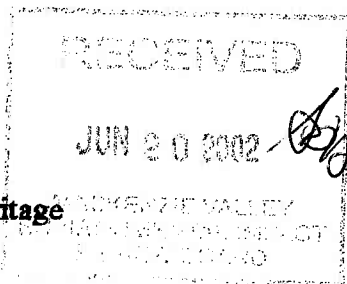


Doc A

Honourable Sheila Copps
Department of Canadian Heritage

Thursday, June 20, 2002

Dear Ms. Copps,

I am writing to you concerning the proposed mine development on the border of Nahanni National Park.

As a citizen of the United States I hesitate to suggest action to you regarding your natural parks and resources. My experience with many visits to the natural wonders of Canada makes me think that we could use your examples and advice to good advantage here in our own wild and natural areas. Please accept my comments as heartfelt feelings coming from a visitor who enjoyed two weeks on a canoe trip on the South Nahanni River.

I am told that in your role as the "Responsible Minister" you have the ability to accept, reject or modify the assessment reports mentioned below regarding the Nahanni National Park.

The issue as I understand it is as follows:

- The situation is worse than the Cheviot Mine issue outside Jasper. The mine requires an all weather road in order to be viable. This road would run too close to, and parallel the boundary of the Park and World Heritage site, through the Karst lands of the Nahanni Plateau. This region is fragile and is part of the land under consideration for expanded Park boundaries through the Deh Cho process. The site is perched in a narrow valley on Prairie Creek that flows directly into the Nahanni. The toxic tailings pond will lie upstream of the Nahanni on Prairie Creek, poised for millennia to flow/leach into the Park. This is one of the most seismically active areas in North America and has experienced flash flooding in recent years in adjacent valleys (a Park visitor was killed in 1995 in one such flood).
- January 19, 2002, a fuel spill estimated at 24,000 litres occurred at the Tungsten Mine site on a tributary of the Nahanni. If this event had occurred within Prairie Creek, the results would have been catastrophic.
- The current environmental assessment process focuses on individual components of the development in isolation from the over all impact. It does not yield an effective assessment of the overall project.

- In the latest "Assessment by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Review Board" they state: *"The review Board also suggested that the Federal Minister and the Minister responsible for National Parks decide on the scope and nature of acceptable protection to ensure the ecological integrity of Nahanni National Park, including the possibility of establishing a buffer zone where land use activities are not compatible with the park purpose and management plan."* The door is open and they are inviting you to exercise your prerogative as the Responsible Minister.
- Until a proper land use plan is finalized, a buffer zone of the complete watershed is the only acceptable management position.
- It is imperative that a moratorium on developments like this be imposed on this watershed until a proper land use plan is finalized.

I thank you for your consideration of my comments and feelings on this matter.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Smith
295 Coconut Palm Road
Vero Beach, FL 32963 USA

cc:

Mr. Tom Lee
CEO
Parks Canada Agency

The Honourable Mr. Robert Nault
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

The Honourable Harbance Singh Dhaliwal
Department of Fisheries and Oceans

The Honourable David Anderson
Department of Environment

**Mr. Vern Christensen
Executive Director, Mackenzie Valley
Environmental Impact Review Board**

**Mr. Bob Wooley,
Executive Director,
Mackenzie Valley
Land and Water Board**