

**NAHANNI  
NATIONAL PARK RESERVE OF CANADA**

**NAH?A DEHÉ**  
*Management Plan*

**January 30, 2010**

**DRAFT**



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**If you have any comments on the draft management plan please submit them by February 15, 2010.**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada, the oldest national park management organization in the world, is responsible for administering a system of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. These protected heritage areas showcase our country's natural, cultural and historic treasures. National parks are protected with and for Canadians; they are a living legacy of our heritage.

National parks are established to protect and present outstanding representative examples of natural landscape and phenomena that occur in Canada's 39 natural regions. The natural regions span the provinces and territories, representing mountains and plains, boreal forests and tundra, lakes and glaciers; landscapes that are the very essence of Canada. Parks Canada is responsible for both protecting the ecosystems of these natural areas and facilitating experiences – enabling Canadians to discover and build connections with these places.

### 1.1 Nahanni National Park Reserve

A legendary icon of Canadian wilderness, Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR) provides visitors with world renowned paddling opportunities, one of Canada's most celebrated big wall rock climbing sites, and hiking amongst internationally significant karst features. For many, visiting NNPR is a trip of a lifetime, which results in a strong sense of attachment to the park.

The park is situated in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories (NWT) (Figure 1). The powerful and dynamic South Nahanni River originates in the rugged and remote Mackenzie Mountains near the border between NWT and Yukon, and terminates at its confluence with the Liard River near the small community of Nahanni Butte more than 500 km downstream. The river is the central feature of NNPR, and is of great importance to Dehcho First Nations. Nahꞵ Dehé is the traditional name for the park, reflecting its Dene heritage. Depending on the context, Nahꞵ Dehé can refer to the South Nahanni River and its watershed, the 2009 park boundary, and/or the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem. In this document, Nahꞵ Dehé refers to the area encompassed by the 2009 boundary, and is used interchangeably with Nahanni, the park and NNPR.

**\*\*Figure 1: REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP\*\***

Protecting the South Nahanni River, specifically Nájłıcho (Virginia Falls) and the spectacular canyons, from hydroelectric development was the catalyst for the establishment of the original national park reserve in 1976, with a land-base of 4,766 km<sup>2</sup>. Early on it was recognized that NNPR was not large enough to protect all of the significant natural features of the area. In particular, the park did not have adequate habitat to ensure protection of wide-ranging species such as grizzly bears and northern mountain caribou. Alpine areas, the habitat of species such as Dall's sheep, mountain goat and hoary marmot, were only minimally represented within the original park boundaries.

To study the feasibility of expansion and new boundary options, the Nahanni Expansion Working Group was formed in 2004. Following extensive research including natural features, wildlife values, oral history, mineral and energy potential, three boundary options were presented for review and comment. The process culminated on June 18, 2009, when Nahanni was expanded to 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the third largest national park in Canada and the sixth largest in the world.

## 1.2 Cooperative Management

The park protects a significant portion of the Nahʔą Dehé watershed, a traditional homeland of the Dene. As such, cooperative management is at the heart of operations for NNPR.



Dehcho First Nations and the Government of Canada are negotiating self-governance, land use planning and resource management issues through the Dehcho Process. As part of the *Dehcho Process Interim Measures Agreement*, Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada created the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team (NDCT) in June 2000. The team allows Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada to work together cooperatively on park management issues while the negotiation process continues.

The NDCT is comprised of four appointees from Dehcho First Nations and three appointees designated by Parks Canada. The Team was given four initial tasks:

- Review and finalize an ecological integrity statement for the park;
- Prepare a new park management plan based on a review of the 1987 plan and the 1994 plan amendments;

- Develop an interim park management arrangement (IPMA) to guide the cooperative management process until the Dehcho Process concludes with a final agreement; and
- Create a memorandum of understanding respecting park expansion.

When these tasks were completed, the role of the NDCT shifted and this group is now dedicated to the ongoing cooperative management of the park as outlined in the *Interim Park Management Arrangement*, including management planning. The ultimate goal is to achieve a permanent management regime between Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada. The final agreement reached through the Dehcho process will take precedence over the direction outlined in this management plan.

### **1.2.1 Collaborating for the Future, Respecting our Traditions**

There are several principles that speak to the philosophy and practice of cooperative management, and Parks Canada's support and respect for traditional use and knowledge. These principles form the foundation of the management plan and reflect the essence of the *Canada National Parks Act* (sec 40), the IPMA and the long-term strategic direction outlined in the 2004 management plan.

#### **Recognizing and respecting traditional use**

Traditional use is an integral part of the ecosystem. Subsistence harvest occurs in a respectful and sustainable manner, in accordance with Dene law, values and principles.

#### **Sharing the stories and traditions of Nahʔą Dene**

Ensuring an appreciation of Dene culture, as well as harmony between traditional use and park visitors is key to creating connections between land and culture. Culturally appropriate programs that present First Nations and Métis history and culture will continue to be developed, acknowledging traditional use as an important element of the ecosystem.

#### **Using traditional knowledge in park management**

Traditional knowledge is an important source of information, including historic practices and current use. This knowledge is integrated with science in resource management decisions and helps guide decisions on the protection and presentation of cultural resources. It is important for NNPR to continue working with traditional users to protect resources, by seeking their assistance in resource monitoring and reporting programs.

### Supporting cultural learning

Through active participation and experiential learning, local First Nations and Métis youth can learn about their culture, building knowledge of the traditional way of life. Through cooperation with Dehcho First Nations and others, NNPR continues to support opportunities to learn about culture and traditions, through such activities as school river trips, mentoring and culture camps.

### Managing in partnership, looking to the future

As part of the cooperative management philosophy, one of the key goals is to ensure gainful employment opportunities for First Nations and Métis partners. Parks Canada supports this goal through summer student work experience opportunities, as well as specialised training and recruitment programs.

## 1.3 Management Planning Process

A park management plan is the key reference document that guides Parks Canada decisions and actions in protecting, managing and operating a national park. As per the *Canada National Parks Act*, management plans are a legal requirement for all national parks. They are developed with the involvement of partners, stakeholders and the Canadian public. Management plans are formally reviewed every five years to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

This plan builds on the successes of the 2004 plan and aims to fulfill Parks Canada's goal, that *Canadians have a strong sense of connection through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations*. It does so by integrating the three elements of Parks Canada's mandate – the protection of heritage resources, the facilitation of visitor experiences and public outreach education – into a revised park vision, as well as a number of key strategies and area management approaches that will be used to guide and measure success in achieving the vision.

A park planning team, including Parks Canada staff and the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team, led the management planning process. Community and stakeholder consultation played a significant role in the development of the management plan. The first round of community and stakeholder meetings was held in December 2009 to seek input on the draft vision, identified issues, key strategies and area approaches. In addition, an on-line forum was created to allow people from across the country to

communicate with the planning team. Comments received helped shape the draft management plan and the second round of consultations.

In January 2010, core elements of the draft plan, designated landing sites, and new infrastructure and employment opportunities were the focus of the second round of consultation in the Dehcho region communities of Fort Simpson, Nahanni Butte, Wrigley and Fort Liard. Further stakeholder meetings were held to discuss new visitor opportunities and management approaches. The on-line forum proved to be a successful tool to reach park visitors and Canadians with an interest in Nahanni, there were over 1,228 unique visitors to the forum, and 105 registered users throughout the consultation process. To conclude the consultation process, the full draft of the plan was made available for final comments in February.

The park management plan sets the foundation to:

- Become a centre for northern mountain research;
- Encourage exploration and discovery of Nahanni by visitors and others;
- Protect the South Nahanni River watershed;
- Expand the visitor experience opportunities and products;
- Develop detailed management direction for Gahnįhthah, Náįłįcho and the Expansion Area;
- Expand park infrastructure outside the park, including facilities in Fort Simpson and Nahanni Butte; and
- Develop a zoning plan for the Expansion Area.

## 2.0 Nahą Dehé: A Place of Importance

As part of the national parks system, NNPR protects and presents the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region, one of the 39 regions in the *National Park System Plan*. Among the significant features of NNPR are antecedent river canyons, spectacular waterfalls, limestone karst and pseudokarst topography with associated cave and sinkhole formations, numerous thermal springs and the highest mountains and largest glaciers in NWT. The park reserve also includes Canada's largest tufa mounds, and the only known locations of a rare plant species, the Nahanni Aster.

\*\*\*picture Nahanni Aster\*\*\*

### 2.1 UNESCO World Heritage Site

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention. This convention recognizes parts

of the world's natural and cultural heritage that are so outstanding that their protection and preservation are considered to be of concern to the world community.

NNPR was among the first twelve sites in the world, and Canada's first natural site, given World Heritage Site status. Conferred in 1978, this status does not yet apply to the expansion area. Nahanni was designated a World Heritage Site due to several factors including significant, on-going geological processes, the presence of outstanding examples of major stages of the earth's evolutionary history, and exceptional natural beauty.

\*\*\*UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE LOGO\*\*\*

To ensure maximum visitor exposure to the park's world heritage status, Parks Canada maintains a World Heritage plaque for NNPR at Náìlìcho (Virginia Falls). This plaque provides visitors with the opportunity to become aware of both the park's global significance and the World Heritage Convention.

## 2.2 Canadian Heritage Rivers System

The portion of the South Nahanni River which flows through the original park was designated a Canadian Heritage River in 1987, as it provides outstanding recreational opportunities in a wilderness area of great scenic beauty. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System recognizes Canada's outstanding rivers to ensure their long-term protection and continued enjoyment by Canadians.

