



Photo Credit - Angela Gzowski

# AKAITCHO TREATY

# 8

NEGOTIATIONS



Photo Credit - Stephen Ellis  
Lutsel K'e Community.



Fort Resolution.



Dettah Community.



N'dilo Community.

## Who are the Akaitcho Dene First Nations?

Akaitcho Dene First Nation members reside primarily in the south-eastern part of the Northwest Territories in four communities around Great Slave Lake: Deninu Kue (Fort Resolution), Lutsel K'e, N'dilo and Dettah.

Akaitcho translates to "Big Foot"; but to the Akaitcho Dene, it has greater meaning. Akaitcho, pronounced Akeh-Cho, was the name of a great Dene leader, warrior, tracker and hunter. Akaitcho is credited with bringing his people into the fur trade and with establishing a peace treaty with the neighboring Tlicho Dene.

## What are they Negotiating?

The Dene living in the area signed Treaty 8 with the Crown on July 25, 1900 in Deninu Kue (Fort Resolution, NT.). The Dene and Crown did not have a shared understanding of the terms, therefore, on May 14, 1992, leadership at the Akaitcho Annual General Assembly put forth a resolution to begin negotiations on the existing treaty.

Negotiations are built on the existing Treaty 8 and will contain provisions that are specific and clear. The negotiators will provide clarity on ownership to land and resources in the region and how it will be managed. Negotiations will also outline provisions for First Nations' self government, specifically the structure, operations, legal status, and measures to enhance the capacity of Akaitcho First Nations so they can participate fully in the economy.

# Eight Stages of the Treaty / Claims Negotiations Process

**1**

The 1900 Treaty was understood by the Dene as a Peace and Friendship treaty. A treaty that would allow co-existence, sharing the land. The Dene never surrendered the land's resources.

**2**

In 1973 Francois Paulette and First Nation Chiefs from across the Northwest Territories filed a legal action against Canada. This became known as the Paulette Case. The Dene took the Government of Canada to court because Canada informed the Chiefs that they were going to build the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. The Dene saw this as a violation of the treaty. The Government of Canada informed the Dene that they understood the 1900 Treaty as surrender of lands and resources. Clarification was necessary between Canada and the First Nations.

**3**

The Dene/Metis comprehensive land claims process began because of the Paulette Case; however, it was never ratified due to an extinguishment clause within the Agreement in Principle (AIP). The extinguishment clause meant relinquishing Aboriginal rights to the land and resources.

**4**

After the failed Dene/Metis agreement, six Akaitcho First Nations from: Lutselk'e Dene, Yellowknives, Deninu Kue, Smith's Landing, Salt River, and Katlodeechee First Nations decided to pursue a Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claim. The TLE is essentially pursuing reserve status. The transaction is exchanging land for cash. The federal and territorial government would continue to manage all programs and services.

**5**

Of the six First Nations mentioned above, three First Nations – Lutselk'e Dene (Lutselk'e), Yellowknives (comprise of Dettah and Ndilo), and Deninu Kue (Fort Resolution) decided to not pursue a TLE. The other two First Nations – Smith's Landing and Salt River, First Nations pursued a TLE and acquired reserve status.

**6**

After the breakup, on May 14, 1992 the Akaitcho Assembly passed a motion to pursue a treaty implementation process called the Akaitcho Treaty 8 negotiations process. The existing treaty needed clarification therefore, negotiations began between the Crown (Canada), the Government of Northwest Territories, and Akaitcho First Nations.

**7**

Reaching an AIP. An Agreement in Principle is not a legally binding document. It is a document that outlines the way in which land and resources would be managed, and it will briefly outline the way in which self government is structured. At this stage, Akaitcho members have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the draft AIP. Should there be issues within the AIP, Akaitcho members are expected to voice concerns.

**8**

Final Agreement stage. At this stage, all members have an opportunity to vote (ratify) the final agreement.

## WE ARE NOT EXTINGUISHING OUR TREATY!

### WE ARE IMPLEMENTING OUR TREATY

The Chiefs representing the four Akaitcho communities have been directed to never surrender their people's rights to the land and resources. This was the understanding of the elders when the Treaty was signed in 1900.



# HOW CAN YOU STAY INFORMED?

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## ■ Community Workshops

You can stay informed by participating in several upcoming community workshops in each First Nation community. The workshops are informational in nature and will describe the negotiations process, the Indian Act, our Treaty, and various terminologies. The workshops are intended to provide an opportunity to clarify understanding of the negotiating process. All community workshops will be advertised in advance.

## ■ Facebook Page

Treaty 8 Tribal Corporation has created a Facebook page called Akaitcho Negotiations. Please like and share the Akaitcho Negotiations Facebook page and look out for updated information regarding the negotiations process.

## ■ Informational Timeline Wall Maps

For a visual depiction of the negotiations process, a timeline wall map will be displayed in each community.

## ■ Community Negotiators

Each First Nation community employs a Community Negotiator who has been involved in the negotiations process for the last several years and is available should members have questions regarding the Akaitcho negotiations.

Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation:

Archie Catholique

Yellowknives Dene First Nation:

Fred Sangris

Deninu Kue:

Robert Sayine

## ■ Chief and Council

## ■ The Akaitcho Website

For more information please visit our website at [akaitchotreaty8.com](http://akaitchotreaty8.com)



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**NWT TREATY 8**  
**TRIBAL CORPORATION**

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