



For immediate release: Feb 16, 2016,

Media Release: Déljné harvesters agree to end ʔekwé hunt for the season

Déljné, NWT:

Harvesters in Déljné have taken the next step in the community's *Belarewilé Gots'ę ʔekwé* (*Caribou Forever Plan*) by making a consensus decision to end hunting ʔekwé zone.

The decision was made because the community has reached the limit of 150 ʔekwé set in the plan. The decision was finalized Friday, Feb 12, after a series of community meetings in Déljné. There is strong support for alternative harvesting (moose, muskox, ʔódzı, fish, ʔtarmıgan) and sharing among families and communities.

"This decision shows that Déljné has the strength to regulate itself when it comes to caribou conservation," said Déljné Chief Leonard Kenny. "Our plan is founded in traditional ways of being Dene (Dene Ts'ııı.) It shows that we can return to traditional ways of harvesting that include many different sources of food. We need to give ʔekwé a rest."

Special Advisor to the Chief on ʔekwé Walter Bayha says it took some work to build consensus.

"People fought for their harvesting rights under the land claim for many years" said Bayha. "Now with the land claim in place, and as we make the transition to self-government, we need to take hold of our new responsibilities in wildlife conservation. Elders have played a major role in helping to establish consensus."

Chief Kenny says there has been a steep learning curve for the community and leadership in implementing *Belarewilé Gots'ę ʔekwé*. "it's a living document," he says. Some key lessons learned include:

- The Déljné plan takes Dene concepts as the starting point. These concepts are inherent to the Dene way of life, and don't usually need to be explained within the community. It has taken a lot of effort to develop ways of expressing those concepts in English for a broader audience, including government and co-management decision-makers.
- In the cross-cultural context and given community opposition to tags, it has become important to be able to articulate and revitalize how Dene people govern their harvest.

- The ʔekwé are behaving differently. “There were planning efforts to ensure that there was no harvesting of t’sida, (female caribou)” said Délıne Chief Leonard Kenny. “That didn’t work out because the ʔekwé were more mixed than expected.”

Next steps:

- The Délıne ʔehdzo Got’ıne (Délıne Renewable Resources Council - DRRC), Délıne First Nation and Délıne Land Corporation are asking members of the community to respect the plan by not hunting in the ʔkewé zone (Tekacho and ıtséré Túé areas – across from the community on the east side of Keith Arm of Great Bear Lake.)
- Two large winter road signs will be posted in the ʔkewé zone indicating it is a no-hunting zone.
- The plan includes community measures to deal with people who don’t follow the policy, with ENR being brought in only as a last resort.
- The DRRC is going door-to-door to share more information about the Belarewıé Gots’é ʔkewé and the decision to end the hunt and to ask for input on how the plan can be strengthened for next year’s harvest.
- Délıne ʔehdzo Got’ıne (DRRC) is supporting alternative harvesting of moose, tódzi (boreal woodland caribou), fish and other wildlife, and is encouraging sharing among families.
- Délıne will be presenting *Belarewıé Gots’é ʔekwé* at the SRRB Bluenose East Caribou Hearing Mar 1-3 in Délıne. This will represent the first time a community plan will be considered along side a government developed plan in the Northwest Territories.

Délıne’s plan is built upon Dene concepts and Dene language. We request journalists make every effort to to respect Dene terms and orthography. (Free Dene unicode keyboards and an online tool are available at denefont.com.)



Leonard Kenny, Chief, Délıne First Nation



Jimmy Dillon, Vice-President, Délıne ʔehdzo Got’ıne



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