



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

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT:

- New
- Amended
- Requires a permit, licence or authorization under the *Preliminary Screening Requirement Regulations* (issuance of a Business Licence pursuant to the *National Parks of Canada Businesses Regulations* s 4.1)
- Does not require permit, licence or authorization and is proposed by PCA

1. DEVELOPMENT TITLE & LOCATION

Canoe North Adventures Guided River Outfitting in Nahanni National Park Reserve

2. PROPONENT INFORMATION

Canoe North Adventures
(867) 587-4440
info@canoenorthadventures.com

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATES

Planned commencement: 2020-06-20
Planned completion: 2019-09-01

4. INTERNAL FILE #

NAH2020-001

5. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Many visitors accessing Nahanni National Park Reserve (Nahanni) do so as clients of commercial outfitting companies. Guided river outfitting typically begins at earliest the first week of June (more often, the second to third week of June) and, on average, run until the first week of September. They range anywhere from one to three weeks in length and include river tripping and hiking as primary activities. A commercial river outfitter must obtain a Parks Canada business licence to operate in Nahanni.

The Guidelines for Licensing of Guided River Outfitting in Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserves (Parks Canada, 2019) outline the considerations for safety and sustainability, set quotas for visitation and limits the number of licences Parks Canada issues in Nahanni National Park Reserve to four, one of which is reserved for an Indigenous Dehcho business. The guidelines were developed through detailed public consultations, stakeholder engagement and



in consultation with cooperative management partners in Nááts'ihch'oh and Nahanni National Park Reserves.

Following the completion of the 10-day pause period for preliminary screenings and support of the Nahʔą Dehé Consensus Team, Parks Canada may issue a business licence to Canoe North Adventures to offer guided river outfitting services in Nahanni National Park Reserve. The business licence would allow the licensee to guide up to 4 trips in June, 4 trips in July and 6 trips in August. A maximum of 15 people (including guides) would be permitted on each guided excursion. Canoe North Adventures has indicated in their application that their trips will primarily start at Nájljcho and end at Nahanni Butte near Highway 7. According to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)*, a Parks Canada business licence must undergo preliminary screening. This preliminary screening applies to Canoe North Adventures' application for a business licence to conduct guided river outfitting activities in Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Activities

- *Water-based:* canoeing
- *Land-based:* camping, day hiking, backpacking (overnight camping)

Locations (see map, Appendix 1)

WATER-BASED ACTIVITY START LOCATIONS	
Island Lakes, Nahanni	Access for the South Nahanni River
Bunny Bar, Nahanni	
Gahnjthah Mje, Nahanni	
Nájljcho, Nahanni	

WATER-BASED ACTIVITY END LOCATIONS	
Gahnjthah Mje, Nahanni	Blackstone Territorial Park, NT
Nájljcho, Nahanni	Łíídlj Kúé, NT
Nahanni Butte, NT	
Lindberg's Landing, NT	

WATER-BASED ACTIVITY CAMP LOCATIONS	
Nájljcho	Gahnjthah Mje
Glacier Lake	
Random camp locations along the South Nahanni River	

HIKING / BACKPACKING ROUTES (Note: all are backcountry/non-maintained routes)	
South Nahanni River to Glacier Lake (multi-night)	Glacier Lake to Fairy Meadows (multi-night)
Gahnjthah Mje to Gahnjthah Tufa Mounds (day)	Gahnjthah Portage and Campground (day)
Sunblood Mountain (day)	Marengo Creek (day)
Pulpit Rock and Gate Viewpoint (day)	Painted Canyon (day)
Scow Creek (day)	Lafferty's Creek (day)



Other exploratory day hike routes along river corridors	
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6. VALUED COMPONENTS

Note: Outfitting companies have utilized the same locations in the park since the 1960s and 70s; many have been surveyed for natural and heritage resources (these surveys are ongoing) and areas of significance are avoided/respected by guides and their clients.

Soil/Land Resources

- The park is located within the Taiga and Boreal Cordillera Ecological regions of the Northwest Territories. These regions include a complex landscape of rugged peaks and ridges, rolling hills, eroded plateaus, deep V- and U-shaped valleys, fast-flowing braided rivers and streams and slow-flowing meandering rivers, and in the south and west, glaciers and icefields. Glacial deposits are widely distributed and occur mainly on the floors and lower slopes of valleys, lakes and ponds are small and sparsely distributed, and wetlands are locally common only on the floodplains and lower slopes of large rivers and on a few broad plateaus. It is an area of discontinuous permafrost (ECG, 2010). The area within the original Nahanni park boundary is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognized for its exceptional representation of on-going geological processes, including karst topography, hot springs/tufa mounds, and caves. Several of these areas are Zone 1, Special Preservation, and visitor access is restricted (Parks Canada, 2010).