\*\*\*CHRS LOGO\*\*\*

## 2.3 Broader Role of the Park Reserve

Canada is committed to achieving a system of protected areas, on both national and worldwide scales. A key goal of international agreements, such as the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, is the creation of a global network of protected areas that will maintain and represent the planet's biodiversity. Through the strength of its own merits, the recent expansion, and as part of Canada's system of national parks, NNPR plays a significant role in these global protection efforts.

Boundary recommendations for the expansion of Nahanni were limited to the Dehcho region. Since early 2008, Parks Canada has also been working with land corporations in the Tulita District of the Sahtu Settlement Area to establish a new national park reserve to protect the headwaters of the South Nahanni River.

The South Nahanni River watershed is an important cultural and natural area for the Aboriginal peoples of the Dehcho Region and the Sahtu Settlement Area, with links between the two cultures. Strong connections and relationships exist between the Dehcho and Sahtu, which are important as the proposed national park reserve would share a boundary with the newly expanded NNPR.

## **2.4 Park Expansion Agreement and Commitments**

With expansion, commitments have been made for an increased complement of staff, a new visitor centre and larger office space in Fort Simpson, as well as a new operations base in Nahanni Butte<sup>1</sup>. The legislation which expanded NNPR provided for some non-conforming uses which are not traditionally associated with national parks: guided sport hunting and roads accessing mine operations.

### **2.4.1 Guided Sport Hunting**

The legislation allows three sport hunting outfitters to continue operating within the expansion area for a 10-year period. Guided sport hunting is viewed as an activity not compatible with the objectives and philosophies of national parks. Although the sport hunting outfitters may continue to operate until 2019, Parks Canada will attempt, on a willing seller-willing buyer basis to purchase these business interests before the 10-year period expires.

### **2.4.2 Mining Operations**

Two mining operations exist in the watershed, including a tungsten mine on the upper Flat River, and a lead-zinc-silver advanced exploration property on Prairie Creek. The park now completely surrounds the proposed mine at Prairie Creek, and the expansion legislation allows a mine access road to cross the park. Both Tungsten and Prairie Creek mine sites draw water from and release effluent into major South Nahanni River tributaries, and both companies maintain on-site tailings ponds.

In addition, a mining road passes through the northwest portion of the park expansion area, to the north of Tungsten, providing access to the proposed mine at Howard's Pass. This mine is located on the boundary between the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and is outside of the watershed. The two mine access roads, Howard's Pass and Prairie Creek, are further discussed in section 8.0 – Access.

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<sup>1</sup> Further detailed in section 10.0 – Park Administration and Operations.

### 3.0 Planning Context

Nahanni's established ecological monitoring, cultural resource management, visitor experience and planning programs, as well as infrastructure and zoning will need to be adapted to include the expansion area. Much of the information contained in the 2009 *State of Park Report* (SOPR) relates to the original park. This section contains a summary of the state of the park, with additional information about the expansion area.

The period between this 2010 management plan and the next planning process will be used to gather baseline information, build relationships and develop visitor experience and public outreach education opportunities. This groundwork will serve to build comprehensive management direction for the expansion area to be included in the next plan.

Parks Canada, Dehcho First Nations and their partners have taken a number of steps to protect and share Nahʔą Dehé. Much has happened since the 2004 management plan, including such notable achievements as:

- Expansion of NNPR to over 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>;
- Creation of the traditional harvesting protocols with Dehcho First Nations;
- Enhanced cooperative park management through the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team;
- Career development opportunities for Dehcho First Nations members through the summer student program, as well as other recruitment, training and mentoring initiatives;
- Interpretation programs and materials featuring local Dene culture;
- Groundbreaking wildlife studies on caribou, grizzly bears and bats;
- Relocation and stabilization of the old forestry cabin in Deadmen Valley; and
- Installing secure containment facilities for fuel caches.

The immediate area around NNPR is sparsely populated, with approximately 2,000 to 2,500 people in the closest five communities in the Dehcho region. Nahanni Butte is the closest to the park, a small community situated about 30 km downstream of the southeast boundary. Park administration and operations are currently based out of Fort Simpson, the primary gateway to the park. Access to the park is almost exclusively by float plane. Since 1984, the visitation has consistently ranged between 800 and 1,000 visitors per year, primarily as a as a multi-day trip on the river or a fly-

in day trip to Nájłıcho (Virginia Falls). The park expansion means there are new gateway communities, access points, user groups and activities.

Nahanni National Park Reserve offers adventure and magnificent scenery for those Canadian and international visitors who want to experience wilderness. Historically, visitors were segmented into two main groups: overnight river travellers (63.4%) and day users flying into Nájłıcho (37.6%). The average age of visitors surveyed in 2006 was 47 years, while 20 years prior it was 38.

With the expansion, there are new visitor groups, including climbers at the Cirque of the Unclimbables and fly-in day users to Glacier Lake. Park visitors can be divided into three<sup>2</sup> main categories:

1. *Day Visitors* –Visitors who spend a portion of a day in the park as part of a scenic flight experience, that may include a stop at Glacier Lake and/or Nájłıcho. Nájłıcho visitors have the opportunity to hike and view the falls and participate in a guided walk.
2. *Overnight Visitors* – Visitors who spend one or two nights in a single location, such as Nájłıcho.
3. *Multi-night Visitors* – Visitors who spend multiple nights in the park in the pursuit of activities such a climbing, paddling or hiking. For the majority of these visitors seeking paddling and hiking adventures, the wilderness character of the park is of vital importance to their experience.

In addition, park visitors can be further divided into those who are guided by a licensed outfitter (59%) and those on private trips.

The number of people who experience NNPR in person is limited by the remote and rugged landscape, difficult travel conditions, the specialized skills required for many activities and the cost of travel to the Northwest Territories, as well as into the park. Public outreach education is therefore particularly important for NNPR.

Interpretation of natural features, cultural history and traditions of the region is provided both through non-personal media such as website, print materials and displays, as well as to visitors in Fort Simpson and in the park by staff. Visitor surveys have found high levels of satisfaction with NNPR interpretation, with 95% of respondents indicating they were satisfied, of which 79% were very satisfied, with their experience.

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<sup>2</sup> Once new facilities are developed in Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson, there will be visitors who participate in community-based interpretation programs, but do not visit the park.

A remote wilderness park, NNPR is a relatively undisturbed area. Fires and floods are the primary ecological drivers of the ecosystem, and these forces are allowed to proceed naturally in the majority of the park. There are no water retention or diversion structures within the park, and fire management consists of a let-burn policy for forest fires in the majority of NNPR. An increase in the frequency and intensity of forest fires is predicted to be one of the most significant ecological impacts related to climate change.

### **3.1 Regional Heritage Tourism**

Nahanni National Park Reserve is internationally renowned as a premier wilderness river park. Spectacular Nájłicho (Virginia Falls) is one of the most recognizable icons of Canada's north. NNPR receives more visitation than any other park in the Northwest Territories, and is central to the tourism industry in the region. In 2006–7, visitors to NNPR represented 37% of all summer pleasure travellers to NWT visiting for the purposes of outdoor adventure.

The park is promoted in regional tourism and commercial publications and featured in Parks Canada promotional material, such as the Agency's 2009 national television advertisement. NNPR also greatly benefits from significant media interest, receiving coverage in newspapers, magazines and films around the world. Numerous businesses, other government departments and non-governmental organizations promote Nahanni in a variety of ways. The impact and exposure for the park by these forms of promotion is significant.

### **3.2 Traditional Use and Subsistence Harvesting Activities**

Since time immemorial, Nahʔą Dehé has featured prominently in the lives of the Dene of the Dehcho and Sahtu regions. In the fall, family groups would depart the larger settlements along the Dehcho (Mackenzie River) with their teams of pack dogs and head west into the mountains by foot. Over the course of the fall and winter, families would live off the land and time would be spent trapping and hunting. Towards spring, people would move into headwater river valleys and begin to construct moose skin boats. After spring break-up, the mooseskin boats would be loaded up with people, dogs and a winter's worth of fur and animal hides.

The dangerous trip down the turbulent South Nahanni River would bring them back to communities along the Dehcho. Furs would be traded for supplies, the mooseskin boats would be taken apart, and the hides used for other purposes. After a period of

visiting and reconnecting with other Dene, the annual cycle would begin again. Over the past half-century, these customary annual journeys have stopped, primarily due to the requirement for children to attend school and the establishment of permanent homes in the settlements and towns of the Dehcho.

Traditional hunting, trapping and fishing activities by First Nations and Métis continue in the park reserve. Motorized access in the park is permitted for Aboriginal people pursuing traditional subsistence harvesting activities. Most subsistence harvest is carried out by Dehcho First Nations members who live in Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson. Today, traditional use occurs primarily along the South Nahanni River corridor, downstream from Nájljcho (Virginia Falls).

### **3.3 Planning History and Review Process**

The first NNPR management plan, completed in 1987, provided the initial framework for the protection of the park's natural and cultural resources and basic services for park visitors. The plan was intended to serve for a fifteen year period. A plan review was initiated in 1992 in keeping with Parks Canada's five year review requirement.

The 1992 review determined that amendments were needed to update the plan in response to national policy changes and local needs. Key amendments included the recognition of ecological integrity as a management priority, the incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge in decision making, improvements to the presentation of the park's natural and cultural resources and recognition of pending results from the Dehcho Process in regards to lands, resources and self-government. The product of the review was an official amendment to the plan, approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada in 1994.

