

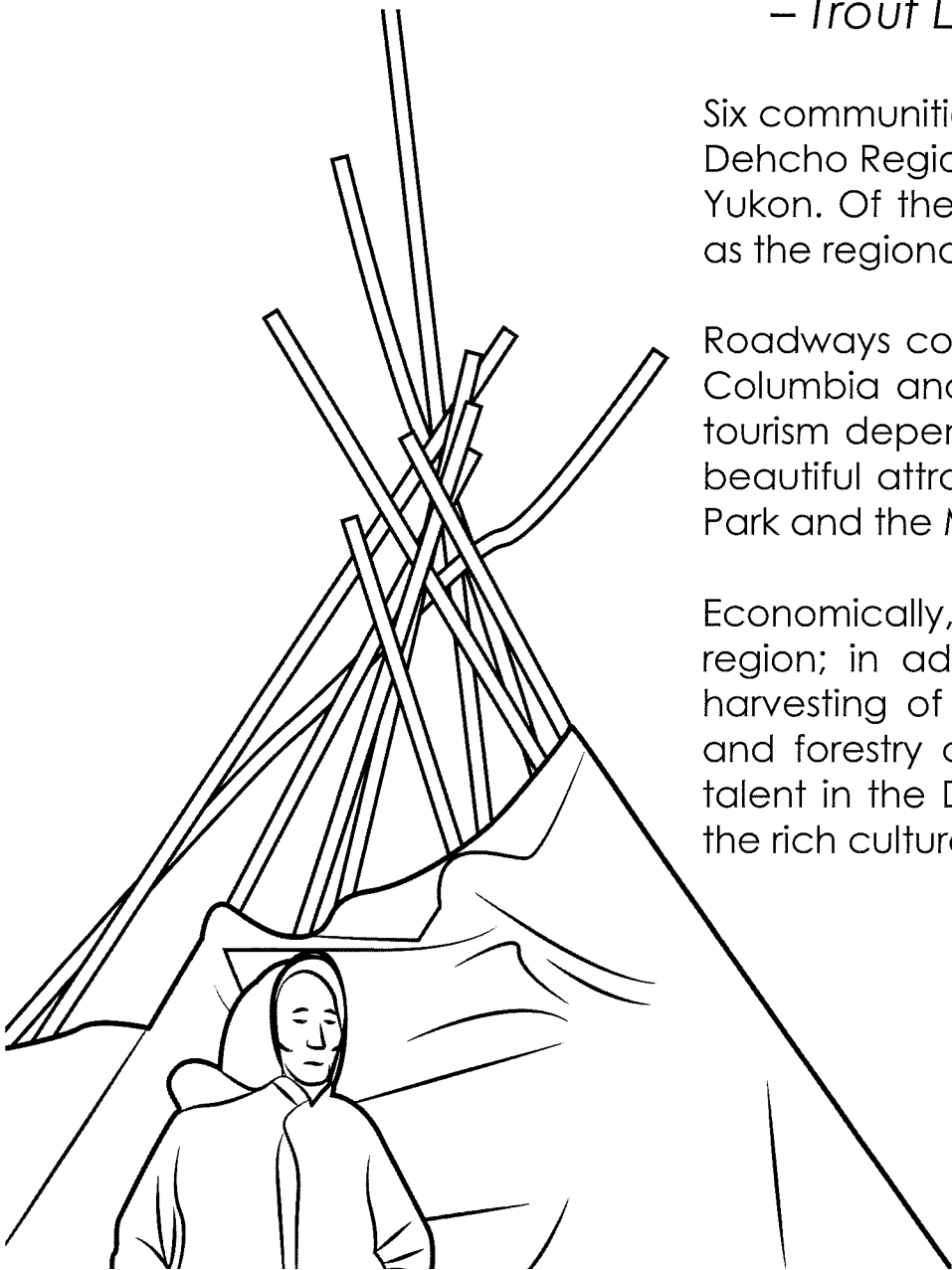
Dehcho Region

*Fort Liard – Fort Simpson – Jean Marie River – Nahanni Butte
– Trout Lake - Wrigley*

