

SPRING 2021 | VOL 5

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

FIELD REPORT ON CARIBOU HARVEST

YOUR INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS: UPDATES

CANADIAN URANIUM WORKERS STUDY

COMMUNITY LAND TECHNICIANS: HERE FOR YOU

Ya' thi Nééné Land and Resources' purpose is to protect the land, water, and air of Nuhenéné and to promote the people of the Denesufiné First Nations and Athabasca communities that live there.



# WHAT IS YA' THI NÉNÉ?



Ya' thi Néné is a non-profit organization owned by the seven Athabasca Basin communities of Hatchet Lake Denesuliné First Nation, Black Lake Denesuliné First Nation, Fond du Lac Denesuliné First Nation and the municipalities of Stony Rapids, Uranium City, Wollaston Lake, and Camsell Portage.

Our mission is to protect the lands and waters of the Athabasca Basin for the long-term benefit of its Denesuliné First Nations and Athabasca communities, guided by their knowledge, traditions, and ambitions, while being a respected partner in relations with industries, governments, and organizations who seek to develop the Athabasca Basin's resources.



*A message from Garrett Schmidt, Executive Director of Ya' thi Néné:*

**E** dlanet'e. Spring is upon us and it could not come soon enough. After a long winter with COVID restrictions and waves of infection impacting our communities, we're all looking forward to the months ahead as more and more people become vaccinated.

Although COVID restrictions impacted how we have worked over many months, it has not stopped us from advancing our mandate of protecting the land and promoting the interests of Basin residents.

In this edition, you'll read about updates on our Indigenous Protected Area project and how we're very near to identifying boundaries to protect areas throughout Nuhenéné for the benefit of future generations. You'll also be introduced to a new staff member in Uranium City and learn about some of the activities our Community Land Technicians have been doing in the communities and out on the land. We've been busy reviewing permit and license applications for many activities throughout Nuhenéné and have been advancing consultation and engagement with numerous proponents in order to minimize impacts on the land and to Denesuliné culture while accessing benefits that come from the proposed projects.

Last but not least, our EXPORT database is up and running and soon to have corporate partners Cameco and Orano utilizing it by posting their training and employment opportunities on a regular basis. We're proud of our accomplishments over the past few months and particularly over the past year while the pandemic has forced us to make so many changes in how we communicate and work with each other, community members and leaders.

Our fingers are crossed that the vaccination roll out will continue to be successful. We encourage everyone to get their shot. We have lots planned in the coming months, particularly for our Community Land Technicians who will be out on the land fulfilling one of our key mandates - monitoring. In partnership with a number of organizations, our CLTs will be involved in monitoring the health of birds, quality of water, as well as fish, berries and impacts from exploration projects. In addition to monitoring the land, we also monitor the government regulatory systems and industrial developments through research and communication. All of these monitoring efforts are important to support strong decision making that protects Nuhenéné for the benefit of Basin residents.



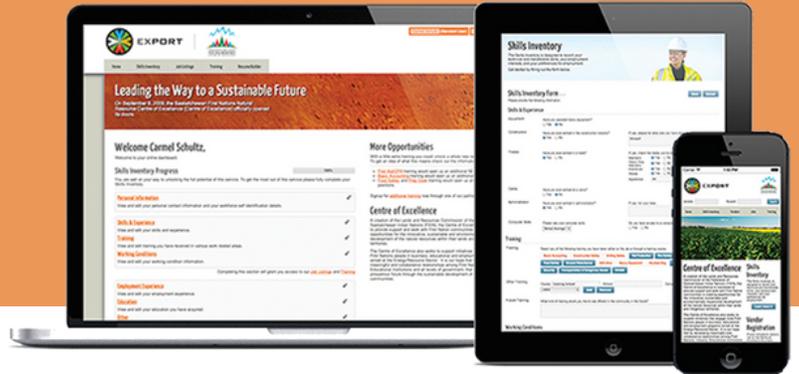
# EXPORT

This online resource will help connect all community members to new employment, training, and contracting opportunities available in the Athabasca Basin.

Visit [www.yathinene.ca](http://www.yathinene.ca) to create your personal profile and to receive notifications updating you on upcoming opportunities.

## Export is an easy to use tool that:

- Is free, accessible online and is mobile friendly
- Instantly starts building your resume as you create a profile
- Allows you to store your tickets and certifications so you never lose them again
- Access to search Job opportunities
- Gives you access to training Opportunities
- Helps you help your community



Edl'ánet'e, hello!

# THE YA'THI NÉNÉ EXPORT DATABASE IS HERE!

## Supporting training and employment in the Basin

CREATE A PROFILE WITH THE YA'THI NÉNÉ EXPORT DATABASE AND BE ENTERED TO WIN! Prizes valued up to \$2,000!

We will be announcing winners on the Ya'thi Nene Lands and Resources' Facebook page once we reach our goal of 250 Basin user-profiles!

Visit our Facebook page for updates, and for more information, contact:

**Terri-Lynn Beavereye**  
**Black Lake**  
 306 - 2 8 4 - 3000 (e x t . 2 2 2)  
[tlbbeavereye@hotmail.com](mailto:tlbbeavereye@hotmail.com)

**Tiffany Toutsaint**  
**Fond du Lac**  
 306-686-2102 (ext. 232)  
[tiffany.toutsaint@outlook.com](mailto:tiffany.toutsaint@outlook.com)

**Doris Besskkaystare**  
**Hatchet Lake**  
 306-633-2003  
[dbess.hlb@sasktel.net](mailto:dbess.hlb@sasktel.net)

**Dene Robillard**  
 306-477-1251  
[dene.robillard@yathinene.ca](mailto:dene.robillard@yathinene.ca)

**CREATE A PROFILE WITH THE YA'THI NÉNÉ EXPORT  
 DATABASE AND BE ENTERED TO WIN!**

**With prizes valued up to \$2,000**



# Indigenous Protected

# Conservation Areas IN NUHENÉ

## What's an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)?

IPAs are usually defined as conservation areas whose creation and ongoing management are Indigenous led, with Indigenous Peoples having the primary role in determining what is important to that specific IPA. That includes things like the values and objectives that the IPA holds as sacred, the boundaries of the IPA, the management plans for the IPA, and the governance structures for the IPA.