The 1987 plan and 1994 amendment were then replaced by the 2004 plan, which set the direction for cooperative management with Dehcho First Nations. The 2004 plan has a strong focus on ecological integrity, in addition to improvements to the visitor service offer and goals for boundary expansion.

The review of the 2004 management plan started in 2008, with an internal assessment of its implementation. This review process identified that the 2004 management plan was, with a few exceptions, being implemented and continued to be largely relevant and effective for guiding park management, with new direction required for the expansion area.

### **3.4 Key Issues and Challenges**

The 2009 *State of the Park Report* identifies challenges to making the park meaningful to Canadians, facilitating visitor experiences and protecting and presenting cultural and natural resources and items of importance to Dehcho First Nations. The challenges and issues are:

#### **Maintaining Water Quality**

Present and future upstream industrial activity, long-range transported pollutants and climate change all have the potential to impact water quality. There is a need to work with local communities and enhance water quality monitoring systems. Clean water is of pivotal importance to people in the Dehcho, as well as people who choose to paddle the rivers in the park.

#### **Declining Northern Mountain Caribou Populations**

Decreasing populations of Northern Mountain Caribou is the result of several factors. Monitoring of caribou populations must be continued inside and outside the park boundaries. The park will work to develop regional management in collaboration with others, including the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Yukon Government and Aboriginal partners.

#### **Incorporating Traditional Dene Names**

Traditional Dene names connect culture and the land, linking local legends with places and history. There is a need to enhance on-going efforts to incorporate Dene names throughout NNPR, foster an understanding of name changes and initiate the process to formally change names.

#### **Maintaining and Increasing Visitation**

Park expansion has brought possibilities, new day use and backcountry focal areas, and activities including hiking and big wall rock climbing. There is a need to diversify the visitor experience offer to meet goals to maintain or increase visitation, while retaining the highly valued wilderness experience and not impairing ecological integrity.

## Infrastructure Supporting the Visitor Experience

There is a need for improved human waste management facilities in the park, as well as an analysis of visitor infrastructure and an assessment of infrastructure requirements for the expanded area.

## Bringing Nahanni to Canadians

Outreach education is very important to ensure that Canadians, especially local communities, youth, urban and new Canadians, feel a strong sense of connection with Nahʔą Dehé. There is a need to further develop local community outreach and education opportunities as well as build on distance outreach education initiatives.

## Establishing Monitoring Programs

Ecological monitoring programs in NNPR have focused on forests and freshwater indicators; with the expansion, monitoring programs for alpine, wetlands and glaciers need to be enhanced or developed. There is a need for improvements in cultural resource monitoring, as well as new monitoring and reporting protocols for visitor experience, outreach education and stakeholder relations.

## 4.0 Vision

This vision builds on the one presented in the 2004 management plan which provided direction for management, partnerships, traditional use and ecological integrity. The 2004 vision was deeply rooted in the ecology of the land; the revised vision is broader in scope, including the expansion area and a stronger visitor experience component. It is intended to paint a picture of the future state of the park.

*Travelling through the land of the Nahʔą Dene, who have lived on this land since time immemorial, local legends excite the imagination. Dene culture, so intimately linked to the ecology of Nahʔą Dehé, is respected in this place of mystery, spirituality and healing. The life sustaining waters of Nahʔą Dehé flow freely, protected through the wisdom and guidance of the Dehcho elders, and traditional subsistence harvesting continues as an integral and sustainable part of the ecosystem, occurring in accordance with Dene laws and principles. Dene are inseparable from the land.*

*NNPR protects a wilderness watershed in the Mackenzie Mountains, where fires and floods shape the land, and naturally-occurring plant and animal species thrive. The park is a model of cooperative management, where cultural resources are treated with care and excellence in the conduct of science is promoted. Communities, volunteers*

*and stakeholders are involved in the stewardship of Nahʔą Dehé, ensuring respect for the land continues into future generations.*

*Flying into the park, range after range of rocky peaks, vast plateaux and canyons hundreds of metres deep unfold below the wings. Watchful eyes may catch a glimpse of a grizzly passing in the bush or Dall's sheep leaping nimbly on rocky hillsides. A moment of solitude feeling the thundering power of Náįłıcho brings a humbling realization of size. World-class opportunities abound to experience wilderness and the natural and cultural heritage of Nahʔą Dehé.*

*Nahʔą Dehé, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, touches and inspires people who may never dip their paddles in the waters of this Canadian Heritage River, climb the rough granite rock walls or fly into this remote watershed. Nahʔą Dehé resonates in the hearts and minds of all Canadians.*

## 5.0 Key Strategies

Key strategies describe an integrated, focussed approach of how NNPR will be managed in the coming years. The strategies set the path to achieve the park vision while addressing the park's challenges, while the guiding principles set the foundation for all management actions. Key strategies are meant to highlight the interconnectedness of Parks Canada's core mandate elements: resource protection, visitor experience and public outreach education.

To build-on opportunities and address issues identified in the *State of the Park Report*. The following key strategies and their corresponding objectives, targets and actions, set park management priorities for the next five years. The key strategies are:

1. Taking Care of Nahʔą Dehé
2. Nahʔą Dehé, A Gift to be Shared
3. Waters for Life

To assist in implementing the management plan, all key strategies contain objectives, measurable targets and actions. Many of these highlight on-going activities, while others provide new actions to undertake in the next five years.

## 5.1 Taking Care of Nahʔą Dehé

The highest mountains and largest glaciers in the Northwest Territories, some of the deepest canyons in Canada, and prime habitat for grizzly bears, northern mountain caribou and Dall's sheep are all found in Nahʔą Dehé. The park includes a Canadian Heritage River and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Wildlife species such as the migratory caribou do not stay within the park boundary; likewise, fire does not respect lines drawn on a map, thus NNPR must work with others to help maintain the highest possible standards of quality for the waters, lands, air and wildlife of Nahʔą Dehé.

Understanding this area is a big task which is best undertaken through monitoring and research conducted cooperatively. Parks Canada works in partnership with Dehcho First Nations, traditional users, academic institutions, other government agencies, and independent researchers to fulfill this task. The scientific work conducted in Nahʔą Dehé presents exciting opportunities to enhance management, stewardship, education and visitor programs.

**Objective 1: *A cooperative management approach is used to guide decision-making, and protect the ecological integrity of the entire Nahʔą Dehé watershed.***

**Targets:**

- Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team guides all major (non-emergency) resource management decisions<sup>3</sup>.
- The park actively participates in regional land and resource management initiatives, which may have an impact on the management or ecological integrity of Nahʔą Dehé.

**Actions:**

1. Meetings of Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team are held regularly (at least 8 times per year).
2. Work with Dehcho resource management authorities.
3. Ensure Parks Canada's mandate of protecting ecological integrity is met through active participation in the environmental assessment and review process for development and operational activities associated with Prairie Creek, Tungsten and any other mining or industrial proposals in the watershed.
4. Investigate the opportunity to develop a bi or tri-annual meeting to discuss issues of importance to regional resource management authorities and stakeholders in regards to the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem.

<sup>3</sup> As per the direction outlined in the IPMA.

**Objective 2: *Natural ecological processes remain the primary forces shaping the ecosystem.***

**Target:**

- Natural fires will be permitted to burn in the majority of the park area.

**Actions:**

1. Prepare a fire management plan by 2014 which:
  - Recognizes the role of fire as a natural ecosystem process.
  - Maintain a fire suppression zone east of Yohin Ridge.
  - Identify values at risk within the park which would be protected.
  - Maintains an observation zone for all remaining areas of the park.
  - Includes a communication strategy to convey information about active fires and the approach to fire management.
2. Determine the natural fire cycle and develop methods for a fire effects monitoring program.
3. Maintain network of climate stations to establish weather norms, aiding the understanding of climate change and local impacts in relation to fire and other ecosystem processes.

**Objective 3: *NNPR is a centre for northern mountain research, where science<sup>4</sup> and traditional knowledge contribute to the long-term protection of the park and enhance public understanding of its ecosystems.***

**Target:**

- All research led by Parks Canada includes at least one other organization as an active partner, or in a consultation or review role.
- 100% of park visitors who participate in interpretive programming have a chance to learn about park research.

**Actions:**

1. Seek to establish a formal partnering relationship with one or more post-secondary institutions to establish the park as a location for research and long-term monitoring.
2. Promote inter-agency cooperation between adjacent federal, territorial and Aboriginal organizations.
3. Research proposals will be considered by the Nahʔa Dehé Consensus Team to

<sup>4</sup> Science includes both natural and social science.

identify opportunities for incorporating traditional knowledge.
4. Develop a strategic volunteer program, including opportunities to participate in NNPR's research and visitor experience program.
5. Use the park's interpretation, public outreach education and communication programs to promote and share research, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal interpretation.</li> <li>• An annual newsletter, which includes information on park research.</li> <li>• A bi-annual research and monitoring report.</li> <li>• Peer-reviewed journal articles.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Objective 4:</b> <i>The high level of biodiversity in Nahʔa Dehé is retained, including naturally occurring plant and animal species. Unique and sensitive landscape features are protected.</i></p> <p><b>Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Species composition and distribution in 2014 remains representative of the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region.</li> <li>• Unique and sensitive landscape features in the park are protected through park zoning proposed by 2015.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Actions:</b></p>
1. Ensure that Mountain caribou continue to be an integral part of Nahʔa Dehé. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current cooperative research and monitoring projects on South Nahanni and Coal River caribou herds are continued.</li> <li>• Caribou management recommendations are developed in cooperation with First Nations, Métis and research partners, and implemented by 2014.</li> </ul>
2. Determine species composition and distribution relative to Mackenzie Mountains historical condition as part of the 2014 State of the Park Report.
3. Implement the park's Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program by 2014, including appropriate biodiversity measures for each indicator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine methods and implement vegetation monitoring in Alpine Tundra indicator.</li> </ul>
4. Investigate and assess remote sensing methods for monitoring biodiversity, phenology and primary productivity.
5. Improve understanding and documentation of rare and endemic species and habitats. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Known populations of Nahanni Aster are re-assessed and new potential sites investigated.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution and ecology of Bull Trout are further investigated.</li> </ul>
6. Assess and identify any unique and sensitive features in the park for consideration as Zone 1 – Special Preservation, or other appropriate management strategies.

