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Denesǫłıne Fishing Knowledge of the East Arm of Tu Nedhé (Great Slave Lake)

FINAL REPORT ON THIRTY INTERVIEWS

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Submitted to:

Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Hay River, NT.

Submitted by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Łutsël K'e Dene Band through the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department conducted thirty interviews of Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation community members to document contemporary and traditional knowledge of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé). This report gives special regard to the community interaction with the East Arm fish populations. An elder advisory committee was formed and consulted through workshops and informal discussions for their input on the study structure. Study questions and the interview methods were collaboratively deliberated through the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department (WLED) coordinators and staff, land and lake users, and the Łutsël K'e Elders. A loose structure of ten interviews per age bracket 15-30, 31-54, 55 and over was selected for the community sampling. Interviews were conducted in April through June 2001 in English and Dene Yatı. Interviewees were asked to comment on twenty-five questions concerning their interaction and use of East Arm fish stocks. A vast territory, this project did not focus on one specific area or topic pertaining to fish in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé). Interviewees were asked for their comments on a wide range of subjects within the arena of fish habitat, such as fishing locations, observations on seasonal variability and availability of stocks, food preferences, history of use, and opinions on the East Arm present and future resource management. The analysis of interview transcripts revealed a wealth of fish information on a host of specific areas within the East Arm. This research intends to provide an introductory review of Denesǫłıne traditional fishing knowledge and touches on contemporary opinions and practices. This study was made possible in part by the financial assistance of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Hay River).

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COVER PHOTO: ERNEST BOUCHER TYING ROCK ANCHORS TO A NET, JULY 2001.

1.0 STUDY DESCRIPTION

The primary objective of this document is to overview the 2001 Traditional Fishing Knowledge Study of the East Arm. This study surveyed the practices of traditional fishing and the integral role it plays in contemporary community life in Łutsël K'e. The interview was the primary vehicle used to gather information contained in this report. Fishing information was acquired from conducting thirty interviews with community members who were asked to answer twenty-five interview questions. From the interview transcripts four themes were identified and categorized into three sub-themes. This report is organized into the four themes, in four sections, each section covering three main sub-themes. Theme division could have concentrated on geographical areas, but rather aspects of the community history were emphasized to organize this report. The interviewee transcript content was divided accordingly. Not all sub-themes will be detailed in full but an outline and sample of the theme formats used during organization is included. Researcher analysis of the theme material was kept to a minimum, as the purpose of this study was to strictly report what was found in the transcripts. The intent of the report is to let the words of the Łutsël K'e community members to speak for themselves, while demonstrating some of the themes that have emerged from this study.

The **first** of these themes, *Home is the East Arm*, documents the Denesǫłıne historical legacy of fishing in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé). A short introduction to the legends and stories that permeate the rich cultural landscape for the Denesǫłıne people of the East Arm will be reviewed. The relationship the people developed through the years in observation of their environment, the specific knowledge they acquired of fish, and the methods used to catch them and the medicinal properties they utilized is discussed within this theme.

The **second** theme, *Making a Living in the East Arm*, documents Elders' personal history on the water, when they were engaged in a cultural transitional experience: Coming in off the land to a small community lifestyle. Present day Elders were born on the land, as were many of their children. Many of these children spent their adolescent years growing up during this transitional period: some spent formative years away at residential schools and then returned to the East Arm after a time away. The grandchildren of today's Elders have had a different childhood growing up in the community, being exposed to life on the land only on weekends, during holidays or school cultural outings. Through this lifestyle shift, many fishing practices and knowledge of habitat and seasonal patterns has changed. We shall explore what people had to say about this from various perspectives, centered around two socio-economic structures that have emerged in the last fifty to seventy-five years: Wage labor through commercial fishing enterprises and tourist fishing lodges on Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé).

The **third,** *Fish Health and Habitat: Where the Fish Are***,** discusses the knowledge of general fish health, habitat and ecology. Good fishing locations and their seasonal variability mentioned by interviewees is demonstrated on

attached maps. Many geographic locations were mentioned repetitively by interviewees. All geographic Dene Yatı (Chipewyan) place names were included if the name was available for that location. These names are set in parentheses after the English name or the explanation that is given for that particular location. Some place names in the process of official verification by Łutsël K'e the Elders have an asterisk after the name, which means that their spelling could be changed after the submittal of this report. The place name research that documented this information is currently being undertaken by the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Traditional Knowledge Geographic Information System Project. The maps generated from the study could be enhanced to better reflect the detail collected within this theme. This topic generated a tremendous amount of information and has great potential for development into a specific study that could include on-the-lake components describing habitat in fishing locations and the mapping of this habitat knowledge.

The **fourth** theme**,** *Vision of the Future: Management and Monitoring,* presents ideas the people of Łutsël K'e have for the future of resource management in the East Arm. Not everyone had resource management directives or policy ideas. Most interviewees still answered the questions associated with this theme and offered their opinions in the form of what feelings they had towards the area that management policies should reflect. Whether pertaining to industrial development or conservation, this section provides a view into the vision of some community members concerning the future management and monitoring of the waters of the East Arm.

2.0 METHODS

The goal of the East Arm Traditional Fishing Study was to collect information on the knowledge and the historical legacy of traditional fishing areas and practices within the community of Łutsël K'e, Northwest Territories. The study reviewed and compiled information conducted in previous studies done by the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department (WLED) on fish and practices of fishing. The interview questions were compiled and put through a series of community filters, where a process of elimination and integration created a working draft, used to create a final copy of the study questions. Community researchers held practice interview sessions to test the translation quality of the questions into Dene Yatı. Interviews were conducted either in the home of the participant or in the WLED office. Interviewers were equipped with a copy of the study questions, mini-disc recording equipment, pen, paper and a 1991 Department of Fisheries and Oceans chart of the East Arm waters. Interviewees were briefed on the purpose of the study and oriented to the type of questions they would be asked prior to the actual interview appointment. This work allowed for thirty interviews representing a cross-section of community members to be conducted in April, May and June in 2001. Male and female participants were sought from three main age brackets: 15-30, 31-54, and 55 and over.

All members of the community that participated in the study were asked to answer twenty-five questions on a wide range of subjects pertaining to their fishing knowledge. The formulation of the interview questions was multi-faceted and went through a series of filters that required much background work and preparation. Some traditional fishing knowledge interviews had been conducted in the past in Łutsël K'e. A review of published and unpublished data collected by the WLED in past projects was performed, some of which has been quoted in this document. A series of short interviews on Tu Nedhe fish knowledge conducted in 1999 through the *Traditional Knowledge in the Kache Kue Study Region (July-August 1999 Interviews)* is one example of reviewed information. No study was located with the exclusive purpose to report on traditional fishing knowledge in the review. This review helped in the development of questions for the study by identifying those areas already covered by previous studies and discovering gaps in the documentation of community fishing knowledge.

The study questions were formulated in three meetings that included the project coordinator, community researchers, Wildlife, Lands and Environment Committee members, Elders, fishermen and land users. Other more informal collaborations and discussions also took place. The Łutsël K'e Wildlife, Lands and Environment office provided a place for public interaction with the researchers when they were not visiting interviewee homes directly. In all, four drafts were scrutinized for the overall effective theme coverage in the questions, the wording of the questions, and the ease in which the questions could be translated by the interviewer(s) into the Dene Yatı language. The four themes discussed by this report originated initially from a loose structure of the following categories: Fishing prior to European contact (prior tool use to contemporary gillnetting, rod and reel), knowledge of seasonal fish location and habitat, identifying primary purposes for fishing, and East Arm

management as it relates to traditional practices in the community of Łutsël K'e. Further illumination of these themes occurred during the analysis of the transcripts and led to the evolution of the themes presented in this report.

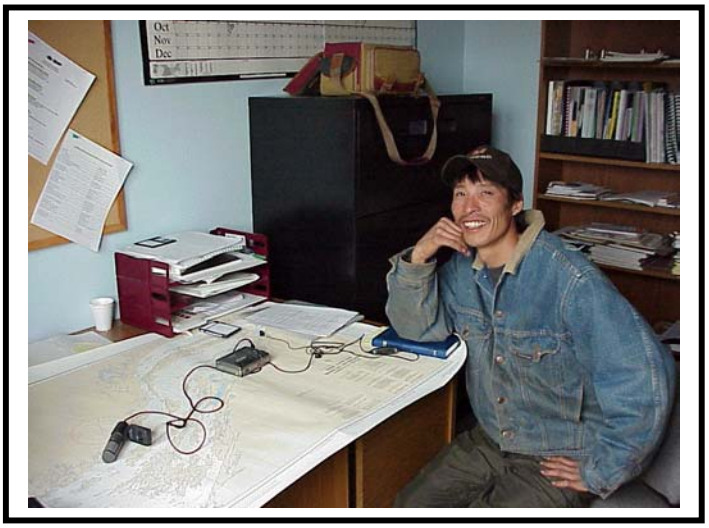

Figure 1: Alec Enzoe during an interview.

All interviews included the use of a Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) East Arm Chart, scale 1: 250 000. This gave the interviewees a chance to point out the fishing areas to which they were referring and often helped to jog their memory. All interviews were taped. Recordings were made on mini-discs allowing for their archiving as a computer sound file in the future. Overlaying clear plastic Mylar sheets onto the East Arm charts during each interview was thought of in hindsight, but should be employed in the future during interview sessions. This would be useful when transcribing the interviews and reporting specific geographic references interviewees made during interview sessions. The length of individual interviews varied from twenty-five minutes to two and half hours! Because this study covered a wide variety of topics pertaining to the traditional fishing knowledge of the community, some individuals had extensive answers for some questions and very little to say for others. Most of the interviews were conducted in English; all Elder interviews were done in Dene Yatı (Chipewyan).

Analysis can assist us to digest new material, think clearly about the many components of a problem or help us see more effectively that which we seek to understand. It is important to note that the Dene understanding of the world does not seek to compartmentalize nor break things down into small parts so that they can be understood. The Dene tend to think critically about a problem or offer a solution in reference to respect and the interconnectedness of life. Rather than to isolate components and break them down into further detail, the Dene would be inclined to take a holistic vision of the surroundings.

The design fundamentals of this study attempted to combine the notions of wholeness yet still subscribe to some compartmentalization for the purpose of analysis. The Denesǫłıne perspective sees all things in the natural world as connected. This was taken into account in the methodology of the question design process. It was realized immediately after a few practice sessions that while very thorough in the construction, some questions were not always the best design for everyone. Specifically for the Elders, answering individual and very specific questions was sometimes perceived as redundant and repetitive to them. For instance, some interviewees, gave an answer for one question which thoroughly covered the areas the interviewer was looking for in ten questions out of the twenty-five that were prepared. The subject matter of the first question might lead them to continue talking, covering other areas related to questions you hadn't asked yet! One might suppose that in certain cases, the interviewee saw a natural connection and thus continued to discuss "fish", in all ways that the interviewee knew about 'fish'. Some interviewers or study coordinators might see this as the interviewee running away with the interview, making for tough analysis. From the interviewee perspective, all that was needed was the first question, not three or four more questions probing the depth of their understanding of a particular subject. These practice interviews helped us to cull the questions, and emphasized that we needed to allow latitude on the way in which people could answer the questions to better reflect the context of their answers.

Paying close attention to the way in which people responded to what we asked as well as how we asked questions during the interviews was very important. Community researchers that conducted interviews with Elders and other individuals in Dene Yatı had to know their material well. If an answer given for one question also applied to another area or question to be covered in the interview, there was no need to ask that question later on during the session. Finally, questions that were found redundant to some interviewees were appreciated by others, and for this reason we maintained twenty-five questions for the final copy of the study questions. (See Appendix 3)

A careful review and organization of the interview transcripts was carried out for analysis. The statistical analysis of the interview answers was considered. It was decided a better method would be to clarify the themes that emerged through the analysis of the transcripts and demonstrate the themes through the words of the interviewees. This would not only illustrate the extensive breadth of traditional fishing practices but the diverse spatial and temporal context of when and how this community knowledge is derived and utilized. This method was determined to more accurately reflect the study objectives, and underscore the emphasis we put on allowing people to direct the interviews to a certain degree. The interviewees quoted in the report are individual comments, but were found to represent a sentiment running through a majority of the transcripts. Statements made by interviewees' that were unique to all those found in the transcripts in certain cases were also quoted. If this happened to be the case for a particular quotation, the reasons for its inclusion in the report were clearly stated. Many interviewees' words were also included in the report that exemplified the type of answers (in length

or structure) that were received especially in the section that discusses seasonal fishing locations and species habitat information.