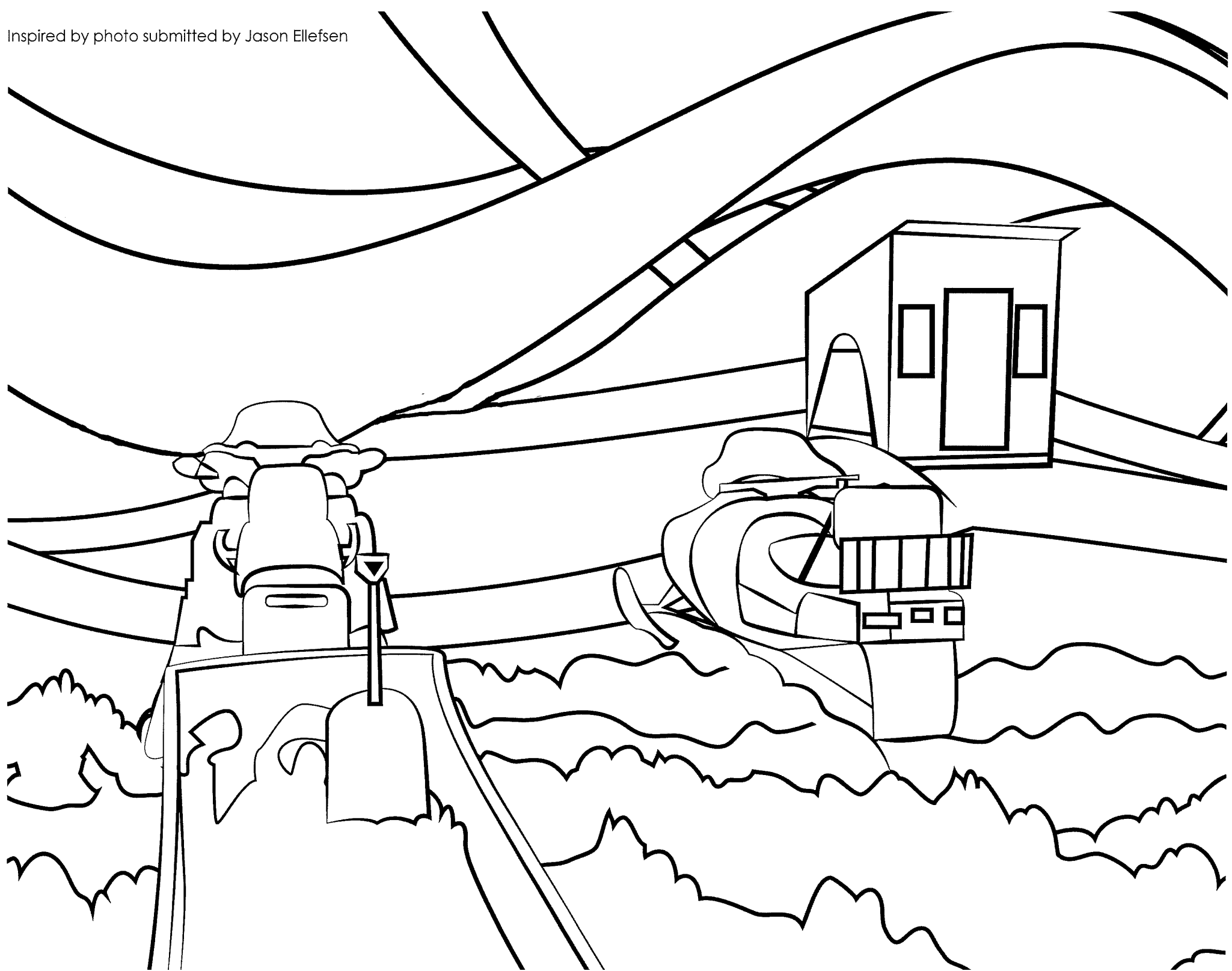
Six communities in the southwestern part of the territory fall within the Dehcho Region, which shares a border with British Columbia and with Yukon. Of these communities, Fort Simpson is the largest and serves as the regional commercial and administrative centre.

Roadways connect some of the communities in the region to British Columbia and Alberta to the south, and allow for some travel and tourism depending on the time of year. Some of the territory's most beautiful attractions are in the Dehcho, including Nahanni National Park and the Mackenzie Mountains.

Economically, there is significant natural resource potential in the region; in addition to natural gas, tungsten, and zinc, traditional harvesting of animals, handicrafts made from harvested materials, and forestry are key drivers for the area. There is extensive artistic talent in the Dehcho, and regular gatherings are held to celebrate the rich culture of the region.



Inspired by photo submitted by Jason Ellefsen



Fort Liard / Echaot'je Kúé *people from the land of giants place*

Located in the corner of the Northwest Territories, close to the borders with Yukon and British Columbia, the Hamlet of Fort Liard is known as the tropics of the NWT. Fort Liard is inhabited predominately by members of Acho Dene Koe First Nation, who have been in the immediate area for generations, and by Métis. With mountains in the distance and located where two rivers meet, Fort Liard is the first community in the NWT travellers heading north on Highway 7 reach.

The Fort Liard site is a traditional meeting spot for Slavey people from places like Nahanni Butte, Fort Nelson, and Trout Lake. Gatherings brought celebrations, sharing of food, drumming and dancing. In 1907, the Hudson's Bay Company established a post in the area, though relations with local people were not always good. The fur trade took off in Fort Liard in 1821, and with ongoing trade, brought changes in culture and different ways of life.

In 1859, Oblate Missionary Father Zephirin Gascon founded the Fort Liard mission. He was the first oblate priest to visit the community, and between 1913 and 1921 the current mission building was constructed almost entirely by the hands of Father Mathurin Vacher.

More recently, the oil and gas industry has been an economic driver in the Fort Liard area. Extractive companies have operated around Fort Liard and continue to evaluate the natural gas deposits, with the community playing an active role in the monitoring of this process. Acho Dene Koe First Nation is in the process of negotiating a Self-Government agreement, with a signed Agreement in Principle (AIP) allowing for the selection of thousands of square kilometres of settlement lands.





