

Black Lake Denesuline First Nation

Community Snapshot

July 2016



Aerial View of Black Lake First Nation taken summer 2013.

Black Lake Denesuline First Nation (Black Lake) is a community located in Northern Saskatchewan's Athabasca Basin region, approximately 1,180 km northwest of Prince Albert.

This document provides a brief snapshot of the community for informational and training purposes. Information is current as of July 2016 and subject to change.

Governance

Black Lake is a member of the Prince Albert Grand Council. Black Lake is governed by a chief and councillors who are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the First Nation and its members. Chief and Council are elected officials and elections are held every two years. The last election for Black Lake was held in June 2016.

- Chief Coreen Sayazie
- John Toutsaint
- Trevor Boneleye
- Darlene Fern
- George Catholic
- Delbert Bouvier
- Pauline Thatcher
- Joe Renie

Membership

Black Lake has a registered membership of 2,096 band members, with 1,614 of those members living on reserve as of June 2016.¹

The population of Black Lake is young, with the median age of 22.3 years² compared to Saskatchewan's median age of 37.6 years.³



Children participate in the annual Black Lake Culture Camp, 2013

The Dene language is very strong and continues to be taught by the Elder to children both at home and within the school system. Nearly all residents also speak English, but Dene is considered to be the mother tongue for 97.6% of residents.² The people continue to maintain their traditional lifestyle, with hunting, fishing and trapping very evident on a year round basis.

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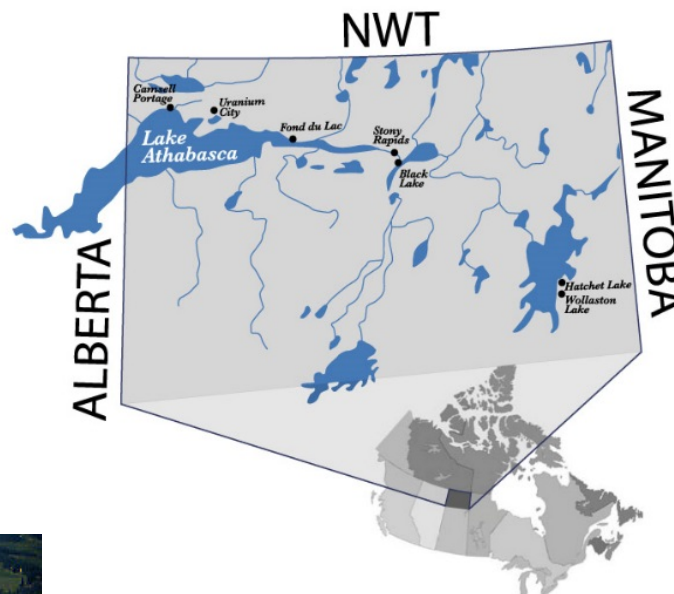
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The Athabasca Basin Region

The Athabasca Basin hosts the world's richest high-grade uranium deposits. The Northern area covers almost a quarter of Saskatchewan and a small portion of Alberta, and currently supplies about 20% of the world's uranium. The region is also the home of seven communities. These communities are largely Dene First Nations communities and include Fond du Lac, Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Hatchet Lake, Wollaston Lake, Camsell Portage and Uranium City. The region is the most inaccessible and least environmentally disturbed area of Saskatchewan.



Local natural wonders such as Hunts Falls, Douglas River, and the Athabasca Sand Dunes provide breathtaking scenery and are some of the most unique ecosystems in the world.

The Athabasca Sand Dunes consist of a series of dune fields stretching for about 100km along the south shore of Lake Athabasca in northwest Saskatchewan. The area is rich in rare plants which scientists consider an evolutionary puzzle. Access is by float plane only, and the area is recommended for experienced wilderness users only.

Stony Rapids

Stony Rapids is located 82 km south of Saskatchewan's border to the Northwest Territories, astride the Fond du Lac river. A Hamlet with about 240 residents, Stony Rapids is the closest community to Black Lake.