For the Nuhenéné IPA, this means that the Athabasca Denesúliné decide what values and priorities will guide and direct all work being done to develop protected areas. The communities also all get participation in the process of determining where the protected areas will be located and their size. Elders, youth, leadership, and land-users are involved every step of the way. This is Nuhenéné, and it is important to us so you have your say.

## Ya'thi Néné Land and Resource office has been busy moving the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) project forward!

There are many tools that are available to the Athabasca Denesúliné to protect the land, water and animals. Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) are an important and exciting option for Nuhenéné. IPAs will afford high level, legislated protection from impacts of development. Indigenous Protected Areas are areas where the communities will lead the development, location, and management of these areas. The Athabasca Denesúliné have always been guardians or stewards of the land and water. By developing Indigenous Protected Areas, the communities will have a tool to ensure that future generations can enjoy and practice their Denesúliné culture.

The goals of Ya'thi Néné when working to establish these IPAs are:

- Protecting the land and water,
- Safeguarding these areas for future generations,
- Be guided by our Elders every step of the way,
- Ensuring that Denesúliné continue to use the land for Treaty Rights (hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering),
- Supporting Denesúliné language.

The areas where we will protect nature and our roots, our connection to our ancestors. They will protect the land, water, and animals. They will be protected from development.

## Where should we protect?

Barren ground caribou are one of the most important species for the Athabasca Denesúliné. For this reason, habitat that is important for caribou was identified as some of the most critical for protection. Because of this, we made sure to include Traditional Knowledge on barren-ground caribou habitat, behaviour and cultural use when looking for areas to protect. By protecting land that is important wintering habitat for caribou, we know that we will be preserving our Dene ch'aniyé and Dene ɗat'ú gheña.

We then included areas that were identified from community members, over multiple generations, as important for protection. Consistent, recurring areas were identified as priority areas for protection. These areas highly overlap with known important habitat for barren ground caribou. These areas became priority areas for protection.

Finally, of these high priority areas, we further refined the boundaries and had several options, per community, to review with community members. Community Land Technicians have worked hard interviewing community members one-on-one on where they thought the Protected Area should be located. Approximately 50 interviews per First Nation community were conducted, plus 20 in Uranium City. YNLR staff also travelled to Camsell Portage to speak to the community members directly on the proposed boundary in proximity to Camsell Portage.

IPAs will always allow for hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. The Denesúliné ɗat'ú gheña (way of life) or Denesúliné Ch'aniyé (culture) will be protected.

Rules surrounding other economic activities, such as outfitting, eco-tourism, commercial fishing, etc. will be decided by the communities during other engagement in the future. There will be no restrictions placed on hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering within any Indigenous Protected Area.

*Pictured: Ice road to Uranium City (left) and the road to Camsell Portage (right).*



Results from these interviews confirmed that critical winter caribou habitat and migration routes were priority for protection for the communities. Followed by hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering areas, water protection and important cultural sites. Although many members were not opposed to mineral development in Nuhenéné, the majority agreed that the IPAs should be areas protected from exploration and mining.

### **Comments from Interviews:**

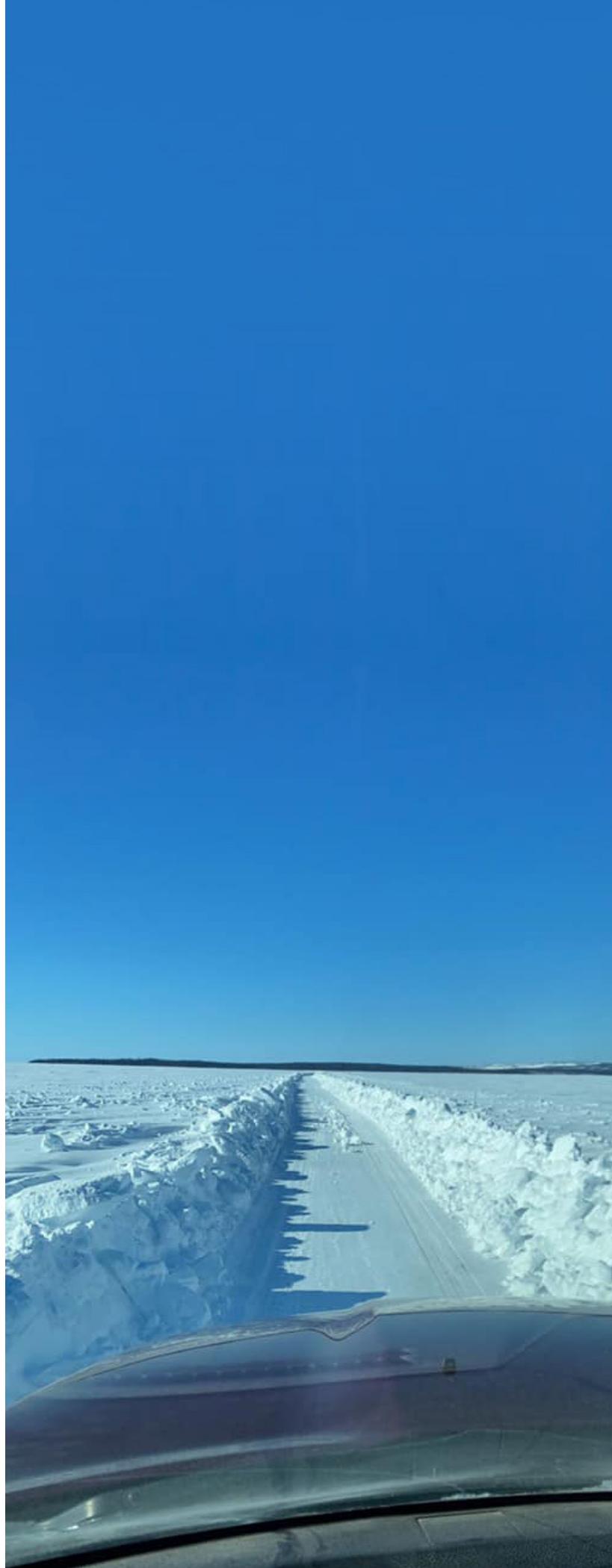
- “This project is good for us, our creator made this earth for us so we can use it wisely...this will benefit us for our future generations, our caribou is what we have to protect, because if we don’t speak for our caribou, then they can’t speak for themselves.”
- “This is a good project for us in the Athabasca Region. It’s good for our future generations”.
- “This is our land and we should have every right to our traditional lands. This is for future generations to come so we must protect our lands and water for our children”
- “Work with Elders, they carry a lot of history and they are our guides”
- “Traditional cultural programs should be established once it is finalized.”
- “It is better to do interviews one on one, because I can’t speak in public. More interviews like this, that way our voices are heard”

Protected Area options selected by interviewees were analyzed and this analysis generated preferred boundaries for the IPAs. This is an exciting time, as these IPAs are finally starting to take shape. YNLR has presented these draft parcels to the Athabasca Land Protection Committee (ALPC) and leadership on April 27th, 2021 in Prince Albert, SK for review and comment. The ALPC and leadership have determined that community meetings should be presented with the draft IPA maps for feedback. Therefore, YNLR is now planning to continue with some direct community engagement in the coming months.

