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## Interim Land Withdrawal Agreement

**YELLOWKNIFE (2 November 2006)** - The Akaitcho Dene First Nations (ADFN) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) have reached a land withdrawal that will allow the parties to continue making progress towards an agreement on land, resources and self-government.

The ADFN and the GNWT have agreed on a five-year withdrawal of 1034 hectares of Commissioner's Land within the City of Yellowknife, to protect these lands from being sold or leased while negotiations are underway. This agreement will also remove the legal uncertainty around the development of municipal lands within the City of Yellowknife thereby allowing the City to better manage development pressures.

NWT Premier Joseph Handley said that by working together the parties were able to reach an agreement that will benefit all northerners. "The ability of the GNWT and the Akaitcho Dene First Nations to reach agreement on this matter bodes well for further discussions in the Akaitcho process negotiations. I am pleased that we are making progress and I am relying on all of the parties to keep up the good will as we enter into the challenging negotiations that lie ahead."

Ndilo Chief Fred Sangris says "The City of Yellowknife was built on the traditional lands of the Yellowknives Dene, which at one time were rich hunting grounds. This area has been changed forever, but with an interim land withdrawal, specific areas will be protected from further development while negotiations continue."

The Interim Land Withdrawal Agreement is consistent with the objectives set out in the Interim Land Withdrawal Protocol signed by negotiators for the ADFN, the GNWT and the Government of Canada on November 21, 2005 as part of the Akaitcho Process negotiations on land, resources and governance.

This protocol provides for the negotiation of arrangements for the "flexible withdrawal" of some withdrawn lands. A "flexible withdrawal would allow for the ADFN to acquire some withdrawn Commissioner's Lands prior to the effective date of an Akaitcho agreement.

"Canada's negotiation team has supported efforts by the Akaitcho and the Government of the Northwest Territories to find a mutually agreeable solution to issues surrounding Commissioner's lands within the city of Yellowknife. I applaud the hard work of all parties and look forward to renewed progress in the Akaitcho Process negotiations

towards an agreement in principle," said the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs in support of this agreement.

The Interim Land Withdrawal will protect identified lands from being sold or leased during the course of negotiations. This means that no new interests can be created on the withdrawn lands for a period five years or until a final agreement is reached, whichever comes first. It also ensures that any existing interests on these lands are protected during the period of the withdrawal. The principles and process for these land withdrawal negotiations were laid out in the Interim Land Withdrawal Protocol.

ADFN members reside around Great Slave Lake (known to the Akaitcho as Tu Cho) and include the Deninu Kue First Nation (Deninu Kue/Fort Resolution), the Lutsel K'e First Nation and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Ndilo and Dettah).

For more information on these Interim Land Withdrawals or the Akaitcho Process, please consult the following media backgrounders:

1. Backgrounder: Akaitcho Process Negotiations
2. Q & A: Akaitcho Interim Land Withdrawal of Commissioner's Lands within the City of Yellowknife
3. Map: Commissioner's Lands for Transfer to the City of Yellowknife
4. Map: Interim Land Withdrawal

The above maps are also available on the following website:  
[www.maca.gov.nt.ca](http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca)

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