3.0 HOME IS THE EAST ARM

3.1 WAYS OF SEEING

The heritage of the people of **Łutsël K'e** is inherently tied to the land. The memories and stories of the East Arm of **Tu Nedhe** live within the people. The Elders of **Łutsël K'e** identify these stories with geographical features and vice versa: the story is as alive as the place, and the two are dependent upon one another. Through the eyes of a **Denesǫłıne** Elder the East Arm of Great Slave Lake **(Tu Nedhé)** becomes more than a landscape one derives a livelihood, it takes on a spiritual dimension where collectively a group of people understand their place in the environment on a very complex level. Many of the stories and myths told about the land explain this experience on a level rarely visited by people of our contemporary scientific culture. This quote from a **Łutsël K'e** Elder adequately sets the content of this report within the cultural landscape of the East Arm Dene people:

I will tell you a true story about how it was in the beginning and how ***Ts'ankuı Theda*** *(the "old lady of the falls") came to be. This story was passed on to me as it was passed on from generation to generation. The "old lady of the falls" has been there since the earliest of times.*

It started in the place called ***Kaché*** *(Ft. Reliance* ***(Kaché)****) and* ***?edacho Kué*** *(Artillery Lake). It used to be called Beaver Lake in those days because there was a beaver living there. You could see the beaver's lodge if you happened to be out at* ***?edacho Kué****. People were often in that area because that is where they went caribou hunting in the fall time. Even today Dene people still go there to hunt caribou.*

In those days there used to be a man. His name was ***Hachoghe****. He was a big man. One day* ***Hachoghe*** *saw the beaver's lodge. He could see it because it was on top of a small hill. He decided he wanted to kill the beaver but saw that he would have to get the beaver out of the lodge. So he started to push the dirt to one side. (Today you can even see where he pushed the dirt to one side.) He was so busy digging and moving the dirt that he didn't notice that the beaver had another lodge in the narrows close to the main land. It wasn't far from the main route that the* ***Dene*** *people used when they traveled in that area.*

But the beaver did not stop at that lodge. Instead he went down the Lockhart River ***(Desnéthché)*** *to the main lake –* ***Tu Nedhe****. The people there were starving. When they saw the beaver they thought they may be able to kill him. It was then that* ***Hachoghe*** *saw the beaver and ran after him with a shovel. He threw the shovel into the water but the smart beaver swam away.*

The handle of the shovel broke and **Hachoghe** *had to leave it there, sticking out of the water. That is why when you go to the north end of Ædacho Kué you see a rock sticking out of the water. That is the handle of* **Hachoghe***'s shovel.*

After **Hachoghe** *broke his shovel, he didn't give up. He continued to follow the smart beaver back up the Lockhart River* **(Desnéthché)***. By then the Dene people from* **Tu Nedhe** *were following* **Hachoghe***. The river was strong and the beaver soon got tired and* **Hachoghe** *killed him. The Dene people were so hungry they went after the meat right away. There was enough meat from that beaver for all the Dene people for two or three days. But there was one woman who asked for the beaver's blood.* **Hachoghe** *told her he could not give her the beaver blood because there was not very much left. So the woman sat down at the falls and waited.*

All of the other Dene people followed **Hachoghe** *who was chasing another beaver down the river. They were heading toward the east arm of* **Tu Nedhe***. After a while, the people noticed that the woman was still back at the falls. So* **Hachoghe** *picked two healthy people to go back and look for her. They went all the way back up the Lockhart River* **(Desnéthché)** *and they found her sitting at the falls. She had been sitting there a long time and so she was stuck in the earth. The two people told her that* **Hachoghe** *was asking for her to return to* **Tu Nedhe***. She said, "I cannot return with you. I have been sitting here too long and now I will be here for all eternity." Then she said, "Go back to where you came from. Go back to* **Hachoghe** *and the others and give them this message." So the two people returned to* **Hachoghe** *and the others and gave them the message. This is how the Dene people learned about the "old lady of the falls" (***Ts'ankuı Theda***). From that day forward the Dene people have gone to visit the* **Ts'ankuı Theda** *to pay their respects, share their worries and to ask for help. (ZC)*

This story exemplifies the importance of the northeast corner of the East Arm, the area of **Desnedhé Che** and the place called **Ts'ankuı Theda** ("Old Lady of the Falls" or Parry Falls on the Lockhart River). As well as mentioning many culturally and geographically significant points of reference within the East Arm landscape, this legend tells the origins of the importance of the area and of the 'Old Lady of the Falls' (**Ts'ankuı Theda**) for the **Denesǫłıne** and to "go back to where you came from", the East Arm of **Tu Nedhe**. Another **Denesǫłıne** Elder continues to explain the importance of the area:

The Lockhart River **(Desnéthché)** *has been here a long time, from our ancestors (Old Lady sitting in the falls). Some times she feeds people by killing big game, caribou, moose, by drowning them in the river and sending it down the river for people to pick it up at the mouth of the river. Until today it's still the same, if you ask for help, she'll hear you anywhere you are, she's there to help people. When I was a young man I remember traveling with my parents (deceased) by canoe paddling. We would sometimes paddle to the mouth of Lockhart River* **(Desnéthché)** *and find dead floating caribou. The old lady had fed us today and we give thanks. The caribou was fresh and the weather was good at that time. Not long ago she gave us moose floating down river; that time there were a lot of people traveling. All the people ate moose meat and gave thanks. We have good use for her to be among us out here at Lockhart River* **(Desnéthché)***. She helps people in every which way she can. Today we still visit her every summer to pay our*

respect for our people, our health and to be strong in our spirit. The **Denesǫłıne** *believe she's a spirit that helps all walks of life, even nature and animals. If someone is sick people help that sick person in taking him or her to the falls and leave him or her over night to heal, that time there was a teepee set up back then. In order for her to help you would have to confess all your sins, just like going to church for confession. That is how it's been done to this day. During the winter you can see smokestack from a distance that has caused the rocks around the falls to darken. People who travel looking for caribou during the cold winter months ask her for help if they can't find the caribou around the Lockhart River* **(Desnéthché)**. *The smoke points straight up and at the tip it bends in every which way it points and that's where the caribou is. The people go that way to find the caribou. Once we built house around the mouth of the river, that time we had good life then, some of the log cabin is still standing, there are all types of stories about the Old Lady in the falls (***Ts'ankuı Theda***). (ML 08 00)*

Following the caribou for most of the year meant constant travel as a way of life. The Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) provided a water travel route from well below tree line to Ft. Reliance (Kaché) and over Pikes Portage (Kaché Kaʔá), the common route taken to Artillery Lake (ʔedacho Kué*)* and the Barrenlands. Ancestor and father to many Elders that have now passed away, John Baptiste Catholique, son of an important Denesǫłıne historical figure, details following the caribou and spending time at the settlement of ʔedacho tłazı (Timber Bay, Artillery Lake) as he experienced it in his day:

*After the winter is gone everybody goes back to Fort Reliance (*Kaché*) or somewhere along the Macdonald fault (***Tthe Laré***) or Meridian Lake (***Hok'os Tué***), Macleod Bay (***Kaché Tł'azı****), Snowdrift River* ***(Tędhul Dezé)*** *or* ***Łutsël K'e*** *and by fall, people get ready to go back to Artillery Lake (***ʔedacho Kué***). Sometimes before they even reach Artillery Lake, the caribou are already there and people stay there for a little while before they go back to their houses. People stay to make dry meat, and people were depending on the houses that are at Timber Bay (***ʔedacho Tł'azį***) for winter. (JBC 03 08 84)*

These "houses at Timber Bay" (ʔedacho Tłazı) emphasize the important caribou crossroad and cultural homeland Artillery Lake (ʔedacho Kué*)* was (and is) for the many ancestors of the people of Łutsël K'e. Although people would be continuing to move nomadically on the land, from the interior of the treeline to the Barrenlands throughout the year, they maintained a semi-permanent camp at Timber Bay *(*ʔedacho Tł'azį*)* during the early part of the twentieth century. It is possible to discern that this camp would have evolved from the ability to consistently find caribou in the area year round. Indication of the presence of ***Denesǫłıne*** is also noted on James Tyrell's maps of his 1900 expedition on Artillery Lake (ʔedacho Kué*)*, (*Map of Exploration Survey of Divide between Great Slave Lake and Hudson Bay: Districts of Mackenzie and Keewatin, 1900*). Maurice Lockhart presently one of the most senior of all Elders in Łutsël K' e, reiterates this sentiment in his own words:

*They (***Denesǫłıne***) would go hunting for caribou into the Barrenlands from Fort Reliance* ***(Kaché)*** *to Artillery Lake* ***(ʔedacho Kué)*** *– that is the main route of our ancestors* ***(Thaı Dene***) *into the Barrenlands. Our ancestors used to carry*

canoes and gear with them everywhere they went. You can still see campsites from the olden days when people used to travel through here. People from Yellowknife and Fort Resolution used to travel through here along with our people from **Łútsël K'e***… Back then there was no money. People helped one another harvest caribou and made winter clothes out of the caribou fur – even snowshoes. About this time of year – people would already be in the Barrenlands harvesting caribou meat. At the end of August – that is when people traveled back to the shores (Great Slave Lake) from the Barrenlands. Around this area (***Łútsël K'e***) – they would harvest fish and the women used to work on the caribou hides and make moccasins and winter coats. The men would work and help the women with some tools they would make such as rope and tarps for the dog sleds, harnesses, and teepees. (ML 28 08 00)*

Tu Nedhe was heavily traveled from the East Arm to Ft. Resolution and points south across its waters. The places that are mentioned above by John Baptiste Catholique and Maurice Lockhart that were inhabited by the people in the spring and fall, "when people traveled back to the shores," have an important quality in common: Good fishing. It was important to make camp before spring break-up at an island or known place of excellent spring fishing, where fish were known to gather along the shorelines to feed or to run up small creeks- such as Jackfish *(Esox lucius)*. Likewise, when the fish began to run the rivers to spawning beds in August and September, it was time to stock up on fish to feed dogs through the transition months heading into the winter. Camps often along shoreline islands (no bears or predators to worry about) would be set up for processing, such as the smoking and drying of fish for stockpiling. Łutsël K'e was one such famous place known for its abundance of fish. The place name is derived from its renown- 'place of small or little fish'. As Pierre Catholique states:

In the old days, the people used to go fishing in the Gap ***(Hǫkáʔzé, also Łuhts'ël ʔazé)*** *and they would go catch a little fish called* ***Łutsël K'e****, the town called after the fish. (PC 05 03 01)*

The peninsula of what is now known as the community of Łutsël K'e was just one of many shoreline areas that included many islands in the East Arm, frequented year after year by people gathering together to set nets and prepare dry meat and dry fish. The original town site of Łutsël K'e (initially referred to as Snowdrift) is closer to this fishing area mentioned by Pierre as "the Gap (Hǫkáʔzé, also Łuhts'ël ʔazé)", known in Dene Yatı as Hoka aze or Luhts'el aze'; this area is fished all year round.

3.2 MEDICINE OF THE FISH

When the interview transcripts were reviewed, a resounding number of community members who knew of the traditional fish medicines, explained the use of the gallbladder of the Lake Trout, *Salvelinus namaycush*. Most interviewees who spoke of this medicine of the Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) bladder associated its curative powers to that of ills befalling the heart or the strength of the body.

I know there is medicine in the fish and it is the bladder- this is the main medicine in the fish. If someone is sick with a heart problem, when they take the bladder out, the fish*, it has to be alive, and that person can immediately ingest the bladder at that time, and then take in water after that.*
(MD 05 24 01)

*Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush)*

The fish bladder is good to use for internal injury and it is good (for) a person who is sick from heart problems and how you use it (is) by just mixing it by drinking water. (NA 05 03 01)

The bladder- it's strong. On the Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)- the big ones- thirty-forty pounds, they have got the larger bladder- they [the Elders of an Elder] used half a teaspoon. Swallow this with water- very strong and good for the heart. It is also good for your eyes- just the Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). Just mix it with water and drink it. You can also put it on [topically] to the eyes with a patch. (PC 05 03 01)

A man described the Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) bladder as possessing medicinal properties that produced general health benefits to the body, perhaps as an immune booster. He experienced seeing his Elders and older siblings use this while he was a young boy:

I've seen my brother George and some other people in the community use the bigger fat Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)—there is a certain type of bag there that has fluids that are bluish-purplish in color. And they have said that it is really good medicine and I have seen these guys drink this medicine. And they said it is really good medicine. They would have it raw or drink it right away. They said it was really good medicine- I have also seen the late Joe Boucher, Albert's late father drink that when he was sick.
(JM 05 01 01)

Many interviewees heralded the whole body of the Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) as an all round general medicine, supplying vitamins and minerals to encourage a healthy and strong body. Here this interviewee explains that both the bladder and the fish as a whole are a good medicine:

The fish is all like medicine-we eat it all, and my grandmother used to eat fish that was rotten because it was a good medicine. The main part of the fish that has the medicine is the bladder. (JR 05 24 01)

Other parts of the Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) were also discussed. The heart while 'still beating' or freshly caught can be ingested immediately from the cavity of the fish, raw, upon a clean bill of health from an inspection of the internal quality of the fish. The ability for this medicine to fortify the immune system, strengthen the lungs and the muscle tissue of the heart were all mentioned as health benefits associated with the Lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) heart.

Figure 2: Homemade Fish Net made by Annie Catholique.

3.2 OLD WAYS OF CATCHING FISH

Many interviewees had similar responses to the questions that asked them to describe the techniques of catching fish prior to contemporary times. Catching fish without nets was a task that required observing the movements of fish and taking mental note of these movements in variations of weather, micro-climates and seasons. Success in fishing required different methods that utilized specialized knowledge of the areas fish could be found and caught during a particular season. Some interviewees acquired this ability from what Elders' parents had shown them. Some young people explained what their Elders had taught them about the methods and techniques people used in the past. Many discussed what they knew of the days when individual families would weave their own cotton twine nets and described the instruments that were necessary in order to make these nets.

