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JAN 26 2006

Heidi Weibe
Executive Director
Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee
P.O. Box 199
Fort Providence, NT, X0B 0L0

Dear Ms. Weibe,

I am pleased to offer Parks Canada's comments on "Respect for the Land: The Dehcho Land Use Plan" Revised Draft Plan of November 2005. Once again, I would like to commend you, your staff and the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee for the excellent work you have done to bring the plan to this point.

As we have stated in previous letters to you, Parks Canada is conducting a feasibility study that will lead to recommendations for an expanded Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada. This feasibility study includes a mineral assessment and research into conservation values and will involve consultation with the public, stakeholders, Métis Locals and First Nations. Parks Canada has defined the park expansion area of interest to be the entire watershed of the South Nahanni River as well as the area of the North Karst. This area is also called the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem.

In my letter to you in May 2005, I expressed support for a conservation zone designation for the entire area of interest for park expansion. This area, the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem, should always be managed in such a way that its conservation values are preserved. The designation of such a conservation zone should lead to appropriate management decisions to protect the watershed, the wildlife and wilderness values of the area and in turn assure the ecological integrity of Nahanni National Park Reserve.

It is also in keeping with the Parks Canada and Dehcho First Nations 2003 Memorandum of Understanding respecting the expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve that calls for "... sustainable boundaries for the ecological integrity of Nahanni National Park Reserve" and "... compatible land use within the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem"

The conservation zone designation for the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem should help to ensure that conservation values are not lost and that certain boundary options, yet to be determined, are not foreclosed before decisions are made.



The conservation zone will not affect existing third party rights, and these rights will be respected throughout the process of expanding the national park reserve.

For these reasons, Parks Canada supports the designation of the conservation zone (#6) that covers the Dehcho portion of the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem. This conservation zone is very much appreciated and the wording relating to the objectives and values of the area is appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin McNamee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'M'.

Kevin McNamee
Director, Park Establishment Branch
Parks Canada