The development of Indigenous Protected Area Management Plans and Denesųliné names for the IPAs will also be part of our plan moving forward. The identification of a governance structure will also be important.

### **What will Protected Areas be protecting from?**

IPAs will have the highest protection available out of all the tools available to the Athabasca Denesųliné for protecting the land. Mineral development is one activity that would not be allowed. Some areas that have been identified as priority for the Athabasca Denesųliné to protect are also lands that have been shown to be high in mineral potential. This means that there are some mining and exploration companies that are also interested in being able to conduct activities in these areas. Therefore, communities will have to consider whether to include high mineral areas in the Indigenous Protected Areas.



# Ya' thi Néné and the DUTY TO CONSULT

When Ya' thi Néné was formally established in 2016, one of its central mandates was to assist in the Duty to Consult process and ensure that the voices and concerns of the Athabasca Denesųliné were heard and taken into account every time government and industry wanted to develop in Nuhenéné.

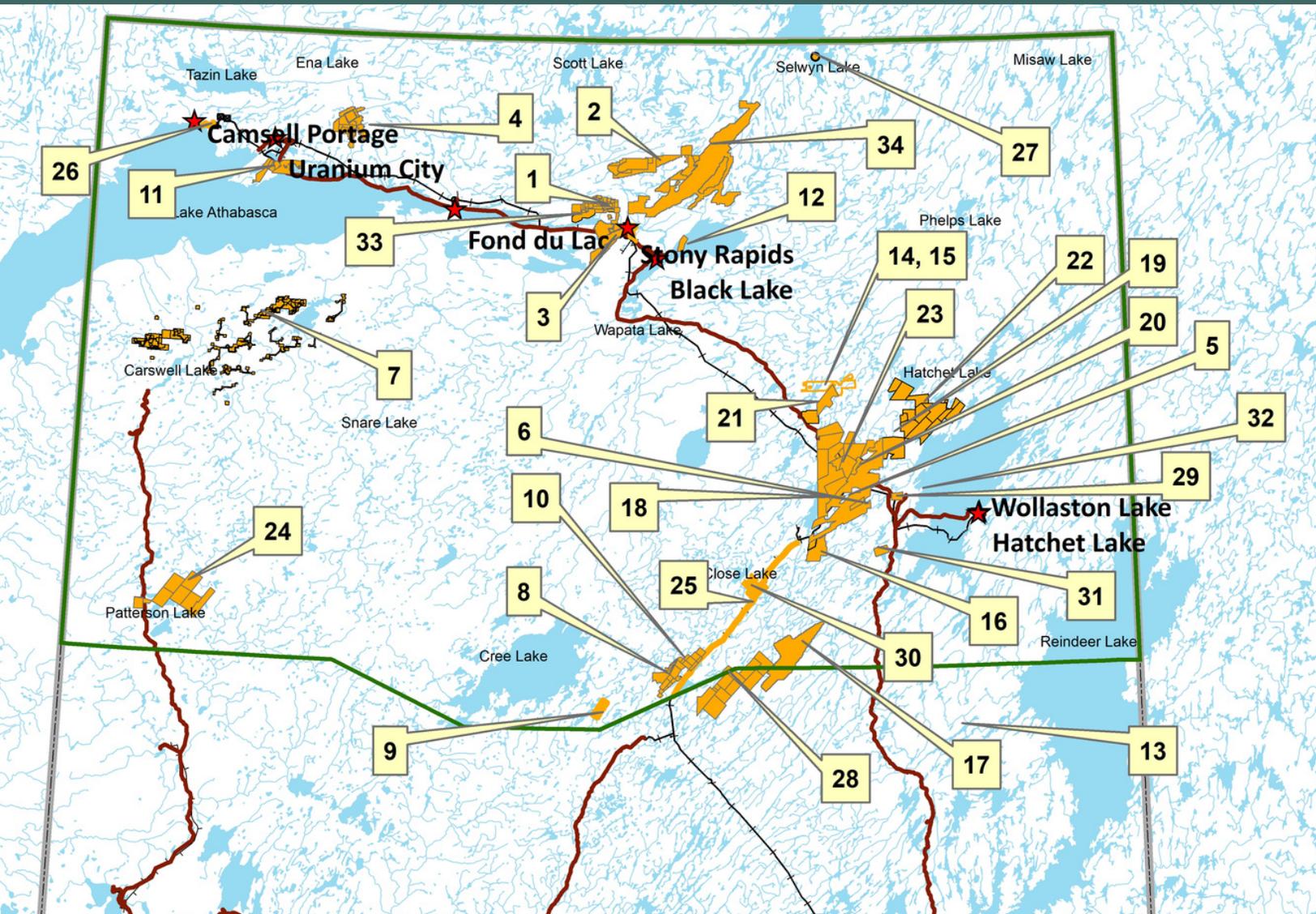
Since October of 2019, we've been doing just that. Every time the Duty to Consult process is triggered by a potential project that may threaten a First Nations' right to hunt, trap, gather, or fish, the government must consult with the First Nations in question.

That's where we come in. When the Nation is notified, so are we— and we begin immediately to make sure your interests are being safeguarded. We make sure that government and proponents are consulting and engaging the people. We analyze the permit, we examine our Traditional Knowledge database, develop maps, and consult the chief and council, land users, and wider communities.

The size of the permitted area does not imply the scale of the work. For example – there could only be 15 – 20 exploration drill holes in the entire permitted area. The 34 'Active Permits' identified on the map in our Spring 2021 edition represent permits that YNLR has been made aware of by the government or directly by the proponent. If permits expire they are removed from the map. If permits have not been issued yet by the government, they are not included. Also, some companies receive permits but do not perform work.

