

Dehcho Process Negotiations

October 27-30, 2025

Sambaa K'e

Leadership Brief

DFN negotiators met with the federal and territorial government representatives in Sambaa K'e for the October session of the Dehcho Process negotiations. Negotiations were held over the course of four days from October 27 to the 30th.

Negotiators maintained a steady pace and a great deal of work was accomplished including the finalizing of two agreements. The two agreements signed were the Dehcho Process Communications Protocol and the Dehcho Process Workplan. Those documents are appended below.

During negotiations different chapters of the AIP are reviewed and amended and when finalized, they give shape to the AIP. The easier straightforward chapters are dealt with first and the more difficult ones are reserved for future negotiations. Five chapters dealing with social issues have been generally agreed to and are nearing completion;

- Social housing
- Income Assistance
- Marriage
- Wills and Estates
- Guardianship and Trusteeship

Lands, jurisdiction, and access to lands continue to be the subject of intense discussion. These are the most difficult and contentious issues. Talks continued on Access, Land use Planning, Taxation and Fiscal Arrangements. Discussions regarding Taxation and Fiscal arrangements are scheduled to continue at the November negotiating session.

In the interests of completing the AIP by next June it was agreed to 'punt' certain issues forward to be finalized when the Treaty is signed

thereby clearing the way for a timely completion of the AiP. Some punt issues are minor and not contentious while others are more difficult to negotiate. A significant punt concerns the relationship of the Dehcho Resource Management Act to the current Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. The current management act in the NWT, the MVRMA, gives primary jurisdiction to the GNWT. DFN have always rejected that position. Under the DCRMA proposed by the DFN the Dehcho First Nations will have full jurisdiction on their lands.

The presence of the GNWT in what is rightfully a bi-lateral process between the DFN and the federal government continues to be a problem. The GNWT continues to insist they constitute a legitimate government and consequently must continue to have overall jurisdiction in the Dehcho. DFN negotiators made it clear that the GNWT is just a recent incarnation of an old colonial model and it should have no permanency. The DFN continues to maintain that nothing in the final Dehcho Treaty should empower the GNWT.

Discussion advanced on other sections of the AIP:

- Jurisdiction on Dehcho Ndehe
- Heritage Resources
- Implementation
- Approving the AIP
- Eligibility and Enrollment
- Transition
- Definitions

The next negotiating session will be held in Ottawa, November 24-27.

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