Aerial View of Stony Rapids taken summer 2013

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Location & Access

Black Lake is a remote community with no all weather road access connecting the community to southern Saskatchewan. Access to Black Lake is by air to Stony Rapids and then by all-weather road approximately 20km south east to Black Lake. Black Lake is also accessible via the Athabasca Seasonal Road (Highway 905), which is entirely unpaved to Points North Landing, about 185 km south of Black Lake. While the seasonal road is open year-round, travel in the summer is very rough and slow traveling.

Stony Rapids Airport

The Stony Rapids Airport provides the only year-round access to the communities of Stony Rapids and Black Lake. It is Saskatchewan's fifth busiest airport. In 2014-2015, a \$3M airport improvement project took place to develop a new access road to the community of Stony Rapids and expand the existing apron at the airport.



Stony Rapids Airport, July 2015



The Athabasca Health Facility



In 2003, the Athabasca Health Authority opened the Athabasca Health Facility, Yutthe Dene Nakohoki (“A Place to Heal Northern People”). The \$12.7M facility is a full service acute-care and long-term hospital and community health facility, located on the Black Lake Reserve (Chicken 224), approximately 1 kilometre from Stony Rapids.

The Athabasca Health facility offers and utilizes both modern

and traditional First Nation Health care methods. The vision of the Athabasca Health Facility includes an emphasis on traditional values, concepts and health practices being respected and understood in partnership with contemporary health care, and an ownership of the governance, management and delivery of health services in the region.

Services provided include 24-hour emergency services, 7-day a week physician services, an inpatient resident care unit, with acute care, long-term care beds, and a variety of paramedical services such as dental, physiotherapy and mental health. Client visits to the clinic from Black Lake average 1,200 per month.⁴

Athabasca Denesuline Child and Family Services Therapeutic Care Home



Athabasca Denesuline Child and Family Services operate a 12 bed youth care home facility located in Black Lake for youth age 5-14 from communities in the Athabasca region. The home opened in January 2014. It provides educational, spiritual, recreation services, therapeutic and family counseling, as well as cultural programming to children, youth, and their families who require service and support. These services are open to all residents in the Athabasca communities, and allow at-risk youth to receive services right in their home area, rather than traveling to an unfamiliar city.



Father Porte Memorial Dene School

Father Porte Memorial Denesuline School provides education from Kindergarten to grade 12. The school has approximately 60 staff, about 460 students and a fast growing youth population, which can be a challenge for the school as the facility was built to accommodate smaller numbers. In 2015, portable classrooms were commissioned and transported to help the school accommodate its fast-growing population.

The school has access to some of the latest technology offerings - 22 classrooms are equipped with smart boards and the school has two computer labs with e-readers and tablets for student use. In April 2016, Connected North was launched in Father Porte Memorial Dene School, providing two way connections between remote and partner schools in the south. The program has so far been a big hit with students not only having access to educational tools in the “south,” but also having opportunities to proudly showcase their culture and way of life to others.



In 2015, portable classrooms were added to Father Porte Memorial Dene School



Staff and students at Father Porte Memorial Dene School at the Connected North launch in April 2016

Interesting fact: Black Lake's students made the news in 2014 for their grade 7 class being ranked in the top five schools in Canada for web-based program Mathletics, a very impressive achievement!⁵



Culture

Dene culture and traditions continue to be important and celebrated in Black Lake. Important traditional foods include caribou, fish, bannock and blueberries. Sharing, working together, celebrating together, respecting the land, water, animals and air and respect for Elders and traditional knowledge are important values shared in Black Lake. The Dene language is still very prevalent in the community.



Many members continue to hunt, fish, and trap as their ancestors did. Respect for animals and the hunt are important traditional values of the Dene. Important survival skills are passed down to the children. Every year, the men of the community travel to the Northwest Territories to hunt for caribou. The meat is shared with the community. Father Porte Memorial School also has a school hunting trip annually where Elders show students where to hunt caribou and how to dress the caribou after the hunt. Fishing is also a very important skill that is passed down to new generations. When fishing, it is tradition to give the lake a gift for safe travel. Elders also teach children how to pick blueberries, teaching them what types are safe for eating and important safety practices when picking.