Joe Michel:

They use nylon nets that are about 5o yards long. In the olden days we used cotton nets. The last time they used [this cotton type of net] these nets was in 1960. That was when the [commercial] fisherman came [to our area] and started using the regular nets that the fisherman started to sell and would give to the people. From then on people started to order these type of nets. (JM 05 12 01)

An Elder explains the process of how you would set the net and the type of nets the people of Łutsël K'e first used:

In the old days how you set nets is use a long stick and you dig a hole in the ice and put the long stick under the ice and make another hole on the other side of the ice. You could make about 1 to 6 holes in between to push the net along under the ice and that how you use to set nets. In the wintertime the ice was about 5 to 6 feet before those days. There is one tool we used to make the nets with, called **ʔetth 'ël chëne**. *[We used] Nets and always. I used a four-inch mesh net- but it varies on what the purpose is and what you are catching. If you are commercial fishing you could use smaller mesh—it's allowed. He said the real old timers they used to make the nets with willows. You couldn't take those out of the water. Then we got this other way. One day some people came here and they just gave us strings and showed me how to weave it- a net. They gave the tools to the people and they used this special tool---[he goes and gets one of these tools]—this one is used only for repairing the nets—not for actually making the net- those look the same but are smaller in size. Just a smaller one. To make a net it would take two-three weeks with these tools. It's all up to you the way that you want to build your net—as far as mesh size would be. All cotton strings –no nylon back then. You could use the same net maybe for five years but we would repair and repair and repair these nets all the time. People had large families back then and everyone would help one another to get things done—we all help each other to set nets, so you could have five, six nets or even rather two or three nets—a small family would only have a small net and that would be okay. That is the width of the net all around [he demonstrates this in the room we are sitting in]. And they [***Łutsël K'e*** *people] also gave fish to the Hudson's Bay store man and they didn't pay them [the* ***Łutsël K'e*** *people] until next spring, when they get their $5.00 [on Treaty Day]. They would give them the supplies that they would need—such as the cotton string and other things. That's how they paid us [for the fish that we brought in the fall time to the Hudson Bay store]. (PC 05 03 01)*

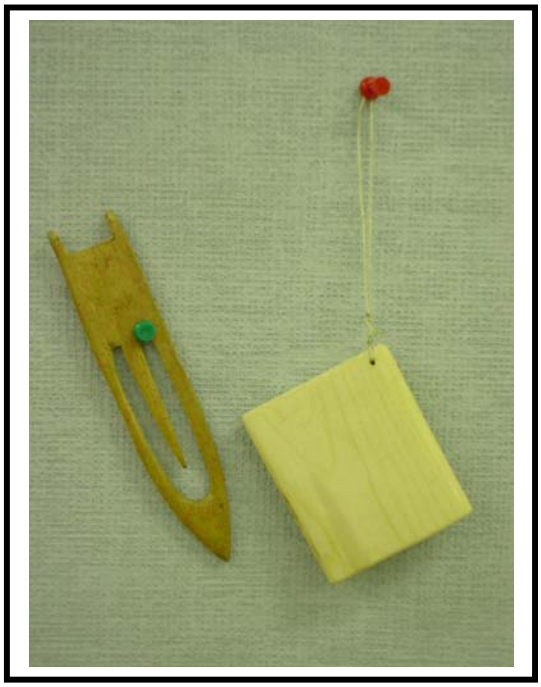

Figure 3: Tools for making homemade gillnets.

One community member provided a detailed account of how the construction of a net was conducted as he learned from watching and helping his parents and Elders. The following is an except of this:

I just seen gillnets that's it; that time you've got to save the net you can't tear it or anything, cause, sometimes they would only get one net a year and that was it. All year they would have to feed dogs. They had to. Sometimes if there was big holes [in the nets] they would have to patch it up- they would usually string it across the road, and then they would just sew it, and make it hang up high. That's what they do. They used those little things with the threads on it; it looks kind of like this—[draws a picture]. It goes like this, its got a hole, and with a point in the middle—you know they go like this----and then every time the rope goes like this, it goes back and then the other way—it goes in, and over here, and then back and it goes over here [in a weaving motion]. So every time you go through the hole, it always follows out. Before we used to never get the nets all ready to set, you know the net we get now has got string on it already—before we never got the string on it-we'd have to do it. Put on the line on top and through all those holes and then tie it. But we had all the time that time [to be able to do this task.]. In the eighties. It's the last time I've seen it. My grandfather he used to help me. But I learned from them. Just by watching. It doesn't take long, you've got to put the rope through this thing [the drawing of the threader], and its just like a thread, and a needle--you know, go through those holes of the net. You go through it and then you tie, I think every three, four mesh, and then you tie it, and then go another four and then you tie it. Most about seven feet wide some nets---We go through this and then we tie it here. Go through there and then go through there and then tie it. And then there will be a square eh. Then will go through here and then another one, and then through another one. Because it goes like this [you would go down through the set of strings in a diagonal line tying off the ends as you go]. And then tie it here. I think there are four. Then it will be like this—same thing, and where are you going to put the floats on, I think about fourteen [squares we would count out] about I guess. You tie a string so where the float goes in, just to tie a float, and tie it there, and go again. So every time there is a float you got to leave a string hanging about that far [uses his hands to gesture the measurement] you could put a float right in there. So if you are counting it, you know every float be even where it starts. Fifty. Before you used to have a long net. I used to use one whole net [hundred yards]. Now everybody is using half a net [fifty yards]. About every fourteen holes there is a float [on the whole thing]. You can't get no nets like that now. Not available. Everything is all ready now; all you have to do is lay floats on and your ready to go. (PE 05 31 01)

Fish moving during spring such as during Jackfish *(Esox lucius)* spawning runs and Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) and coming into shore to feed after spring ice break-up; as well as fall time Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) spawning runs where fish in the rivers were abundant, were key fish harvesting periods during the year. Moria *(Lota lota)* should not be overlooked here, as it is still a favorite dinner item of Łutsël K'e elders. Though Moria *(Lota lota)* is occasionally caught in gillnets, this is rare compared to Whitefish *(Coregonus clupeaformis)* and Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), the two main species caught in gillnets by community members. Moria *(Lota lota)* tend to feed in a habitat that is characteristic of shallow bays and muddy or grassy areas, areas with easier access for people fishing along shorelines. One interviewee said this of the earlier days of fishing, before the use of gillnets in the area:

Well, he [his father] said that you could throw just about anything into catch Pike (Esox lucius), even your socks. To catch a Pike (Esox lucius)- all you do is you go for it. A mesh bag, an old bag, anything—all along the bays, anywhere there is Pike (Esox lucius). Back in the day, when they would mainly fish for Pike in the bays, it was because there was no nets, or lures around. Well all the Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) or Pike go into the grassy bays and they would just spear them. Like they said that's what they used in the olden days. My Dad said you get a Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) and the tail part of the Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis), and they would put it on a hook overnight in the lake and then they come and get it. Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) would get it. All homemade hooks, they would place them (in) different spots, right in the middle of the lake. And they said, you know what's a Moria (Lota lota)? They would take the bait too. Some of them [used to] catch a lot of Morias (Lota lota) instead of the Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). I don't know maybe they are faster [to catch with the older methods] than the Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) or something. Well you know, like right here in the Gap **(Hǫkáʔzé, also Łuhts'ël ʔazé)**, *they used to spear those Ciscoes (Coregonus artedi). They would just sit there and make a hole in the ice, with a gaff, like, with lots of needles in there, and just wait there, eh, for the Cisco (Coregonus artedi). That's it. That's the name of this place right here, eh.* **Łutsël K'e**- *a place of a small fish. Dad said that in one whole day you could get a big full sack of Ciscoes (Coregonus artedi). Sitting there all day, just wait and take them out. A bunch will go near the top of the ice, and then you spear the Cisco (Coregonus artedi)—nails or bones would be on the end of it. Then use the Cisco (Coregonus artedi) for other bait.* (SB 05 10 01)

Before the availability of metal hooks for angling, Eagle hooks (**Kache Kue** *Study Region Report, 2000*) and hooks made out of caribou bone were reported as being used by the people. Techniques were mentioned by interviewees such as spearing Ciscoes (*Coregonus artedi*) at the **Łutsël K'e** Gap and spearing *Pike (Esox lucius)* in grassy bays along islands and lakeshores. These shallow areas were often the most favorable habitat to catch fish with your bare hands. People discussed methods of angling that involved sticks fashioned with crude hooks made out of fish or caribou bone and rigged to be left unattended to open holes cut into the ice in early spring, left that way overnight and checked the morning or the next day for a potential catch. 'The Gap **(Hǫkáʔzé, also Łuhts'ël ʔazé)**' very close to the earliest site of the village of Snowdrift) was one place known to be a good location to use this method. This was one of many fish habitat locations that people knew good fishing could be experienced throughout the winter. Caribou bone hooks placed in ice fishing holes overnight would often use a small fish (*Coregonus artedi*) as bait. Success in the deployment of these pre-gillnetting methods was often as much about the correct timing of fishing the habitat location and the habitat verification of your targeted species, as it was about the fisherman's procured skills. This interviewee relates his experiences on learning patience and developing skill:

I just know one way that they do it, they take a piece of bone, from a Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) from a head bone, with it all dried out, you tie a line to it, and you put it in a creek or channel, and just leave it there, they do it till today, I guess. But I don't see no people doing that with a bone [anymore]. They [would] wait until that thing bobs, or until the fish is caught, eh. So somebody will be sitting on a rock, near the water, and they will sit there all day, depending upon how abundant the food was, [and especially] if food was scarce, so that's only one method I know. They would just use the bone as bait. Tie sinew to it, and leave it in the water

until you get lucky. Well I remember the last time that I did that was with my Grandmother; we were staying in a tent right here [Murky Lake ***(Łuyaghé Tué)****]. It was springtime and she showed me how and so I did. And there is a little hill up here that I sat, here [points on the map], I don't know how long. An hour or so [I waited]. Finally I saw that little stick bobbing, and sure enough I caught a Trout (Salvelinus namaycush), she [my Grandmother] was really proud of me. And another way is mmmm, in the little creeks in the bay here. There's a small creek that goes up, we go there with spears, and there's a little creek and Jackfish (Esox lucius) run, to spear the fish like that, in springtime. In June sometime—mid June, some of those Jackfish (Esox lucius) are humungous- big fish. They are traveling up stream, to ponds—I noticed these old pictures [in the office], where these people are holding these huge Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) 10-20 pounds. Never do you see people holding small Trouts (Salvelinus namaycush). It's not the first picture I have seen of that, from the olden days. These fish are big, and healthy [they were catching]. And now from the eighties, boy, they have just started to get weird on us. So there is got to be something going on with that.*
(DD 05 24 01)

The younger generation does not need to employ these methods for catching fish. The variety of foods available through the Co-op store and shopping trips to Yellowknife supplement the fish caught in gillnets, caribou hunting, the seasonal harvesting of geese, swan and ducks, the trapping of beaver, muskrats, and rabbits. The knowledge of these older ways is being transferred to them nonetheless. The young man quoted above, learning from his Grandmother, is certainly an example of this occurrence in the community. Spear fishing and catching of Moria *(Lota lota)* seems to be still practiced, the desire for which is fueled by a mixture personal interest to experience these older traditional methods of catching fish and the enjoyment of eating these fish. A young woman relates an experience of learning a fishing method from her grandfather and relates some of this sentiment:

There is a trick that my Grandfather taught me, you take an empty hollow log- that is empty on both ends, and you take sinew, and you take a little hook. I'm not sure what they would've used back then, but when he showed this to me, he used a metal hook. Just a hook by itself, with the sinew on it, and its tied to a rope like so [demonstrates the knot with hand gestures]. And then the log sits there. Then you put it in the water, and then what happens is the fish goes up, and it gets caught on the hook inside, and this log that has the sinew tied to the hook, is tied to the shore, and so it just keeps it [the fish inside the log]. Its rigged so that the log and the stick stay together, and its right by the shore bed. So if you want to see if you have caught anything you just pick it up—and check. If you have something—you have something, if you don't you don't. Another thing that I have heard, but never tried, is you make the spears, and you know there is this little creek, in the back bay (off the ***Łutsël K'e*** *peninsula) here. I don't know if you have ever seen it, kind of where the bridge is [Austin Lake road], and there is another one further down, and another one further down. You just make a spear, and you just go when the fish are running, in the spring [the Jack fish], like May, at the end of the month- June- ask Kevin he will take you—he likes to do things like that. It's a lot of fun and always a test. The old style ways.*
(IC 04 20 01)

The ways reported in the transcripts represent the type and variety of fishing methods that have been employed and are being taught to the younger generations in the community, but are not the only older methods discussed or practiced in the community.

4.0 MAKING A LIVING: FISHING THE EAST ARM

4.1 FISHING FOR DOGS, FISHING FOR SKIDOOS?

There used to be sooo many dog teams in this town- no one knew the skidoo very well. Joe Michel and I used to go out together and were buddy workers. We used to go straight out to the Barrenlands trapping in the wintertime and we would trap for all kinds of fur. At first during the fall we would go all the way there by boat, and bring our dogs with us. From there [Reliance **(Kaché)***], with the dog team we would head out into the Barrens. Then we wouldn't come back until right before Christmas. In the fall when we traveled to Reliance* **(Kaché)** *in the boat, it would be sooooo cold, but we were still traveling like that. Its very different using a dog team as compared to a skidoo, because with the skidoo you can get into accidents. When I used to use a dog team, I used to not worry about gas or nothing. With the skidoo you can get into accidents and could get into trouble. Like if you go trapping by skidoo, and your skidoo breaks down you have to walk a very long ways back—if you use a dog team, no matter what the distance you will get there. With a skidoo you can't tell where the ice is not frozen, and could miss where there is open water---with a dog team, the dogs could sense the open water or area right away so there was no worries. (JB 05 24 01)*

The introduction of dogs to the people of the East Arm is not our discussion here, but at some point during the 1800's they became an essential part of life and a necessity for trapping and hunting on the land in the winter. Gradually the use of skidoos came to the people of Snowdrift as the young community once was called, and with the changes in transportation and other outside technologies, there came great changes to the **Łutsël K'e** lifestyle. A gradual decrease in fishing occurred, paralleling the decrease in the necessity to fish for the survival of your sled dogs. It was one less task one needed to master in one's daily work. Madeline Drybones discusses her use of a dog team in the past and the areas she used to fish regularly for her dogs:

I did a lot of fishing for dogs. And I went fishing right at the end of the Stark Lake **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *for the dogs [in the fall]. I stayed there sometimes. As well as* **Tochatwı** *Lake [called* **Float Lake** *by people of* **Łutsël K'e***, an English literal translation of the Chipewyan name for this lake* **'T'aıdzer Tue'***] where there is all kinds of fish and a lot of them. I always have nets in the water all year long. You don't see it on this map, but this place is good for fishing [pointing to inland lakes between top of Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *and Lausen Lake (***Łu Tué***)], on the portage route from* **Łutsël K'e** *to Ft. Reliance* **(Kaché)***]. By skidoos its good for the younger generation, but in the olden days I preferred to use a dog team, because I used to walk for a about 9-10 days straight with the dog team and [and my kids on the sled] behind me---this was no problem for me- [breaking trail]. (MD 05 24 01)*

One member of the community explains his experience of growing up on the land and in town during the transition period between these two methods of transportation.

