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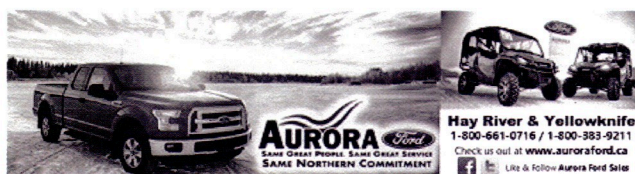
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## All-season road could pave way to wellness

*Nahanni Butte considers wellness camp in park*

April Hudson  
Northern News Services  
Thursday, May 26, 2016

### TTHENAAGO/NAHANNI BUTTE

A lack of response from the federal government is not deterring Nahanni Butte's chief and council from pursuing a wellness camp for the region, which could be established in the Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Chief Peter Marcellais said the community wants to negotiate an Impact and Benefits Agreement with Parks Canada for infrastructure investment in Nahanni National park.

On Jan. 22, Marcellais sent a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressing the band's desire to meet with government representatives regarding "the timely need for investment in park infrastructure, more specifically, the use of the

Nahanni National Park Reserve to establish and promote community led projects such as the establishment of cultural wellness centres."

The band followed that letter up on March 21 with an e-mail to NWT MP Michael McLeod, asking McLeod to find out if Trudeau had received their letter.

When contacted for comment, McLeod said he has contacted the Prime



The mountains in Nahanni Butte. The community is looking at establishing a wellness camp for youth in the mountains depending on the fate of an all-season road to Prairie Creek Mine. - April Hudson/NNSL photo

Minister's Office and is waiting for a response.

McLeod said Impact and Benefits Agreements are commonly signed with companies, not with governments.

"I don't know what the precedent is in terms of dealing with Parks Canada. I think there's room for some type of arrangement," he said.

"Whether they call it an Impact and Benefits Agreement, I'm not sure ... but in terms of a Parks (Canada) agreement, I think that in itself has a lot of precedence in other areas."

McLeod said the proposed cultural wellness centre could find funding under a new government social infrastructure program, although criteria for that funding is still being established.

"I totally expect we'd be able to accommodate it ... We're really working hard to try to get programs that encourage wellness, so this would be a good fit," he said.

All-season road could get support

The band already has an Impact and Benefits Agreement with Canadian Zinc Corporation, which is responsible for Prairie Creek Mine. That agreement was signed in 2011.

The mine is accessed through a winter road but Canadian Zinc is in the process of applying to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board for permission to build an all-weather road.

Marcellais said Nahanni Butte would likely support the application but first the band would need to see more benefits from Canadian Zinc.

On March 17, Nahanni Butte passed a band council resolution authorizing Marcellais and band councillors to negotiate additions to its Impact and Benefits Agreement with Canadian Zinc Corporation to reflect the building of the proposed all-season road.

"We need more benefits going here," Marcellais said.

In particular, he said the band will be seeking funding toward its proposed wellness camp which could be established for youth between the mountains.

"One idea is that it could be for the whole Deh Cho region," he said.

"It's not just us, it would be good for the whole region."

Alan Taylor, Canadian Zinc's chief operating officer and vice-president of exploration, told the Deh Cho Drum the mining company is in support of the idea and has been consulting with the band over the past two months.

"We're always in favour of trying to support the community in relation to (our) site activities," Taylor said. "(The all-season road application) has a direct



impact on the community, and it's our view that we should sit down with them and see how we can provide some consideration to helping them out further ... Nahanni Butte is the closest community to the project and while we're somewhat revenue-starved right now, with the proposed operation of the mine, it would help support such ventures as youth camps and supports for the community."

The band is looking at other areas of funding as well, through the GNWT.

Marcellais said if they get enough funding the camp could even run year-round, if demand called for it.

During a community meeting with Nahendeh MLA Shane Thompson on May 17, Marcellais and the band council laid out their plan for the youth wellness centre.

Thompson said they discussed how to enhance and develop a cultural site in the community that already has cabins in place, as well as the proposed wellness centre.

He added he has already been in touch with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and will be doing the same with the Department Justice, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Health and Social Services to see if there is funding available for the current cultural site.

As for the proposed site in the park reserve, Thompson said he was in support of the idea.

"I think this is a very positive approach, and I think if industry and the federal and territorial governments are able to work together, it would be a camp developed and made by youth for youth. That's really unique," he said.

"That speaks volumes about their commitment to youth."

#### Commitment to community engagement

In order to ensure the entire community has a say in the band's position on the all-season road and the Impact and Benefits Agreements, Marcellais said the band council has been mailing out notifications to all community members.

"Everyone knows what's going on," he said.

The band council has also been seeking approval from community elders, who are signing off on band resolutions.

Marcellais said the youth wellness camp will be brought up for discussion at the upcoming Dehcho Assembly in Jean Marie River.



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