The respective companies represented on the map (see list) have all granted approval for Ya' thi Néné Land and Resource Office to share their permitted areas. For more information on project status, Basin residents are encouraged to contact their Ya' thi Néné Community Land Technician or Environmental Land Use Planner (Shea Shirley, shea.shirley@yathinene.com).

These 34 icons indicate permits that YNLR has been notified of or have been shared via the proponent.



	<b>Proponent</b>	<b>Permitted Activity</b>	<b>Permit Expiration</b>
1	ALX Resources Firebird Nickel Program	Exploration	May 2022
2	ALX Resources Flying Vee	Exploration	April 2022
3	ALX Resources Gibbons Creek	Exploration	December 2022
4	Appia Energy Corp. Alces Lake	Exploration	March 2022
5	Cameco Dawn Lake	Exploration	December 2023
6	CanAlaska Waterbury	Exploration	March 2022
7	CanAlaska Western Athabasca	Exploration	December 2022
8	Denison Mines Corp. Moon Lake	Exploration	December 2021
9	Denison Mines Corp. Ford Lake	Exploration	December 2021
10	Denison Mines Corp. Wheeler River/Advanced Wheeler River	Exploration	December 2021
11	Fortune Bay Goldfields	Exploration	April 2022
12	Forum Energy Fir Island	Exploration	May 2022
13	Forum Love Lake	Exploration	March 2022
14	IsoEnergy Larocque East	Exploration	March 2022
15	IsoEnergy Larocque East Temporary Work Camp Expansion	Exploration	March 2022
16	IsoEnergy Tower	Exploration	October 2022
17	IsoEnergy Gemini	Exploration	October 2022
18	Orano Canada Inc. Waterbury UEM	Exploration	December 2023
19	Orano Canada Inc. Wolly	Exploration	December 2023
20	Orano Canada Inc. Midwest	Exploration	December 2023
21	Orano Canada Inc. Waterfound	Exploration	December 2023
22	Purepoint Uranium Group Inc. Red Willow	Exploration	December 2021
23	Purepoint Uranium Group Inc. Henday	Exploration	December 2021
24	Purepoint Uranium Group Inc. Hook Lake	Exploration	December 2021
25	SaskPower IP3 Transmission Line	Power Line Vegetation Maintenance	December 2021
26	SaskPower CR-403 Camsell Distribution Line	Power Line Vegetation Maintenance	Fall 2021
27	Selwyn Lake Lodge	Legitimize an Existing Lagoon	2025
28	Skyharbour Resources Ltd. Moore Lake	Exploration	December 2021
29	UEX Corporation Vixen Lake	Exploration	December 2023
30	UEX Corporation Christie Lake	Exploration	December 2023
31	UEX Corporation Dwyer Lake	Exploration	December 2023
32	UEX Corporation Pow Bay	Exploration	December 2023
33	UEX Corporation Axis Lake	Exploration	December 2022
34	KoBold Energy Metals	Exploration	October 31 2022

## POWERING PEOPLE WHEELER RIVER

Denison Mines' Wheeler River Project located 35km north-east of the Key Lake mill is a proposed uranium mining project using the In Situ Recovery (ISR) mining method.

The Wheeler River Project team will be organizing an online meeting for Athabasca Basin region residents soon to present this project.

Watch for upcoming advertising on Facebook with details for this event. Learn more about Denison, the Wheeler River Project and ISR at [www.DenisonMines.com](http://www.DenisonMines.com)





# Land Issue: Fond Du Lac Loader Incident

On March 2, 2021 a front-end loader broke through the ice offshore from Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation. The loader was partially submerged in the water 100 yards from the freshwater intake and about 300 to 400 yards from the shore of the community. Our Community Land Technician (CLT) Derek Cook reported the issue to Shea Shirley, our Environmental Land Use Planner on March 10, 2021. Cook reported the issue due to increasing community concerns about the oil, hydraulic fluid, and diesel that were leaking into the lake from the loader.

In addition, there was increasing concern due to a community water hole (residents that do not have running water obtain their drinking water directly from the lake) that was located directly by the loader that residents were using. The water hole had been relocated since the accident, but was still downstream from the loader. There were also fishing holes and fishing nets downstream of the loader that were used for harvesting and contribute to the food security of the community. The submerged loader posed a direct risk to the safety of community members of Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation. Community members were greatly concerned on the impact of contamination through drinking the water (which had been consumed) and eating the fish.

Ya'thi Néné Land and Resource Office (YNLR) filed a report with the Provincial Spill Line on March 11, 2021. We provided information to the Ministry of Environment and Water Security Agency. The Ministry of Environment provided a response on the same day of March 11, 2021, informing YNLR that the Department of Highways did not want to break the ice to remove the loader because it would impact the ice road that was used for mining and cost over 1 million dollars to construct. The solution provided was that the contractor would place a boom around the loader to prevent any additional leakage and it was indicated that there were 100 litres of fuel left and that it was considered 'very low risk.'

Due to limited additional information provided, YNLR continued to communicate with the province to acquire additional information. On April 7, 2021 the loader was removed from the ice.

If you or someone you know comes across a land issue, please report it to your local CLT or Environmental Land Use Planner.



## EARMMP

Eastern Athabasca Regional Monitoring Program



Collecting and testing traditional  
country foods since 2011!

Visit [www.earmp.com](http://www.earmp.com) to learn more.



Updates  
from your

# DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

FACILITATING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE LONG LEARNING IN THE BASIN

By Dene Robillard, Ya' thi Néné Development Coordinator

## Pathways Project Update

If you are interested in upgrading your academic skills to help you succeed in your future post-secondary program of choice, this pilot project could be for you! Northlands College and SIIT, in partnership with the communities of Black Lake, Fond du Lac, and Hatchet Lake, are considering a pilot project for both previous and recent grade 12 graduates who want to upgrade their academic skills. If there is enough interest from students, Phase One of the pilot project is proposed to take place in Fall 2021.

Phase One includes: Northlands College works with students to do testing that helps the student see where they are at academically. SIIT works with applicants to do career pathing for those who have done the academic testing. Career pathing helps students figure out what careers are suitable for each person and what is needed to pursue these careers. Career pathing is only available to students who have completed the academic testing.