<p><b>Objective 5: <i>The cultural heritage and values of NNPR are protected and management respects traditional users and interests</i></b></p> <p><b>Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of strategic documents required for cultural resource management are completed by 2015.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Park staff and the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team will collaborate with other partners on the documentation, protection and presentation of cultural resources in NNPR.</li> <li>2. The Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team will document and recommend recognition of traditional place names to the Geographical Names Board of Canada. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and understand the appropriate process by 2012.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Develop a <i>Cultural Resource Values Statement</i> for the park by 2013.</li> <li>4. Prepare a <i>Cultural Resource Management Strategy</i> for the park by 2015.</li> <li>5. Expand the cultural resource inventory for the park to include the expansion area.</li> </ol>
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## 5.2 Nahʔą Dehé, a Gift to be Shared

For many, dreams of dipping a paddle in the waters of the South Nahanni River, listening to the roar of Náįłıcho (Virginia Falls) or feeling the rough granite of Lotus Flower Tower in the Cirque of the Unclimbables may remain just a dream. Few people get the chance to visit the park due to its remoteness and ruggedness, the harshness of travel conditions and costs to get to the park, in addition to the skill level required for most activities. Ensuring that Nahʔą Dehé is in the hearts and minds of Canadians and people around the world is key for continued support.

Cultural connections are a highlight of the trip for many visitors. People come for the wilderness or the challenge of adventure, but leave with fond memories of their interactions with Dehcho people and culture. With park expansion, there are many new opportunities, which will be developed in conjunction with partners, allowing new experiences in Nahanni (further discussed in the section 6.3 – Expansion Area). All current and future visitor experience opportunities will be developed so as to protect the wilderness qualities and health of the park, so integral to the desired visitor

experience. To ensure an enjoyable experience, visitors will continue to receive comprehensive and reliable information in advance of their trip, so they can dream of adventures to come and plan a safe, low-impact trip.

**Objective 1: *Authentic opportunities provided by Parks Canada and its partners create meaningful connections with Nahʔą Dehé.***

**Target:**

- Guidance provided by NDCT will ensure that 100% of visitor programs incorporate Dene cultural heritage.
- 100% of business licence holders indicate that they have meaningful opportunities to work with NNPR to develop mutually beneficial visitor services.

**Actions:**

1. Develop guidelines and reference materials to incorporate traditional Dene place names in all public materials and programs.
2. Review and determine the best future approach for the Community Cultural Demonstrators program by 2014.
  - Improve methods to identify and engage Dehcho community members by 2012.
3. Participate in the development of a regional Aboriginal Tourism Strategy.
4. Develop a Partnering Strategy with commercial operators, community organizations, non-profit organizations and other government agencies to achieve efficient, effective and mutually beneficial visitor services.

**Objective 2: *New, inspiring opportunities for visitors throughout the park result in enhanced experiences for visitors and increased visitation.***

**Targets:**

- Offer 5 new visitor opportunities by 2015.
- Increase visitation by 6% to 860 visitors by 2012.

**Actions:**

1. Develop a Visitor Experience Plan:
  - Expand and augment the visitor offer<sup>5</sup>;
  - Develop an Interpretation Strategy.
2. Visitor demographic information, motivations, interests and needs are understood

<sup>5</sup> Development of new visitor products is further detailed in the Expansion Area Management Approach.

<p>and used to enhance the visitor offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a visitor market analysis, including application of the Explorer Quotient and market segmentation.</li> </ul>
<p>3. A thorough assessment of potential impacts of new visitor opportunities is conducted during product development, considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public safety, visitor experience, ecological integrity and cultural resources.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Develop a Marketing and Promotions Strategy.</p>
<p>5. Develop a Social Science Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine tools for measuring the achievement of visitor experience performance expectations.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Objective 3: <i>Extend the offer of outreach education, touching the hearts and minds of more Canadians.</i></b></p> <p><b>Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2014, students have had the opportunity to be inspired by Nahanni through presentations or programs with all schools in Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Wrigley, Trout Lake and Fort Liard.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p>1. Develop a strategy for public outreach education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on community-based interpretation in Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson, delivered by park staff based in these locations.</li> <li>• Develop and implement products and initiatives for Canadians and urban audiences.</li> </ul> <p>2. Enhance support for culture camps and programs for local youth.</p>
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<p><b>Objective 4: <i>Enhance visitor services in the gateway communities and locations serving NNPR.</i></b></p> <p><b>Target:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park promotional material is located at 100% of the gateway locations as defined by the Marketing and Promotions Strategy by 2014.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p>1. In cooperation with stakeholders, develop an appropriate park presence at key gateway locations in Northwest Territories, Yukon and northern BC.</p>
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### 5.3 Waters for Life

The threat of hydroelectric development on the South Nahanni River was the catalyst for protection of Nahanni National Park Reserve in the 1970s. The desire to ensure clean water for current and future generations served as the impetus for park expansion for Dehcho First Nations. The result was the protection of the majority of the watershed as part of the expanded national park reserve in 2009.

Communities in the Dehcho rely on the life sustaining waters of Nahʔą Dehé. Water is key to culture. It is important for the people, wildlife and plants that live in and are connected to Nahʔą Dehé and for the people who visit the area.

Water quality will continue to be important in the future for park management, given the primary recreational experience is travelling the South Nahanni River and that there is regional industrial development in close proximity to the park.

**Objective 1:** *The waters of Nahʔą Dehé are high quality and unimpaired by activities inside and outside park boundaries.*

**Targets:**

- Water quality remains within recommended federal and local site-specific guidelines.
- The condition of all water-related indicators reported in 2009 *State of the Park Report* have been maintained or improved by 2014.

**Actions:**

1. Continue baseline water quality monitoring, in cooperation with Environment Canada, other agencies and local communities as appropriate.
2. Update site-specific water quality guidelines with current monitoring data.
3. Actively monitor water quality of potentially impacted watercourses (e.g. Flat River and Prairie Creek).
4. Complete the South Nahanni Watershed Study and implement resulting recommendations for stream monitoring.
5. Develop sub-watershed mapping for use in park management, including mitigation of industrial impacts, monitoring, visitor opportunity planning and education.
6. In cooperation with federal and territorial agencies, Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and industry, develop a proactive strategy to enable effective multi-agency emergency response to the potential release of industrial effluents which may pollute the park.

7. Develop a protocol for emergency response to point-source pollution (e.g. fuel spill) inside the park.
8. The park's Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program is fully implemented by 2014; ensuring monitoring measures are in place for Freshwater, Wetland and Glacier indicators.
9. Indicators and measures with low rankings in the 2009 SOPR are addressed; e.g. glacier monitoring is further developed, in cooperation with Natural Resources Canada Glaciology group.

<b>Objective 2: <i>Local communities are involved in water quality issues and management.</i></b>
<b>Target:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team, local community members guide all major (non-emergency) decisions in regards to water quality<sup>6</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>
1. Opportunities for training in water quality monitoring are provided, to enable local communities to participate in monitoring programs.
2. Results of water monitoring are communicated on an annual basis with local communities.
3. Prompt notification of any significant changes to water quality within the park is made to Dehcho First Nations leadership.

<b>Objective 3: <i>The South Nahanni River offers an exceptional wilderness experience, and continues to be the primary multi-day recreational activity for park visitors.</i></b>
<b>Target:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% of visitors surveyed feel they had a true wilderness experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>
1. Continue the campsite monitoring program, and take action when necessary to ensure minimal impact to the environment and experience of visitors.
2. Information about low-impact backcountry practices and requirements is provided to visitors.
3. Review and improve the management of human waste along the river corridor, and in other areas of the park in order to reduce the risk of water contamination, as well as reducing the environmental footprint and cost of handling waste removal.

<sup>6</sup> As per direction outlined in the IPMA.

4. Re-assess the visitor carrying capacity on the South Nahanni River, if/when numbers reach the previous peak visitation of 1,200 users to ensure the wilderness experience and ecological integrity are not impacted.

## 6.0 Area Management Approach

Where groupings of resources, visitor opportunities and operational considerations lend themselves to a common management approach, *area management approaches* (AMAs) are identified. AMAs provide direction on issues that are directly associated with only portions of the park.

