

EA1415-01 Prairie Creek All Season Road,  
Canadian Zinc Corporation

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**Report on the cultural impacts  
technical session in Fort Simpson  
July 5, 2016**

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Submitted to: The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact  
Review Board

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## Background

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board held technical sessions to discuss the proposed 'All Season Road' to the Prairie Creek Mine by Canadian Zinc and its predicted impacts on the environment and people were held June 13-16, 2016 in Yellowknife. The Yellowknife technical sessions considered evidence from both scientific and traditional knowledge sources, but focused on scientific data. The Review Board accepts both types of evidence on an equal footing. This technical session seeks to provide opportunity for traditional knowledge holders to submit evidence on the proposed development area in a more appropriate setting, in their own community.

The Review Board retained Joanne Barnaby as an independent contractor to facilitate a technical session on cultural impacts from the proposed 'All Season Road' in the communities of Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson. The purpose was to gather information from land and resource users about potential cultural impacts from the proposed road. This report focuses on the Fort Simpson session and was prepared by the Facilitator. Statements made by participants are paraphrased, and in some cases broken into separate topical areas in order to create a report that is most helpful to understanding the issues discussed. Participants are therefore invited to correct any misinterpretations with the author.

## Participants

### **Liidlil Kue First Nation Members**

	Jonas Antoine
Chief Gerald Antoine	Beatrice Antoine
Sub-Chief Kele Antoine	Dean Holman
Hilda Tsetso	John Holman
John Tsetso	Liza McPherson
Elizabeth Hardisty	Edward Cholo,
Percy Hardisty	Nicholas de Pelham
Jim Antoine	Grand Chief Herb Norwegian
Eric Mencoche	

### **Nahanni Butte Attendees**

Chief Peter Marcellais

Jean Marie Konisenta

Jim Betsaka

Leon Konisenta

Brian Ekotla

Clayton Konisenta

Maurice Vital

John Lafferty

Darrell Betsaka

Jayne Konisenta

Garey Ekotla

Steve Herrett

### **Others**

Adrian Paradis, CANNOR

Marcy MacDougell , ENR, GNWT

Wilbert Antoine, Canadian Zinc

Alan Taylor, Canadian Zinc

Allison Stoddart , Parks Canada

Andrew Mathews, Lands, GNWT

Jonathan Tsetso, Nahanni National Park

Doug Tata, Parks Canada

Ashley Okrainec, Parks Canada

Joseph Tunney, Dehcho Drum

Chuck Hubert, MVEIRB

John Holman, Ft Simpson Visitor Center

Laura Lee Poitras, Health and Social Services

Chief Joachim Bonnetrouge, Ft Providence

Steve Gooderham, ENR, Dehcho

Angela Norris, ITI, GNWT

Heidi Wiebe, Stantec

Joseph Daley

K. Lambert

Alan Ehrlich, MEIRB

Stacey Menzies, MVEIRB

Ruari Carthew, MVEIRB

## Agenda and Approach

The facilitator explained that the Agenda provided a focus on community participation and was designed to be flexible to allow an approach that would accommodate their needs. Following brief presentations by the Review Board about their process and by Canadian Zinc about the project, the session would move into an open-ended format with an invitation to community members to bring forward traditional knowledge and cultural concerns.

A large scale map was set out on tables to facilitate discussion about specific concerns along the proposed route. Participants chose not to share information on the map out of concern about confidentiality around site specific traditional knowledge. Community members were encouraged to sit at the tables which were set up in a semi-circle and visitors (including government representatives) were encouraged to limit their participation to listening and limit any comments to ensure that they did not use up time dedicated to community members. Interpretation was available but was not required.



