



KNOWLEDGE HUB SUMMARY

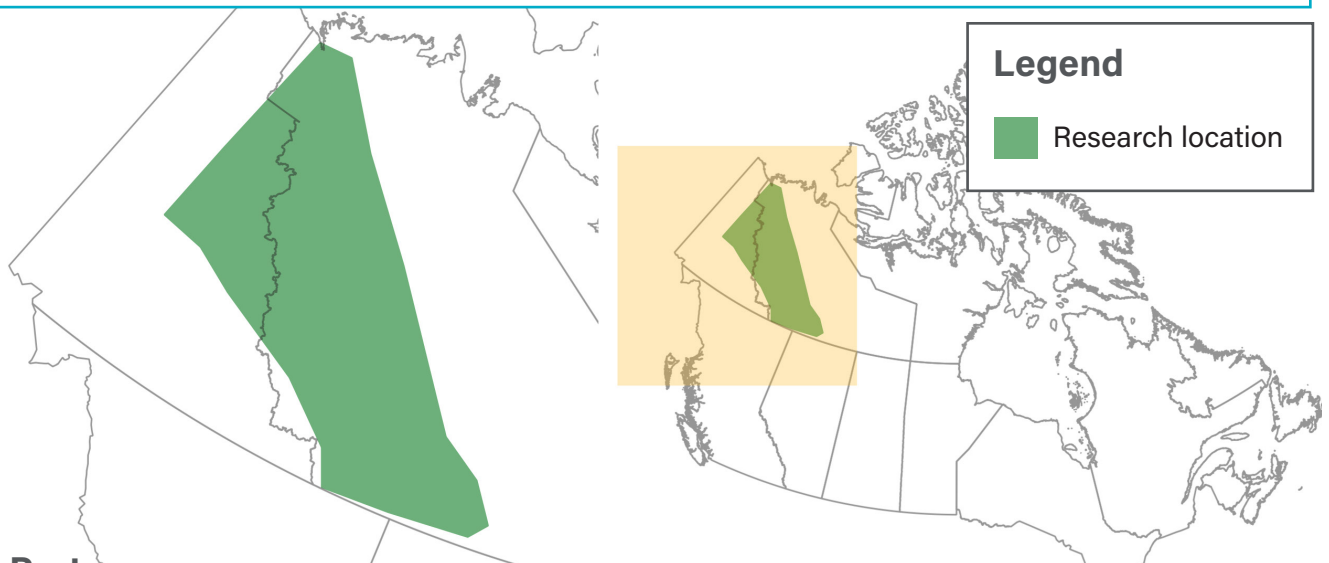
Níó Nę P'ęnę (NNP) – Trails of the Mountain Caribou

This five-year Indigenous-led program focuses on the relationship between Indigenous well-being and caribou conservation in the Mackenzie Mountain area of the Sahtú Region, Northwest Territories. For the Shúhtaot'Inę (Mountain Dene) of Tulít'a and Norman Wells, Níó Nę P'ęnę encompasses all of nature it's what holds everything together and attracts wildlife. This area has been a gathering place for people and caribou for thousands of years. In 2014, these communities partnered to develop a plan for research, monitoring, and land protection that supported Dene language, ways of life, and law alongside co-existence with caribou. Between 2016 and 2019, successive meetings led to the development of the Níó Nę P'ęnę Beghárę Shúhta Gozepę Narehzá - Trails of the Mountain Caribou Plan. This research combines Indigenous methodologies and knowledge with respectful non-invasive science-based research on caribou populations and landscapes, contributing to the community's objectives for caribou conservation, cultural resurgence, and governance.

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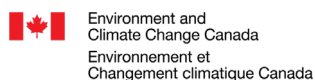


Project Partners

Fort Good Hope Renewable Resources Council

Nááts'ıhch'oh National Park Reserve

Nę K'ę Dene Ts'ılı - Living on the Land Forum



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Project Goals

The original goals of the project were to research the relationship between Indigenous well-being and caribou conservation in the Mackenzie Mountain area of the Sahtú Region, NWT. Specifically, the project aimed to:

- Understand the connection between Indigenous well-being and caribou conservation.
- Develop a plan for research, monitoring, and land protection that would support the vision of keeping Dene language, Dene ways of life, and Dene law strong in co-existence with caribou.
- Incorporate Indigenous methodologies and knowledge with non-invasive science-based research to contribute to caribou conservation, community well-being, cultural resurgence, and governance in the mountains.
- Establish collaborative partnerships between Indigenous communities and researchers to achieve shared objectives for caribou conservation and community development.

Key Outcomes & Impact

The team's most significant research findings reveal a profound connection between Indigenous well-being and caribou conservation, highlighting that caribou are not just animals but integral to Indigenous culture and ways of life. Through a combination of Indigenous knowledge and Western scientific methods, the team has developed non-invasive techniques to monitor and protect caribou populations while upholding Indigenous traditions. This approach includes on-the-land observations, storytelling, genetic analysis, and drone monitoring—methods that ensure a comprehensive and culturally respectful co-production of knowledge. These discoveries are crucial for promoting the sustainable coexistence of caribou and Indigenous communities for future generations.

Collaborative efforts with communities like the Shúhtaot'ıne of Tulı́'a and Norman Wells have resulted in innovative management strategies that respect Indigenous knowledge systems. The use of drones for non-invasive monitoring has gained attention and support within the community, demonstrating the effectiveness of braiding Indigenous and Western approaches. Community knowledge holders and Elders play a pivotal role in shaping research priorities, emphasizing the interconnectedness between caribou well-being, cultural heritage, and community vitality. Their active participation ensures that the research not only protects caribou populations but also strengthens cultural traditions, aligning with the values and needs of the community.

Over the past year, the program has made significant strides in meeting its goals, including an on-the-land gathering to update the caribou management plan and advanced drone training for nine Indigenous guardians, boosting capacity for non-invasive wildlife monitoring. Continued work in fecal sampling and genetic analysis further supports the vision of maintaining Dene language, culture, and governance in balance with caribou conservation. This braiding of Indigenous and Western knowledge has resulted in significant social, economic, and environmental benefits, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative approaches in caribou conservation. These impacts extend beyond the local communities to regional and national levels, showing how this research fosters both ecological sustainability and Indigenous well-being.



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