Students continue to learn culture and traditions at culture camps held annually. Elders teach the children about traditional hunting methods and survival skills such as preparing a hide for clothing. They also teach about significant traditions, such as drumming and dancing. The drum is an important part of the Dene culture. It is



respected and used to begin all ceremonies. Traditional drumming teaches respect and creating love and friendships. It brings the entire community together, including the children and the Elders. Dancing is also an important tradition. The participants bond and celebrate being Dene. Some traditional dances include the "Tea Dance," the "Drum Dance," and the "Round Dance."⁶

Religion is also an important part of the Dene culture. The Catholic faith is very important, and each year Dene people of the Athabasca gather at Pine Channel between Stony Rapids and Fond du Lac for a pilgrimage and retreat. Mass is conducted twice a day and children's programs run throughout the week. Black Lake members also celebrate their catholic faith at masses at their local church, Church of Our Lady of the Cape.



Black Lake Businesses

The Northern Store

The Northern store in Black Lake offers food, merchandise, clothes, fuel, and financial services. The Northern is the original core store banner of The North West Company. Black Lake's northern store is operated by local business owners and provides jobs for approximately 40 people in the community.

Hours:

Monday – Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.



Medals Enterprises Gas Bar

Medals Enterprise Gas Bar and convenience store provides fuel and basic food items as well as automotive and snowmobile parts and general merchandise on reserve

Medal's Contracting (306.284.4896)

Owned by Napoleon Medal, Medal's contracting provides construction equipment and service including backhoe, loaders, motor graders, tractor truck and trailer configurations as well as service trucks.

Taxi Service

Taxi service in Black Lake is provided by the following companies:

- Robillards Taxi – 306.284.2087
- Sayazie Taxi – 306.284.2109

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Black Lake RCMP Detachment

A new RCMP detachment is currently being built in Black Lake to provide service to the Black Lake and Stony Rapids area. Currently, the community receives its policing services through the detachment in Stony Rapids. Construction is projected to be complete in late 2016.



Fire Services

Black Lake is served by the local volunteer Fire Department made up of volunteers from the community.

Cellular Service

In December 2015, new cellular towers serving the communities of Stony Rapids and Black Lake were fully operational and residents can now enjoy the benefits of SaskTel wireless service. This \$6M extension of wireless cellular service to these communities was made possible through a partnership between Sasktel, Huawei Canada (who contributed \$385,000 in funding and equipment), and Athabasca Basin Development (who contributed \$249,000). Wollaston Lake and Fond du Lac also received wireless service under this initiative with service being turned up in these location in September 2015.



The cell tower at Black Lake was completed in December 2015



Economic Development

Black Lake is active in economic development ventures in order to create employment and build wealth for the community. The First Nation owns numerous businesses including Elizabeth Falls Hydro, Black Lake Development, Black Lake Ventures, and Waterfound Development Corp. Investments also include shares in CanAlaska Uranium.



Tazi Twe Hydro Electric Project

In November 2015, Black Lake voted in favour of proceeding with the \$630M Tazi Twe Hydroelectric project, a joint venture with SaskPower.

The Tazi Twe hydroelectric project is a proposed water diversion hydroelectric project that will supply 50 megawatts to the provincial power grid. It will be the first new hydro project in Saskatchewan in over 30 years, and is expected to bring \$1.3 billion into the community over the project's 90-year life span.

Tazi Twe will also be the first hydro project built entirely on reserve land in Saskatchewan. Black Lake First Nation and SaskPower signed an agreement in principle to build the project in 2013. The framework agreement between SaskPower and Black Lake First Nation provides for a 30 per cent interest for Black Lake and will provide a cash flow stream to the band for the next 90 years. Black Lake also wanted the least amount of financial risk, and minimal impact on the land and traditional activities.