I had a skidoo and a dog team at the same time. Back and forth. A snowmobile is a lot easier to operate, less time required on your part as an individual. It's no big secret that the usage of dogs was eliminated by the replacement of them by snowmobiles. Which

probably took a lot of pressure off the fish in the Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) area, but having said that though, in one generation the people of the Northwest Territories went from the fittest to the most unfittest people in Canada. I think that the snowmobile has a little bit to do with it; the introduction of television has a lot to do with it. So it's just an impact, it's both positive and negative on society. I can't really recall the exact year [the transition time between dogs and skidoos] but its right between the years of 1978 and 1985. Actually 1975 and 1980 I would say. So the transition between the dogs and the snowmobile happened in the seventies. People operated as a family unit then, so, the family would have one snowmobile and two or three dog teams. As the family got another snowmobile, another dog team went. So it [the skidoo] just slowly replaced [the dog team]. And during that time money wasn't available, government programs weren't available, so people operated as a family unit. You can still see this to a certain extent in the community, but individualism is becoming a priority, dominant, rather than 'family-ism'. You are able to travel long distances in a short period of time [with the skidoo], and you can become a little more independent, as a young person or a young man, rather than going out with the family. [Often prior to the Nineteen-eighties] sometimes the whole family traveled. And as society evolved more employment and education became more important, people started staying in the community working, and kids going to school. I think that my family was one of the last few families that pretty much settled in the community. Before that we followed the seasons, summers to the Barrenlands after the caribou, spring for muskrats, fall was fishing…(SN 05 30 01)

Interviewees talked about the amount of fish necessary to keep the dogs running strong, as was the routine involved with the maintenance of a dog team. In the interview quoted below, the interviewee begins by first discussing a particular memorable guiding experience he had with a lodge guest, but then begins to detail the amount of fish one might need for one's dogs as compared to the amount that was often taken home by tourists before limit regulations were established in the East Arm:

Every morning we [the tourist and I] would go fishing and then we would spend the day bird watching and going for a hike. Well he caught enough, what the hell. And then he would take no fish home with him, and in those days people got no limit, there was no limit per person, holy…. He [the tourists] got a lot of fish then, you could just take as many and as much as you wanted. That wasn't too bad that time [when we were harvesting fish for the dogs] because the dog, he doesn't need that much fish, maybe we had seven fish and had seven dogs, if you had five fish – that's lots eh, you just divide it all. Five to seven fish per day- see if you use the gillnets, you catch a awfully big Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)—maybe twenty pound—16 pound—if you catch two 16 pound you can feed seven of your dogs, and you still got leftovers for yourself, or the family, eh. (JF 05 30 01)

When asked to comment about his methods of fishing this interviewee began detailing wintertime fishing locations. This immediately led him to tell the story of the last dog team he had to travel on the land, and the experience that characterized his final association with the family dogteam:

Mostly I do it through guiding with tourists [fishing]. But before when we had dog teams we used to set nets all over here [the Łutsël K'e area as well as on inland lakes and on Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué)]. We used to have lots of dogs in the seventies. In 1979, I traded a skidoo for a dog team [got a skidoo for a dog team]. Fourteen [dogs]. We had two teams and they sold it for one snow machine. That guy from Reliance (Kaché) there, he wanted to make a trade, for a snow machine. So— [we]*

made a trade for a dog team. Foruteen dogs. Owwwwww. I missed my dogs. [Laugh]. Yea, that year Antoine [Michel] raced with it [part of his old dog team] in Yellowknife. [He took] four of mine and he raced in Yellowknife and came in second. I was about seventeen years old then, and I didn't know my dad ever sold it, while I was in school in Yellowknife. And then after four or five years they gave me back my dog, my leader, after five years they gave my dog away, my dog can't remember me. He couldn't even listen to me, so I just got rid of it. I might start [up again] if somebody is starting around here. To train them you just got to talk to him like a human, they got to like to run—in the summertime you make them all loose and get them running. We used to set nets right here- by the Gap (Hǫkáʔzé, also Łuhts'ël ʔazé)*, and sometimes in Stark Lake* (The Kalnıka Tué*) *here- [top of the Stark River outlet flowing into Great Slave Lake* (Delthı)*]. A ten-pound Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) would feed three dogs—give'em that every day. And sometimes in the middle of winter, like February, you can hardy catch any fish here, eh [the areas mentioned]. So we would put nets right here in the middle, mostly all the fish they go down deeper [in the winter]-right in the middle between this island and this island [Louie's Island (*ʔéghái Nu*) and Narrow Island (*Nudaré Naghé*)- right between the two- near town]. (PE 05 31 01)*

4.2 MAKING A LIVING: COMMERCIAL FISHING

While stockpile fishing in the spring and fall was necessary to feed sled dogs through the freeze-up or break-up transition periods, many people of Łutsël K'e spent their summers during the mid twentieth century commercial fishing, often with their family. They would catch only their daily need of fish for themselves and their family, selling the rest to a fish plant in the Simpson Islands (Gah Nué*). A young man remembers his childhood summers of the 1960's in this way:

I started fishing ever since I was a kid maybe since I was twelve – thirteen years old. I went out with my father when I was young with the fishnets, around 1970. In the early eighties we used to go commercial fishing (as a family). At Simpson Islands (Gah Nué) and then early eighties 1982, 83, 84 we used to do commercial fishing at Gros Cap (Nudaré Naghé) too. I remember when we did that one-year, different from the previous years. We did this around Simpson Islands (Gah Nué*). We would go around and collect fish for the commercial fishing plant- for profit. And doing a lot of sports fishing with a fishing rod all around this area. All around Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) and Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé)—around Redcliff (Island) (Tthegére Nu)--- all around this area. Sometimes we would use the fish net; and when we would use the fish net, we would use that to provide food for the family, and not for usually doing it for the sport fishing—whatever you catch you just take home and you fix it—The fishnet is for survival. I've been doing this ever since I was young kid, I guess. All my life I've lived like this, not only me though- everybody else in town as well. (JM 05 01 01)*

Another Elder discusses commercial fishing in the Simpson Islands (Gah Nué*):

Three summers in a row (I commercial fished), it was a lot of fun when I fished in my younger days. I had no problem then, eh. They [the big commercial boats] catch a lot of fish, tons and tons of fish. We'd pull up about thirty-forty nets a day. There was big boats,

that's how I used to fish. Commercial--- tons and tons [we would process on the boat]—we don't count it [the individual fish, just weigh the fish caught from each net]—60-80 mesh nets, [we would pull up from the water]; we would just take the fish out of the nets. (AE 04 12 01)

The commercial fishing and guiding on the East Arm for many people of **Łutsël K'e** became a way of life, especially in the summer. This Elder discusses the practice of being out on the lake and what it meant to be out on the water and the livelihood that it allowed:

*I been fishing in Stark Lake (**The Kalnıka Tué***) for the longest time and there used to be so much fish, even now there is probably more, even more fish. I went fishing at the Simpson Islands (**Gah Nué***), all through there, over past Union Island (**Thaıkel Nué**) over to Basile Bay (**Ts'u Choghka Tłazį**) and the over to the Narrow Island (**Nudaré Naghé**) and **Etthën** Island and then I would bring back my fish back to the fish camp. I used to go fishing at Moraine Bay (on the west side of the lake) I would go there from the Simpson Islands (**Gah Nué***)—I went fishing there for two years. From Simpson Island to the Narrow Island (**Nudaré Naghé**) and straight away to Gros Cap (**Chelá Gaı Naghe***) and then back to the Simpson Islands (**Gah Nué**). I used to make so much money with fish. I used to make my money by fishing and trapping. I know where all of the good spots are for fishing. With fishnets, the nylons, in the first beginning of them, we would use these and catch lots of fish with these. In the olden days they used to use those homemade nets [made of cotton string] but they did not catch a lot of fish. Nowadays we get these nylon fishnets and we catch a lot more fish with them. Twenty years ago was my best catch for Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). This was the best time. Everywhere I went there was a lot of Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). That's the time I was guiding for Frontier Fishing Lodge and when our guests asks us – or would tell us what they wanted, and we would go to the right place and catch those fish there. Whatever they wanted that time. Now Elders like us, we know where all the good fishing spots are, and nowadays this younger generation doesn't know where the good fishing spots are. I am thankful for you asking me about these kinds of questions from the olden days because they need to know these old-timer stories, because we are going…(JB 05 24 01)*

4.3 MAKING A LIVING: GUIDING THE FISHING TOURIST

When asked to provide information on areas of habitat for specific fish species, often the answer would be woven into a narrative about the many summers an interviewee had spent out on the lake. Often these narratives would relate to time spent guiding fishing lodge tourists. Those guides have developed traditions and protocols over the years concerning the craft of finding fish. Competition within this guild of guides was stimulated over the years. This manifested itself in the most humble of ways, one of these being the quest for the 'shore lunch'. Day after day, week after week throughout the summer, to catch the right number of fish for lunch every morning was a great challenge, especially in reference to the Frontier Fishing Lodge. The more guests there were at the lodge the more 'rookies' there were that year guiding, and the more fish the seasoned guides had to catch for the noon hour. To consistently supply 'shore lunch' became the mark of a skilled fisherman to many guides and tourists alike. Jimmy Fatte started guiding in 1956; this seasoned guide explains the situation:

You've got a lot of fish out there. But some people, like I said, they figure if there is water there's fish, you just throw in the lures right there. That's not the way it is, eh. Even around here there is a lot of guys, they take people out from Frontier, they get skunked for shore lunch. They can't catch fish. The same thing with Plummer's when I was there. There are quite a few guys that can't catch fish for a shore lunch. They get skunked. All day long. See…(laugh). Well, they don't know the place, eh. They just throw a lure in there and there and there. Well, me--- I don't know, I just started a long time ago, so I know what times fish start biting, especially Trout (Salvelinus namaycush), eh. Here I know the certain spots. I don't tell nobody my secret spots. I've been guiding a pretty long time, and I've never been skunked, eh. A lot of guys getting skunked--- I MEAN not catching fish all day. What is it a six hour- eight hours in a day? Well see, eh, we taught a lot of guides, even now I will guide for Frontier and when a new guy comes around, they let him try it out with me, eh. We work it out that way too. Sometimes they just go around on their own- especially (those) we call green, eh. They don't catch fish for lunch. See you leave the dock about eight-thirty; your lunch is at twelve. See the main thing when you are a guide is you have to get your lunch first- so you can fool around wherever you want, but its good to get your shore lunch already. But some people they just make a mistake though too, the first cast (of the morning), they get one, but throw it [back] in, then they say they will get a fresh one. But they don't want to throw it back into the water. But we'll catch a fresh one. Cause you don't want a fish to be in the sun too long. We'll throw it on the frying pan while its still kicking. (From angler's line to frying pan.) I've had a good time with those people. [I've] Been there too long with them. The regulars they come back all the time, and some guests are now bringing their grandchildren, year after year, and then some die. The relatives still come back up. And they want the same guide all the time. Sometimes they come in one big bunch, one big group. One day maybe 20-24 [will show up at the lodge]. They sort it out. Sometimes for the shore lunch, we have had ten boats together. That's lots. In the morning we just decide where we are going to go- and then fish on the way, so it could be anywhere, and we need to catch at least one fish per boat. That way we can have enough fish for everyone. Yet sometimes some boats don't have any, see what I mean. Some don't have any and some catch one or two extra. (JF 05 30 01)

JB Rabesca earlier in this report was quoted talking about the ease they were able to travel all over the East Arm while guiding. They were able to go wherever they wanted in the East Arm, so long as the tourists were willing participants. Guiding allowed freedom to explore the lake. One gets this sense from these interviewees' comments on guiding in the East Arm:

Nice tourists, nice guys. Every week they change, each week, another two men, another two men, like this. The next week…Always something around like this, always American. They all have smiles. Nice tour. .Real nice folks. I cook, Good cook for him. Good guy by me. Everything – he like it. He wanted me to work all the time. (NA 05 03 01)

I guided for over five-six years---I mean about ten years ago—we used to catch a lot of fish then… I used to enjoy guiding. I like the lodge, its doing pretty good here at the river—doing a pretty good job, I don't know about all of the others. (AE 04 12 01)

Guiding tourists on the East Arm every summer allowed many individuals in Åutsÿl K'e to spend the entire summer on the lake in the pursuit of fish. They could explore different areas for fish habitat with someone else's boat, with the gas provided, get paid and meet new people, often from another country, while doing it.

5.0 FISH HEALTH & HABITAT: WHERE THE FISH ARE

5.1 FISHING LOCATIONS IN THE EAST ARM

I have a cabin up on the river (Tędhul Dezé), so as soon as the ice has fallen away from off of the river, then I will set nets into the river. In the fall time too. Around my cabin [at the Snowdrift River (Tędhul Dezé), Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué) outlet]. Around here I will also set my nets into the water. I will get Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush), Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis), Grayling (Thymallus arcticus)—out here in the GSL—Grayling (Thymallus arcticus), here in the lake, with the nets---sometimes but not often. Like us--Even me, when I go out to set nets, I will go where I know is a good spot where to catch fish, and I will set nets there---—and after a couple of nights of too much fish, I'll just take the nets out. I will go and collect the fish out of the nets there. Adults around here like me, they don't set nets just anywhere in the water, they know where to catch fish with nets — even me, I have a special place that I could set nets into the water for Trout (Salvelinus namaycush), Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis). For some guys its different when they go out there, and say this place is probably good, probably they won't catch too many, but an adult like me, I know where the fish are, cause we've been fishing all our lives in Łutsël K'e, eh. We don't have to go far. Probably a mile is the farthest I've gone from town to set a net [or my cabin]. I used to fish a lot in my younger years, these days we don't fish as much, just a few nets that we've got in the water in the winter. In the summer, back in the day, we had more nets out. I don't know, there is no change for me, if I want fish I go out and set nets in the water, I put it in for two nights and it is too much fish for me, so I just take it out.*
(AE 04 12 01)

Many questions referring to habitat areas, especially those like "Where do Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) spawn?" would result with an answer 'by the river', 'at the river', or 'the fish run in the fall'. This study and other studies conducted by the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department have reported fish travel from Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) into Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) via the Stark River (*), but this was not elaborated upon by study interviewees. In this case, 'the river' referred to either the Stark River (*) or the Snowdrift River (Tędhul Dezé). As with all questions, some interviewees answered with more detail to certain questions than did others. The following excerpts are meant to reflect the variety of fish habitat knowledge that was discussed and shared, as well as present repetitive topics that appeared in numerous interviewee responses when reading the transcripts. The subject of fishing locations yielded a tremendous amount of information. This section will review the variety and the breadth of habitat locations and specific habitat knowledge mentioned in the interviews.

