
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why was the research done?

Before Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho can become a protected area under the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy, its ecological, cultural and economic values must be studied. Renewable resources like wildlife, fish, trees, plants, wilderness, and renewable energy can have economic value. This report studies these renewable resources. It looks at where they are found in Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho, how they are used now, how they could be used in the future, and how important they are economically. This report should help the Working Group and Community of Déline make decisions about how to best protect Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho, and help to write a final plan to manage the areas.

We know that the use of renewable resources is very important from a social, cultural, and spiritual point of view, especially for Aboriginal people. These values have been studied in the Report on Cultural Values for Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho and are not the focus of this report. However, they should be kept in mind throughout this report.

How was the research done?

This report only used information that has already been collected by other people. No new studies were done. The researcher took existing information from written reports and maps, and interviews with people at many Déline, Sahtu, and government agencies. The members of the Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho Working Group have reviewed and commented on this report.

Besides Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho itself, Déline and part of the area around Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho were also studied.

What the report says

1. Trees

The people in Déline use a lot of trees for firewood. Land use maps shows that they harvest some trees from Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, especially along the shoreline.

However, it is believed that very little firewood comes from Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, because it is so far from the community.

There have not been any detailed studies of the timber potential of Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. It is believed that the potential for commercial forestry operations is low because overall wood volumes are low, even though there are some large trees growing on Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. However, harvesting for a sawmill did take place on Sahoyúé in the past when there was a market for it.

2. Plant harvesting

Land use maps show that people from Déline have picked berries and other plants in the shoreline areas of Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. We do not know how much plant harvesting is going on now in these areas.

3. Agriculture

The potential for agriculture in Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho is low.

4. Fishing

There is no commercial fishing happening in the area now. There could be potential for a small fishery in Great Bear Lake that would catch fish to sell locally. It is believed that a large fishery, catching fish to sell down south, would not be successful.

Sahtu beneficiaries from Déline harvest many fish for food, including lake trout. They do most of their fishing near the community, but some of their fish (about 11%) come from the waters on and around Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. Within the candidate area, Deerpass Bay and the southwest shore of Sahoyúé are important areas for fishing.

Many tourists come to Great Bear Lake for sport fishing. This kind of tourism generates a lot of money and is a very important industry for Déline. These tourists fish mainly for large trophy fish, especially lake trout, in Great Bear Lake. We do not know exactly where they fish or how many fish they catch. There are 4 outfitting companies. These companies operate 3 fishing lodges in the area but none on Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. Some of the tourists fish in the lake around Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, often in Deerpass Bay

and Mackintosh Bay. They practice catch-and-release fishing so they probably do not kill very many fish.

The fish in the area grow and reproduce slowly. If too many fish were killed, it would take the fish population a long time to recover. That means that careful management is needed. Because the Sahtu beneficiaries and the tourists use some of the same fish, there is potential for conflict. The needs of the Sahtu beneficiaries have top priority under the land claim agreement.

5. Animals

Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho have good habitat for many animals, including barren-ground caribou, boreal woodland caribou, moose, furbearers, other small game, and waterfowl. Hunting these animals for food is very important to the people of Déline. They do most of their hunting near the community, and a small amount (0.5% to 8%, depending on the species) in Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. Within the candidate area, Deerpass Bay and the southwest shore of Sahoyúé are important areas for hunting.

Trapping is also important to the people of Déline. Trappers take mostly marten. Only a small part of their harvest from 1999 to 2003 (about 4%) came from Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, however, the areas trapped can vary over time. Within the candidate area, Deerpass Bay and the southwest shore of Sahoyúé are important areas for trapping.

It is believed that non-aboriginal hunters – including Déline residents and outfitters – kill a very small number of animals. There are no records showing how many of these animals come from Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, but it is believed that outfitters do not take hunters to Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. Even one outfitted hunt can bring a lot of money to the community. There is one big game outfitter in Déline.

Until now, Déline has had a very small commercial harvest of barren-ground caribou (around 15 animals per year). It is not clear if any of these animals are harvested from Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. This commercial harvest will be stopped, at least for the near future, because of the caribou declines.

It is hard to know exactly how many animals live in or use Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, and whether there is potential to increase hunting or commercial harvesting. There might

be potential to hunt more furbearers and muskox, but there probably is not potential to hunt more caribou right now. The needs of the Sahtu beneficiaries have top priority under the land claim agreement.

6. Arts and Crafts

Some people in Déline use plant and animal parts to make arts and crafts. We don't know exactly where they get their materials, but they may gather a small amount in Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, or from animals they hunted there. Arts and crafts are an important source of income for these people. Bringing more tourists to Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho would probably lead to an increase in arts and crafts sales.

7. Non-Consumptive Tourism

Non-consumptive tourism is tourism that does not involve hunting or fishing. It includes eco-tourism. Some tourists come to Déline to do wilderness activities, historic activities, and boat tours to Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho. Right now, there are only a small number of these tourists each summer. These tourists don't spend as much money as the sport fishermen or big game hunters. However, more and more people are becoming interested in this kind of tourism, so the market is growing. The Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho protected area could help to bring more tourists into the area. This will not happen automatically. A detailed plan to bring tourists to Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho would be needed. The fact that Déline has no all-season road, and the tourist season is short, will be a challenge. Research on how to increase tourism in Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho would be useful. Some of the features that tourists might be interested in are traditional portage routes, beaches, good boat harbours, good camping areas, and hiking trails.

8. Renewable energy sources

Hydro, wind, and solar energy are not being used in Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho now. A hydro-electric project has been proposed on the Great Bear River, but this dam would be far away from Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, and probably have a very small impact on the areas. Wind energy and solar energy probably have low potential, and a big development in

Sahoyúé or ʔehdacho is unlikely because the protected area is so far away from Déline. Some people might be able to use solar hot water heaters, or small wind or solar electric systems to supplement the generators in their own homes or cabins.

What comes next?

There is a lot we do not know about resource use in Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho. We do not need to answer all these questions in order to proceed with protecting Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho. Because the Protected Areas Strategy respects Aboriginal and treaty rights, hunting, fishing, trapping, plant gathering and wood gathering by Aboriginal people will continue in the protected area. However, the protected area could affect sport fishing. It would be useful to have more information on how sport fishing outfitters currently use Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho. Also, an overall tourism study could be done to understand how protecting Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho will affect tourism.

Overall, Sahtu beneficiaries today do less hunting, fishing, and trapping in Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho than they do in the Déline area. However, they do still use Sahoyúé - ʔehdacho, especially the shoreline areas. Deerpass Bay and the southwest shore of Sahoyúé are particularly important areas used by Sahtu beneficiaries for hunting, trapping, and fishing. Final management of Sahoyúé-ʔehdacho should take this into account.