## Fort Simpson

Tuesday, July 5, 2016

Time	Agenda Item	Notes
<b>2:00pm</b>	Opening Prayers	Facilitator will approach an elder to do prayer
<b>2:10</b>	Opening Comments	Chief or Representative
<b>2:25</b>	Welcome and review of Agenda	Facilitator provides brief explanation of purpose of session and how we will proceed  Participant questions or comments on the Agenda welcomed
<b>2:35</b>	Introductions	Round table
<b>2:45</b>	Mackenzie Valley Review Board	How this session will feed into the Review process
<b>3:00</b>	CanZinc Presentation	Traditional knowledge and cultural values that may be affected by the project and how to address them.
<b>3:15</b>	Health Break	
<b>3:30</b>	Review of project route map  Community Questions	Are there any areas of special concern along the route? Are there rivers or creeks of particular concern? Harvesting? Have concerns previously raised been addressed?
<b>4:30</b>	Are there specific concerns from community members	Are the families who's traditional territory most impacted by this project present? Are there further concerns?
<b>5:00</b>	Dinner served	
<b>5:45</b>	Outstanding issues or questions	Is there a need to bring forward any further traditional knowledge or land use?
<b>6:30</b>	Recommendations	Are there recommendations that you would like to make to reduce impacts?  Do you have solutions to problems identified?
<b>7:00</b>	Priorities	Are there issues that should be identified as priorities?
<b>7:15</b>	Closing Remarks	Board handout on next steps
<b>7:30</b>	Closing Prayers	

## Community Session Introduction

An opening prayer was offered by Elder Jonas Antoine and was followed by round table introductions of everyone present. The Facilitator provided a brief overview of the Agenda and explained the purpose of the session. She reminded people that the Prairie Creek Mine and the winter road to it had already undergone a review and had been approved. She explained that the focus of this review was on the proposed All Season Road and that this session was dedicated to identifying cultural impacts, traditional knowledge and social concerns.

Recognizing the nature of Dehcho Dene culture, such impacts would include impacts on their traditional way of life and the wildlife and other natural resources that the people depend on.

Chief Gerald Antoine welcomed everyone to the session and spoke about where the name of the community came from. He explained that it was a traditional gathering place where 'the two rivers meet'. Chief Antoine stressed the value of the traditional lifestyle that required people to have a multitude of skills and extensive knowledge of the natural environment. He referred to the land as being like a shopping mall where people knew where they had to go to get what they needed and that they were effective managers of their impacts on the environment.



Following presentations by the Mackenzie Valley Review Board on the mandate of the Board and the decision to hold community sessions focused on culture and traditional knowledge, Canadian Zinc made a presentation on the proposed All Season Road project. Questions were raised about the level of detail available about plans for stream crossings which are critical to protecting water and fish. Further questions arose about how public access to the road could be limited as the GNWT does not have the legal tools needed to control or limit public access.

Canadian Zinc stated that to date they only have preliminary engineering plans and will be developing more detailed plans for approval prior to construction. He also clarified the efforts to work with the Nahanni Butte First Nation to use the Indian Affairs Branch land near the community to establish public access control, perhaps through the use of a gate or other mechanism.

## Community Concerns

The session was then opened to community members to identify issues of concern to them based on traditional knowledge and culture. These concerns have been highlighted below with an explanation of each concern and any recommendations or ideas to mitigate the problem that was put forward that related to it.

## General concerns

Hilda Tsetso explained the importance of the whole area to her family who continue to harvest through hunting trapping fishing and gathering for food and clothing. She is concerned about the stresses created by the proposed road on everything from song birds to large animals like moose and caribou.

*That area where the road goes into the mountains is a traditional harvesting area for us.... When the road is put in place..it's our refrigerator, it's how we sustain ourselves....It's a caribou migrating route, they go all the way down the range towards the river and it's also an important feeding area for the caribou. It will affect everything, even if the construction is done in a season when the animal is not present, it still affecting their migration and habitat so that when they come back there, their home has been disturbed or destroyed....when we wake up in the morning, the first thing we wanna hear is birds. We go up to Virginia Falls and into the Yukon, so the whole area is important to us. Hilda Tsetso*



## Traditional Knowledge Study

Further to Chief Antoine's explanation that the Liidlii Kue First Nation continued to manage their lands in the traditional manner, Liidlii Kue First Nation requested funding support from Canadian Zinc and government to carry out a traditional knowledge study project to focus on the areas of concern around this project was made. It was clear that the community does not feel adequately prepared to participate fully in an Environmental Assessment without this level of preparation.