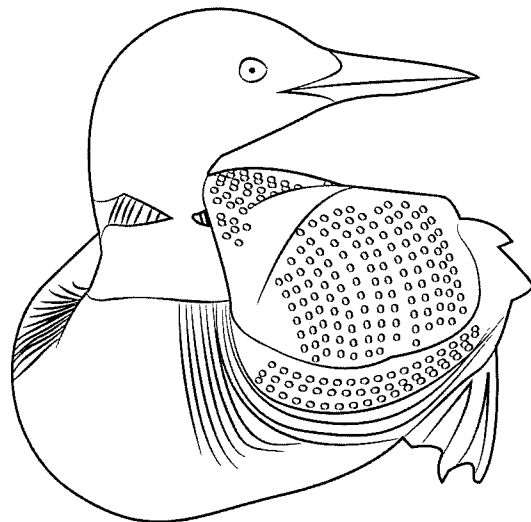
Inspired by photo submitted by Shannon Crawley

Fort Simpson / Łíídlı Kúé

place where rivers come together

Fort Simpson bears the unique feature of being the only village in the Northwest Territories. It is located where the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers meet, and is the regional centre of the Deh Cho. It was originally established as a fur trading site in 1803 by the Northwest Company, and since then has been the oldest continuously-occupied trading post on the Mackenzie River. The village was named after Sir George Simpson in 1821, and before that was known as "Fort of the Forks".

Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in 1858, with a priest establishing a permanent residence almost four decades later. The Parish Hall was followed by the construction of a hospital and later, a school. Fort Simpson is known as the gateway to the Nahanni, as it is a popular starting point for visitors to Nahanni National Park.



Visit from the Pope

In September, 1987, Pope John Paul II visited the village of Fort Simpson after a tour of the United States. He had initially attempted to make this trip several years prior, but was unable to land because of fog. He addressed the disappointed people of Fort Simpson from Yellowknife, promising to return at a future date.

He kept this promise, and on Sunday, September 20, 1987 delivered an address to those gathered. He acknowledged his gratitude to be present in the land of Denendeh and to be welcomed by many who had travelled from around the territory and Canada.

His speech identified the importance of culture and tradition with these words:

"In that spirit of respect and missionary service, I repeat what I said on the occasion of my previous visit, that my coming among you looks back to your past in order to *proclaim your dignity and support your destiny*. Today I repeat those words to you, and to all the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and of the world. The Church extols the equal human dignity of all peoples and defends their right to uphold their own cultural character with its distinct traditions and customs."



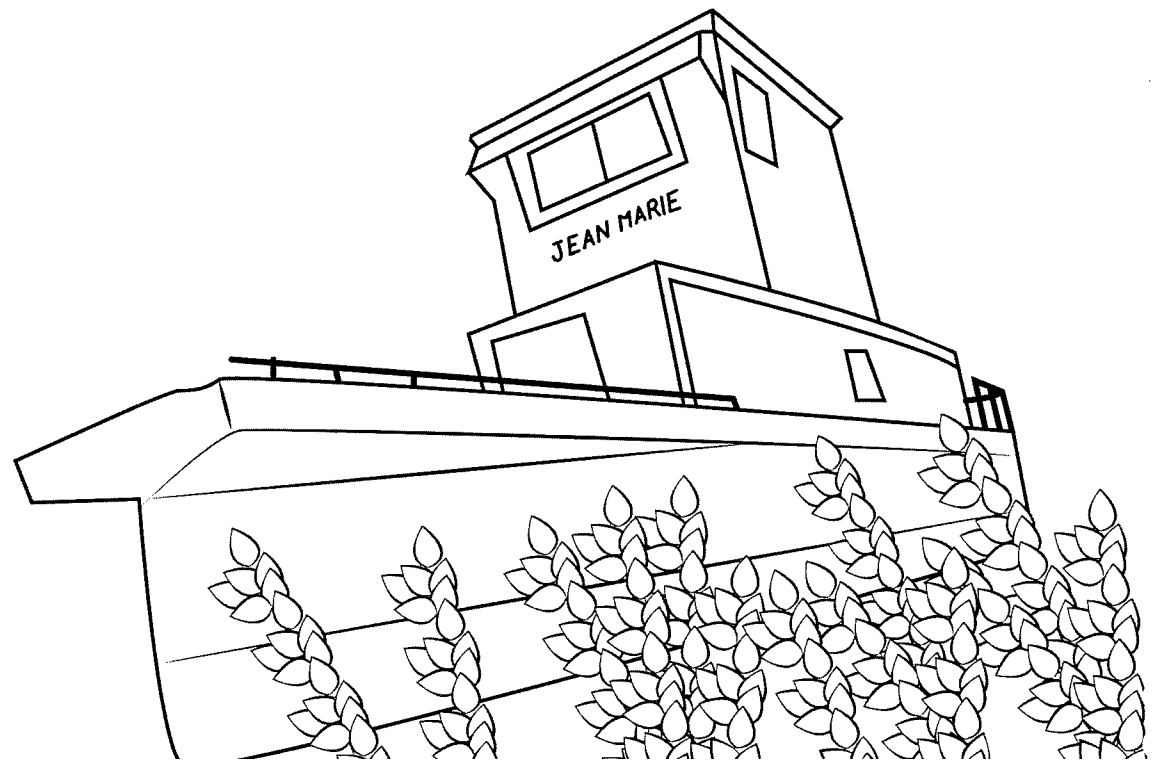
Jean Marie River / Ttheek'édélı̨ *water flowing over clay*

