to the Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine. We have completed a number of technical reviews this year - the largest will be aiding the communities in their review of the Interim Closure Reclamation Plan (ICRP). However, as the project moves from construction to operations, several plans will be reviewed and updated.

### TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORING

The Traditional Knowledge Monitors have and will continue traveling to the Family Culture Region to finalize the site locations of the cabin and wall tents, as well as oversee the construction of the cabin and wall tents. While at site, the Traditional Knowledge Monitors have also been collecting traditional knowledge data. They will be continuing these activities throughout the rest of this year.

### ON-SITE ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

This program is perhaps the most established, as it has the narrowest scope. However, this year we will continue to build linkages in - to the technical review, to the traditional monitoring, and to the Governance Committee.

### VISUAL IDENTITY

After developing the logo and brand materials, we are completing our website and have started developing our communication policy. This effort is all about how we want to communicate with the people that we serve. We expect this to be mostly deployed by summer 2016, with aspects to be updated towards the end of the year.

### FAMILY TRAVEL PROGRAM

We expect development of the program to begin in late spring of 2016. The Family Travel Program focuses on assisting community members to get out on the land and exercise their right to hunt, trap, fish, and gather in the area around Gahcho Kué. We need to figure out the finer details, but we hope to have our first Family Travel Program participants out on the land before the end of summer 2016.

### TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DATA FRAMEWORK

Has just started. As a priority in 2015, it was identified that outside expertise was desired and proposals to develop the Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Program are being considered. This effort has two goals - figuring out how to collect information from participants, but also how we will store and manage that information. We expect this work to start early spring 2016.



# TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITOR REPORT

## CABIN & TENT LOCATIONS

The Traditional Knowledge Monitors came on board in May 2015 and immediately set to work with Lutsél K'e community members to pick a location to build a cabin. This cabin will become the base for the Family Culture Program on the land near the Gahcho Kué mine. The Fletcher -Walmsley Lake area was selected by Lutsél K'e Dene elders and the Traditional Knowledge Monitors as the preferred reference lake area. While the cabin siting has changed a number of times, the initial work allowed the next phases to be started. This cabin will be available for Family Travel Program participants.

A tent frame will be built on Kirk Lake to facilitate the Traditional knowledge monitoring of Gahcho Kué. This lake is in the same watershed as Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine.

## CABIN DESIGN

After a general location was picked, we began designing our cabin and infrastructure needs. Initially a large cabin was preferred, better to house the monitors and the Family Travel Program, but we quickly realized that weight restrictions for shipping would require a redesign and materials for a 20x20

cabin. After a short delay the materials were purchased and we prepared for a fall build, but the weather turned and we were forced to delay until the winter – which wasn't entirely bad as it opened up the winter shipping road.

## SOURCING MATERIALS

As the year came to a close we were working on sourcing the materials and equipment to support the TK monitors and our travel to site. We worked to collect quotes and purchasing materials for a number of larger items, with most of the material bought in early January. With these purchases we began to make arrangements to travel to site, researching the historical routes and working with our people to find the best ways up to Gahcho Kué. The first trips have been to put the trail in during early 2016.

## ESTABLISHING TRAILS

In winter 2016, the Traditional Knowledge Monitors re-established trails to travel to and from Lutsél K'e to Kirk Lake, Walmsley Lake, and Gahcho Kué. These trails may also be used by other community members traveling from the community of Lutsél K'e to the barrenlands.

# ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR REPORT



## YEAR OF 2016

This was a year of change and learning for the Environmental Monitor at site. The Environmental Monitor's job started with a community tour where she quickly gathered a sense of the concerns coming from the communities. The discussions which took place on those days have been used to consider the monitoring work she is doing on site.

From the project's perspective, this past year has provided big changes at the Gahcho Kué Project as DeBeers prepares the site to go into an operational phase. For the very busy 2015-2016 term, the

Environmental Monitor participated in many interesting projects taking place on site, getting to work with - and learn from - members of various communities.

## FISHOUT

Most people are aware of the fishout that was completed here - the Environmental Monitor was a part of the large crew of fishermen. All of the fish that had been caught were processed and distributed to the surrounding communities. The fishout was just one of the projects that the Environmental Monitor has been a part of - but all of her work is documented and sent to the Governance Committee. Generally, the results of these programs can be viewed on both the McKenzie Valley Land and Water Board website and in DeBeers's upcoming annual water license report.

## WILDLIFE

Wildlife has not proven to be a major concern at site - to date there have been a few minor issues, but the Environmental Monitor has been working hard with the company to ensure that wildlife isn't being drawn into the site. It is great to see the shift from past work reports - where the company has often found lots of wildlife attractants to the point where they now see very few. It is expected that this trend will continue as they work to minimize direct impacts from the site.