Black Lake Ventures

Black Lake Ventures is the business arm of Black Lake First Nation. It has direct ownership in three companies:

- Athabasca Basin Development - 23.23%
- Prince Albert First Nation Business Development – 8.33%
- Athabasca Catering – 20%

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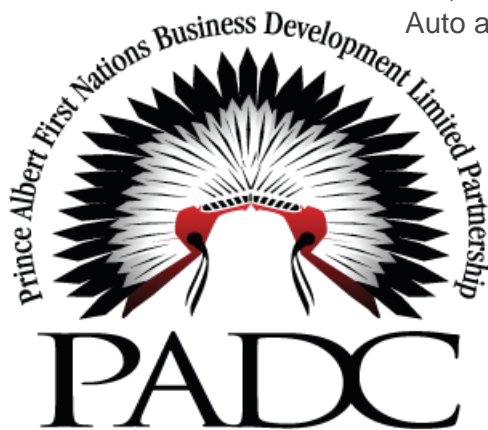
Athabasca Basin Development is an investment company committed to building and investing in successful businesses. The company is owned by the seven communities in the Athabasca Basin, with Black Lake Ventures having 23% ownership.

Since being established in 2002, the company has grown to include complete or partial ownership in twelve companies providing a wide range of services. The company began with the unity of the seven communities in the Athabasca region who wanted to participate in the activities in the local mining industry and create a company that would provide benefits to the communities for generations. Governed by a board of representatives from the Athabasca communities and through its CEO, Geoff Gay, the company has a strong reputation, winning Business of the Year by SaskBusiness Magazine in 2014 and the Prospector and Developer's Association of Canada's inaugural Skookum Jim award in 2008.

The company has ownership in Arctic Beverages, Athabasca Labour Services, Athabasca Basin Security, Double Diamond Structures, Flyer Electric, Lonona Contracting, Mudjatik Thyssen JV, Points Athabasca, Points North Group of Companies, Team Drilling, Tru-North RV, Auto and Marine, West Wind Aviation.



The board and staff at Athabasca Basin Development. Left to right: Treena Fosseneuve, Office Administrator, Rick Robillard, Board member, Kristine McWilliam, Controller, Earl Lidgueree, Board member, Terri Daniels, Board Member, Joyce Powder, board Member, Geoff Gay, CEO, Shauna Loewen, Business Development, Anne Robillard, Board Chair, Dean Classen, Board Member, Kristy Jackson, Director of Marketing & Communications, Daniel Powder, Board Member. Missing: Jeanette Daniels, Admin Assistant



Prince Albert First Nations Business Development Limited Partnership strives to own and operate profitable businesses that create employment opportunities for First Nations people, generate earning for reinvestment in businesses and support First Nations quest for economic self-sufficiency. The company has ownership in Arctic Beverages, Double Diamond Structures, Glemor Equipment, Points North Group of Companies, Western First Nations Hospitality LP, and West Wind Aviation.



In 1994 Athabasca Catering evolved from several related joint venture and partnerships and in 2003 the partnership became a 100% Saskatchewan First Nation owned and operated company. Our managing Partner, Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership, provides us the support, experience and oversight we need to succeed. The company specializes in local, First Nation and Aboriginal hiring providing positive influence for regional economical impact commitments.

The company has thrived in the remote site catering industry for several reasons; among them is high client satisfaction, high quality food service, qualified and skilled management at all levels and a willingness to do what it takes to get the job done safely, professionally and skillfully.

Waterfound Development Corporation

Black Lake First Nations also participates in economic development activities through 33% ownership in Waterfound Development Corp. Currently, this development corporation owns 20% of Northern Resource Trucking (NRT).



Formed in 1986, Northern Resource Trucking is a transport company that includes a large fleet of trucks and trailers including dry bulkers, propane, petroleum, sulphur, chemical, flat decks, low beds and reefers. It primarily provides transport services to Cameco, AREVA and Claude Resources mines in Northern Saskatchewan, hauling consumables, mining materials, dry or liquid bulk commodities, machinery and over-dimensional loads for the mining companies.

Providing training and employment to drivers has been an important part of the NRT culture and continues to be important to the First Nation and Metis owners of the company. NRT has maintained an excellent safety record and its drivers have the training and experience needed to provide transport services across vast and challenging terrain including gravel and ice roads.

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