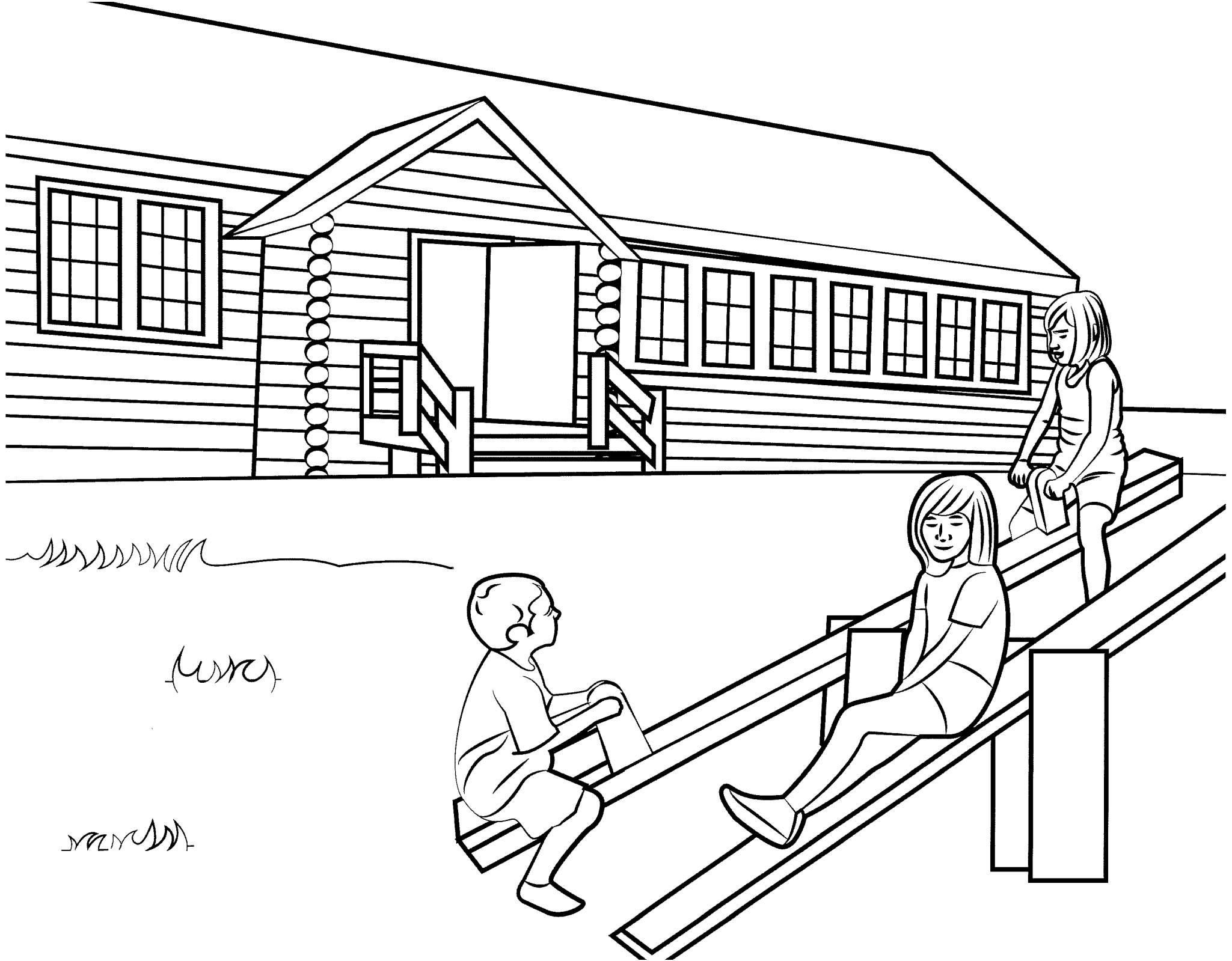
The Designated Authority community of Jean Marie River lies in the Dehcho Region, at the intersection of the Jean Marie and Mackenzie Rivers. Slavey Dene have inhabited this area for generations; in fact, ancient artifacts have been discovered at the village site dating back to prehistoric times.

A spruce log warehouse was the first recorded permanent building in the community, and records suggest that the people of Jean Marie River First Nation began establishing a more permanent settlement in the early 1920s. It is said that an elder suggested to friends and relatives that, unless they stopped moving around, they would never accomplish anything. However, the traditional ways of life are still very much alive in Jean Marie River; hunting, trapping, and fishing make up a central part of the economy and provide a source of food for community members. Arts like beadwork, moose hair tufting, and porcupine quillwork are widely practiced.

A local school was introduced in 1954; previously, children had attended the residential school in Fort Providence. The current school provides classes for children up until grade 6. The people of Jean Marie River are known to be quite entrepreneurial; business initiatives undertaken in the community have ranged from a sawmill to logging and river transport to a community garden and small farm project.

Today, access to Jean Marie River is by a 27 kilometre all-weather road from the Mackenzie Highway. The community is governed by the Tthets'ek'ehdeli Dene Band Council, consisting of an elected chief and six members of council. Jean Marie River is part of the Dehcho First Nation, and has strong cultural influences from Dene laws, values and principles.