The beginning of a GIS database for East Arm fishing information was initiated through this study. This section provides background to the attached fishing area map (See Appendix 1) created from compiling responses documented on traditional fishing areas and the information compiled by the Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) Itinerant Sport Fishery Survey Summer 2000 Report (DFO). Information that was received through the interviews on traditional fishing locations and areas mentioned where a high or low volume of tourist traffic was observed or guiding had been requested to fish that area was mapped. This work of mapping traditional and

current use fishing areas is ongoing, being undertaken by the Wildlife, Lands and Environment Department in Łutsël K'e as part of an accumulative effects community-based environmental monitoring initiative currently underway.

Overall, interviewees did not limit their comments on the quality of fish to any one area of the East Arm. Comments were made on the southern areas of the East Arm around Łutsël K'e (including inland lakes such as Murky Lake (Łuyaghé Tué), Lac Duhamel (Haketh Tué) , Ogilivie Lake (Ko' dare), to Ft. Reliance (Kaché) and Charlton Bay (Hak'ós Tué Tsën Tłazį*). Rivers of the Kache Tue area (North Shore of McLeod Bay (Kaché Tł'azı)) of the McKinlay (Łu?azé Desché), Barnston (Desdelgaı*), Waldron (Denéchëth Des), and Bedford Creek (K'enu?a Kue) and the Hoarfrost (Destsëlché) were often mentioned as well. The general number of areas mentioned on the East Arm as preferred fishing locations was around seventy-five.
Many more fishing locations were mentioned. Some of these locations (about twenty-five) were inland lake locations. The quality and the characteristics of fish in specific areas of Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) and the general characteristics of fish in certain inland lakes as compared to those in the East Arm waters were also mentioned. This fishing knowledge of the East Arm region's inland lakes was built over many years of the extensive miles people traveled on their trap lines in the winter, as the Denesǫłıne would often depend on inland lake fish to feed their dogs. The East Arm Charts (Fisheries and Oceans/ Hydrographic Service, 1991) during this portion of the interview process was invaluable as a tool for people to demonstrate detail in the fishing areas they frequented throughout the year.

Catching big fish is normal. (AE 04 12 01)

Figure 4: Rubin, Norton, Charles, Rocky & Arthur with a fifty-pound Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*).

After spending time in the East Arm, one could not agree more with that comment. Indeed, catching big fish, especially Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), is the rule rather than the exception. Hence, the renown of the East Arm to sports fishermen all over the world. Prior to the use of fishing techniques such as gillnets and rod and reel, catching large, deep diving Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), especially in the summer, was most likely not a regular event. Earlier in the report one interviewee explained that most fish that **Łutsël K'e** ancestors caught could be found along the shorelines and in shallow bays such as *Pike (Esox lucius).*

A fair amount of attention was given to the differences people distinguish between 'Ft. Reliance **(Kaché)** Trout' (*Salvelinus namaycush*) and Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) from the southern area of the East Arm. Most interviewees who made comment upon this subject did so reiterating the sentiment Brenda Michel expresses below:

*At Fort Reliance (**Kaché**)- I like those fish there. They are just red, red, red. They taste really good. Compared to these fishes around here-- Pearson Point and all the fish around here are whiter--the meat is white--but when you go fishing in Fort Reliance **(Kaché)**-those fish are red. Different Trouts (Salvelinus namaycush) around here compared to Fort Reliance **(Kaché)** Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). (BM 05 17 01)*

Many individuals from the forty to fifty year old age bracket had a tremendous amount of map information on good fishing locations. Below this interviewee shares his observations about the differences between the northern and southern East Arm populations of *Salvelinus namaycush*, their habitat locations and the modern techniques often needed to catch the Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) in the summer:

*Wildbread Bay **(Nıtłër Nu Ná Tłazį*)**, this is one of the best spots. [As well as] Up in the Gap **(Dhedh Theʔá Tłazį*)**. The flesh of the Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) up in the Northern Part of the East Arm- up by all of those rivers, the flesh is different-- more red, down here the flesh is grayer—paler. There is a difference, something to do with the type of water, eh, they are swimming in. Pearson Point, Wildbread Bay **(Nıtłër Nu Ná Tłazį*)**, trolling all around while guiding, I have gone to a lot of spots—a lot of spots. Redcliff Island **(Tthegére Nu)** on the other side, not the cliff side—the west side of the island, off of this point here--- this is a good spot [for Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)]. The Gap **(Dhedh Theʔá Tłazį*)** up here between the mainland and this Island [up by Wildbread Bay **(Nıtłër Nu Ná Tłazį*)**-----] I used to use five and a ¼ [mesh nets]-- then they changed the whole lake to 5- some use four and ¼-. The five lets the smaller Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) get away. They go all over. Mostly in June right after break-up they stick to the shores and in the bays--- go to any of these bays around here in the spring and you find a lot of Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). In the summer as it becomes warmer, the Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) I think go deeper, much deeper, I don't know where they actually go, but they g o to the deeper areas of the lake. Now that everybody has fish finders you can catch Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) anytime, but before we used to troll all around in and out of the bays and you could get skunked for a whole day, not really anymore. Never seen the eggs really in the water. Well some years, the summers- it gets really hot. That's when they go deeper, that's when they get hard to catch- August, I don't know why, but in August you hardly catch any Trout (Salvelinus namaycush), but I go look for them, don't know where they go though, they go deeper*

or somewhere. Nowadays people hardly get skunked now though, all the boats they have fish finders so you can go anywhere, even in the middle of the lake. Right off Pearson Point (*), it's a drop-off like you know, 200-300 feet---and you can't check that far, but then right off that on the other side its real shallow- only thirty-forty feet there- real shallow. And then, that little island there [group of islands off Pearson Point not marked or named on the map] we usually just troll there back and forth- it's really deep there. Stark Lake **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *has some deeper areas but the places we really ever go are just off to the left hand side off by the cliffs and then right at the mouth of Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *there, the Snowdrift outlet to Great Slave Lake* **(Delthı)**. *[Around] Fortress Island (***Tsákıl Daheka Nu***), a lot of Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) there, right in the Gap* **(Dhedh Theʔá Tłazı̨*)**, *right there [between the Pethei Peninsula* **(Golá Gá)** *and the Fortress island in Christie Bay]. Between that island and the mainland [Douglas Peninsula and Fortress Island]; Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)- I do a lot of jiggin' there; 200 ft. down. And if you catch a fish down that deep, you take it up to the top fast, and the stomach blows up and when you release it, it won't go down; so sometimes you carry a hose, eh. Take all the air out, and then it'll go down, else it will just float around, and it can't go down then. 150-200 ft. Just a small little hose, to take the air out of their stomachs. And then some guides they just poke a hole on their sides. I don't know exactly how [they do this and] still throw them back down. Well they say that it won't hurt it [the fish]. The lodges take their early tourists out to Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *because it is the first to break-up, earlier than the Great Slave, so early in the season there is fishing going on in Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)**. *We take the people out to the end of Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *for Pike (Esox lucius) and towards lunchtime, we'll catch some Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)—for lunch. There is a lot of fish in the Gap (***The Kalı Ka***), *[Northern Stark Lake gap- 62' 27' 31, 110' 14' 00] around Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)**—*Stark Lake Gap (***The Kalı Ka***). *One day maybe ninety fish [with nets], maybe more. (SB 05 10 01)*

Again a combination of personal history, education through Dene family tradition and economic opportunities (such as guiding tourists through the East Arm) affords this young man with a wealth of information regarding the movements of fish and exactly how one should go about catching them:

Well at this time of the year [May] I look for points like the Snowdrift River **(Tędhul Dezé)** *and the Lodge here [pointing to the map] straight go out to ...Tomato Island (***Nu Tsoghe***), *there is a reef right out there, that is a good spot. And across from the Lodge there is another point, a reef that goes out here, that's good, and right across from Wood Island and off on the North side, there's a shallow point too. Always look for shallow parts this time of year. All the reef parts, points, look for wherever it blows too [the wind] look for this, [it effects the fish movements]. If it blows on one side I'll fish on the other. If its blowing on the other side I'll go back to the other side, because of the way the currents go- it's the best time to go off points [of land] if its choppy and rough the best place to be is off [the opposite side of the wind]. You catch some good fish out there. If it comes down to summer, the water gets warmer; the fish intend to go a bit deeper than normal. They find different places now. Here these cliffs are deeper all along Pearson Point (*), all over here, right here, also Three Humps [Island] (*) , Eagle Island (***ʔet'ané Nu***), Long Island, and right here too off this off this old Snowdrift Point (***Thaʔı Kǫe ʔı̨lá****), the Lodge, up here at the mouth of Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)**, *for Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). Fortress Island (***Tsákıl Daheka Nu***) is pretty good for fish in this area here in the islands- [Northwest side of the island]- all the way along this side too [Christie Bay- north shore]. When I used to work at*

*the Lodge it used to take about an hour-20 to get to around Fortress Island (**Tsákıl Daheka Nu**), that's with a 25 horse. And then it depends on where you are going from there. It takes about an hour twenty and then if you go over here [west side] maybe less than an hour more over here. It depends on you: you gotta make a plan on how you are going to go fish. Everybody's got to have a plan how to fish, because its seven days a week, eh. I'll start off from here, and start working my way around [Christie Bay and the North Shore (**Kache Kué**)] by the end of the week I'm back at the lodge. I have a picnic table right off here too, right off the Red Point on the rocks (*), I've got picnic spots all over, one right off Redcliff **(Tthegére Nu)**, off Pearson Point (*), on this island here which spot now… on this part here-wherever there is good fishing spots I make fireplaces there. Even in this bay here. At Fifteen-Mile Point (**Betsıghıé)**- It's good there too. Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) and then go across [south side] and there's big Pike (Esox lucius) here. He calls this place No see'em Bay, I don't know why we call it that. And there is Redcliff Bay (**Tthegere Nu Tłazá Dare**) in there. Oh there's walleye here too---right here in Lake Duhumel (**Haketh Tué**)- that's where my Dad and I would go for walleye, he showed me that one time. We would go there, [at the south end there is a small creek] we went there last year you don't really catch them –but you can CATCH them. You can use hook and reel. This here's the Tochatwi Bay. You come around here- Pearson Point (*), these little island [on the southern shores] you come around and there is a reef here. On the other side of Portage Inlet **(Habaı Díyaghé)** (- a big reef in here- in these islands here—there is a Bombardier trail [at the far end of Christie Bay near **?edor Jones Náke***] on Douglas Peninsula, and around Antoine's camp. Back here there is pretty good Pike (Esox lucius) [again pointing to the end of Christie Bay]…*

*If you go closer to a shore, you'll always catch Pike (Esox lucius). Big Pike (Esox lucius). Maybe a small one [Salvelinus namaycush] too. Maybe because it goes right into here, and then goes straight out, but that thing here makes it a little U, but who knows. This is the only places I go up on Stark, because it is richer in Pike (Esox lucius). This is a Pike area here- [river area, you go down here-see this little slit here that's a Pike hole I tell you. [South end of Stark Lake **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** tiny Bay nearest the Stark River mouth on the southern side.]. As well as all along these islands all around here. UP in the river in certain parts, in here, along all the little creeks like that. Go up, little creeks like that, and [I look for] the way the bottom is, that's how I say what's there [what fish species]. You just look at the creeks, where the deep parts are, the way the land is shaped and the bottom is, that's how [you figure where the fish are]. I look at the land and the way the moss looks, the way the land is shaped, I just figure it out. If its, the big fish [I am looking for], they tend to go to the shore this time of the year [early May], when the ice is melting- in maybe two-three feet of water. Sometimes in shallows, in the big boulders you can cast just in between there, and if you are lucky you can catch'em. The biggest fish that I ever caught is forty-two pounds, and it was right in here. In Shelter Bay (**Łétá Cho***), on the south side—forty-two pound Lake Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). (ALE 05 04 01)*

This interview is representative of the interviews many guides and commercial fishermen gave in length and detail when asked questions concerning fish habitat, fishing locations and the seasonal variability of the locations they frequently visit. Some specifics on spawning areas are mentioned below, where an interviewee describes the area where he has witnessed signs of spawning beds south of **Łutsël K'e** at Murky Channel **(Luyaghé Des)** for Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), Jackfish *(Esox lucius)*, and Longnose Sucker (*Catostomus catostomus*) or White Sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*). The information gathered on spawning or rearing areas, often did not include details as to the type of shoal habitat type or substrate of the area. The Murky Channel **(Luyaghé Des)** area

was mentioned in quite a number of interviews as good spawning habitat; this interviewee's words on the subject well represent those comments:

There's a spawning ground for fish at the Murky Channel ***(Luyaghé Des)****, between where Murky Lake* ***(Łuyaghé Tué)*** *flows into Murky Channel [the outlet]* ***(Kǫe Chéle Chelá*).*** *There is a little island there- and especially in October there is thousand's and thousands of fish. You could probably spend a night there and you could probably hear them in the lake; and you could throw a line in there with the fishing rod and every cast you would be guaranteed a fish. [Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)]- they spawn there as well and sometimes there in the little creeks – you know the ponds here where the bridge is? There is Jackfish (Esox lucius) that spawn there in the springtime too. [Pointing to the areas on the map] And go there and there is Jackfish (Esox lucius) that I know of. And I'm pretty sure that there are areas all around like this that we don't even know of. The Elders might know. June usually—and the one that I was telling you about the spawning place you go there usually [Murky Channel* ***(Luyaghé Des)****] in September/October. You go out there for moose and you can camp there—I know because I have done that, and its funny because there is certain times of the season where Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) will spawn and all the sudden the Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) goes and then it's the Jackfish (Esox lucius) that go there. So there is two types of fish that go through that area. One group and then the next group. (JME 05 01 01)*

Not only does this comment mention two fish species sharing this spawning habitat area, but also mentions the area as good moose habitat. This combination of seeking moose and catching fish was a common scenario noted in many of the transcripts. While fishing one might spot a moose and vice versa- one might be scouting for moose and in the process discover a great new fishing spot along the shoreline or in a bay. When moose hunting in the summer was mentioned on the East Arm in the transcripts, it often went hand in hand with an experience where the interviewee had time to closely observe aspects of fish aquatic habitat. Concurrently, many observations that were documented concerning habitat types, depth levels, water clarity, habitat or water characteristics often came in conjunction with discussing the activity of moose hunting by boat on the East Arm.