# TECHNICAL MONITOR REPORT

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015



### FINANCES & ADMINISTRATION

One of the initial tasks for any startup is to establish the financial and administrative approach - developing the budget, work plan and spending mechanisms that will ensure accountability and transparency to the signatories. Our first responsibility is to ensure that we use the resources available to us in a manner that's wise and we're doing that in a way that is clear to all the parties.

### DECISION MAKING

NHX has adopted a hybrid approach for decision making - befitting the experiences and preferences of the Governance Committee. NHX provides resources for their time, allowing the First Nation to develop internal capacity and resources.

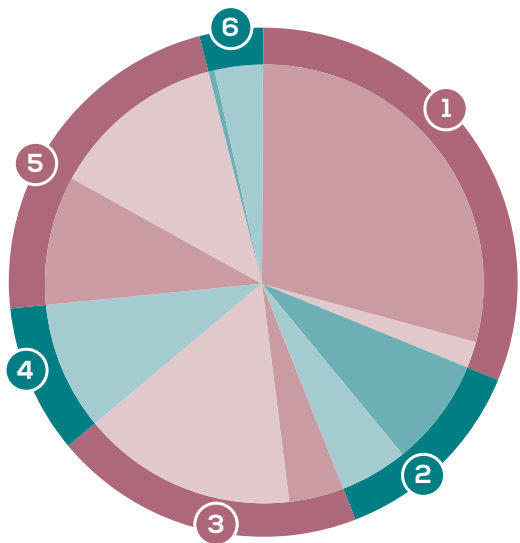
### TECHNICAL REVIEW

As mentioned above, providing technical comments on environmental monitoring and management plans is familiar ground. During 2015 we reviewed the Waste Management Plan, the Standard Operating Procedures for Archaeologic finds, dyke construction plans, and the Aquatic Effects Plan. Comments were provided back to the parties.

### LOGO

Working with the Family Subcommittee to develop the logo for NHX was an interesting and creative process that resulted in quality outcome.

## FINANCES



ALLOCATED    EXPENDED

\$197913	\$185923	1	STAFF COSTS
\$81125	\$49970	2	COMMUNITY SUPPORT
\$126000	\$25296	3	FAMILY CULTURAL PROGRAMS
\$60000	\$0	4	EXPERT REVIEW
\$125000	\$61288	5	IMPLEMENTATION
\$25000	\$2997	6	OTHER

In 2015, Ni Hadi Xa was very conservative with its expenditures - ensuring that projects were planned out before approval and beginning to spend money. Not only is this sound management, but startup dollars are the only opportunity for NHX to acquire the tools and infrastructure that we will need to complete our mandate. The Governance Committee is aware that future budgets are much more austere - we need to conserve our dollars and be open and creative to achieve our goals.

### NOTES

The 2015 allocations include a significant amount of funding that was provided for in 2014, but due to the late start up, very little of that funding was actually spent.

The totals here include a number of projects that were started in late 2015 but expected to be completed within the first three months of 2016. This includes cabin construction, tent frame & equipment mobilization, visual identity and a 3rd party expert review - approximately 20% of the 2015 budget.



# CLOSING

2015 was a good year for Ni Hadi Xa. The high bar we are setting will continue, including implementing goals and targets that are aligned with our objectives. The time lines may be readjusted to existing conditions, however we are committed to adapt our priorities to allow us to accomplish our goals.

NHX is looking forward to 2016 where we strive to build the remaining facets of our organization. Our real monitoring effort will get underway and baseline data collection will begin.

The experts from each of the communities will be a central part of the answer to the questions that we’re considering - the major thrust of our organization will be using the people on the land. What do they observe? What do they think? NHX primarily draws on Dene and Métis Traditional Knowledge.

As our program grows, we hope to have more and more community members involved - particularly the families. We need the experiences of all - men and women, young and old - to ensure that our program is a success.

## TECHNICAL COORDINATOR

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Name

Address

Email

Phone

★ Name one way that Ni Hadi Xa is watching the land.

★ Name two of parties of Ni Hadi Xa Agreement.

★ What year did Ni Hadi Xa start?

CUT & MAIL TO WIN!







Tłı̨chǫ Government  
Micheal Birlea



North Slave Métis Alliance  
Shin Shiga



Lutsél K'e Dene First Nation  
Lauren King



De Beers  
Sarah McLean



NWT Métis Nation  
Tom Unka



Deninu Kué First Nation  
Robert Sayine

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