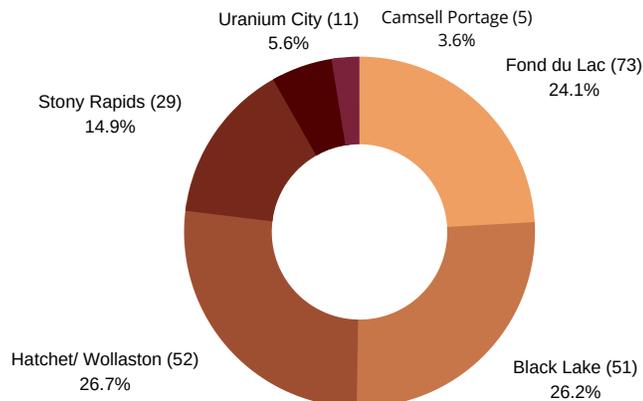
PAGC-Dene/QM Points will provide a student allowance for the assessment portion of the program. Please note: To be considered for the program in Fall 2021, you must have completed BOTH the testing and career pathing before June 30, 2021.

This date is subject to change if the COVID-19 situation does not allow Northlands College/SIIT to proceed with testing. After the testing and career pathing take place, it will be determined if the proposed program is feasible. If it is feasible, the current plan is:

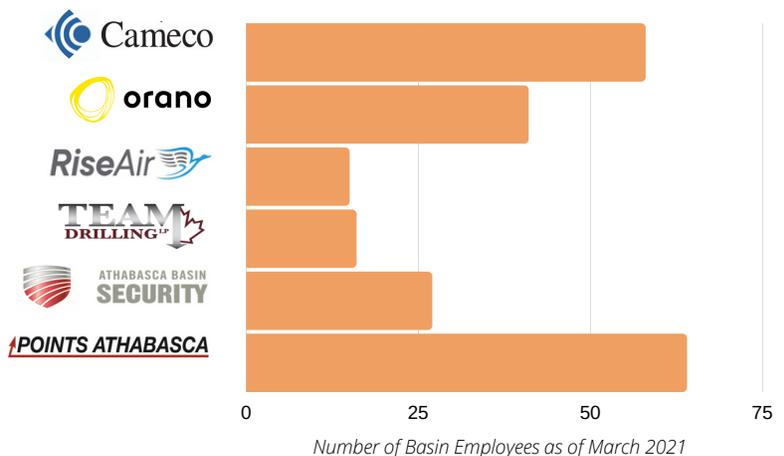
- The upgrading program would potentially start in Fall 2021 and/or Winter 2022.
- The upgrading program would be held in Stony Rapids to allow a regional approach. Please note that you must be willing to relocate to Stony Rapids while you are participating in the program (approximately 9 months). We would send out details of dates, locations, and times later.
- Phase One (testing and career pathing) approximate community visits are as follows:
  - **BLACK LAKE (end of May);**
  - **HATCHET LAKE (end of May);**
  - **FOND DU LAC (mid-June).**

Thank you to those who have already showed interest and consideration in this initiative. Both Northlands College and SIIT are excited to partner with your community and to explore the opportunity to provide this exciting program! If you have any questions or comments, please contact Dene Robillard, Development Coordinator (dene.robillard@yathinene.com) or your local Economic Development representative.

## Employees by Location



## Basin Employer Statistics



These charts provide the Q1 (Jan-Mar 2021) employment statistics for both Cameco and Orano, and eligible Basin-owned businesses supported through the Collaboration Agreement (excluding Athabasca Catering).

# Community Land Technician Field Report

## Observation on Wastage, Southern Hunters and Land Issues

On March 24, 2021, Jean Tsannie and Ian Donard went on a three-day trip, leaving from Wollaston Lake travelling northwards to observe land issues related to abandoned exploration camps and wastage of caribou meat. At first, machine issues and reduced visibility due to the snow made it seem like it was going to be a long trip. Luckily, things began to run more smoothly once they met a hunter after passing a portage near Wollaston. During their travels, they saw winter birds and tracks of marten along the shoreline on the side of Gillander Lake.

After travelling for six hours to Maguire Lake, Manitoba, they had a break and continued to Kasmere Lake Lodge, where they met with other hunters. Jean and Ian took pictures of the site and documented its surroundings due to concerns about Dene traditional land, and how hunters were leaving these places behind. Once they finished, they continued onward another 3-4 hours to Kasmere Lake. Some of the lodges observed along the way were a mess. They spent the night here, along with other community hunters. No hunters from southern communities were seen on this trip.

*Pictured left:  
Community Land Technicians Jean Tsannie, Ian Donard and community member Jacob Joseyounen.*



The next morning, after observing more of Kasmere Lake, they set off for Goose Lake, Manitoba, which is about three hours from Kasmere Lake. On the way, they observed caribou pellets and some harvesting sites along the shoreline. There was no wastage seen at the observed sites.

After arriving at Goose Lake, they met with other hunters, who pointed them in direction of caribou. The hunters decided to break trail to Boal Lake.

Being the only female, Jean was asked to wait by the shore with toboggans left behind by the hunters. Ian went along with the hunters to observe them and mentioned that “the hunters that we went with were amazing hunters, they did not chase caribou and did not waste anything”. They all did their harvesting of caribou the proper way. The hunt lasted late into the afternoon, so Jean made a fire to keep warm. Finally, two locals came back to pick up their toboggans and led her back to join the crew.



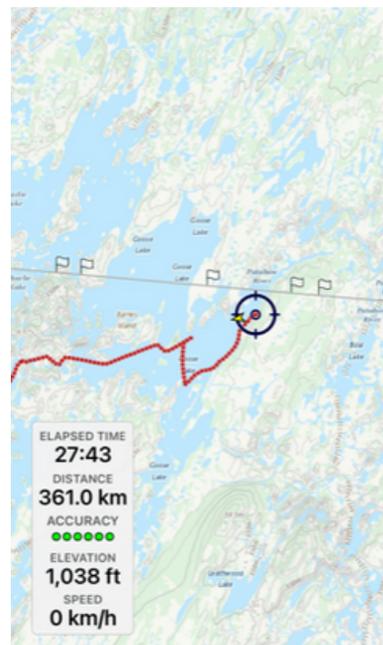
There were no issues with these hunters. They were shooting caribou the proper way; no chasing or leaving any wounded. Once they were done hunting, they gathered and asked one another if everyone had enough to take home to their families. Some did not, so they decided to go hunt some more until everyone had enough, but not more than needed. Once all the hunters were done harvesting at close to midnight, the hunters, Jean, and Ian all decided to head back to Kasmere Lake Lodge. They also completed a land issue form regarding Nuelin Lake Lodge and brought the issue forward with the Government of Manitoba biologist for follow-up.