5.2 LAKE TROUT SIZE PREFERENCE FOR EATING

The best catch would be 8 to 12lbs. (RF 05 04 01)

This was overwhelmingly the consensus of those who spoke of a preference in the size of Lake Trout they found ideal for the dinner table. Some mentioned exclusively ten pounds, some mentioned twelve pounds and some eight. The large Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) that are often caught in the nets around **Łutsël K'e** are considered very rich, almost too rich to eat, although they make a good size feast for a large family. Here an Elder explains the process of catching fish for the consumption of his family, at a particular site, as well as his expectations from his many years of experience there:

Figure 5: August Enzoe with a spring net catch.

With the nets you catch all kinds, so I take what I catch--- except Trout (Salvelinus namaycush)--- when they are really fat, I don't eat those—because they're too rich. Sometimes you can get very young Trout (Salvelinus namaycush), good to eat, unless they are too fat-——[the] small that are also fat, not just older ones- these have big stomachs. These are too rich- and you can't eat those—too rich. If you want to make dry fish you have to get more Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) than more Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis), that's how we live here. If its just for eating, during the summer, like I said before if its two nights, even one night, when I am living in my house up there [at the Snowdrift River ***(Tędhul Dezé)****] its enough time to catch what you need. In the springtime, I'll get [the nets in] in another two weeks there, when the ice is all gone on the river, in the morning I'll put the nets there in the water, in the evening I have to pull out – its too much. In the fall time, it is like that too. When going for dry fish, you want more, and two nights too much.*
(AE 04 12 01)

Here again the mention of Fort Reliance **(Kaché)** Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) in eating preference came up by many interviewees. Fort Reliance **(Kaché)** Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) have a reputation that holds them in special standing, they are considered to be unmatched by any other Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) of the East Arm in taste quality, color of the meat (dark pink) and firmness of the meat.

Many people also spoke of a preference for female Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) and *Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis)*, explicitly for the enjoyment of the eggs. One interviewee told of her delight to eat fish egg bannock. Here a community member explains this favorite food:

I prefer female because of the eggs, the eggs are a delicacy among the Chipewyan people. It's like caviar for us. So, there is another thing that they have inside their stomach, it's a kind of a tube- and that one too, you cook it on the fire. Ooooohh. It's beautiful. So basically, we prefer the female fish, Trout (Salvelinus namaycush) and the Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) - especially the Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) eggs in particular. (DD 05 24 01)

5.3 FISH HEALTH

In general, fish health in the East Arm was considered excellent by the interviewees. Though some of the interviewees did report catching fish with a high volume of parasites in fish within certain areas of the East Arm, most people did not have this experience to report and explicitly kept what comments they had to make about observing ill looking fish to Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*). Comments reporting parasites in fish were exclusively relegated to the summer fishing season, no mention of this observation in fish caught in the winter was mentioned. Indicators of fish health were also pointed out quite frequently in the interviews. A number of ways in which interviewees assessed fish health is overviewed here. Assessing the quality of a fish included visual inspections of external and internal cavities. Below one Elder explains that the visual appearance of the liver was taught by her father to be important when assessing fish health:

I never did run into a sick fish, but you can often tell if a fish was good or not by the liver. If you see a liver that is small and pure white then you know that the fish is very sick. When you open the fish up and in the guts if you see a type of a worm in the guts, then this will give you a bad stomach infection- even if you cook it, it will be no good. It is a little small fish like—and if you are not careful this little fish can kill you—it will eat your stomach until it kills you—this was told [taught] to me by my great grandfather. (MD 05 24 01)

Women have considerable talent and expertise in assessing fish health. Through the many years of processing fish for drying and smoking, season after season, any abnormalities or exceptions to what they had become familiar to as standard fish quality was quickly noticed. One notable criterion was the fatness of the fish, used today as a measure of fish health. This can be done by making a visual assessment of the external shape of the fish or by an inspection of the internal organs, where cues offer a visual indication of a fat, healthy fish. Parasites loads, as well as overall body shape were criteria mentioned for judging fish health. Taste, smell and other means, such as the quality of the liver, were also criteria documented.

The community observation of a decline in the quality of fish Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) came up often in interviews, often unsolicited. Documented in a number of transcripts, this demonstrates the community's shibboleth of the dubious quality of fish in this lake. This study offers some insight into the events that have influenced this view and could be summarized in the following way: Between forty and fifty years ago, Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) was subject to a consistently high volume of fishing, particularly in the days when stock pile fishing for sled dogs during the freeze-up/transition period was important. According to a 1961 survey done by Kelleher and Haight (The Fall Domestic Fishery at Snowdrift, NWT. Journal of Fisheries Research Board of Canada 22(6): 1572, 1965) one hundred and fifty-seven people or half the dog owners of Snowdrift were surveyed and they owned 167 dogs. The chronology of the community's decline in fishing Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) seems to follow the decline in the use of dog teams for travel. Today no one in Łutsël K'e uses dogs for transportation on the land. The effect of this decline in community fishing was intensified by the fact that Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) had been sampled and passed by as a site for a commercial fishing enterprise due to parasite loads in 1959 (Sinclair, Tractenburg, and Beckford, 1967). According to Elder Pierre Catholique who worked on that particular sampling project, this might be among the numerous events that have played a role in establishing a lowly reputation for Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) fish. Guides and lodge staff have made judgments as to the low quality of the fish at Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) as well, indicating in recent seasons a high volume of parasites persisting in the fish. So intermittent verbal reports from the Frontier Fishing Lodge traffic (normally fished by guests during early summer, due to limited boat travel possible in the Arm during late ice break-up years), and from community members that venture to fish there on occasion, continue to contribute to the poor status of Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) fish. This perpetuates the other widely held view that because only sporadic fishing occurs there, the fish in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) are over-populated. These are most of the issues brought up specifically in the interviews, which presently encapsulate the scene at Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*). The amount of parasites found on the Whitefish *(Coregonus clupeaformis)* and Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), as well as Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) with skinny bodies and big heads, seem to be the prime concern regarding fish quality in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*). The same community assessment methods described by interviewees to determine fish health in the East Arm were also used for health assessment of fish at Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*).

If not guiding for the Frontier Lodge in early summer, most members of the community will fish on Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) only on occasion, often at precise times during the year. One such time is when the first winter nets are set in late November-early December. Ice forms at a location not far from the outlet of the Snowdrift River (Tędhul Dezé) into Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) earlier than anywhere else and is in close proximity to town. Although the Back Bay off the Łutsël K'e peninsula (*) has nets set in December shortly after freeze-up and in smaller inland lakes, this location on Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) is often the first suitable spot for winter net setting. On the weekend these nets are checked for the first time, a picnic or outing

of family members usually occurs at the Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) site, to celebrate the annual event. In addition to this, many cabins are in use on the Snowdrift River (Tędhul Dezé) and nets will be set by some directly in the outlet of the Snowdrift River (Tędhul Dezé) into Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) in the spring and summer.

An Elder notes the taste difference between the fish of Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) and the fish of the areas of Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) in the immediate waters of the Łutsël K'e region:

And in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué) too there's really skinny fish. You can taste the difference. Sometimes you catch a fish and there is no taste to it—that means it's really skinny. And when you get a fat one you can notice the difference—sometimes in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) I've noticed that some of the fish have big heads and small tails. Like ancient fish- it looks really weird. Fish like that sometimes you catch them with the fishing rod up the river. (JM 05 01 01)*

Two Elders below comment separately on the fish in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*):

The fish in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué) was checked it out awhile back for commercial fishing- but there was too many leeches and parasites in the fish, so they left it alone. Around 1980 maybe—Jimmy Anderson from Hay River checked it out. The fish in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) look different because there are so many worms in the fish. In the old days there was one fishing lodge on Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) and the fish were not that good for fishing, so they moved the lodge to Nu Chogh, it is an island not far from the Frontier Lodge [On Great Slave Lake]. In the mouth of Stark Lake (Dethı) when you come from the river and there was a lodge, the lodge was just there. This was in the 1960 and from then on they didn't really go fishing at Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) anymore. In Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) there are little gaps [that separate one basin of water from another] that pass into the mine area and there the fish are no good. There is a lot of Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) but not that much Trout (Salvelinus namaycush). (PC 05 03 01)*

Yes, even when the mine was open even the fish then the fish in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué) they used to have puss—Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) has always been like that. Some fish you'll catch will be fine and others you will catch we would have to throw back into the water. Yes, the fish don't look the same [in] Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) and East Arm fish don't look the same---East Arm are much better than Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*). I remember one time some people came up to see about doing commercial fishing in Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) and all the fish were bad that they caught and they had to get rid of all that fish. So they had to move back to East Arm.* (JR 05 24 01)

Finally, many interviewees made a comparison of Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*) to the fish of the East Arm:

In Stark Lake **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *I found some fish that had some puss and cyst on the meat and there some worms on the fish, on the outside of the fish. I have seen them in the past. In the McLean Bay, there [are] some Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) were bigger and different than those from the Great Slave. All the fish in the area in Stark Lake* **(The Kalnıka Tué*)** *has lot of fish that has puss and that will be Whitefish (Coregonus clupeaformis) and Trout (Salvelinus namaycush).*
(AL 04 01 01)

6.0 VISION OF THE FUTURE: MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

6.1 WINTER COMMERCIAL FISHING

The interviewees were asked to comment on a potential winter commercial fishing business that could be created to serve community fish consumption. Because this idea has circulated the community a number of times in the past (*Commercial Fishing and Fish processing in* ***Łutsël K'e***, unpublished draft report), the study sought to get a better indication of the community's current perspective. About two-thirds of the people interviewed had a comment to make on creating a local commercial winter fishery. Some saw the idea as a good economic opportunity for the community. The majority thought it was a great idea to stimulate economic growth, but not by investing in a commercial fishing business in close proximity to **Łutsël K'e** or in the East Arm. A few came out strongly against it, while the majority of interviewees seemed to offer only a brief comment on the subject. Many thought that there would be a lot of pre-fishing 'paper work', and quota planning associated with getting a project of this type off the ground. Prediction of its potential effects on East Arm fish stocks did not bode well with those who were interested in stimulating more tourism in the East Arm, and many thought other economic opportunities could potentially serve the community better than a commercial fishing business. This interviewee summarized the community's feeling towards a commercial fishery:

It is our resource to use, and it is our lake for people to use it, and has been for umpteen numbers of years, if we can sustain it [a commercial fishing business], I don't see a problem with it. If it is sustainable. You also have to consider the amount of anglers coming to this area and the lodges that effect more people than just the one, two, three individuals that engage in commercial fishing, so you have to balance a few—and ask what's the biggest bang for your dollar? So those are the things that have to be considered. [Perhaps this is feasible] If you are able to [commercial fish] without seriously disrupting the fish [over exploit the East Arm stocks]. I think ***Łutsël K'e*** *should be looking into the ownership of Lodges. I don't necessary think you have to build any lodges, just buy into the ones that exist, work with the government of the Northwest Territories, the Federal government, Department of Fisheries and Oceans to establish some clear rules so* ***Łutsël K'e*** *people and the Band Office have a direct say in what happens out here. I think it is the responsibility of the people of* ***Łutsël K'e*** *to protect the East Arm.. (SN 05 30 01)*

Another comment:

I talk to some people at the lodge and those people I don't mind, but for commercial fishing using gill nets, and people taking more fish than they need, I don't support that. In traditional ways they used to take enough for the family and their dogs, as for commercial fishing I don't think it should happen here. (AC 06 19 01)

Interviewee comments that were not in favor of commercial fishing explained why they were opposed to this in the area. This comment of the **Łutsël K'e** family tradition to take only enough fish as was needed was often mentioned. During the nineteen sixties, this practice was observed by visiting fishermen surveying the

techniques and methods fishermen were practicing in the Northwest Territories. They wrote this passage about the techniques being utilized at the time:

In most cases there were marked inefficiencies in fishing practices in the Snowdrift area in the fall of 1961. Participants used only enough gear to supply their daily needs. Nets were made of cotton, linen and nylon and were mostly equipped with rocks and sticks rather than with the conventional leads and floats. The nets often became snarled and, because they could not hang as well as those properly equipped, small volumes were landed." (Sinclair, Trachtenberg and Beckford, p.52)

In fact, Snowdrift fishermen often welcome those "snarls" in the net, which often prove advantageous to assist them in not catching too many fish. Many fishermen assert this remains true today. These naturally occurring holes and snags from continued use do not hinder their efforts but often help fishermen from catching fish that they do not need.