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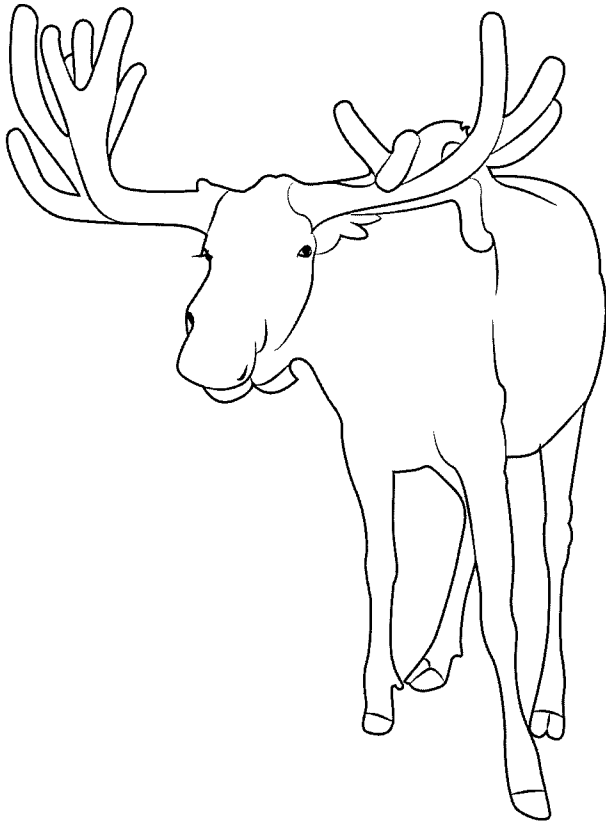
Nahanni Butte / Tthenáágó

strong rock

Nahanni Butte is a Designated Authority community in the Dehcho Region of the Northwest Territories. It is located where the Liard River meets the South Nahanni River, and is the access point for Nahanni National Park. It was named after the signature mountain butte that lies adjacent to the community, and is a popular stop for paddlers leaving Nahanni National Park and for hikers, travellers, and adventurers.

The community was established in the early 1940s, and elders understand that the word “nahanni” comes from the word “naha”, meaning “the people that roamed through the mountain and valley”. In spite of the regular flow of tourists and guests, there is a very traditional way of life in Nahanni Butte, with many people practicing traditional land-based activities throughout the year.

Nahanni Butte and Nahanni National Park are the place of legends; rumours of a lost gold mine, mysterious deaths and disappearances, and the occasional sasquatch sighting are all part of the history. Mysterious lights, UFO sightings, and stories of the prehistoric “bear-dog” and other cryptids continue to this day.