On Friday morning, after getting ready and loading up gear, it was past lunch hour by the time they left Kasmere lake. It was a sunny day, but the trails were covered with snow. Some hills were so rough that they had to use two skidoos to pull one another up. Jean called her husband to meet them to help break trail which was a big help. It was a bumpy ride all the way from Cochrane River to Wollaston Lake. Close to Wollaston, it was getting very slushy on the lakes, but they all made it back safely. Despite the challenges on their first time travelling to these sights, it was a useful learning experience.

In conclusion, they did not see any issues with southern hunters during this trip. There was generally very little caribou meat wastage seen (neckpieces and leg bones). There was an issue with the garbage left behind from harvesters and a lack of respect for cabins observed. Finally, there was an abandoned exploration camp that was reported to Manitoba.

These hunters were very knowledgeable of the land and caribou. They are a good example of caribou eaters, they were taught well in every way. The way Jean and Ian observed these hunters made them feel welcome and a true Dene person. They take care of each other, and they take care of what they hunt, they show respect to wildlife and to other people they meet with.

“This trip was one of the best! All thanks to the people for guiding us there and back. It was very successful teamwork.”



# Athabasca Community Trust



From left to right Derek Cook, Dusty Augier, Ricardo Adam, Chris Adam, Hunter Isadore, Shaden Stenne, Jasper Pacquette, Aneken Adam, Bruce Martin and Andrew Isadore. Moss Lake, NWT. Cabin built in October 2020 with funds from the ACT. Photo submitted by Derek Cook.

The Athabasca Community Trust is thrilled to welcome new leadership, Chief Kevin Mercredi and Councilors of Fond du Lac First Nation. We very much look forward to working together in the near future. As all the necessary documents required have been provided, we are pleased to see projects get underway. We eagerly anticipate a number of different initiatives launching this year, some of which are directed towards youth, training and equipment.

We have upcoming Trustee appointments to be filled in both Fond du Lac and for the Northern Settlements. We would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to Earl Lidguerre who represented Fond du Lac and Margaret Powder who represented the Northern Settlements for their contributions as Athabasca Community Trustees.

Both Earl and Margaret are original Trustees, serving from 2016 to 2020. As we look back on their time with us, undoubtedly our achievements would not have been possible without their counsel and advice. On both a professional and a personal level, we are grateful for their involvement and support as Trustees.

Due to Covid-19, there has been a reduction in Uranium production in 2020. The Trust will only be offering one round of proposals in the Fall of 2021. The Trust will also be holding their Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the Summer months. Similar to last year, the AGM will be held virtually for the safety of all attendees. Please stay tuned for more information on both the call for 2021 proposals and the AGM.



Cameco

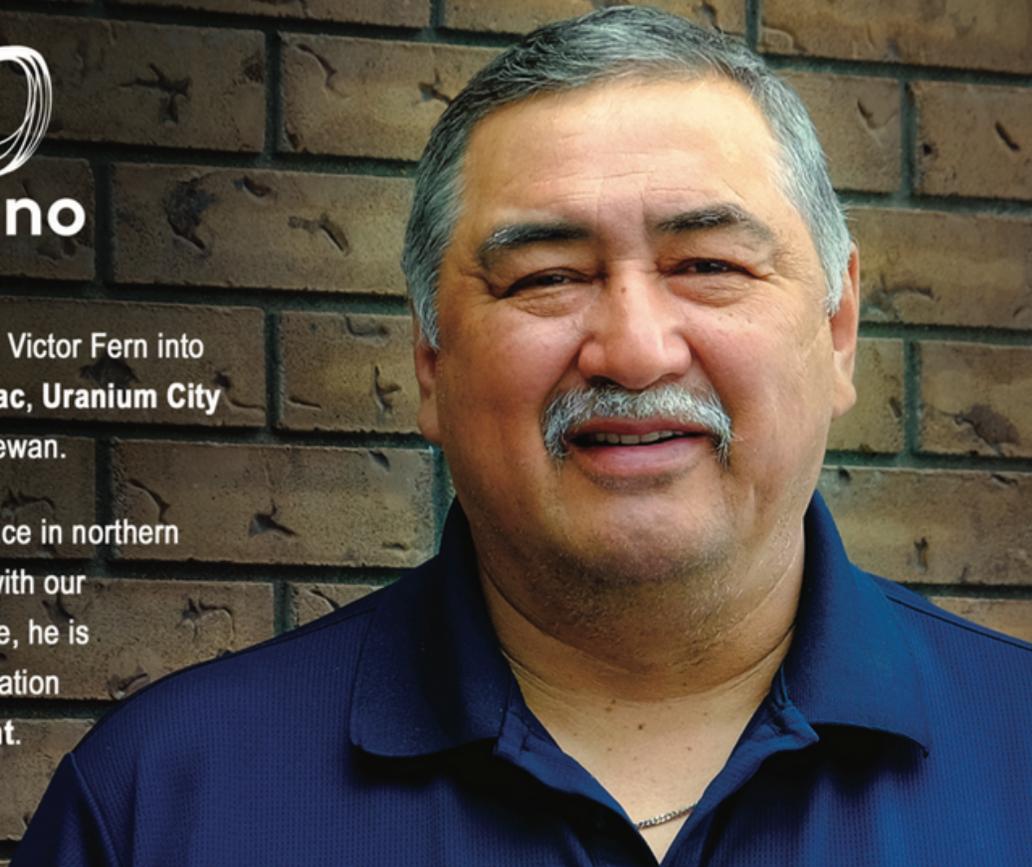
Energizing a clean-air world



orano

Cameco and Orano are pleased to welcome Victor Fern into the role of community liaison for **Fond du Lac, Uranium City** and **Camsell Portage** in northern Saskatchewan.

Victor brings a passion for making a difference in northern communities and a long history of working with our companies to benefit northerners. In his role, he is responsible for assisting with the implementation of the **Ya'thi Néné** collaboration agreement.



**Victor Fern**  
Community Liaison

Fond du Lac / Uranium City / Camsell Portage

Phone: 306-686-2343

Email: victor\_fernsr@cameco.com

The CLTs Derek Cook and Travis Fern flew around the Misaw Lake, SK area and documented wildlife sightings, such as caribou as well as land disturbances.



