

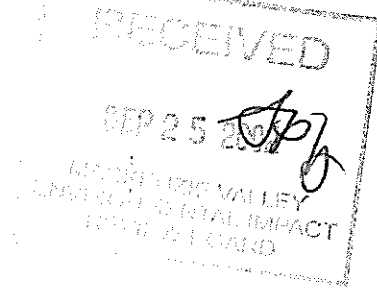
Minister of Indian Affairs
and Northern Development



Ministre des Affaires
indiennes et du Nord canadien

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

SEP 19 2002



Mr. Mark F. Weist
markweist@roger.com

Dear Mr. Weist:

Thank you for your e-mail of August 17, 2002, in which you express concern regarding the potential harm to the environment of the South Nahanni River area, as a result of the possible re-activation of the Prairie Creek mine.

I fully recognize the importance of this region and I can assure you that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) officials will continue to work closely with the affected parties to ensure that the environment is protected. Canada's commitment to the protection and careful management of the region is evidenced in part by the implementation of the Deh Cho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement. As a result, a Regional Land Use Planning Committee has been established. INAC is working with the First Nations to identify lands to be withdrawn from disposition as an interim measure as part of the Deh Cho land, resource and self-government negotiations process. The withdrawal of land will ensure those areas are protected from future land disposals or rights issuance, throughout the negotiations process with the First Nation.

In December 1999, my colleague, the Honourable David Anderson, Minister of the Environment, and I committed to the development of a general Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management (CEAM) Strategy and Framework for the Northwest Territories (NWT). Due to existing development pressures we also committed to the development of a Plan of Action for the Deh Cho region. A multi-stakeholder Steering Committee with representation from regional Aboriginal governments, the Government of Canada and territorial governments, industry and environmental groups is guiding this initiative.

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In the interim, activities in the region are being carefully regulated and closely monitored by the regulatory agencies, the governments of Canada and the NWT to ensure this area is protected. I am confident that decisions made with regard to mining and other possible developments in the region will be consistent with ensuring the ecological integrity of this important region.

I appreciate your taking the time to raise these matters with me.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
ORIGINAL SIGNED PAR
ROBERT D. NAULT

Robert D. Nault, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Sheila Copps, PC, MP
Mr. Bob Wooley
Mr. Vern Christensen
The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

From: "Nault, Robert D. - M.P." <Nault.R@parl.gc.ca>
To: "'Minister@inac.gc.ca'" <Minister@inac.gc.ca>
Date: Tue, Aug 20, 2002 8:31 AM
Subject: FW: Nahanni River

Paulette/Tom,

From Hill mail - for response by correspondence unit pls.

-H

-----Original Message-----

From: Mark Weist [mailto:markweist@rogers.com]
Sent: August 17, 2002 12:06 PM
To: nault.r@parl.gc.ca; copps.s@parl.gc.ca
Cc: pm@pm.gc.ca
Subject: Nahanni River

The Hon. Robert Nault, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6
Fax: (613) 996-1759 The Hon. Sheila Copps, P.C. M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6
Fax (613) 994-1267

Re: Protecting Nahanni National Park Reserve

Dear Minister Nault and Minister Copps:

As a Canadian who cares deeply about Canada's wild rivers and wilderness areas, I am writing to express my concern about the future of Nahanni National Park. I understand that this World Heritage Site is under threat from mining and oil and gas development within the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem. I also understand that real opportunities exist to expand the protection of this area so that future generations can experience the beauty of this wilderness area.

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has recently issued a report which finds that the proposed developments at the Prairie Creek Mine upstream from Nahanni National Park will cause significant impacts to water quality. In addition, I understand there are large quantities of cyanide, PCBs and diesel fuel that have been stored at the mine site for 20 years, on the banks of Prairie Creek. The mine site is located in a region that is prone to both flash flooding and earthquake activity. Either of these events could result in contamination of the pristine waters of Prairie Creek, regardless of any precautionary measures taken.

Also, I understand that the ores that Canadian Zinc proposes to extract are heavily contaminated with mercury as well as arsenic and antimony, leading to further risk of water contamination from run-off should the mine be allowed to go ahead.

Finally, for the mine to operate, a road has been proposed that runs through the sensitive and world renowned Nahanni karst formations - an area that has been identified by Parks Canada as being of High Conservation Value and part of a planned park expansion.

The risk to the ecological integrity of the Nahanni region from the Prairie Creek mine is too high for the Government of Canada to allow this project to proceed. Given Canada's international obligations to protect Nahanni as a World Heritage Site this mine must be stopped, and the site cleaned up. I ask you to work hard to ensure that this happens, and to ensure that the entire Greater Nahanni Ecosystem is protected from industrial development.

I look forward to your response on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mark F. Weist

P.S. - When in Fort Simpson I was quite proud (as a Canadian) to find the plaque that our current Prime Minister had unveiled to commemorate the extension of the Mackenzie Highway. I would like to think that this area has special significance for him.

CC: "Teevan, Derek: INAC" <Derek.Teevan@INAC.INAC-AINC.X400.GC.CA>

Paulette/Tom, From Hill mail - for response by correspondence unit pls. -H -----Original Message-----

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Sent: August 17, 2002 12:06 PM

To: nault.r@parl.gc.ca; copps.s@parl.gc.ca

Cc: pm@pm.gc.ca

Subject: Nahanni River

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Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
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Fax: (613) 996-1759 The Hon. Sheila Copps, P.C. M.P.
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