Parks Canada Preliminary Screening under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT:

- ❑ New
- ✓ Amended
- ❑ Requires a permit, licence or authorization under the *Preliminary Screening Requirement Regulations* (issuance of a National Parks of Canada Restricted Activity Permit pursuant to the *National Parks of Canada General Regulations* ss.11.1 and 12.1)
- ❑ Does not require permit, licence or authorization and is proposed by PCA

1. DEVELOPMENT TITLE & LOCATION

Náįlįcho (Virginia Falls) Facilities Rehabilitation, amendment
Nahanni National Park Reserve, NT

2. PROPONENT INFORMATION

Liz Baker (Project Manager)
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3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATES

Planned commencement: 2017-09-08
Planned completion: 2018-12-30

4. INTERNAL FILE #

NAH2017-002 (amendment)

5. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Of the northern fly-in national parks, Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR) has the highest visitation (850 per year, five year average). About 95% of these visitors spend time at Náįlįcho (Figure 1), either as part of a paddling trip or a day flight. Visitor access around the site is facilitated by approximately 1.5 km of wooden boardwalk (Figure 2). Over the years, Parks Canada has expended significant effort and funds in attempt to maintain the boardwalk system. In 1988-89 a major recapitalization of the boardwalk system was undertaken to protect the trail corridor from trampling and in attempt to address structural issues with the boardwalk. Most recently, in the early 2000s, Parks Canada recapitalized the boardwalk using helical piers recommended by Public Works and Government Services Canada. These piers failed to adequately support the boardwalk, particularly in wet/sloping areas, resulting in significant annual heaving that creates conditions that are not safe for staff and visitor use as the resulting twisted, sloped and collapsed boardwalk segments produce serious trip and fall hazards, especially for those carrying heavy loads while portaging past the Falls. This necessitates 2-3 weeks of maintenance staff time and significant expenditure on an annual basis to return the boardwalk to a safely usable state. Additionally, the current configuration of the boardwalk, docks, and associated visitor facilities such as the sharing circle, food cache, and access ramps do not provide optimal traffic flow and efficiency at the site. For example during times of peak visitor use the two existing docks do not provide enough capacity for all the float planes and arriving canoeist/rafters resulting in planes being moored to the bank and gear/visitors being stored in unsafe and aesthetically unappealing locations on or near the main boardwalk landing. This development is being proposed to provide a long-term and cost effective solution to access, maintenance, and visitor experience/safety issues at Náįlįcho.

Amendment:

Excavation work for land based dock anchors will now be completed using small tracked equipment (Kabota K008 and Thomas 45 series mini skid steer) which will be brought to Náįlįcho via aircraft. There will be four excavations of, at maximum, 3.7m^2x 1.2 m deep, which will be located greater than one meter away from high water level (Figure 5). These excavations will be filled with inert material such as concrete or existing scrap metal from the existing boardwalk support and backfilled with excavated material; excess excavated material will be broadcast on the ground surface in the surrounding area.

Development Objectives:

See existing screening: NAH2017-002

Development Methods:

See existing screening: NAH2017-002 and amendment information on page 2 of this screening.

6. VALUED COMPONENTS

See existing screening: NAH2017-002

7. EFFECTS ANALYSIS

See existing screening: NAH2017-002, and:

Wildlife and Vegetation

- Potential spills during refuelling of tracked equipment and/or storage of fuel drums could lead to soil/water/vegetation contamination.
- Movement of tracked equipment between excavation sites could result in damage to soil/vegetation
- Invasive species could be brought into the park on tracked equipment
- Grater scope of excavation could result in damage to potential buried heritage resources

8. MITIGATION MEASURES

See existing screening: NAH2017-002, and:

1. Spill kits will be on site and fuel barrels will be stored in suitable storage units with secondary containment (temporary berms with adequate capacity for the total volume of stored fuel).
2. When visitors are present equipment use will be restricted to daylight hours only in vicinity of the campground to ensure that noise disturbance is minimized.
3. Equipment will travel on the existing boardwalk, on plywood, or will be slung by helicopter between excavation sites.
4. Equipment will be washed prior to entering the park to ensure that it is free of any vegetation/seeds.
5. Excavation sites have been assessed by a Parks Canada archaeologist and have been declared free of heritage resources. Regardless, if heritage resources should be uncovered, work will stop and they will be documented/reported to a Parks Canada archaeologist.

9. OTHER Considerations

- ✓ Surveillance: A variety of Parks Canada staff (e.g.: Asset Manager, Project Manager, Visitor Experience Manager, Archaeologist, Ecologist) will be on site at various times throughout the duration of the project to provide surveillance.

10. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL ADVERSE EFFECTS

Given the limited and short-term magnitude of effects, the location in a predominantly pre-impacted area, and the timing and the application of mitigation measures, the development will not cause residual adverse effects to natural/cultural resources or visitor experience.

11. EXPERTS CONSULTED

Department: Parks Canada / Government of Canada	*Date of Request*: June 25, 2018
Expert's Name & Contact Information: Patrick Carroll PO Box 750, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0 Patrick.carroll@pc.gc.ca / Tel: 867-872-7936	*Title*: Cultural Resource Management Advisor, SW NWT Field Unit
Expertise Requested: Heritage resource evaluation	
Response: Little to no likelihood of surficial or buried heritage resources in the excavation/work areas.	

12. DECISION

Taking into account the analysis and implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the analysis, the development:

- ❑ Might have a significant adverse impact on the environment, and the proposal should be referred to the *Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board* for environmental assessment.
- ✓ Does not have a likelihood of causing significant adverse impact on the environment.
- ❑ Might be a cause for public concern, and the proposal should be referred to the *Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board* for environmental assessment.
- ✓ Does not have a likelihood of causing public concern.

13. RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL

Prepared by: Jacquie Bastick A/Resource Conservation Manager, Nahanni National Park Reserve	Date: August 22, 2018
Approval Signature:  Jon Testo Superintendent, Nahanni National Park Reserve	Date: August 22, 2018

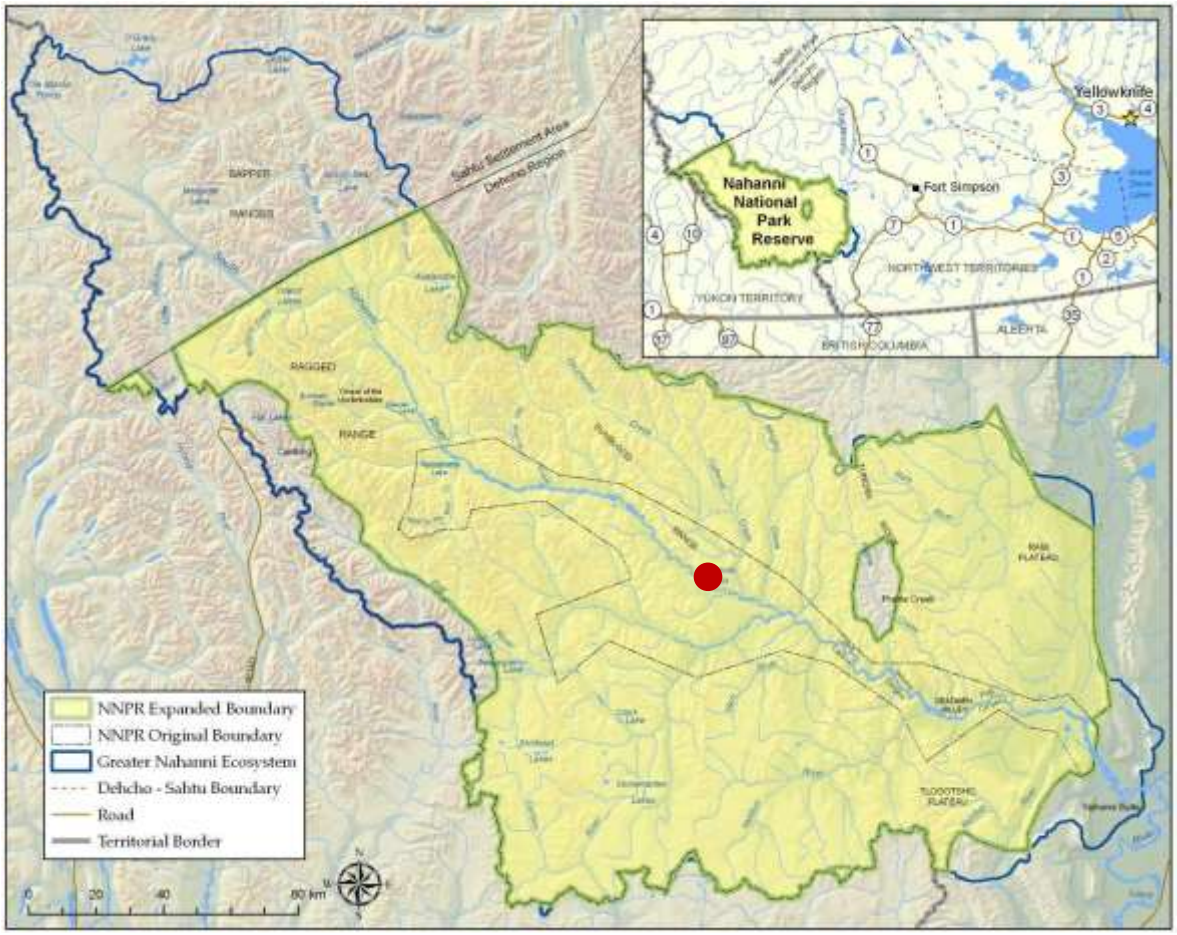

Figure 1: Development location map. Náįlįcho is indicated by the red dot.

