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GNWT Sponsors Candidate Critical Wildlife Area in South Slave

YELLOWKNIFE (March 19, 2010) – The Government of the Northwest Territories reaffirmed its commitment to the environment this week with its sponsorship of the Buffalo Lake, River and Trails Area of Interest under the NWT Protected Areas Strategy. Situated in the South Slave Region, the area is the first site to receive sponsorship from the GNWT, with another 20 Areas of Interest in the process of assessment.

“We have a pristine natural environment in the Northwest Territories, and our government is dedicated to ensuring that it remains pristine for the use of future generations,” said Minister Miltenberger, “The Protected Areas Strategy is one way that we can identify areas of particular importance and ensure that they are preserved.”

The sponsored area is adjacent to Wood Buffalo National Park. It is 2,177 square kilometres and includes the western portion of Buffalo Lake (Ejie Túé), the lower Buffalo River (Ejie Túé Dehe) and traditional trails. A map of the area is attached.

The area has been an important traditional hunting, trapping and berry harvesting area to the K’atł’odeeche First Nation for generations. The site is used by many harvesters for hunting in the fall, and provides critical habitat for moose, beaver, waterfowl, and spawning fish.

The Kátłódeche First Nation has been working on protection of Buffalo Lake, River and Trails for five years. Following this sponsorship, a working group will be formed to advance the area through the process identified in the Protected Areas Strategy. Ecological, mineral and renewable resource assessments will be completed to inform the working group in making recommendations to ENR on boundary location and management objectives for a future Critical Wildlife Area.

The NWT Protected Areas Strategy outlines a community-based process to protect natural and cultural lands across the NWT. It recognizes the need to preserve important ecological and cultural values and provide opportunities for economic development while respecting Aboriginal rights, third party interests and land-use planning processes.

For more information, contact:

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