



## Achieving Protection for Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta

Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta (pronounced Tsoo-den-ĭ-len **Too-yuh-ta** – also called The Ramparts River and Wetlands) has always been recognized as a special cultural and ecological area by the Sahtu Dene and Métis. The intent to protect this area was originally documented in 1993 by the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. Since 2001, the Yamoga Land Corporation (YLC), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), Canadian Boreal Initiative (CBI) and other Protected Area Strategy (PAS) partners have worked with the community of Fort Good Hope to advance the area towards protection. With the federal government granting Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta five years of interim protection from development, the area is now moving towards permanent protection as a National Wildlife Area through the NWT PAS.

The Protected Areas Strategy is a formal, community based process that identifies areas with significant cultural and ecological values and provides a means for permanent protection. Key to the PAS is the participation and cooperation of local aboriginal groups, federal and territorial governments, industry (the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and NWT Chamber of Mines are members), and other non-governmental organizations. The PAS requires a government agency to sponsor candidate protected areas and use their legislation to facilitate land withdrawals. Environment Canada is the sponsoring agency for Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta and the area will become a National Wildlife Area under Canada's National Wildlife Act. DUC staff in the NWT work closely with community representatives to move their candidate protected areas through the PAS process.

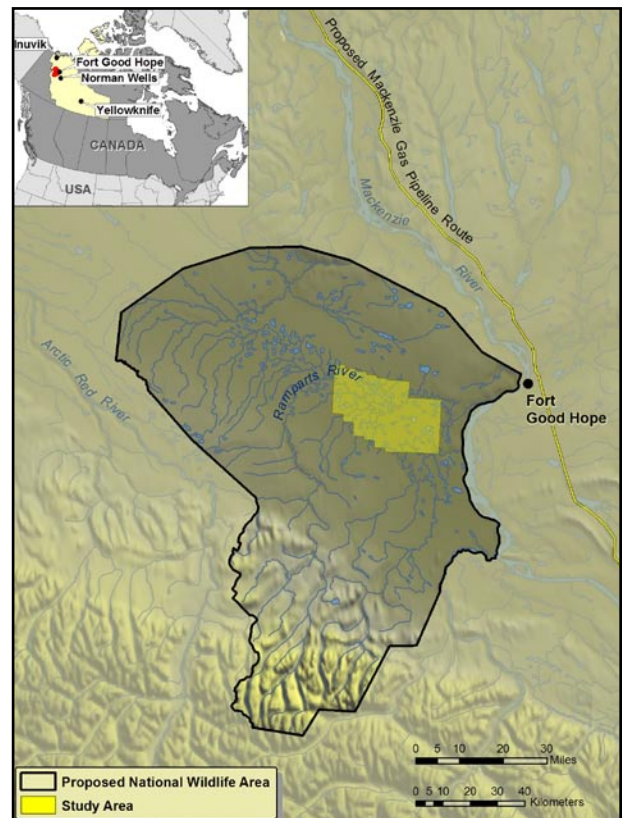
## Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta (Tsoo-den-ĭ-len Too-yuh-ta)

### Where is Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta?

Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta lies west of the Mackenzie River in the boreal forest of the NWT and covers 15,120 km<sup>2</sup> (3.8 million acres). The northern portion of the area lies within the Arctic Circle and the most southern portion extends into the Mackenzie Mountains and includes the majority of the Ramparts River watershed.

The Ramparts River flows from the foothills of the Mackenzie Mountains. It meanders through critical wetlands and traditional places before it enters the Mackenzie River just above the Ramparts Canyon at Fort Good Hope, NWT.

**Figure 1.** Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta, outlined in black, has received interim protection for five years and is moving towards permanent protection as a National Wildlife Area. Research conducted by DUC in the study area helped determine the importance of this area to waterfowl and other waterbirds.





Over the next few years, DUC will continue to work with partners to achieve permanent legislated protection for Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta as a National Wildlife Area.

## **Importance of the Area**

### **Ecological Importance**

Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta encompasses almost the entire Ramparts River watershed with five other watersheds intersecting the area. It is home to a wide diversity of habitats as it contains portions of four ecoregions. The Ramparts River and Wetlands Complex is a critical wetland area that filters millions of gallons of water each day, while its vast peatlands, soils and forests sequester huge amounts of carbon.

Wetland complexes throughout Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta include bogs, fens, marshes, swamps, and open water. The open water and marsh wetlands are generally shallow and small in size, making the area extremely attractive for waterfowl and other waterbirds. DUC's wetland inventory has documented over 30,000 individual wetland basins ranging in size from one hectare to over 500 hectares. There are many more wetlands that are less than one hectare. Conservative estimates indicate more than seven per cent (110,074 hectares or 272,000 acres) of the total Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta area contains open water and marsh habitats.

Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta is identified as a "Key Terrestrial Migratory Bird Habitat Site" by CWS. This critical waterfowl breeding site provides excellent nesting, brood-rearing and staging habitat for ducks, geese and loons, and supports more than one per cent of the Canadian populations of scaup, scoters and Pacific loons. Recent data indicates that as many as 94,000 paired waterfowl inhabit the area during the breeding season. Thousands of non-breeding waterfowl and breeding and non-breeding waterbirds (e.g. loons, grebes) are also found throughout the region during spring, summer and fall.

The diverse habitat throughout the region provides vital habitat for a large number of mammals and birds including boreal woodland caribou and peregrine falcons; two species listed as "threatened" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and protected under the Species at Risk Act. The area provides important habitat for moose and aquatic furbearers, such as beaver and mink. Dall's sheep roam the Mackenzie Mountains. Mountain woodland caribou, grizzly bears and wolverine (designated by COSEWIC as "species of special concern") also depend on this wetland-rich region.

### **Cultural Importance**

Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta is "the place of love songs," a cultural landscape connecting people and place across time. It is a sacred region and harvesting area of the Dene and Métis of Fort Good Hope. This area has been used for trapping, hunting, fishing, camping and social gathering for generations. Landscapes such as these are intimately linked to cultural identity and represent a source of traditional knowledge for the Dene or Métis. The many place names in the area reflect the history and culture and the peoples' ties to the land.