Figure 2: Overview of existing Nájlįcho campground, docks, and boardwalk system. Red box indicates location of proposed maintenance storage area and yellow box indicates location of the proposed boardwalk reroute.

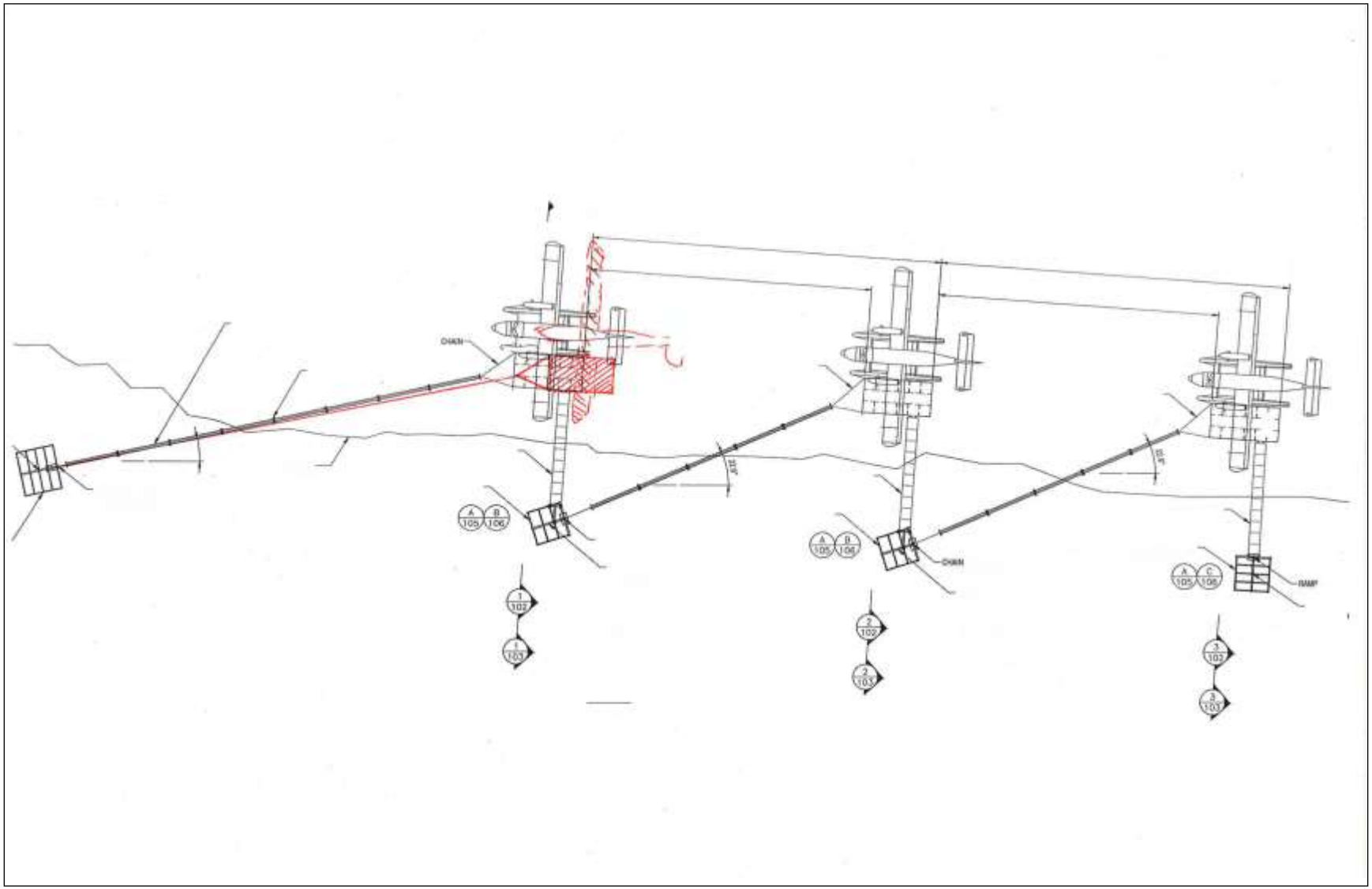

Figure 5. Proposed land anchor locations at the main Nailicho docking area.