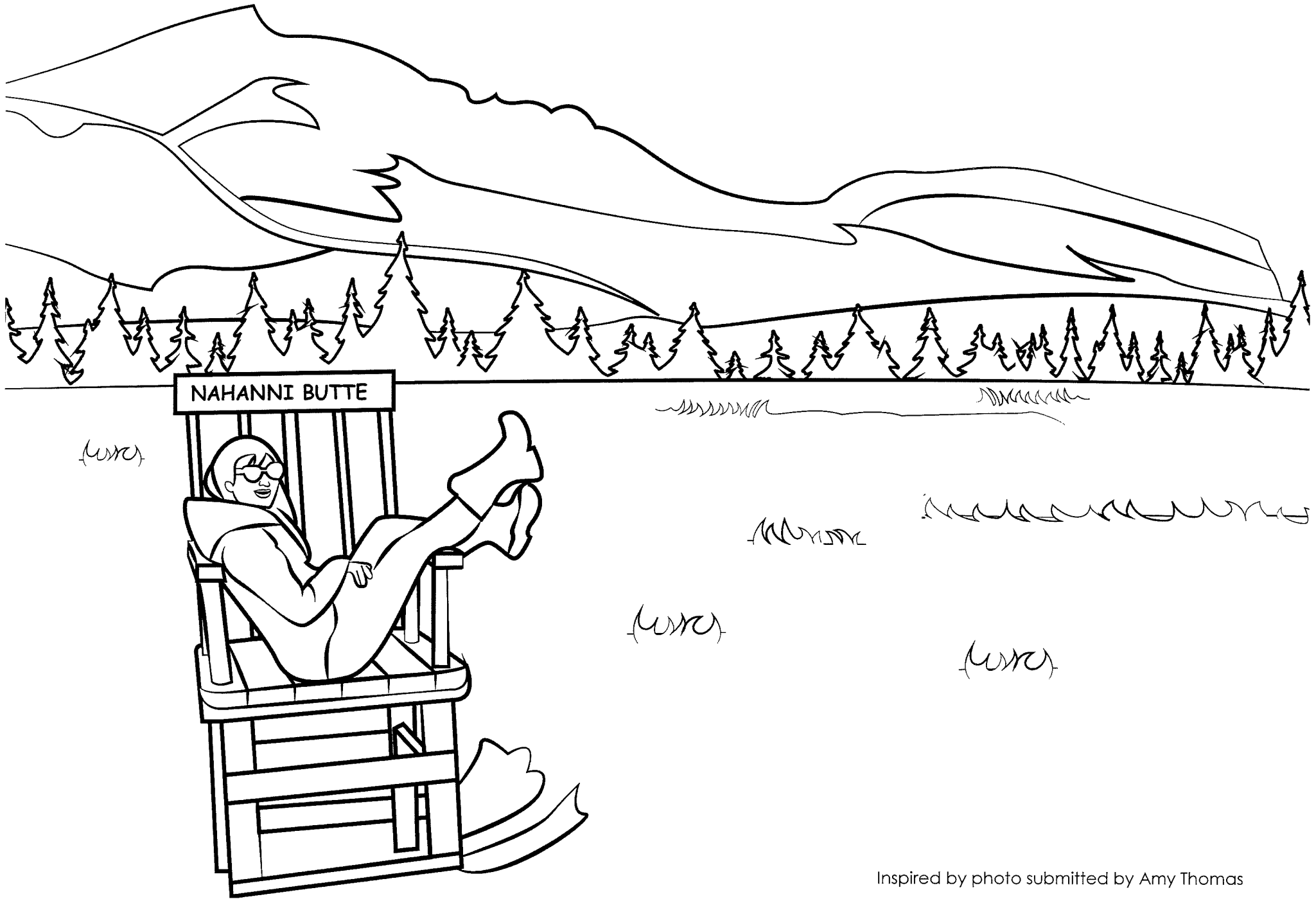


Mysterious Nahanni – Valley of the Headless Men

The Valley of the Headless Men (also known as the Valley of the Headless Corpses) is one of the most mysterious stories in the history of the Northwest Territories. The eerie tale comes from a series of unexplained events in the 200 Mile Gorge of Nahanni National Park during the time of the Gold Rush.

Brothers Willie and Frank McLeod travelled through Nahanni in 1906 on their way to the Klondike, disappearing without a trace until two years later, when another group of prospectors discovered the decapitated bodies of the brothers. Later, in 1917 and again in 1945, two more men were found headless in the valley. All told, by 1970 over 40 people had disappeared in this valley, never to be heard from again.

There are many theories as to what happened to these travellers and their heads; grizzly bears, supernatural forces, an unruly sasquatch, or territorial humans defending against intruders. The mystery of the area dates back thousands of years, with legend telling that people were afraid to settle because of the various spirits and creatures lurking nearby. Some say that the spirits of the Warriors of the Naha tribe, said to be larger than normal men and to wield powerful weapons, have stayed in the valley long after the tribe itself disappeared suddenly and inexplicably.



Inspired by photo submitted by Amy Thomas



Trout Lake / Sambaa K'e *trout lake place*

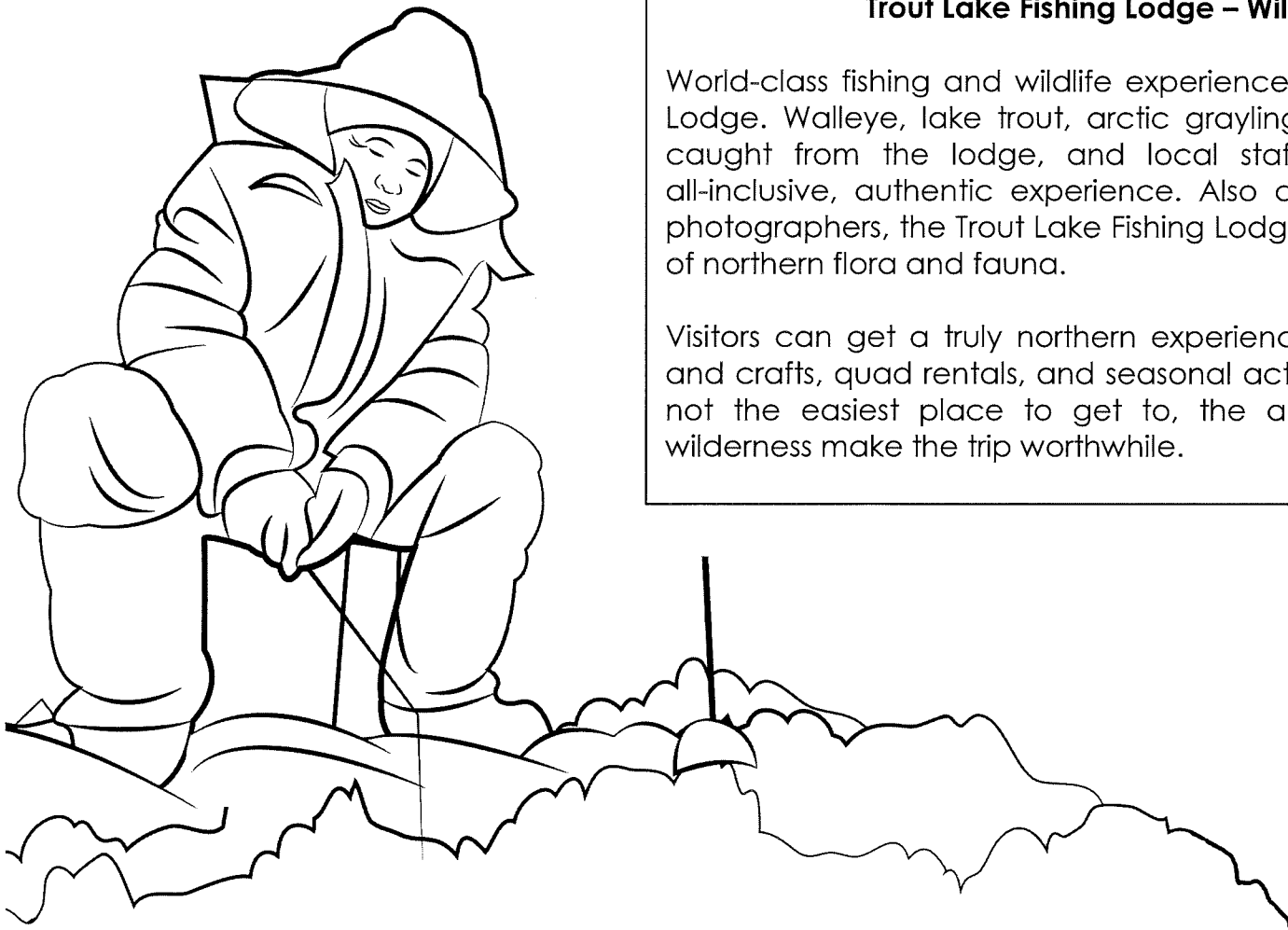
On the shore of the lake bearing the same name, the Designated Authority Community of Trout Lake is a small community represented by the Sambaa K'e Dene Band. The majority of community members are involved in a hunting, trapping, and fishing traditional lifestyle, and a small fishing lodge provides access to these bountiful waters for avid angler tourists.

