

Minister of Indian Affairs  
and Northern Development

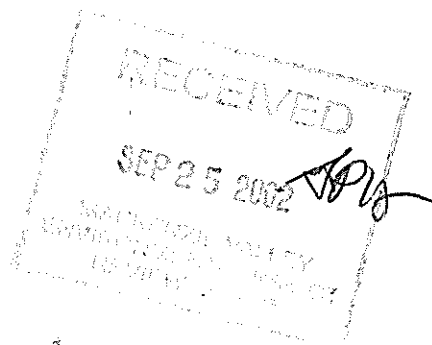


Ministre des Affaires  
indiennes et du Nord canadien

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

SEP 19 2002

Ms. Alison Woodley  
Federal Northern Campaigner  
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society  
506 - 880 Wellington Street  
OTTAWA ON K1R 6K7



Dear Ms Woodley:

Thank you for your letter of August 22, 2002, in which you forwarded two hundred and eighty seven letters from Canadians concerned about the future of the Nahanni National Park Reserve.

I fully recognize the importance of this region and 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 INAC officials are working with the Deh Cho to identify lands to be withdrawn from disposition as an interim measure as part of the Deh Cho land, resource and self-government negotiations process.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 Deh Cho 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 federal 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 of 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,

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ROBERT D. NAULT

Robert D. Nault, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Sheila Copps, PC, MP  
Mr. Bob Wooley  
Mr. Vern Christensen