Liidlii Kue First Nation wants to look at this project from a higher level of management – a bird's eye view. They see the need to consider the regional impacts and not just local ones. They need time to discuss this project with the Dehcho Land Use Planning Board and to consider all of the information there that relates to traditional trails, important habitat areas and traditional place names which signify critical information about cultural and ecological values of specific areas. A question was put to the Review Board, "Where does land use planning fit with your process?" Board



staff responded by noting that the Land Use Plan is on the public record and can be considered by the Review Board.

The First Nation needs the time and resources to analyze other sources such as the Dene Mapping Project, the Dene Nation Archives and their own Traditional Knowledge data base. This would include analyzing ecological components that may be affected in different seasons. They do not feel that a session like this is enough to bring forward all of the knowledge available to identify and assess cultural impacts. The First Nation has a Traditional Knowledge policy in place that they want to see respected. LKFN said that a project of this magnitude should include a traditional knowledge study and respect confidentiality requirements.

*...It's difficult to engage our people in a general session like this when they have shared so much detail already...we need the resources to hire the technical people to bring forward this very detailed knowledge that has already been documented. We need a Geographic Information Systems person to help with delineation and map production. Traditional knowledge researchers are needed to review and extract from these valuable sources.*  
Dean Holman

Other community members spoke of the importance of LKFN members having the opportunity to participate in a TK study as they too have ongoing land use of the area.

*I just want to say that Nahanni Butte people are not the only ones that harvest out in that area. We harvest from the Ram plateau and all the way along the rivers, to the Yukon border and where the river goes into the mountain and we meet people from Nahanni Butte there like Angus and Raymond Konisenta and spend time with them sharing stories. We need to have the chance to share our knowledge about this whole area.* Hilda Tsetso

*I think it's important that we do a TK study with the traditional land users and harvesters from here too, that use that area. In my family, we share with about 7 households from the meat that my family gets. Those traditional laws and principles are important to practice, sharing is a big one. That is a lot of people who depend on the resources from a few harvesters, about 18-20 people... and that's just the harvesters from my family, there are many more.* Elizabeth (Betty) Hardisty

Canadian Zinc pointed out that they understood that there were no cultural or traditional knowledge concerns from LKFN as there was no response to their enquiry. Canadian Zinc supports LKFN compiling TK, noting that the NBDB TK study was funded by a government grant.

Jonathan Tsetso of Nahanni National Park, expressed an interest in considering how they might be able to support a TK study, recognizing that budgets have already been set.

### Summary:

- *LKFN has traditionally occupied parts of the project area and members continue to use the area. They are concerned that their traditional knowledge has not been considered in the project design and that their interests might be impacted as a result.*
- *LKFN is looking for support from government agencies to fund a traditional knowledge study that includes a literature review of existing databases.*
- *LKFN would like the Review Board to consider the Traditional Knowledge in the Dehcho Land Use Plan in relation to the all-season road.*

### Participation in Management

An elder talked about how the whole situation appears complex but that it is actually fairly straight forward. He summarized it as follows;

*We have a responsibility to govern this area, we have jurisdiction. We entered into an agreement in the Park expansion discussions as part of our responsibility to manage our lands, we agreed to allow the mine to proceed. We also entered into an IBA with Canadian Zinc, this was based on our responsibility to govern this area, our jurisdiction, our sovereignty. At this point, we said 'Let's manage this area together'. I think it's simpler than we think, we just need to take responsibility and put all these things together.... we got to be able to sustain ourselves, to look after ourselves. Elder Jonas Antoine*

LKFN is interested in playing an active role in monitoring should the project be approved. They pointed out that they would be better positioned to apply traditional knowledge to management and mitigation if they were involved directly. This would contribute to building their capacity to take the responsibility for stewardship that Elder Antoine was talking about. Canadian Zinc feels that the IBA provides a framework to build on to accommodate this.

Elizabeth Hardisty offered to share a project that school children produced that set out 'Dene principles' based in Dene values and culture that guide important decisions. She explained that her family and others harvest in the North Nahanni area and always share with others what they bring back. This is an example of the kind of cultural principles set out by the children in a booklet.

### Summary:

- *LKFN would like an environmental monitoring role if the project is approved.*
- *LKFN would like to apply their traditional knowledge to management and mitigation of Project effects through direct involvement in project planning, especially for water crossings.*

### Water

A concern about road impacts on streams was raised as there are streams that flow into the North Nahanni watershed that the people depend on. More information on bridges design and other techniques for crossings is needed to enable people to assess this proposal.