This management plan has three AMAs, two along the linear river corridor to address unique concerns and a large area concept for the expansion area. In the future, AMAs will possibly be applied to the Cirque of the Unclimbables, South Nahanni River, and potentially for day use areas (ex. Glacier Lake). An AMA may also be appropriate for areas of the park near mining operations; future management decisions will be based on understanding gained over the next five years. **\*\*insert map of AMAs\*\***

### 6.1 Gahnjthah: Rabbitkettle Area

*A mirror image of the hills and mountains reflects on the surface of Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake). On a hot summer day, jumping into the lake provides welcome relief from the heat for campers preparing to start their journey down the South Nahanni River.* **\*\*insert picture of RKL reflection\*\***

The Gahnjthah Area offers a tremendous opportunity, as visitors can participate in a guided hike from the lake to the tufa mounds at Gahnjthah (Rabbitkettle Hotsprings), a place of significant spiritual importance to Dene people. Gahnjthah Mie, a lake large enough to accommodate floatplane landings a short portage away from the South Nahanni River, provides a logical starting point for numerous river travellers who are embarking on their South Nahanni River adventure. During the summer, staff provide important visitor orientation, interpretation and public safety functions. Facilities include a staff cabin, dock, portage trail, camping area and food caches.

Gahnjthah is one of seven designated Zone 1 (Special Preservation) areas in the park, and the only Zone 1 area where public access is permitted; access is facilitated through a guided hike. The 3.5 km hike passes through grassy slopes, aspen stands, and spruce and pine forests, the accompanying interpretation explores geology, bears and

Dene culture. Grizzly bears and black bears frequent the area as they forage for buffaloberries. When bears are present in the area, interpretive hikes may be suspended.

Once at the tufa mound, visitors can walk barefoot up the north mound, experiencing the unique texture of the calcium carbonate and water flowing gently underfoot. The two tufa mounds at Gahnjthah are the largest such known structures in Canada. The south mound has great cultural and spiritual significance to the Dene and no visitor access is permitted.

**Building Tufa**  
 Tufa is a soft, porous rock that is formed when calcium carbonate precipitates out of warm spring water rising from deep within the earth. The water's flow causes the formation of ridges, intricate terraces, and large bathtub-shaped pools called gours.

The opportunity to experience the north mound will continue, so long as monitoring indicates the deposition of tufa exceeds any human induced change.

**\*\*picture of JA and BH on north tufa\*\***

The Gahnjthah Area is an overnight access and registration node for park visitors, with the unique opportunity visit an area of cultural and natural significance. Focussing on the Gahnjthah Area over the next five years will allow the park to examine, consider and improve the visitor offer, public safety and monitoring program. This will ensure the continuation of a low-impact, quality overnight visitor experience, while assessing the potential for different opportunities at Gahnjthah Mie. The goal, by 2015, is for an area plan to be developed to provide detailed guidance for this key visitor hub. Principle actions for the next five years are included in the following table.

<b>Key actions for the Gahnjthah Area</b>	
1.	Conduct an engineering assessment of the Rabbitkettle River ferry crossing in 2010.
2.	Develop additional programs based on visitor interests, consider interpretative, activity and volunteer opportunities.
3.	Investigate methods to share the Gahnjthah experience with people unable to visit the park or take part in the interpretive offer.
4.	Refine the ecological integrity monitoring program for the area.
5.	Develop a better understanding of visitor capacity, in regards to cultural values, ecological impacts, public safety and visitor expectations for Gahnjthah Mie and the tufa hike.
6.	Review and enhance the current tufa monitoring program, including consultation

	with tufa expert(s) to develop a more scientifically defensible monitoring program.
7.	Develop an area plan for by 2015.

## 6.2 Náìlìcho: Virginia Falls Area

*Flying into Náìlìcho, the plane banks for a view of the falls, before landing on the deceptively calm river. The calmness hides the turbulent whitewater of Sluice Box rapid and the falls below. Walking on the trail towards the falls, the noise gradually builds, until the thunder of the falls resonates up from the ground through your bones.*

**\*\*picture of Náìlìcho\*\***

As the intersection of river users and day visitors, Náìlìcho (Virginia Falls) is a very popular location. It is also one of two designated aircraft landing sites in the original park. As a result, coordinating and meeting expectations of river users, day use visitors and fly-in campers can be quite complex. Náìlìcho is also a day-hike node, with access to Sunblood Mountain which towers over the South Nahanni, Marengo Falls on a tributary of the river, and the viewpoints and base of the falls.

It is here at Náìlìcho that the majority of interpretation programming for the park takes place. The programs provide visitors with a connection to Nah?á Dehé allowing visitors to understand the interconnectedness of traditional users and the ecosystem. Local interpretation staff research their family history and share appropriate stories with visitors, developing a personal connection between the past and present. Náìlìcho is the origin of the community cultural demonstrators program, allowing Elders and other Dehcho community members to share the importance and history of traditional use with staff and visitors. **\*\*picture of CCD participant\*\***

To protect the fragile landscape and prevent trail braiding, several kilometres of boardwalk have been constructed for the campground and associated trails. Considerable on-going maintenance is required due to damage from frost heave and general wear and tear. There are also two staff cabins in the area, Virginia Falls and Sunblood. The Virginia Falls cabin is close to the campground and visitor infrastructure; staff are stationed there throughout the summer season. Sunblood, the older of the two cabins, is un-staffed and located approximately 10 kilometres upstream.

Nájljicho requires special attention as it is at the heart of the visitor experience for the park, everyone paddling the South Nahanni River either starts or passes through, and people camping overnight have the choice of several day-hikes. The area needs to meet expectations of a wide variety of visitors. **\*\*picture of students on Sunblood\*\***

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**Key actions for the Nájljicho Area**

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1	Assess and improve infrastructure, specifically: outhouse facilities <sup>7</sup> , signage, food cache(s), helipad and the Virginia Falls staff cabin. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate options for future use or decommissioning of Sunblood staff cabin.</li> </ul>
2	Develop a preventative maintenance plan which includes a regular assessment and maintenance schedule for all site infrastructure.
3	Develop additional programs for the area based on visitor interests, consider interpretative, activity, cultural and volunteer opportunities.
4	Assess and improve visitor orientation and pre-trip planning information.
5	Assess opportunities for ecological integrity monitoring at Nájljicho.
6	Review and improve natural hazard management.
7	Develop an area plan for Nájljicho by 2015.

**6.3 Expansion Area**

*The new boundaries of Nahanni National Park Reserve protect a diverse array of unique landforms and important wildlife habitat. The tallest mountain in the Northwest Territories, which has no official name, is situated within the new boundaries, as are the largest glaciers. Important habitat for wide-ranging species such as mountain caribou and grizzly bears is now protected. The globally unique North Nahanni Karst, containing caves, limestone pavements, canyons, poljes, sinkholes, and extensive underground drainage systems are included within the new park boundary which now encompasses more than 30,000 square kilometers of the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region. **\*\*picture of the Cirque or Glacier Lake\*\****

Canadians and international visitors will be able to experience Nahanni in new and exciting ways. Places with intriguing names, such as Cirque of the Unclimbables, Death Lake, Broken Skull River, Vampire Peaks and Tlogotsho Plateau, are now protected for all time. Nahʔa Dehé is already world-renowned for canoeing, and now

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<sup>7</sup> As part of the comprehensive assessment of human waste management identified in the key strategy *Nahʔa Dehé, a Gift to be Shared*.

has one of the top fifty big wall climbing locations in North America. In addition, opportunities exist for expanded recreational opportunities, such as backpacking, paddling, camping, flight-seeing and day hikes.

The expansion brings with it the need for new partnerships and environmental remediation. In addition new research and guidance needs to be developed for cultural resources, ecological integrity, public safety, environmental hazards, and appropriate zoning. The Expansion Area AMA is envisioned to have a life span of five years. This time period will enable NNPR to develop a better understanding to of the expansion area, so detailed management direction and zoning can be included in the next management plan. Until more is known, decisions will be based on the precautionary principle and adaptive management. Key actions include:

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### **Key Actions for Research and Planning**

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1.	Conduct baseline inventory work including: occurrence of rare or endemic species, sensitive landscape features, cultural and archaeological resources, and current use.
2.	Update current park documents to include the expansion area (ex. Public Safety Plan).
3.	Develop an interim approach <sup>8</sup> for awarding tourism business licences not covered by the agreement between Parks Canada and the Nahanni River Outfitters Association by 2011.
4.	Assess the need for infrastructure to support public safety, visitor experience and other park management needs by 2014. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop appropriate staff facilities and visitor infrastructure at Glacier Lake and Fairy Meadows.</li> </ul>
5.	Work with appropriate governments and organizations to expand recognition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNESCO World Heritage Site to include the Nahʔą Dehé watershed.</li> <li>• Canadian Heritage River to include the length of the South Nahanni River.</li> </ul>

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### **Key Actions for Development of New Visitor Products**

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6.	Work with stakeholders and specialists to investigate potential new visitor activities and products in the expansion area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assess and determine the need for new routes, trails and portages.</li> <li>○ Determine if the trail from the South Nahanni River to Glacier Lake should become a designated trail.</li> </ul>
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<sup>8</sup> A final agreement reached through the Dehcho process takes precedence over the direction outlined in this management plan.