6.2 HARVEST STUDIES IN THE COMMUNITY

A question was also included pertaining to future harvest studies of fish in the East Arm and in the waters around **Łutsël K'e**. The idea of yet another study in the community did not bring immediate interest or approval, but the majority of those who responded seemed to think the idea was okay with the prerequisite of informing the community of its direct purpose: "How would the study be utilized to promote or advance DFO policies and/or management strategies?" This was a common question. Second, it was made clear that the study should include community researchers in the design process and employ people in the community. This excerpt reflects the ideas many community members interviewed relayed through this study:

I think in order to get the results- to find out new information we have to go ahead and participate in these kinds of studies that could be useful positive information later on in the future. It's good to know how what's around us, how many fishes are there, how many people eat fish and all that. I guess in the old days people would go out for one or two weeks and collect fish for their dog team. As you know there is no more dog teams, and people tend to get fish just for stocking up for the winter as its hard to get fish in the wintertime, because its cold and people still do it, but not all the time. People don't go camping to collect fish anymore but they go camping to go get ducks, in the springtime. But they do go set the nets to make the dried fish and just for a week or so, that's what is happening now. I think its good to have studies like that if it is going to benefit the community. If it is going to do the community good. If it is a study that relates to making more restrictions for us later, then sure, of course we aren't going to want to participate. Are they going to use our information against us? So if it's not going to be good for us- okay—if its not, the heck with that.
(JME 05 01 01)

While the reasons behind the precaution and hesitancy embedded in the comment above are well understood by community members, those reasons may not be understood by those outside of the community. Below an Elder gives an example of why the path **Łutsël K'e** must take is one of caution when asked to participate in new studies. Below he talks of the closure of Zone 6 (or the East Arm) to commercial fishing, and the construction

of the uranium mine in 1948-49 at Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*). These were two of many events that influenced the way the community responds to land/water use and government policy and what it means to have their concerns be heard regarding their territory and their livelihood within the East Arm:

I went commercial fishing at the Simpson Islands (Gah Nué), and I received one of those fishing boats. In the Simpson Islands (Gah Nué*) is where I caught a lot of my fish. One day I made one hundred dollars a day in fish. First Pearson Point was the cut off point for commercial fishermen called Ten-Mile Point—but then they changed it to Utsingi Point (Betsıghʃé)- or an area called 15-Mile Point. Before [as commercial fishermen] we were not allowed to go fishing beyond the 15 Mile Point (Betsıghʃé), and its still that way to this day. When there was no Fifteen Mile Point (Betsıghʃé), they used to go all over commercial fishing: To Wildbread Bay (Nıtłër Nu Ná Tłazʃ*), McLeod Bay (Kaché Tł'azı*) and Christie Bay and it was effecting the fish – hardly any [population] there-so they changed it—and now no one who does commercial fishing is supposed to go beyond that point. The fishermen discussed this- got together and said along with the Chief and Council [of Łutsël K'e] to decide this. We were the ones – ten boats met out [on the lake] there to decide this--- met out—talking about the little amount of fish [that they were catching]. For the next year, they started talking about shutting down. Before that these white people made all these decisions- nobody tells us what they are doing--- [for instance] they started bringing in from the Barge, here, all this equipment and we helped them take all the equipment off of the barge and then they tell us that they are building a mine on Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*). So the mine was put up behind our back…* (JR 05 24 01)

Many interviewees felt the 'zone six policy', which designates the East Arm as off limits to commercial fishing should not be changed or modified in any way. Most interviewees expressed that the East Arm should continue to be managed as a world class Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) fishing area.

6.3 MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF THE EAST ARM

Comments on the community's interaction with outside lake users had mixed responses. Most respondents seemed to agree that there was not enough education or information going out to the summer boating visitors in the East Arm about the historical legacy of the Denesǫłıne in this area. Mostly, people want visitors to know that this land is the home to the Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation. Almost all interviewees responded that they had often seen visitors on the lake but most often interviewees reported that they had little or no direct contact with them, unless guiding at one of the three lodges located in the East Arm. Two comments below reflect adequately the broad type of responses the study received with respect to community interactions with lake visitors and tourists. One of the longer responses that was given had much to say about the growing infringement upon the community's traditional activities and the growing use of the lake by tourists and the lodges in the East Arm:

Yep, I have seen many of these folks, especially when we go hunting for moose; there is a lodge over here [Taltheilei Narrows ***(K'ałdëlé)****] and one over here [at Ft. Reliance* ***(Kaché)****], so there is basically three lodges, with the one in McLeod Bay* ***(Kaché Tł'azı*)****. So if you are out hunting, you mostly encounter –eh some tourists, in fact most every time in the summer. They are all over this Bay [pointing to McLeod], there are not only tourists but people coming from Yellowknife, and they are doing there own thing, so there's a lot of traffic around here, in the summer. Its makes it hard for hunting moose, they are always in the bays. If there is moose around, they won't come down to the shore, because all of the racket that they are hearing. Sometimes it interferes with our hunting skills, and in other times, they come in handy because they have extra gas, when you run out of gas. The lodges, well we aren't allowed to go to the lodges, that is the rule. Especially with this guy at Plummer's Lodge [at Taltheilei Narrows* ***(K'ałdëlé)****]--- they don't even hire us. They hire people from out there. And here they are just our neighbors. We can't even come up shore, unless we have a need for something desperately, other than that, they do their own thing, and we do our own thing. There is this one too, the Indian Mountain Lodge (at* ***Dhedh Theʔá Tł'azį****). I have only been to this one here in the fall time. When nobody was there, but I never had any experience with them. I have been to Reliance* ***(Kaché) [****the lodge there****]*** *but this is only a small outfit, the biggest outfit is this one here—Plummer's Lodge. So in the summertime there are lots of non-natives on this lake. (DD 05 24 01)*

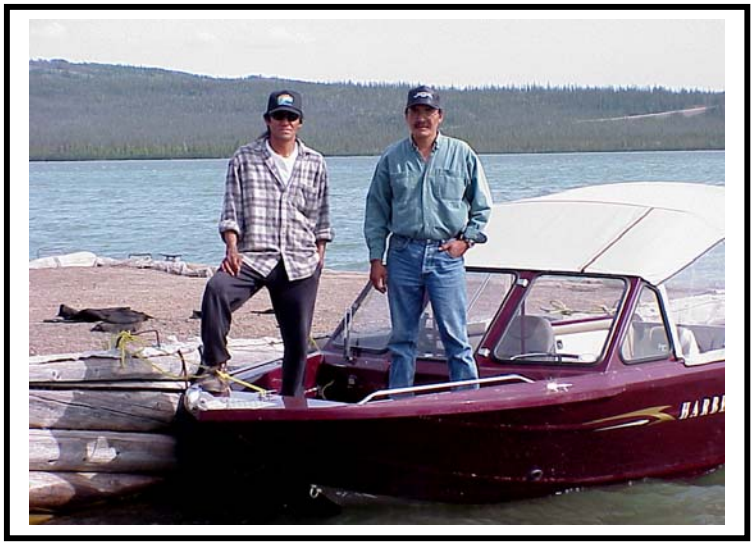

Figure 6: 2001 East Arm Monitoring Staff, Raymond Marlowe and Ron Enzoe.

From a slightly different perspective, the thoughts this young woman presented another view growing up on the East Arm, traveling by boat in the summertime:

We've always interacted with visitors on the lake, we've always traveled, her and I, and we've always gone camping in the bush sometimes for two- three months—on the lake—so when you see people you usually interact with them. But, I've noticed that in the last five years its really gotten almost out of hand, too much activity, it used to be where you could go out, camping for a month and you would run into maybe just a few people, but now you run into tons more. (IC 04 20 01)

Many management decisions and future-plans for the East Arm are beginning to take shape. Community members are increasingly involved with their Treaty 8 entitlement process. They have initiated talks with Parks Canada to investigate if a partnership can be established to create a co-managed East Arm National Park that will uphold aboriginal title to the land. Not all interviewees felt concerned with the management issues, but most of them expressed a deep attachment toward the land and water of the East Arm when answering monitoring and future management questions. When compiled on this particular subject, responses yielded the idea that regulated tourism and growth in the East Arm was necessary, with the following caveat: Future monitoring and management structures involving **Łutsël K'e** from the start must be created to respond to increased activity in the East Arm.

Many voiced a profound respect for the land and water including a belief in the regenerative powers of certain areas, such as 'The Lady of the Falls' (*also known as Parry Falls*). This passage below reflects a common respect all people in **Łutsël K'e** have for the waters of the East Arm:

I guess just keep things out of the water. Like for my Elders always told me to respect the water, when you are traveling on the water always pay the water respect---where ever you are going just always pay the water. If you are traveling by canoe-- do not talk, just paddle. When you get onto shore you can talk all you want-- don't yell at each other---when you are canoeing together--do not yell- that is the respect that the Elders had [when on the water], so it is passed down, from generation to generation, but its always how the Elders taught me, so I live by it. (BM 05 17 01)

Impressions of the monitoring of the East Arm as it stands now could be best summarized by an interviewee who talked about the present structure of the program and what positive additions could be made in the future:

I think one boat [East Arm Monitoring Program Boat] is not enough. Some people they come from Hay River and from Yellowknife- from way across the lake up here. They are all over the place; you can't get all over [with one boat]. They put their boats in on the lake at Hay River or Ft. Res [Fort Resolution] and they come this way. So I say just in this last meeting—I did not know there was DFO in Yellowknife--- [But] there is no DFO [in Yellowknife, Department of Fisheries and Oceans]. Nothing. NO George Low—no fishing inspector there---in Yellowknife. So that means that there is nobody to watch tourism or commercial fishing from there [or in the East Arm], just in Hay River. [There is] No monitoring ability from there. So this last meeting [Great Slave Lake ***(Tu Nedhé)*** *Advisory Committee] we are supposed to ride down to Ottawa, some or a few of the committee [members] to Ottawa to ask them for a money for a DFO officer in Yellowknife. To help with the overall monitoring of the East Arm. See, there is nobody to really check their boats when they get into Yellowknife too. No DFO there. They could check their boats when they get into the area. Its hard, when they go from Yellowknife, if they get permitted here [in* ***Łutsël K'e****], they would have to come down this way, and then out [up to Christie Bay and rest of the Arm]. It might be hard to enforce. Some would just come half way and then turn back without getting their licenses. Another thing is that from here in* ***Łutsël K'e****, we could just build a cabin, that one is easy—they could go into Wildbread Bay* ***(Nıtłër Nu Ná Tłazį*)****—[or] in the Gap (****Łeta Cho***

Dıyak'é*) *[referring to the map] and get their license, there are no cabins right now there. They were before but then, they were talking about that park on this whole island, so they moved across the bay from there. We called it the doctor's cabin [that area of the between Pethei (Golá Gá) and Douglas peninsulas]- from the Gap (Łeta Cho Dıyak'é*). We call it the Doctor's Cabin [this name originates from the folks that built it]; they were from Chicago. I think the park would be a good idea. Then just for us, the commercial fishing, still issuing permits, for certain fishing, and then build a cabin in the Gap (Łeta Cho Dıyak'é*) and have a park officer, a person from Łutsël K'e that could be at that station or cabin in the Gap (Łeta Cho Dıyak'é*) [between Pethei (Golá Gá) and Douglas Peninsulas] there. (SB 01 10 01)*

Figure 7: In transit from Łutsël K'e to Ft. Reliance (Kaché).

A vision has been forming for the management of East Arm within the community. This Band member had this view of the East Arm, combining his peoples' past and present cultural identities, blending them together to create a viable economic future:

Well, I guess the only thing that I can add, I think its pretty clear that the mode of transportation change from dogsled to snowmobiles was a major effect to the people in the Northwest Territories, the people of **Łutsël K'e** *on the way they live. And it probably had a positive effect on the fish population on Great Slave Lake* **(Tu Nedhé)**. *That's yet to be determined though, through studies, but one thing that I do know is that the Great Slave Lake* **(Tu Nedhé)** *and the Northwest Territories is one of the last Great Frontiers left in the world, and people will be attracted to this area. Down the road. There has to be policies and plans of how to utilize this area, with the intention of preserving the area much as possible from pollution etc. etc. At the same time how to utilize it. Not just to [utilize it], but we can't get into this initiative [the treaty entitlement process] with the idea that we are gonna isolate the East Arm. That's just a battle that you can't win. The interest is just too strong from other groups. Benefiting and management is the key, I think managing the East Arm and the resources with in the area. I know that the East Arm has great potential and the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development wants to develop this area for tourism. And people in this community have got to realize that economic development in this area in tourism is going to be the sustaining factor for the future—mining is great to help out with the short term [economics] in the East Arm, but its East Arm tourism- it'll be another Hawaii [laughs]. The thing that I think that the people of* **Łutsël K'e** *should understand is tourism. [To learn about] what the tourists want, at the same time start [re] developing their own cultures that have been lost, the drumming, the dances, etc. etc. that attracts tourism, then at the same time you create an environment where you take advantage of and develop the best of both worlds. (SN 05 30 01)*

This following interviewee focused his comments on the present structure of East Arm management and monitoring, as well as on his understanding of the present fish stock levels. He clearly laid out many of the tasks he believes should be the community's responsibility in the overall protection and guidance of the East Arm. He underscored the necessity of keeping track of the monitoring process and the findings from year to year:

Well I think that the fish population eventually is gonna go up anyways. Then you will have problems with parasites and whatever and too many fish then pretty soon, maybe, well and one way is to fish. Fish them out so you balance that. But people I know have been talking about commercial fishing, if there would be a way that the community only, can open an area that closed years ago. I don't really remember that, but it was a couple of years ago. [On the monitoring program] I think it is, if records are kept just to monitor how many people are going through the area, the time of year- stuff like that- how many people, what transportation they were using, how long they stayed and so forth. If those questions were asked and answered, it could maybe be good. But if I was a visitor I don't know if I would want to see somebody [approaching the boat]. Because most people are trying to get away from all of that. But I think its monitoring. This is a good way to manage things and control things—it's a good way of controlling what might be happening out there. Because a lot of people usually throw garbage out on the land and stuff like that and a lot of people fish without the proper license. It is one way to manage the wildlife and stuff like that. I think it's a good idea. [That is] if we record what we monitor for some comparison from year to year. (TL 05 11 01)

With regard to the community's roles and responsibilities, quite a few responses emphasized the need for people in the community to get out onto the lake more often and spend less time inside or in town. Below includes one interviewee summary of the situation.

Get away from the TV. Its been here since 1980, ----1982. (PE 05 31 01)

Figure 8: AJ Catholique ice fishing near Łutsël K'e, at Hǫkáʔ azé, 'The Gap'.

As compared to pre-skidoo and electricity days, contemporary life has modified to an extent what it once meant to live in the East Arm. This comment should be understood in the context of the Dene lifestyle, a rich heritage of living off of the land. When this man speaks to suggest one should get away from the TV, he is not suggesting that this activity has overcome the on-the-land-based lifestyle of people in Łutsël K'e, but that it is does discourage it.