*Liidlí Kue made it clear through our participation in the Nahanni Park expansion discussions that water is the most important resource we have and must be protected. Both the South Nahanni and North Nahanni are rivers that the people rely on for hunting purposes, their tourism potential, and their environmental components.... The Tetcela River flows into the North Nahanni watershed which is highly used by community members and is an important source for grayling and yet it does not even show up on this project map. Dean Holman*

The community would like more detailed information about all creek and stream crossings out of concern about the impacts on furbearers as well as fish. Culverts were not generally seen as a good way to protect habitat, and trappers believe that furbearers will stay away from them and not follow their trails to avoid them. People want to consider alternatives. Further information on how the Review Board and governments are going to assess this project in relation to climate change is also requested. The community wants to know if traditional knowledge observations about climate change impacts in general (as they are not currently specific to the right of way) would be respected by the Board.

LKFN would like to build on their monitoring experience that they have gained through AAROM (Aboriginal, Aquatic Oceans and Resources Monitoring program) to look at fish and fish habitat and water quality. Concerns around grayling and water quality issues may be alleviated if members were involved in monitoring this project themselves. They also want to monitor the effects of climate change and how that impacts things like erosion and water levels, fish health and distribution.

### **Summary:**

- *LKFN would like detailed information available about water crossings so that they can comment on specific approaches and technology used.*
- *LKFN has concerns about how climate change may impact things like erosion, water levels, fish health and distribution*
- *LKFN would like traditional knowledge observations about climate change impacts included in the assessment of Project effects*

### **Caribou**

Community members pointed out that woodland (northern mountain and boreal) caribou are endangered species and that Granger Gap and Wolverine Pass are significant habitat for them.

Elder Jonas Antoine shared an oral history story about the 'Caribou Flats' area.

*My Dad shared an old story about when he was young, he travelled with elders from the Cli and Tsetso families up on the Ram plateau area. And they were talking about an area beyond that...so they sent three guys out there and they traveled for about 3 days...when they came back, they reported that there was a place that was even better than where they were. They said there was big herds of caribou and there was moose wondering all over the place. Now based on this story, I think they were way out at the far end of the Karst area. My Dad told me there was an area called "Klon'ba (sp?)", that's what they now call the Caribou Flats. Elder Jonas Antoine*

Canadian Zinc described their caribou (and other wildlife) survey work carried out in 2010-11 where they found significant caribou populations in the 'caribou flats' area but no human tracks. Elder Antoine explained that his Dad's story shows that even if they didn't see human tracks when they did their survey, this story demonstrates that this land was used and is recognized as important to the people and to the animals.

Jonathan Tsetso also described the collaring program that started a few years ago that will enable them to monitor the full life cycle of caribou including seasonal behaviours and herd dynamics.

*Granger Gap and Wolverine Pass and that entire range is important to the caribou as the community recognizes this whole area as important habitat both for migration and mingling areas. The people do rely on caribou. Dean Holman*

*The land beyond the Gap is the same as on this side to us, we have a responsibility to manage it. I just had to point out how important the land is to us. Elder Jonas Antoine*

### **Summary:**

- *The Caribou Flats, Grainger Gap and Wolverine pass areas are important habitat for caribou*

### **Public access, Road Closure and Reclamation**

Community members were interested in understanding how an all season road would be different both in terms of routing and in terms of cost from the winter road. They also wanted to know when the road would become a public road. ENR responded by explaining that it would not be a public road but that they are not able to stop the public from accessing roads in the NWT that have been licensed to build. There was concern about increasing risk to LKFN members if there were public access to the road, including as mine employees, working on such a narrow road. Increased harvesting access and pressures on wildlife populations including moose, caribou, fish, beaver and other natural resources that the community depends on, are also a concern. Collision risk with animals and other people was raised.

The community would like some time to discuss LKFN member access to the road with Nahanni Butte and Canadian Zinc and comment on this further at a future date with the Review Board.