7.	Complete a risk assessment of access to Fairy Meadows from Glacier Lake to determine the best management approach. Take action based on recommendations.
8.	Consult with members of specialized activity communities (e.g., rock climbing, mountaineering, caving) to develop a visitor service offer which meets the needs of current and future visitors participating in a specialised activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a code of practice for climbing in the Cirque of the Unclimbables and other locations in the park.</li> </ul>
9.	Develop a pre-trip planning information package for each new activity or key location to identify park services, specific safety issues and travel requirements prior to visitor products being promoted.
10.	Develop processes for visitor registration, de-registration and payment of required fees.
11.	Develop a means to manage different activities to ensure public safety and the maintenance of a wilderness experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Methods to limit interactions between guided sport hunters and other visitors will be established in conjunction with outfitters.</li> </ul>

#### **Key Actions for Environmental Remediation and Protection**

12.	Inventory and prioritize sites requiring remediation by 2012. Clean-up prioritized sites by 2014.
13.	Identify, assess and designate fuel caches through consultation with air charter operators and sport hunting outfitters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop best practices for locations with only a small number of fuel containers.</li> <li>○ Install secondary containment at all designated fuel caches used by Parks Canada, business licence holders and air charter companies by 2011.</li> </ul>

## **7.0 Consultation, Partnering and Building New Relationships**

Nahanni National Park Reserve depends on the cooperation and support of many partners, stakeholders, the non-profit sector and others to achieve the park vision. NNPR will continue to maintain rewarding relationships with these groups. In addition, the park will move forward to build relationships with new organizations and stakeholders related to the management and promotion of the park.

The 2009 expansion means that portions of the park may now overlap areas of importance to other Aboriginal groups, including Acho Dene Koe, Fort Liard Métis, Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council. In this context, Parks Canada will

continue cooperative management with Dehcho First Nations through the Nahʔa Dehé Consensus Team and will undertake discussions with each of the other First Nations and Métis groups to determine possible interests and potential implications for park management. NNPR borders the Sahtu Settlement Area, which includes the headwaters of the South Nahanni River, a proposed national park. Therefore, discussions with Sahtu organizations will continue<sup>9</sup>. Parks Canada's goal is to establish mutually agreed upon strategies for working together.

The development of greater understanding for the expansion area over the next five years means that it is key for Parks Canada to continue to work with a broad range of regional interests, including federal, territorial and local governing bodies responsible for planning and managing adjacent lands.

### **7.1 Management Planning Consultations**

Management plans are formally reviewed every five years to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Recognizing the importance of NNPR to local communities, stakeholders and business operators, their input will be sought early in the management planning process, allowing them to contribute to the development of alternatives and solutions. Public input (Canadians, visitors) will be sought to gather information in regards to opinions about issues, alternatives and solutions. The Nahʔa Dehé Consensus Team will endeavour to keep people informed, listen to their knowledge and let them know how input will be used in the planning program.

Nahanni National Park Reserve is committed to reporting annually on implementation of the management plan. These annual updates will be created by the Nahʔa Dehé Consensus Team and shared with partners, stakeholders and the interested public.

## **8.0 Park Access and Travel**

Access to the park is primarily by air. Once in the park, visitors are required to use non-motorized means of travel. The motorized travel restrictions do not apply to local First Nations and Métis conducting spiritual or traditional subsistence harvesting activities.

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<sup>9</sup> This will assist in regards to complementary park operations, such as visitor services, resource conservation and public safety.

## 8.1 Aircraft Access

Up until 2010, there were two designated landing sites for visitors in the park: Nájłıcho (Virginia Falls) and Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake). As a result of expansion, an additional five locations have been put-forward as designated aircraft access sites (see Table X, and Map X) **\*\*insert designated landing sites map\*\***. These

Location	Float plane	Wheeled Plane	Helicopter	Type of Use	
				Day-use	Overnight Access
Nájłıcho (Virginia Falls)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake)	✓		✓		✓
Bunny Bar	✓	✓	✓		✓
Island Lakes (Haywire Lake)	✓		✓		✓
Island Lakes (Honeymoon Lake)	✓		✓		✓
Glacier Lake	✓		✓	✓	✓
Seaplane Lake	✓		✓		✓

new locations reflect landing areas which saw regular use, prior to the expansion of the park. They are either popular feature destinations, such as Glacier Lake (an access point for the Cirque of the Unclimbables), or areas which provide people with access to the South Nahanni River, either directly, or via tributaries. Regional air charter operators are encouraged to reduce disruption to the wilderness experience of visitors, by avoiding low level flights along the river corridor.

Fairy Meadows was initially considered for inclusion as a designated helicopter access point, as it provides direct access to the Cirque of the Unclimbables and reflects existing use prior to expansion. However, given the unique nature of the alpine area, and concerns raised during consultations, this area will be assessed prior to any designations being made.

Aircraft access into the park, apart from the designated access points, may be permitted by the Park Superintendent on a case-by-case basis. When making the decision for permitting access, consideration will be given to other reasonable means of access, the potential for significant adverse effects to ecological integrity, cultural values, wilderness character, public safety and enjoyment of that area by other persons. Permission for aircraft access to areas not designated, such as Hole-in-the-Wall Lake (original park) and the Ram Plateau (expansion area), will be facilitated through an application submitted to the Superintendent.

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### Aircraft Access Actions

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1. Develop a process and criteria for evaluating requests for access to non-
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	designated landing sites in 2010.
2.	Monitor the effects of flights on the visitor experience as part of the overall social science strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess visitor values at Fairy Meadows.</li> </ul>
3.	Monitor the effects of flights and landings on wildlife and aquatic habitats. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess wildlife values at Fairy Meadows.</li> </ul>

## 8.2 Road Access and Travel

With expansion, there are now two private mine access routes which pass over park lands. Signage will need to be placed on both routes to inform people about national park boundaries. The Prairie Creek Mine winter access road is not constructed; a permit exists for an industrial winter road. Motorized visitor use and access will not be permitted on this route.

The second road, Howard’s Pass Road (also known as Selwyn Road), transects the northwest portion of the park. This road provides access to a mine site in the Yukon; it is not intended to be used for ore trucks. Visitor activities in the vicinity of the Howard’s Pass road will be considered as part of the investigation of new visitor opportunities.

## 8.3 River Access and Travel

Non-motorized watercraft are the only acceptable means of river travel for visitors. From time to time, park operations require the use of motorized watercraft. Whenever possible, these operations will be scheduled outside of the primary park visitation period. Aboriginal traditional harvesting activities are not bound by the provision on non-motorized travel in the park.

## 9.0 Zoning and Wilderness Area Declaration

Land and water areas of national parks are classified through the management planning process according to their natural and cultural resource protection requirements and the capability and suitability of these areas to provide opportunities for visitors to experience the park. Ecosystem structure, function and sensitivity, cultural values and opportunities for visitor experience are all considered when applying the zoning system.

Local Aboriginal people may require access to all areas of the park for spiritual reasons or for traditional subsistence harvesting activities, and as such they are not bound by the restrictions on use prescribed by the zoning plan for the park.

There are a total of five zones which can be applied:

1. **Special Preservation (Zone 1).** These areas contain unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features or are among the best examples of the features that represent a natural region. Preservation is the key consideration. Motorized access is not permitted and visitor access is strictly controlled.
2. **Wilderness (Zone 2).** The majority of national parks are classified as wilderness where there are extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and which will be conserved in a wilderness state. The perpetuation of park ecosystems with minimal interference is the key consideration. First-hand opportunities are available for visitors to experience the park's ecosystems if only rudimentary services are required. Motorized access is not permitted for visitors, except by air to access the remote backcountry. Air access requires permission of the superintendent.
3. **Natural Environment (Zone 3).** Visitors may experience a park's natural and cultural heritage values through outdoor recreation activities requiring minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature in Zone 3. While motorized access may be allowed, it will be controlled.
4. **Outdoor Recreation (Zone 4).** A broad range of opportunities for understanding appreciation and enjoyment of the park's heritage values occur in Zone 4. Essential services and facilities have minimal impact on the ecological integrity of the park. Direct access by motorized vehicle is permitted only to the degree that the ecological integrity is impacted to the smallest extent possible.
5. **Park Services (Zone 5).** Zone 5 applies to communities in existing national parks which contain a concentration of visitor services and support facilities. Major park operation and administrative functions may also be accommodated in this zone to maintain ecological integrity. This zone is not applicable to Nahanni.

To complement the zoning system, some sites may be classified as environmentally or culturally sensitive areas (ESA or CSA) if they are worthy of special management

through specific guidelines for each area. These areas are often small, and their classification as an ESA or CSA can exist within any of the five zones.

In addition, The *Canada National Parks Act* provides for areas of a national park to be declared, by regulation, as wilderness areas. The intent of this legislation is to enhance protection and maintain a high level of ecological integrity. In these declared wilderness areas, the legislation only permits development and activities required for essential services and resource protection. Typically, Zone 1 and Zone 2 can be included in Declared Wilderness Areas.

A zoning system is in place for the original NNPR. The expansion area does not yet have a zoning plan in place.

## 9.1 Zoning in the Original Nahanni National Park Reserve

For the original park, the zoning plan first presented in the 1987 plan remains valid (Figure X). The zoning plan outlines seven areas of Zone 1 (Special Preservation), and two areas of Zone 3 (Natural Environment), with the majority of the park being Zone 2 (Wilderness). In the spring of 2009, the Zone 1 and 2 areas became a Declared Wilderness Area, a designation which encompasses over 98% of the original park.

**\*\*insert map of zoning in original park\*\***

### 9.1.1 Zone 1: Special Preservation

#### Rabbitkettle Hotsprings

The two travertine mounds found at this site are the largest such structures known in Canada and possibly the largest in any sub-Arctic locality. The tops of these tufa mounds display characteristic calcite micro-dams or gours. Calcite is a relatively weak material susceptible to shattering from frost action. A more immediate danger to the structures would be the impact of uncontrolled foot traffic on the mounds. Access to Rabbitkettle Hotsprings is facilitated by a guided interpretive hike to the north mound. Due to the cultural and spiritual significance of the south mound, no visitor access is permitted.