# community LAND TECHNICIANS IN PROFILE



Drumming: Ya'thi Néné CLT Ian Donard drums with youth drummers, on Black Lake near Fir Island. This ceremony was performed prior to Forum Energy starting their drilling program nearby. Pictured here: Ian Donard, Jayden Robillard, Jessie Sayazie and Darren Toutsaint.

## Ice Safety

The Ya'thi Néné Community Land Technicians along with some community members from Fond du Lac, Black Lake, Stony Rapids and Hatchet Lake were able to participate in Ice Safety and Rescue Training on March 7-8, 2021. The 2-day course provided valuable information on how to assess ice conditions, to make good decisions and work and travel safely on the ice. They received both hands-on practice and experience with both self-rescue and rescuing others who fall through the ice. Snow machine extraction was also covered. Boreal River Rescue donated drysuits to each Community Land Technician, plus some for the communities of Stony Rapids and Uranium City. Successful participants are now certified for three years!

"That was wonderful training. It may come in handy someday. I enjoyed it!" – Freddie Throassie, participant



## We welcome Margaret Powder, our new CLT for Uranium City/Camsell Portage!



"I was raised by my mother, grandmother, & great grandfather and grew up in Camsell Portage. At the age of 5, I moved to the boom mining town, Uranium City. I now have 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

Today I live in a ghost town, what I see on our land is devastating, what mining has done back in the day, today there are mine clean ups taking place.

I am grateful to become a Ya'thi Néné Community Land Technician, it is Our responsibility to Protect Mother Earth, she provides for all of us and past, present & future generations to come"



## Bird Studies

The Community Land Technicians, along with researchers from Birds Canada will be traveling to the south shore of Lake Athabasca, the Athabasca Sand Dunes, and Tazin Lake to study bird diversity. This study will be ongoing from mid to late June and will include multiple crews and boats. This is part of a larger project that measures bird diversity and abundance in Saskatchewan called the Breeding Bird Atlas. Birds are good indicators of environmental health because they are visible, they occur in all habitats, and they respond quickly to environmental stressors and habitat change.

## Health study digs through data of 80,000 uranium workers

Do you ever wonder about the health and safety of the people who work in Canada's uranium mines, mills or other sites and who regularly handle naturally radioactive materials like uranium as part of their jobs? Epidemiologists Dr. Rachel Lane and Ms. Kristi Randhawa at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) certainly do: they are leading a 4-year study to look at the long-term health of uranium workers in an effort to find new evidence about the role radon plays in lung cancer.

Some of the world's toughest health and safety regulations protect Canadians working in places where uranium is mined, milled, processed and fabricated. The workers and the air they breathe are regularly monitored for exposure to radiation, especially radon, which is released when uranium decays. In fact, today's modern workers often have radon exposures lower than those naturally occurring in the surrounding local communities.

And while past studies found that overall; uranium workers were as healthy as other Canadians. Lung cancer was the only disease associated with radiation where uranium miners had higher death rates than the general male population. This is why Dr. Lane and Ms. Randhawa felt it was important to update these studies and further our understanding of the relationship between radon and lung cancer.

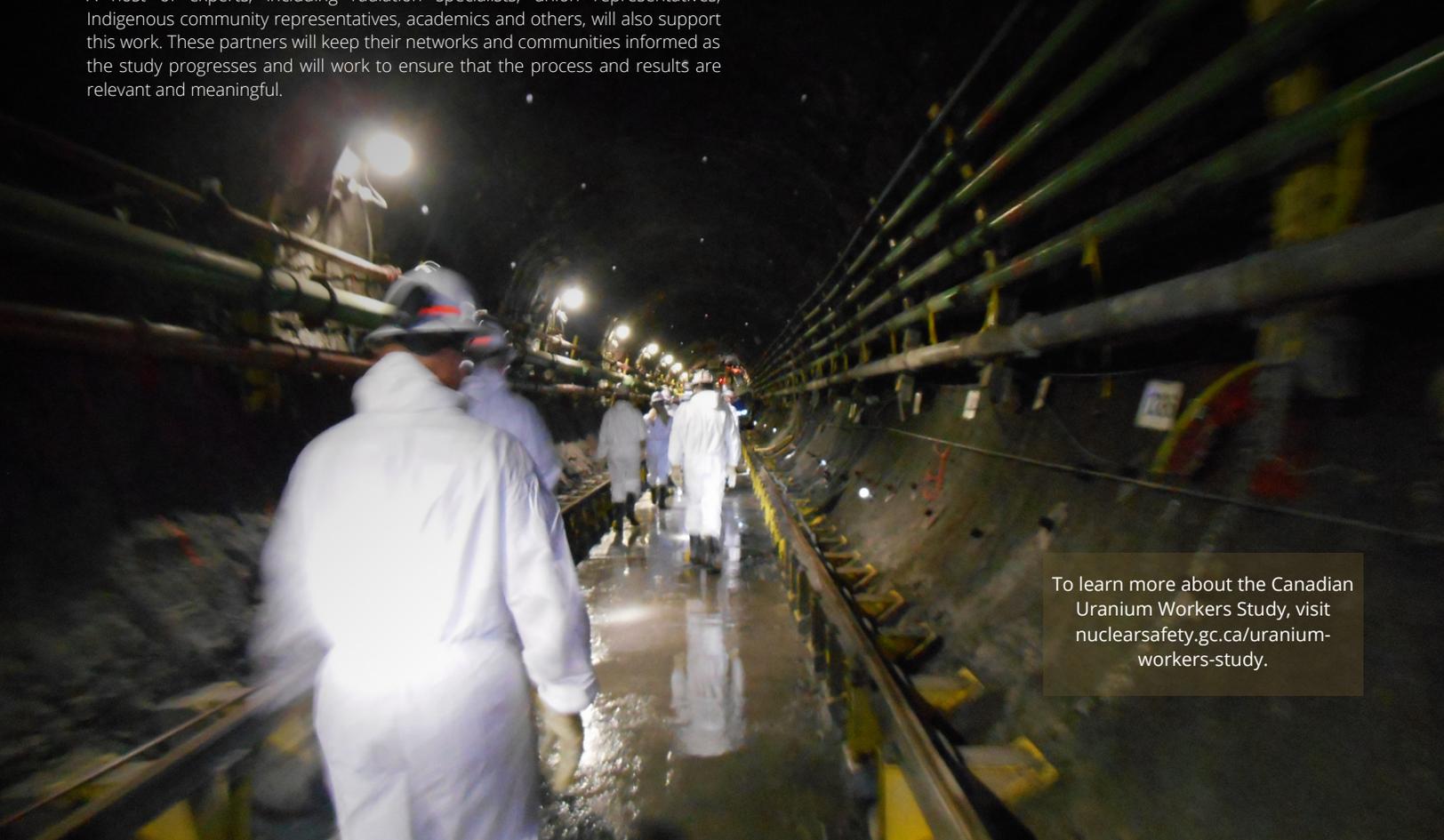
The CNSC team will not be alone in trying to explore these relationships. Dr. Anne Leis and Dr. Punam Pahwa from the University of Saskatchewan's Department of Community Health and Epidemiology will lead a statistical analysis of health data from nearly 80,000 Canadian workers. This sprawling study will investigate the causes of death going back to 1950 and cancer data from 1970 onwards for all types of uranium workers.