Around the question of road removal and reclamation, there was openness expressed to the idea of Nahanni Butte First Nation having the primary say as to what should happen to the road after the

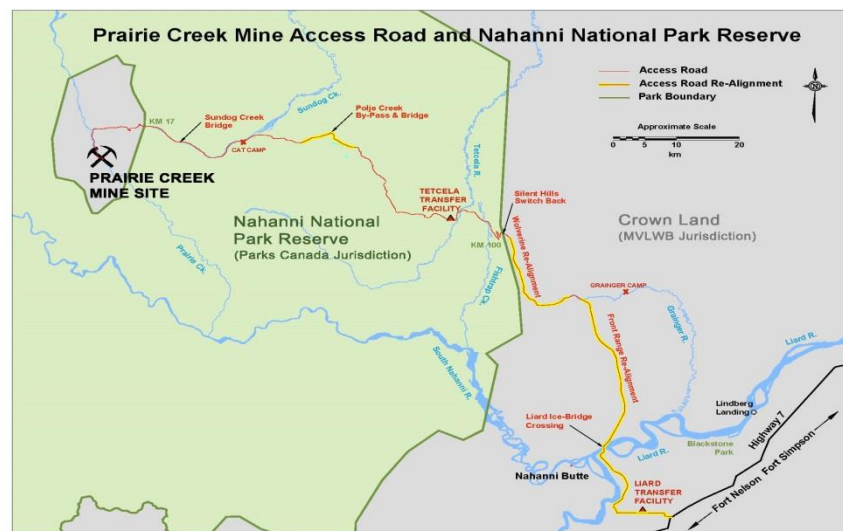
mine closed recognizing that there will be a lot of other interests that will develop over time from others and that they will need to consider those as well.

Questions around the use of IAB (Indian Affairs Branch) lands designation were raised as this is something that is currently under consideration.

*How much is an all weather road going to cost and how much does a winter road cost? Eric Menicoche*

### Summary:

- *LKFN expressed concern over road safety risks to people and animals*
- *LKFN would like time to talk with Nahanni Butte and Canadian Zinc on road access issues and will inform the Review Board of the outcome*
- *LKFN supports Nahanni Butte having the primary say in road reclamation options*
- *LKFN wants to be involved in Indian Affairs Branch lands discussions*



All Season Road Alignment – Canadian Zinc presentation July 5, 2016

### Climate Change

Community members pointed out that Canadian Zinc admits to a high level of risk in certain sections of the proposed road. They want to know whether this assessment has included climate change and if so, what are the projections that it is based on? Have government agencies considered this risk? Does the information exist on how to manage the impacts from climate change?

Canadian Zinc committed to communicating to LKFN where their information on impacts of climate change is available for the new proposed alignments.

## Summary:

- *LKFN would like to see traditional knowledge incorporated into predictions on climate change impacts*

## Analysis

It is clear that there is a deep level of traditional ecological knowledge within the community and some are frustrated that they have not been resourced to conduct a traditional knowledge study for this project. They also feel that there is much to be gained through a literature review of several sources, the Dehcho Land Use Plan, the Dene Mapping Project, the Dene Nation Archives and their own Traditional Knowledge data base.

LKFN would have liked to build on what has already been shared and documented and together with more details from Canadian Zinc, focus a session on working through specific concerns. They should be encouraged to identify and seek the support required to do so. Canadian Zinc and government agencies should be encouraged to contribute to meeting the study needs quickly so that this valuable knowledge can become part of the public record and part of what is considered by the Review Board.

## Conclusions

The Review Board's decision to host these traditional knowledge sessions in Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson was received quite differently in each community. Nahanni Butte received government funding and had the opportunity to carry out an extensive traditional knowledge study that they are satisfied with and that it feels can be used by the Board in carrying out its' assessment. This enabled participants to concentrate on problem solving in that session. The Liidlii Kue First Nation of Fort Simpson, on the other hand did not receive such research support and feels that this creates a serious information gap. In my view as independent facilitator, this information is important to the Board in making an informed decision.

In both cases, it is evident that both First Nations want to contribute to ensuring that the project, should it proceed, be carried out in a manner that protects the values and integrity of the ecology they understand so well. An active role for both reviewing project plans in greater detail and in monitoring both the construction and maintenance of the road is desired and should be encouraged by all. It is through this hands-on participation that the opportunity to produce solutions to problems will arise.