#### Grotte Valerie

Grotte Valerie is a 2km aggregate of limestone karst passages formed by water percolating from the plateau above First Canyon. Various passageways and caverns are decorated with hundreds of small, but actively growing stalagmites and stalactites. Studies have shown the cave system to be older than 350,000 years. One of Grotte

Valerie's unique features is the presence of dozens of Dall's sheep skeletons, some embedded in ice. These are the remains of animals that wandered into the cave system and were unable to return past an ice fall. Access to the cave is strictly controlled for reasons of public safety and protection of the fragile cave features, and is limited to park-approved scientific research.

### **Wildmint Hotsprings**

These hotsprings are located approximately 100 kilometres upstream of the South Nahanni River near the Flat River. The tufa walls are brittle and crumble easily. While there are no extensive mound formations here, such as those at Rabbitkettle, concentrations of wildlife and unusual vegetation species require protection. Access is limited to park-approved scientific research to protect the fragile tufa walls and the unique vegetation found at this site.

### **Old Pots Hotsprings**

Old Pots Hotsprings on the Flat River is a well-developed tufa dome with several large pools or "pots" overflowing with ground water. The tufa formations are extremely susceptible to damage. Access to this site is controlled to protect the fragile tufa dome, and is limited to park-approved scientific research.

### **Deadmen Valley Sheep Licks**

These mineral outcrops or "licks" are located along the South Nahanni River in the eastern part of Deadmen Valley. They are frequented by Dall's sheep, as well as wolves and bears in search of prey. The sensitivity of mammals to disturbance at licks is unknown; consequently, access to these sites is controlled and is limited to park-approved scientific research.

### **Sand Blowouts**

Located just inside the southeast boundary of the park, the Sand Blowouts are made of finely-textured sandstone which has been eroded by the wind into unusual shapes. Curved arches, rounded pillars and perfect sandstone spheres are found in a small area of approximately five hectares. The sandstone features are easily eroded and susceptible to trampling; consequently, access to this site is controlled and is limited to park-approved scientific research.

### **Yohin Lake**

This lake near the eastern park boundary is the largest lake in the original park and is an important nesting area for various bird species including the rare Trumpeter Swan.

It is also noted for its diversity of aquatic vegetation and the abundance of nesting waterfowl and passerine birds. The sensitivity of this site requires that public access be strictly controlled and limited to park approved scientific research.

The Yohin Lake area is frequently used by residents of Nahanni Butte for subsistence harvest and cultural/educational purposes. Traditional use is not restricted by park zoning.

### **9.1.2 Zone 2: Wilderness**

The majority of NNPR is zoned as wilderness. This zone is intended to ensure the protection of park ecosystems, with minimal interference. There are no designated landing sites in the wilderness zone. Air access to the remote backcountry may be granted through permission of the superintendent.

### **9.1.3 Zone 3: Natural Environment**

#### **Rabbitkettle Lake and Nájljcho (Virginia Falls)**

Both Rabbitkettle Lake and Nájljcho (Virginia Falls) are designated as Natural Environment. This designation recognizes controls on use and facility development at these sites, while allowing for frequent air access.

## **9.2 Zoning in the Expansion Area**

The Expansion Area Management Approach outlines research needed to develop zoning over the next five years. In accordance with park policy, zoning will be developed in consultation with interested parties. It is anticipated that much of the expansion area will likely be Zone 2<sup>10</sup> (Wilderness), as with the original park, and one or more areas will likely be designated Zone 3 (Natural Environment) to enhance visitor access. In addition, culturally and environmentally sensitive areas and Zone 1 (Special Preservation) areas will be considered. It is anticipated that Declared Wilderness Area designation will not be sought until after 2019 when guided sport hunting opportunities are no longer available in the park.

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<sup>10</sup> Guided sport hunting will continue to occur as non-conforming use up until 2019.

## 10.0 Administration and Operations

The administration office for NNPR is located in Fort Simpson. The Field Unit office, from which the park receives support, is located in Fort Smith, 750 km east of Fort Simpson by road.

Facilities supporting administration, operations and the visitor experience will be changing, now that the park has expanded. The park establishment agreement and business case both outline specific infrastructure which will be developed over the next five years to support expanded park operations.

### 10.1 Administration and Operations Outside of the Park

With park expansion, the needs of the park have changed. As such, there will be changes to facilities. Fort Simpson, the primary administration and operational centre for the park, will continue to function as such; however, an operational base will also be established in Nahanni Butte.

In 2010, park facilities in Fort Simpson include office space in a retrofitted log building constructed in the 1960s; and a small shop with one heated storage bay, as well as a cold storage shed with four bays, built in the mid-1990s.

Historically, visitor information and registration has been provided in the park office as the park does not have a visitor reception centre. A small, outdated interpretive display is housed at the Village of Fort Simpson Visitor Centre. With park expansion, visitor orientation and communication will need to occur at gateway locations which may see increased use at access and egress points. These communities and locations include places such as Watson Lake, Fort Nelson, Muncho Lake and Inconnu Lodge.

Park expansion commitments include the development and enhancement of administration and operational facilities. Where possible, the NNPR will partner with Dehcho First Nations to develop shared facilities. All infrastructure will be developed in efficient and environmentally responsible ways.

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#### New Facilities Actions

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- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | Establish an operational base in Nahanni Butte. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop in cooperation with the Nahanni Butte Dene Band.</li><li>• Start with a temporary facility, then build a permanent facility.</li></ul> |
| 2. | Develop a visitor reception centre and expand the park office facilities in Fort   |
-

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Simpson.

- Develop in cooperation with Dehcho First Nations, Lídlij Kúé First Nation and Métis Local #52.
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### 10.1.1 Staff Housing

Due to the extremely limited housing market in Fort Simpson, NNPR also owns and maintains a staff house with an attached two-bedroom temporary accommodation unit for visiting staff or researchers. Housing units are also leased from the Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada. In addition, several long-term staff rent or own their homes. Housing is a necessary tool for recruiting and maintaining staff, and the units available do not meet new needs.

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#### Staff Housing Actions

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1. Develop a new housing policy.
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## 10.2 Facilities in the Park

### Camping

In keeping with its wilderness character, visitor facilities in the park are minimal. Other than designated campsites, park visitors are encouraged to camp at random locations of their choosing. These areas will be monitored to ensure the impacts of use do not interfere with the wilderness character sought by visitors. If an area experiences frequent and significant visitor use, management actions will be considered, such as a reservation system or its inclusion as a designated campground.

A small number of designated campsites were established to protect their surrounding environments from concentrated and repeated use. The park currently has eight designated areas for camping. The original park had four designated campsites:

1. Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake),
2. South Nahanni River Island (opposite the Rabbitkettle Lake portage landing),
3. Nájljcho (Virginia Falls), and
4. Kraus Hotsprings.

Facilities provided at the original four designated campgrounds will be re-assessed to determine the most appropriate infrastructure, as some, such as the outhouse at Nájljcho are not meeting the needs of visitors. As result of concentrated visitor use

and findings from the campsite monitoring program, two additional camping areas have been designated along the South Nahanni River corridor:

5. The Gate, and
6. Lafferty Creek.

In addition, two camping areas which were outside the park until the boundary expansion in June 2009 are also now designated camping areas:

7. Fairy Meadows<sup>11</sup>, and
8. Glacier Lake.

The goal for all four newly designated sites is to install minimal infrastructure to ensure proper management of human waste and minimize environmental impacts. In order to ensure the camping areas are compatible with the park's wilderness qualities, they must be primitive in nature. At most, infrastructure will be limited to cleared tenting areas or tent pads, food caches, fires rings and outdoor privies.

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### Campsites Actions

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|----|--|
| 1. | Determine appropriate, minimal, sustainable infrastructure for the designated campsites through an assessment and consultations with stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess and improve infrastructure at the four original designated sites.</li><li>• Determine appropriate minimal infrastructure for the new designated campsites.</li></ul> |
|----|--|
- 

### Portages and Trails

In the original park there are four designated portages. These are located along the South Nahanni River at Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake), Nájłıcho (Virginia Falls), Figure of Eight Rapids, and along the Flat River at the Cascade of Thirteen Steps. With the expansion, there are now other portage trails within the park and non-designated trails, which see regular use by visitors. The Expansion Area AMA outlines the assessment process for new trails and portages.

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<sup>11</sup> Special care will be given to Fairy Meadows in regards to infrastructure needs, as climbers who use the area often stay in a base-camp for long periods of time. In addition, other visitors hike and stay in the area.

## **Operational Facilities in the Park**

Facilities in the park to accommodate NNPR operations are limited to visitor service, public safety and enforcement needs. In the original park, this includes five staff cabins: Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake), Sunblood<sup>12</sup>, Nájłjcho (Virginia Falls), Flat River and Deadmen Valley.

In addition to providing accommodation for staff while on patrol, the cabins are used as staging areas during public safety, fire management and research and monitoring activities. A helicopter landing area exists at each cabin, and quantities of fuel are stored on-site. Visitors can use the cabins in the event of an emergency; first aid supplies, food and radio equipment are stored in each cabin.