These 70 years of mortality and 50 years of cancer data, along with data on workers monitored for occupational exposures to ionizing radiation, will give real insight into the long-term health outcomes.

A host of experts, including radiation specialists, union representatives, Indigenous community representatives, academics and others, will also support this work. These partners will keep their networks and communities informed as the study progresses and will work to ensure that the process and results are relevant and meaningful.



## Canadian Uranium Workers Study



To learn more about the Canadian Uranium Workers Study, visit [nuclearsafety.gc.ca/uranium-workers-study](https://nuclearsafety.gc.ca/uranium-workers-study).



### **Restarting the McClean Lake Operation**

We are pleased to say that the McClean Lake uranium mill has been safely restarted and is now back in production. To minimize further downtime, the site team has spent the past few months on maintenance projects and restart preparations to ensure a smooth transition out of care and maintenance. Unfortunately, due to the pause in production caused by the pandemic, and the necessary timelines for completion of the program, we will not be able to run a Mill Operations Training Program for new trainees this year. We will look for opportunities to ensure this valuable program runs in the future, providing our operations with a qualified local workforce.

Safety continues to be our priority and as such we are reminding all employees and contractors to follow the provincial guidelines to ensure that our site remains a safe and healthy workplace. Now more than ever we need to keep the team healthy, and we are strongly encouraging everyone to get their COVID-19 vaccination when it's their turn.

### **Congratulations Summer Students**

For the next four months we will be hosting two environment trainees, two warehouse summer students, two site services summer students and one radiation protection student at the site. All of these students are from Athabasca Basin communities and they will learn the ropes at an operating uranium mill. The students will gain valuable experience while we gain their energy and ideas during what will no doubt be a busy summer. Congratulations students!

### **Highlights of the Winter Exploration Program**

Orano began winter exploration programs in January with the projects finishing in late March. Orano operated five projects this year and focused in the vicinity of the McClean Lake mill.

The drilling projects were accessed by the Athabasca Seasonal (Winter) Road with exploration and drill crews stationed at Points North Landing or the McClean Lake site. Drill operations occurred at Wolly, McClean Lake, Midwest and Waterbury-UEM. Geophysical surveys occurred at Wolly, Midwest and Waterfound River projects, with a small camp utilized for the Waterfound River survey.

Orano worked with a number of different contractors including Athabasca Basin owned Team Drilling and northern business Patterson Geophysics. Overall, we are pleased with the results of the winter program, which will help inform future programs.

### **JEB TMF Expansion Project Engagement and Workshop**

The tailings management facility expansion project for McClean Lake continues to be top of mind. As we prepare for the September public hearing with the CNSC Commission, the Orano Canada team members continue to meet with interested northern and Athabasca Basin organizations. An AJES (Athabasca Joint Engagement and Environment Subcommittee) workshop is planned for later this spring and we look forward to delving into the details of the project and hearing any questions or concerns.

### **Contact Us**

As always, we welcome questions and comments any time. Please call us at: 306-343-4500 or reach out through our website: [oranocanada.com](http://oranocanada.com) or social media.



## Your Community Land Technicians are here for you.

**YA' THI NÉNÉ'S PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT THE LAND, WATER, AND AIR OF NUHENÉNEÉ AND TO PROMOTE THE PEOPLE OF THE DENESŪHINÉ FIRST NATIONS AND ATHABASCA COMMUNITIES THAT RESIDE THERE.**

That's why we're always on the lookout for issues and observations from residents of the Basin. If you or someone you know has an observation, notices something, or hears a concern related to the land and water, we ask that you report it to one of our Community Land Technicians (CLTs).

When you make a report to your CLT, they will take the time to listen to your concerns and ask you questions. After collecting as much information as possible they will refer the issue to our head office, where research and analysis will be done and actions to resolve the issue will be determined.

Updates will be provided to the person(s) who reported the issue on a regular basis. Issues that are successfully resolved will be communicated to the communities.

Some examples of issues that could be reported include:

- Seeing an outfitter abandoning an out-post camp, leaving debris and garbage
- Finding an abandoned exploration camp with waste left behind
- A sick or diseased animal (e.g. fish with unknown cysts)
- Observations on changes to the environment (animal behaviour, habitat, etc.)
- Issues with hunting/trapping/fishing/gathering

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY LAND TECHNICIAN OR SHEA SHIRLEY AT  
SHEA.SHIRLEY@YATHINENE.COM OR CALL (306) 477-1251.**



# EXPORT

EXPORT is a web-based skills inventory and business registration database built to increase communication between community members and partners operating in the region in order to maximize training, employment and business opportunities in the Basin.

### WHAT CAN EXPORT DO FOR YOU?

EXPORT brings companies and communities together with a database of resumes of skilled individuals. EXPORT was built by and for Basin communities and people, providing a platform to give regional partners a direct connection to Basin residents and Basin businesses to better meet community needs and to maximize regional opportunity.

**JOIN EXPORT NOW TO  
FIND YOUR NEXT  
EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITY.**



**WE NEED CONTENT FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER.**

Send your photos to  
admin@yathinene.com with  
the subject line "YNLR  
Newsletter" to be featured in  
our Summer 2021 issue!



## YA' THI NÉNÉ LANDS AND RESOURCES

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