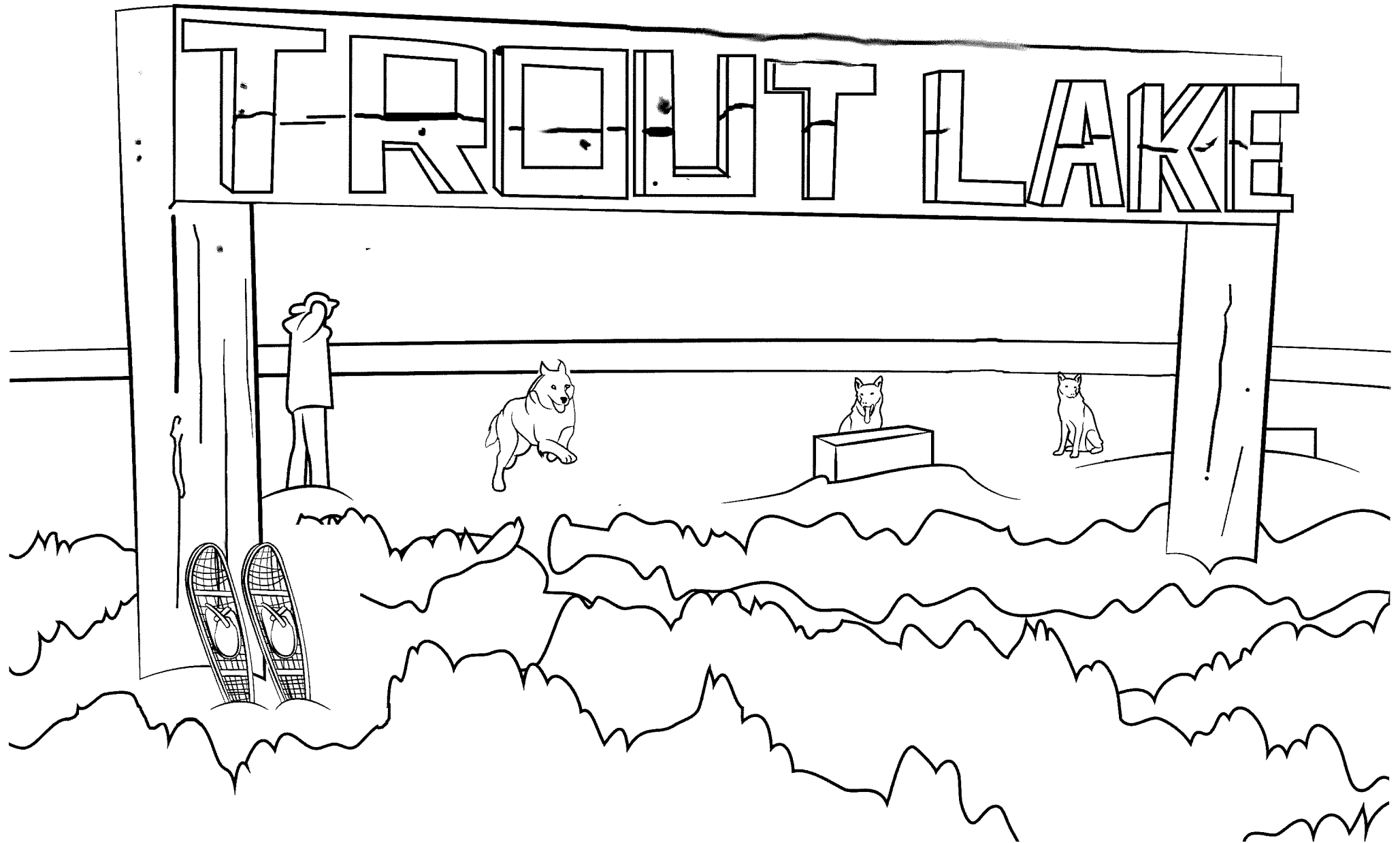
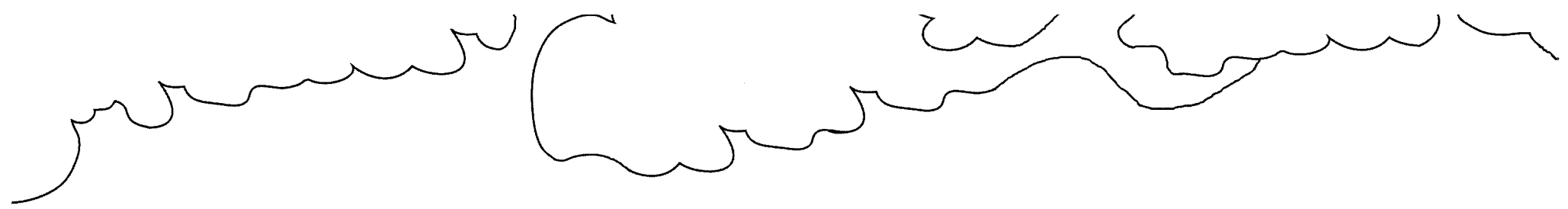
Trout Lake was established as a permanent community in the late 1960s, but the site had been sporadically occupied by travelling traders and traditional land users for generations before. Wildlife abounds in the area, and Trout Lake is particularly well-known for moose, black bear, wolf, beaver, marten, muskrat, and a wide variety of fish.