Finally, one young woman expressed her views on the management of the East Arm stressing the importance of community involvement for the future of her children and their quality of life. She speaks of the importance of maintaining the environmental quality of the East Arm while still participating in a larger economy:

I think there needs to be more participation by the community in the monitoring of the Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé). We have a big area, and the water is the essential part of our way of life. If anything was to happen to it, its going to be detrimental to not only our generation but to all the other generations to come. I don't want to ever have to worry about things like that. It is bad enough that we have the problem at Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué) and you know there is not only that area, but there could be un-foreseen areas as well. So to protect it, is probably the most important thing for me—to keep it as pure and away from all those mining minerals and all that mining garbage. That is another thing that I am worried about it, the flow, the watershed flow, and how that comes down to the East Arm, they have all these environmental studies out there and they have researchers monitoring these mines but you know, who's to say they are going to be 100% accurate in their testing? Anything can slip and one little thing in the water that is harmful could have a major impact to the whole entire ecosystem I think. We should push for the training of our people, to be out there monitoring, checking the data and more people monitoring this area and the fishing lodges. And all the fishing lodges should change to 4-stroke motors! It should be mandatory. (IC 04 20)*

Figure 9: Patti Lockhart with a Lake Trout from the net.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Traditional knowledge practiced in the community is dynamic, a characteristic of all systems of knowledge that are alive and in use. The traditional knowledge base developed from years of observations on the water, through the oral tradition of the Elders, passing this information through the generations. New technologies and ideas (like using a depth finder to find fish instead of concentrating on shoreline characteristics, or using a 'needle bar' ice chisel instead of a square head chisel when checking nets in the wintertime) are constantly being integrated into the daily routine. Most likely, the refinement of fishing practices will continue to add to and modify the knowledge system of all things 'fish' in the community. Locating habitat and understanding seasonal stock variability is being put into practice through the combination of traditional methods and new technologies. Fishing is a fundamental activity to the community and the consumption of fish is not just 'country food', the harvesting of East Arm fish is a way of life.

Gathering specific knowledge of these practices, future study contributions to the community knowledge base would best be served by on-site visitation or fishing with Elders and Denesǫłıne land users. Methods and techniques are best observed and discussed in the field, therefore it is recommended that further study to investigate specific knowledge of theme areas covered by this report include significant time devoted to accompany fishermen or land-users when on the water, to communicate with them when they are engaged in study focus activities. Participation in on-the-land activity by the researchers is integral to good study data collection and understanding of those activities.

Many traditional knowledge questionnaires from previously conducted northern community ecological studies were considered as models for the question design. While perhaps these models worked very well for other communities, immediate response to the question models by Denesǫłıne researchers, land users and Elders was that they were too long, asking too many questions at one sitting. One of these models contained 106 questions asking for extremely detailed information on all aspects of various animal habitat, harvest preferences, temporal and spatial variability of such in the traditional territory. Additionally, some asked for quantification of ecological seasonal changes for five, ten, fifteen and twenty year increments. These are important questions, but the method and wording of these questions was ill suited to generate accurate information in Łutsël K'e. Questions that pertained to East Arm fish stocks and fluctuations on a larger temporal scale invariably would yield short non-descript answers. This left little platform during the interview to discuss how they perceived that change in the stocks and what indicators they looked to that made this change apparent to them; these types of questions could be approached while out in the field.

The number of interview questions and the interview time length required to complete an interview using such a model did not fit community objectives. Certain question topics would best be researched through

separate studies for accurate and thorough data collection. From eighty-six questions that the study researchers wrote, three-fourths of these questions were edited out of the questionnaire. The target was to interview a sample based on age brackets representing community members, rather than exclusively interview knowledgeable fishermen and Elders. Therefore, questions were re-written and combined to ensure a large variety of East Arm activities and many areas of expertise would be covered. We used these twenty-five questions as a guide, not a script, and emphasized that researchers maintain flexibility during the interview process.

This report first focused on the traditional Dene ways of seeing and speaking of the land and water. The ecological knowledge that Elders of Łutsël K'e have passed along to the next generation has been stored, changed and transmitted by a process where one's survival within a landscape is attributed to one's knowledge and expertise of that changing landscape. Denesǫłıne ancestors developed a unique way of life over time in the waterscape of the East Arm. This was demonstrated in the stories, methods and techniques of fishing, as well as the within the examples given of the revered medicinal properties of Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*). The report touched upon the three main community economic activities: guiding, commercial fishing and subsistence fishing. The study investigated these economic endeavors in order to document the community's contemporary knowledge and utilization of that knowledge through the community work activities that take place. Oral tradition of fish habitat and methods to assess fish health, such as standards of body condition and fatness of the fish that the community employs, were also discussed a number of contexts.

The information gathered on East Arm fish habitat was voluminous, too lengthy to include in full detail here. The information collected with respect to specific fishing areas, seasonal movements of fish species, spawning and other habitat areas (such as 'sleeping' areas), was discussed and quoted from the transcripts. The necessity of catching fish for survival has shifted to one of personal preference or to provide a seasonal economic livelihood. Community fishing knowledge is kept current by angling and traditional net setting, and guiding tourists in the East Arm. The changing cultural context of the Denesǫłıne of Łutsël K'e has modified the practice and applications of traditional fishing knowledge, not the cultural importance of fish in the regular diet of community members. Fish is a very important food source, a staple of the community. A dramatic period of change has become the status quo and this situation will likely continue in the community for years to come, but a change in the distinction of East Arm fresh fish as a preferred food source is unlikely. This report has surveyed some of the areas of this ongoing transition.

An overview of community ideas on future management practices and present monitoring of the East Arm demonstrates community interest in expanding the East Arm summer monitoring program. Educating visitors of the historic and contemporary presence of the Denesǫłıne people in the East Arm is a priority, as well as increasing the seasonal monitoring with additional staff on the lake from year to year. Ideas

included creating a program to increase awareness in the younger population of Łutsël K'e to increase their understanding of their future roles and responsibilities in the management of the East Arm, as well as get them out on the lake to explore their heritage in the summertime. Overall, the interviewees in this study demonstrated an eagerness to maintain the high quality of fish stocks in the East Arm, a deep respect for the land and water and a desire to instill and ensure this for future generations.

Figure 10: Elders Noel Drybones and Jonas Catholique fix a net with sticks as floats.

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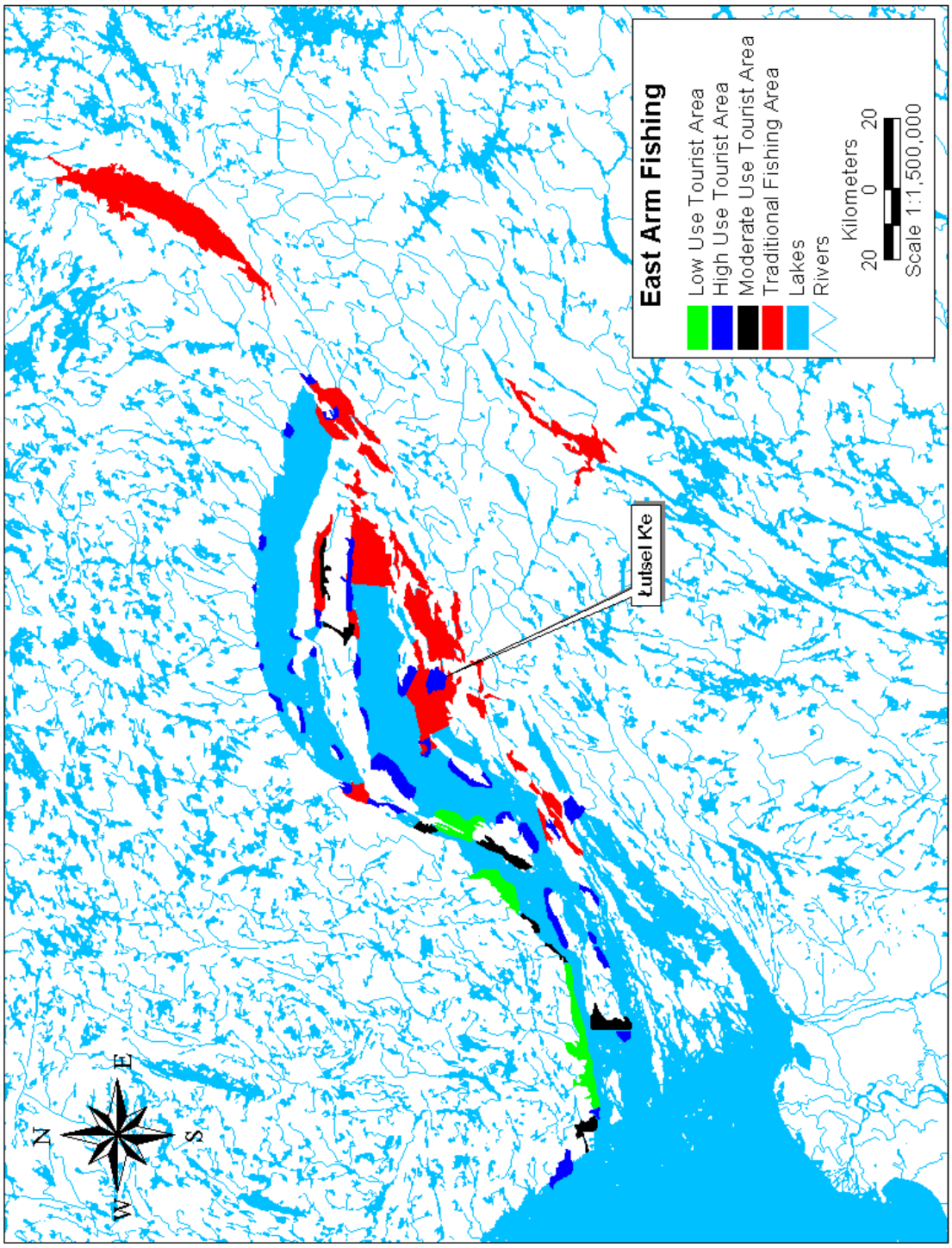
APPENDIX 1: MAPS

I. STUDY LOCATION MAP

APPENDIX 1: MAPS

II. AUTOCAD/ARCVIEW (GIS) EAST ARM FISHING LOCATIONS MAP



APPENDIX 2: REPORT OUTLINE

Appendix 3: Outline of Denesǫłıne Traditional Fishing Knowledge Study Report

The interview process involved thirty community members that were asked twenty-five questions on personal experiences and their acquired knowledge of fishing in the East Arm. The subject matter concerning the twenty-five questions concentrated on four theme areas. The four themes used in the construction of this study are defined by the following outline. The outline lists the three sub-categories for the themes. The sub-categories provide further elaboration to the study questions and final report organization.

THEME 1: This area covers the topics that include older oral tradition passed to present day elders from the days prior to the establishment of the church or the town of Łutsël K'e. It should be noted that some information collected in this category came from younger individuals though who were in the process of learning this knowledge or had learned it from their parents or grandparents.

1. Old Stories Of Tu Nedhe
2. Medicine of the Fish
3. Old Ways to Catch Fish

II.THEME 2: The topics here focus on the various economic opportunities that have been present to the Łutsël K'e community over the years and offer a window into the changes that have occurred as a result of innovations in transportation for traveling on the land as they relate to contemporary fish harvesting and changes in seasonal fish harvesting practices.

1. Making a Living: Trapping, Fishing for Dogs, Dog-Skidoo Transition
2. Making a Living: Commercial Fishing
3. Making a Living: Fishing Lodge Guiding

III. THEME 3: The specific knowledge of the land and the habitat ecology of the fish in the East Arm, as well as the surrounding larger bodies of water (Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*)) is discussed here. Topics mentioned here include fish characteristics contributing to personal eating preference, fish health observed in the East Arm, preferred net setting and angling location areas.

1. Size Preference for Consumption
2. Fish Health
3. Fish Habitat-Seasonal Movements, Spawning, Angling, Net Setting areas

IV. THEME 4: Information gathered on contemporary lake use and future natural resource management of the East Arm is covered in this section. Ideas on the potential for a winter commercial fishing enterprise, harvest studies in the community, community perceptions of non-local lake users, and the economic opportunities associated with development in the East Arm for Łutsël K'e are discussed.

1. East Arm Monitoring, Experience with other Lake Users
2. Future Policy Preferences and Management Ideas
3. Comments: Years Fishing on the East Arm

APPENDIX 3: STUDY QUESTIONS

DATE: Interviewee: Tape #:

Location: Łutsël K'e, NT Interviewer: Translator:

1. How long have you been fishing?
2. Is there any special time of the year that you like to catch fish?
3. Is there a type of Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) you think makes the best catch? (Ex: male, female, young, old?)
4. Are there areas you know of that always have a lot of Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) or other fish?
5. What about good areas for other fish? Where do you like to fish? Can you show me on the map?
6. What time of the year do you go these fishing areas?
7. How do you catch this fish? If nets, what gillnet mesh size do you use?
8. Have you seen Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) migrate? Where do they go?
9. Do you know where the female may lay their eggs?
10. Have you ever found Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) dead or sick (diseased)? When and what does it look like?
11. What about areas beside Stark Lake (The Kalnıka Tué*)?
12. Have you ever seen Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) with abnormal eyes, fins, tails, etc? Where and when?
13. Can you remember a time when the Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) population was low or there was more than there is now?
14. Which part did people use of Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) as medicine long ago, if any?
15. Do you know any old time stories about Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) or white fish?
16. Lodges, outfitters, anglers. What do you think of them? Do you see them or talk to them in the summer? Elders/ adults: Did you work for a Commercial Fishery?
17. A few years ago a winter commercial fishing business was talked about for the community. What do you think of this idea?
18. Should the community do anything to make sure there are healthy Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) for future generations in the East Arm?
19. There is a summer monitoring program in the East Arm that does angler (summer sport fishing) surveys. Do you know about this? If so, what do you think of it?
20. Would you participate in a harvest information survey done by DFO over the next couple of years with community involvement?
21. What year did you own your first ski-doo or when did you start to use a ski-doo instead of dog team to get around in the winter? Can you talk about this a bit?
22. When did you stop fishing to feed your dogs for pulling a sled?
23. What kind, if any, changes did you see about life in town or with the fish in the East Arm when ski-doo started being used?
24. Is there anything else you would to say about Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) in the East Arm waters? Or mention any changes you've seen, we haven't mentioned?
25. Is there anything we can do to make this interview better?