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SEP 27 2005

Ms. Heidi Weibe
Executive Director
Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee
P.O. Box 199
Fort Providence, NT, X0E 0L0

Dear Ms. Weibe,

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to comment on "Respect for the Land: The Dehcho Land Use Plan" Draft Plan of June 2005. I would like to commend you, your staff and the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee for the tremendous job you have done on this draft land use plan.

As we have stated previously, Parks Canada is working on a feasibility study that will result in proposed boundaries for an expanded Nahanni National Park Reserve. This feasibility study will include research into conservation values and mineral potential and will involve consultation with the public, stakeholders and First Nations. Parks Canada has defined the area of interest for park expansion, an area that takes in the entire watershed of the South Nahanni River as well as the area of the North Karst and is also known as 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. We are pleased to see that the draft plan includes the provision of a conservation zone (#6) that covers the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem. This conservation zone is very much appreciated and the wording relating to the objectives and values of the area seem to be appropriate.

The long term management of the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem must ensure the maintenance of its conservation values. The designation of a conservation zone should lead to appropriate management decisions and compatible land uses that would protect the watershed, the wildlife and wilderness values of the area. This in turn would assure the ecological integrity of Nahanni National Park Reserve. And, in the period before expanded park boundaries are determined, a 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. As I stated in my previous letter, we also wish to ensure that throughout the process of expanding the national park reserve existing third party rights will be respected.

Thank you for your consideration of Parks Canada's comments and suggestions.

Sincerely



f Kevin McNamee
Director, Park Establishment Branch
Parks Canada