Trout Lake Fishing Lodge – Wilderness at its Finest!

World-class fishing and wildlife experiences await at the Trout Lake Fishing Lodge. Walleye, lake trout, arctic grayling, and northern pike can all be caught from the lodge, and local staff ensure that guests have an all-inclusive, authentic experience. Also a popular destination for wildlife photographers, the Trout Lake Fishing Lodge boasts close access to a range of northern flora and fauna.

Visitors can get a truly northern experience with cultural tours, hiking, arts and crafts, quad rentals, and seasonal activities like berry picking. While it's not the easiest place to get to, the authenticity and vast, expansive wilderness make the trip worthwhile.



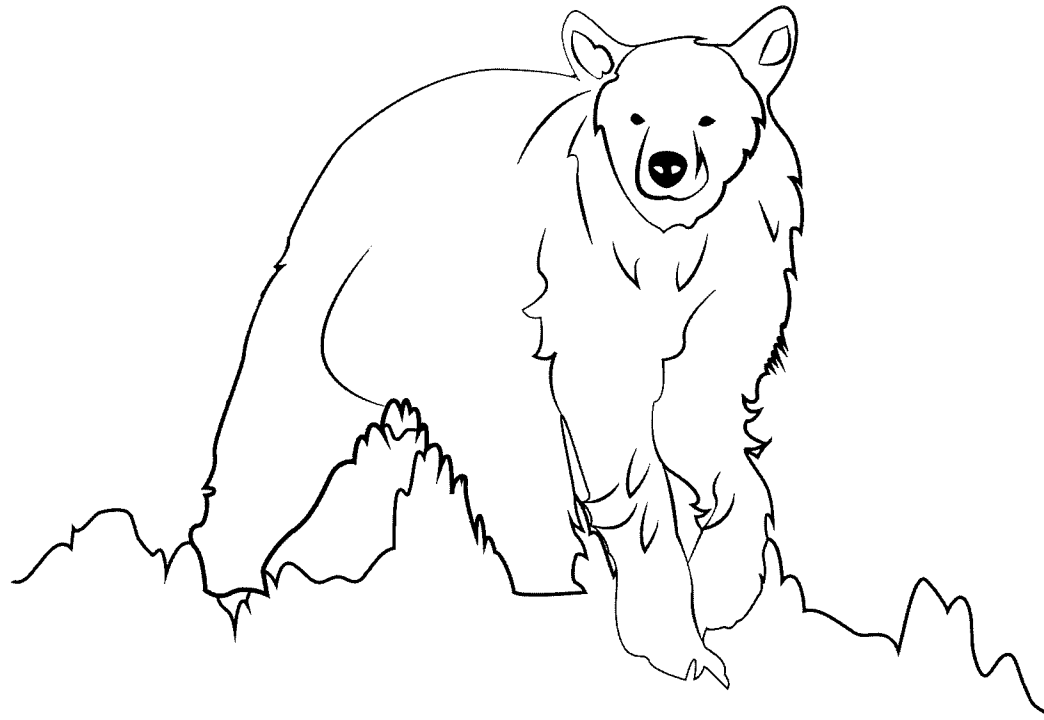


Wrigley / Pedzéh Kǐ *clay place*

Evidence suggests that Dene people have inhabited the site of Wrigley for hundreds of years, though this population likely lived nomadically, living off the land. Between 1817 and 1821, the North West Trading Company operated a post called Fort Alexander, where people gathered to meet and trade furs. This post later closed, prompting traders to settle 32 kilometres south of the current Wrigley site. Following several years of hardship, disease and famine at the beginning of the 20th century, many families moved to away to a new settlement area. The majority maintained a nomadic lifestyle, moving between fishing and hunting camps along the river.

In the 1950s, construction of a one-room school house was completed by the federal government, and a new church was also built. Further development was not undertaken, though, as residents realized that the terrain was not suitable for buildings. Instead, the entire community was moved to Hodgson Creek in 1965, where the Wrigley site now remains. Buildings were moved by barge, and 15 new houses were built.

The Dene members of the community are represented by the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation, a member of Dehcho First Nations. Traditional lifestyles are alive and well in Wrigley; residents value their connection to the land, continuing to hunt, trap, and fish actively in the region. Youth are commonly engaged in these activities as well, and in particular are fond of handgames and drumming.





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