



PROPOSED EXPANSION OF NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

Dehcho Community Update #1

June 2006

Taking Care of Nah?ą Dehé and Expanding Nahanni National Park Reserve

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Where did the idea to expand Nahanni National Park Reserve come from?

Nahanni National Park Reserve was established in 1976. Parks Canada has known for a long time that the park reserve is too small to properly protect healthy ecosystems. Since the first Park Management Plan was prepared in 1987, Parks Canada has been on record as wanting to expand the park to better protect the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem.

Dehcho First Nations, and Nahanni Butte Dene Band have passed numerous resolutions calling for protection of the South Nahanni River watershed. Through the Dehcho Process, Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada began working more closely together. In 2000, the Nah?ą Dehé Consensus Team was formed. Made up of members from Nahanni Butte Dene Band, Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada, the Nah?ą Dehé Consensus Team has an important role in managing Nahanni National Park Reserve cooperatively.

2. What has been done so far?

The Nah?ą Dehé Consensus Team prepared a Memorandum of Understanding Respecting Park Expansion. The Dehcho First Nations Grand Chief and the Minister responsible for Parks Canada signed this document in 2003.

The Nahanni Expansion Working Group was formed in 2004 and is made up of 2 Dehcho First Nations, and 2 Parks Canada members.

The Nahanni Expansion Working Group has overseen research studies related to the proposed expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve.

3. Why are the research studies being done?

The studies will provide the Nahanni Expansion Working Group with the information needed to propose a new boundary for Nahanni National Park Reserve.

4. What is being studied and where?

The area of interest for park expansion is the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem, including the South Nahanni River watershed and the North Karst. Several projects have been done or are still underway:

- A detailed mineral and energy resource assessment conducted by Natural Resources Canada (not yet complete).
- Wildlife studies: Woodland caribou, grizzly bears, Dall's sheep, bull trout;
- Karst landforms,
- Glacier mapping,
- Land cover mapping,
- Forest fire history,
- Oral history and traditional use information,
- Economic impact assessment
- Examination of the various 3rd Party Interests such as mineral or land leaseholders and business operations.





5. Has the final boundary already been decided?

No.

First, the Nahanni Expansion Working Group needs to consider all the research results and hear what people think. Only then can the Working Group propose a new boundary.

Then Parks Canada will hold more open houses to hear what people think about the proposed new boundary.

Once those consultations are complete, the Working Group will recommend a final boundary to Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada.

It will then be up to Dehcho First Nations and Canada to negotiate a final agreement respecting the expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Within their traditional territory, which includes the South Nahanni River watershed, Dehcho First Nation members have hunted, fished and trapped for subsistence purposes since time immemorial. Will this continue if the Nahanni National Park Reserve is expanded?

Yes.

6. How will an expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve affect First Nations, local communities, 3rd Party Interests, and Canadians as a whole?

These are questions that we want to ask YOU!

What are your concerns? Do you have any questions?

What is your opinion?

You will have a chance to learn more about the proposed expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve very soon. You are invited to Open Houses in the following communities:

Times: 3pm to 8pm drop-in

Presentations: 3:30pm and 6:30pm

Nahanni Butte – Tuesday, July 4

Nahanni Butte Dene Band Office Boardroom

Fort Simpson – Thursday, July 6

Dehcho Hall – Cultural Centre

Fort Liard – Friday, July 7

Recreation Centre Gym

Wrigley – Monday, July 10

Recreation Centre Gym

Please come and speak with us! Your views and opinions are very important.

The Nah?ą Dehé Consensus Team prepared an Ecological Vision for Nahanni National Park Reserve that states:

Nah?ą Dehé will protect a wilderness watershed in the Mackenzie Mountains where natural processes such as fires and floods will remain the dominant forces shaping the park's ecosystem. Special features of the park, including waterfalls, hot springs, glaciers, plateaux, canyons, karst landscapes and cultural/spiritual sites will be preserved. Naturally occurring plant communities will thrive and native animal species, including woodland caribou and grizzly bears, will be sustained at viable population levels.

Dene are inseparable from the land. Traditional subsistence harvest will continue to be an integral and sustainable part of the ecosystem and will occur in accordance with Dene laws and principles. Nah?ą Dehé will continue to be revered as a place of mystery, spirituality and healing.

Nah?ą Dehé will be a model of cooperative management with First Nations of the Dehcho where ecological and cultural integrity is protected, visitor access and enjoyment is encouraged within the limits of ecological integrity and wilderness experience, and messages of natural and cultural heritage are communicated with excellence. Nah?ą Dehé will also serve as a national long-term ecological research and monitoring site, and will promote excellence in the conduct of science and cooperative resource protection.

These words are from the Nahanni National Park Reserve Management Plan, a document that is tabled in Parliament and signed by the Minister of the Environment.

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