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**Herb Norwegian Describes Land Protection In Nahanni National Park Reserve**  
**CBC Special Report, October 2, 2002, 7:50 a.m.**

CBC: Herb Norwegian is a former chief of the band. He's now the assistant chief negotiator for the Deh Cho First Nation and he joins us now.

HENDERSON: Good morning, Herb.

NORWEGIAN: Good morning.

HENDERSON: We just heard from Chief Rita Cli on the issue of seismic testing on the Mackenzie River. She says it's safe. What is your position?

NORWEGIAN: The position all along right from the beginning, especially back in '93 when the Deh Cho declaration was tasked in Kakisa, made it very clear that waters had to be protected as well as land. Then that whole discussion developed and then it went into the harvesters, the elders and they continued to take the position that the might Deh Cho had to be protected and for those reasons, land withdrawals, land had been identified on both sides of the entire Deh Cho, to have it withdrawn. Our position, the position of the chiefs, the position of the Deh Cho team and, of course, the whole position is based on protecting the entire watershed, or at least being in the corridor of the might Deh Cho.

HENDERSON: So is it the seismic testing itself that you are against or what it could lead to, which would be drilling underneath the river?

NORWEGIAN: I think the worst-case scenario is that in the event that something is detected, that they did find some resource like maybe oil and gas below the Mackenzie, what you would end up with in the future, right away, could be something equivalent to what's happened in Norman Wells. Islands could be built on the Mackenzie and all along the fear has always been the tampering of the might river. Because of that, remember about a year ago, the GNWT was talking about damming the rivers and there was a political outcry throughout the whole valley just people tampering with the river. That's no different from people just actually going out there and doing that type of work along the river. The

traditional harvesters and ourselves have done a lot of work and identified some very crucial areas along the rivers that need to be protected. So the position all along is to protect the rivers and to withdraw lands alongside the rivers.

HENDERSON: Now, Herb, on the issue of protecting the land, you've been at meetings this week with Parks Canada on extending the boundaries of the Nahanni National Park to protect the mining shed from mining development. What transpired from that meeting?

NORWEGIAN: Well, this has been an ongoing thing. We have been at this for almost two years. As a result, we started up negotiations and from that a side table was set up. A consensus team for the park was set up and from there, we then looked at a whole series of things. One of them was to take a look at the ecological integrity of the park which means will the park survive in about 30 to 50 years from now. The answer as no. In order for the park to survive, we need to take a look at the entire watershed to protect the entire watershed. So that's the direction we are headed. We had a negotiation session in Nahanni Butte last week and the people there had reiterated their support to continue to protect the water shed. So what will happen is that you will see a series of areas that will be withdrawn and it could very well mean that the whole park system, at least within the Nahanni, will be fast-tracked. Because of the prime minister's statement in Johannesburg on parks, the throne speech, there's a whole series of things that sort of reinforced the need to move a lot faster on the things that are taking place within parks. For us, the crucial question is the treaty and aboriginal rights. What we want to do is take something totally different from what presently exists in Wood Buffalo and other parks...

HENDERSON: Just so I am clear on it, you want to extend the boundaries of the park, but at the same time maintain your hunting, fishing and traditional rights.

NORWEGIAN: That's right. That's the main pillar for this discussion.

HENDERSON: Parks Canada doesn't have a problem with that?

NORWEGIAN: No. Parks Canada is onside. As a matter of fact, they are searching and looking at ways of how to get around that whole problem. So that's where we are at right now. If things go well, we could start making some major moves here within the next few years at least, maybe even by December as we speak.

HENDERSON: Really? So if all comes the way you would like to see it come out, when do you think we would see bigger boundaries around Nahanni National Park?

NORWEGIAN: Well, the first step is to actually look at agreements between ourselves and Parks Canada. The boundaries itself, well we will have to have a good session into actually look at these

boundaries because there are a couple of mines and we also have big game outfitters that are right within the Nahanni watershed, so there will have to be some discussion as to what we should do with these mines. Do we expropriate them or do we just donut them or how do we go around dealing with these things? There are some really sensitive areas within the watershed that needs some protection right away. In the event that development, the way it's been creeping up on us, we could very well see a whole series of mines around the park, then what? Right now, we only have two, so this is a good time to do business.

HENDERSON: Alright. Well with that, thanks very much for coming in and joining us this morning.

NORWEGIAN: Mahsi.

CBC: Herb Norwegian is the assistant chief negotiator of the Deh Cho First Nations.