To permit VHF radio communications within NNPR, and between the park and the office in Fort Simpson, four mountain-top radio repeaters are situated at strategic locations. As a back-up to the radio system during periods of poor, or failed radio communications, a satellite phone is located at Gahnjthah Mie (Rabbitkettle Lake) and at Nájłjcho (Virginia Falls). Emergency personal locator beacons are located at the other cabins in the park.

Initially, one operational facility will be added to the expansion area. This will be installed at Glacier Lake, following a needs assessment<sup>13</sup>. Eventually, it is intended for this base to enable staff to provide visitor services, interpretation, resource conservation, law enforcement and public safety.

All new infrastructure developed will be based on a thorough needs assessment, and developed with sustainable building practices. Infrastructure in the park will consider efficiency, cost and complement the wilderness nature of the park.

### **10.3 Business Licences**

Park outfitters are extremely important to Nahanni, as 59% of park visitors choose a guided river trip. To qualify for an outfitter licence in Nahanni, the commercial operator must first be licensed by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

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<sup>12</sup> The 2004 management plan had an action to evaluate options for removal for Sunblood cabin. This plan includes an action in the Nájłjcho AMA to assess options in regards to the cabin – including opportunities related to cultural activities, visitor use and/or removal.

<sup>13</sup> As outlined in the Expansion Area AMA

Historically, the number of park outfitter licences issued to commercial operators reflected the carrying capacity for visitor entry to the park over a summer operating season. As the original park was principally along the river corridor, these licences were for use on the South Nahanni River. There are four licences currently issued to outfitters for river trips, plus one additional licence which may be issued to a qualified local Aboriginal outfitting operation. With park expansion, a process needs to be established to consider new applicants to operate tourism businesses in the expansion area<sup>14</sup>.

Guides in Nahanni are tested and licensed by the park for their knowledge of park rules and regulations<sup>15</sup>. Guides must be employees of licensed park outfitters, and guide only those trips in the park that are operated by the licensed outfitters.

In support of these services, Parks Canada will collaborate with regional air charter services and with outfitters and their associations, such as the Nahanni River Outfitters Association, to manage commonly desired activities compatible with the park's purpose and objectives.

## 11.0 Monitoring

Effective monitoring in the remote and rugged environment of Nahanni National Park Reserve presents numerous challenges. The recent expansion, which has significantly improved the park's overall ecological integrity through greater protection of wildlife habitats and representation of natural features, has also brought the park boundaries closer to sources of potential impacts (*i.e.* mine sites). In addition, the increased park size, gateway locations and ability to increase visitor opportunities and numbers requires a more sophisticated understanding of current and potential visitors.

The new land base has broadened the area of responsibility for monitoring, and thereby increased some of the associated logistical implications. The many benefits vastly outweigh any of these considerations, however, and with the new financial and human resources, staff are looking forward to meeting the challenges and opportunities ahead. Monitoring is a very important component of adaptive management, providing a sound understanding and basis for decision making.

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<sup>14</sup> Noted as an action in the Expansion Area AMA.

<sup>15</sup> The NNPR guide testing and licensing process does not apply to sport hunting guides.

## 11.1 Ecological Integrity Monitoring

The ecological monitoring program for NNPR is structured according to a set of five indicators used to report on the condition of the park. These indicators are the main ecosystems of the park, namely Forest, Alpine Tundra, Freshwater, Wetlands and Glaciers, and within each of these ecosystems are a set of *Measures*. Each measure falls into one of three categories, and is designed to determine the status and trend of a specific aspect of that ecosystem; it could be a *Biodiversity* measure such as the population size of caribou, or a *Process* measure such as the size and intensity of naturally-occurring forest fires, or a *Stressor* measure such as levels of certain industrial chemicals in a river or stream.

The status and trend of measures within a given indicator (ecosystem) are rolled up to provide an overall assessment of the condition of that indicator, and these are presented in a five-year cycle in the State of the Park Report (SOPR). Prior to the park expansion, the primary indicator in NNPR was Forest, representing ~83% of park area; of the 21 measures reported in the 2009 SOPR, nine were in this indicator. The other indicators reported on five (Freshwater), three (Alpine Tundra), three (Glaciers) and one (Wetlands) measures respectively. Two measures (Primary Productivity and Caribou Composition) were reported in both Forest and Alpine Tundra, and one measure (River Discharge / Flow) was reported in both Freshwater and Glacier indicators.

The 2009 SOPR, the first to be completed for NNPR, determined that Forest and Freshwater indicators were in good condition and stable; Alpine Tundra and Glaciers were in fair condition with declining trends; Wetlands were not rated, as there was insufficient information to make a proper assessment at the time of the report. Improving the number and quality of measures in the Alpine Tundra and Wetland indicators, through the framework of the park's Ecological Integrity Monitoring Plan, was identified as a major information gap to be addressed over the next five years.

## 11.2 Management Effectiveness Monitoring

The 2009 SOPR summarizes some of the main management actions from the previous planning cycle, and reports on the results achieved. In terms of ongoing management actions and associated monitoring to be continued in the coming years, monitoring of the condition of campsites along the South Nahanni River will continue to be a part of park operations, as this program is informative to management of both the ecological integrity and wilderness experience aspects of the park. Similarly, monitoring of the tufa mounds to detect and mitigate impacts from visitor access will be continued.

Management of fuel caches has been improved in the original park over the last planning cycle through installation of new containment systems, and monitoring at these sites will continue. A new but similar initiative in the coming years is to inventory existing fuel caches in the expansion area, determine sites for continued fuel storage, and improving the condition and monitoring of these sites. Discontinued fuel cache sites, and other contaminated sites will be identified, rehabilitated, and monitored as necessary.

### **11.3 Visitor Experience Monitoring**

Nahanni National Park Reserve has been very proactive in building a greater understanding of visitors, including perceptions of the wilderness experience, support for management actions and satisfaction. The first extensive study of river users was in 1986; this survey has since been replicated and expanded to develop greater understanding of visitor needs and how they use the park. In addition, there are annual statistics which report on visitor demographics, segmentation, length of stay and public safety issues.

The visitor experience monitoring program for NNPR reported in the SOPR is structured according to a set of four indicators. These indicators are personal connection, marketing and promotion, interpretation, and visitor service offer. Information on these measures is collected via the Visitor Information Program Survey. NNPR rated very highly in all of these areas in the 2009 SOPR. In addition, social science is used to support program development. For example, in advance of new product development, NNPR commissioned an assessment of effectiveness of Aboriginal Heritage Presentation.

Improvements can be made in the management of social science information to ensure a single-point, accessible source. There are no significant gaps in regards to monitoring; however, the program needs to be expanded to develop a better understanding of new visitors, their desired activities and expectations. A comprehensive social science program will be developed to support monitoring and decision making.

### **11.4 External Relations Monitoring**

External relations, as measured in the SOPR, includes public outreach education, stakeholder and partner engagement. Much of the monitoring for external relations occurs at the national level, and thus is not reported by individual parks.

Outreach education is very important for NNPR, especially youth in the Dehcho. The park would like to increase efforts in this area, and has outlined targets and actions in relation to extending the reach of the park, to inspire more local youth (and Canadians) to develop a strong sense of personal connection.

The park is cooperatively managed with Dehcho First Nations through the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team, a successful partnering relationship which has been in place for over a decade. In addition, stakeholder engagement is key to the operation of NNPR. The river outfitters are key partners in setting the foundation for memorable experiences. In addition, the majority of park visitors use the services of air charter companies. NNPR stakeholder and partner relationships tend to be very strong. A comprehensive strategy to measure these strengths and to identify any gaps would be beneficial, including a measure of the opportunities and degree of influence stakeholders and partners feel they have in regards to park management.

### **11.5 Cultural Resource Monitoring**

Although the inventory of cultural resources was rated as good in the 2009 SOPR, the monitoring of cultural resources, sites and places was rated as poor; a formal monitoring program for NNPR has not been developed. Efforts to visit unconfirmed and threatened cultural sites within the original park boundaries created a baseline of information and a photographic record for these sites. This information will provide a solid basis in which to make long-term monitoring and management decisions.

The SOPR and this management plan identify two important steps to be taken: the preparation of a Cultural Resource Values Statement for NNPR and a Cultural Resource Management Strategy which will outline specific priorities for the park, and ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to management of cultural resources.

## **12.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment**

To be inserted by Environmental Assessment Manager.

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## 13.2 Acknowledgements

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### 13.3 Acronyms

AMA	Area Management Approach
CRM	Cultural Resource Management
CSA	Culturally Sensitive Area
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
IPMA	Interim Park Management Arrangement
NDCT	Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team
NNPR	Nahanni National Park Reserve
SOPR	State of Park Report
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization

### 13.4 Glossary

#### *Greater Nahanni Ecosystem*

Broader than the Nahʔą Dehé/South Nahanni River watershed. The Greater Nahanni Ecosystem includes the North Nahanni Karst.

#### *Nahʔą Dehé*

Can refer to the South Nahanni River and its watershed, the 2009 park boundary, and/or the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem. In this document, Nahʔą Dehé refers most often to the area encompassed by the 2009 boundary, and is used interchangeably with Nahanni, the park and NNPR.

#### *Explorer Quotient*

A market segmentation tool, based on personal preferences. There are nine traveller types: no-hassle traveller, free spirit, cultural history buff, gentle explorer, virtual traveller, cultural explorer, authentic experience, rejuvenator and personal history explorer.

## 14.0 Summary of Actions

To be inserted.