Air/Noise Quality

- No formal observations of air/noise quality have occurred in the park, however it is expected that these valued components are excellent and representative of their natural state. The majority of the park is zone II Wilderness, which represents "extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and are conserved in a wilderness state" and "in much of Zone II, visitors have the opportunity to experience remoteness and solitude. Motorized access is not permitted except for controlled air access" (Parks Canada, 2010 & 2017).

Aquatic Resources

- SARA-listed Bull Trout are present in the South Nahanni River below Nájiljcho (Babaluk, 2015).
- The South Nahanni River is silt-laden (March and Scotter, 1975), as is common of many of the rivers and streams in this area as they flow through glacial deposits (ECG, 2010).

Flora and Fauna

- Migratory and SARA-listed birds are present in the park and may nest at locations visited by guided groups; the general nesting season for this area extends from approximately May 1 to August 25. Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), a ground-nesting species



has been observed nesting on the Prairie Creek and Bunny Bar alluvial fans (Tate, pers. comm., 2017; Arnold, pers. comm., 2020).

- Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), Northern Myotis (*M. septentrionalis*)—both SARA-listed bat species—Longeared Myotis (*M. evotis*), Long-legged Myotis (*M. volans*), Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), and Eastern Red Bat (*L. borealis*) have been recorded at various locations along the shoreline of the South Nahanni River (Lausen *et al.* 2014). As of 2019, two cave sites, including Grotte Valerie, have been confirmed as hibernacula for Myotis bat species and two additional sites are suspected (Horne and Critchley, 2020). Current evidence suggests that Grotte Valerie is likely used as a hibernaculum by five species: Little Brown Bat, Northern Myotis, Long-legged Myotis, Big Brown Bat and Long-eared Myotis (C. Lausen and G. Horne, pers. comm., 2017). All caves in the park reserve are off-limits to visitors.
- Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos* - northwest population) have a widespread distribution throughout the park (Weaver, 2006). However, grizzly bear encounters in the park are relatively uncommon with between 0 and 10 sightings reported annually by visitors and park staff from 2010 to 2017 (Nahanni National Park Reserve, 2017). The majority of grizzly bear sightings occur in areas of the park where food caches are provided for visitors to store food and other attractants – Gahnjthah Mje, Nájłjcho and Glacier Lake. Additionally, in accordance with Nahanni’s Bear Management Plan, all reported bear observations are carefully reviewed by park staff to determine whether management action (e.g., public alerts, area closures, etc.) should be taken to prevent human-bear conflict.
- Interaction with other SARA-listed species in the park (i.e.: Collared pika (*Ochotona collaris*), Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus* - boreal population) and Woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou* - Northern Mountain population), will be minimal as visitors either do not frequent habitats where these species are located or visitation does not occur during periods of significant congregation such as calving. No adverse effects are anticipated if the mitigation measures described in this screening are followed.
- No SARA-listed vegetation species will be impacted. Nahanni Aster (*Symphotrichum nahanniense*), a SARA-listed species, exists at various locations along the Flat and South Nahanni rivers (COSEWIC, 2014). Three of these populations are protected as Zone I Special Preservation (no public access except by permit or with Parks staff present) and the remaining four are in Zone II Wilderness areas (Parks Canada, 2010); revised zoning or alternate protection measures are being examined for these latter populations during the current management planning process.

Social/Cultural Environment (including Wildlife Harvesting)

- Harvesting (wildlife, plants, and trees) and motorized access for traditional activities within park boundaries is a right of local First Nations (Parks Canada 2010 & 2017).



Heritage Resources

- Heritage resources are defined as a human work, an object, or a place that is determined, on the basis of its heritage value, to be directly associated with an important aspect or aspects of human history and culture of an heritage area (Parks Canada, 2013). Heritage resources include archaeological or historic sites, burial sites, artifacts and other objects of historical, cultural, or religious significance, and historical or cultural records (MVRMA (s.2)). Heritage resources exist throughout the park. Although surveys have been conducted to identify these resources at certain locations along major river valleys, lakes, and in the Glacier Lake/Cirque of the Unclimbables area, there remains a high potential for the presence of undocumented resources throughout the park.

7. EFFECTS ANALYSIS

See "*Parks Canada Best Management Practice (BMP) for Commercially Guided Eco-Tourism Activities in Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada*" (Appendix 2)

8. MITIGATION MEASURES

Canoe North Adventures will adhere to mitigations described in the "*Parks Canada Best Management Practice (BMP) for Commercially Guided Eco-Tourism Activities in Nahanni and Nááts'jch'oh National Park Reserves of Canada*" (Appendix 2)

9. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Surveillance
- Follow-up monitoring, general
- Follow-up monitoring, required by legislation or policy (indicate basis of requirement e.g. required by the *Species at Risk Act*)
- SARA Notification

10. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL ADVERSE EFFECTS

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

11. EXPERTS CONSULTED

<i>Department:</i> Parks Canada / Government of Canada	<i>Date of Request:</i> January 9, 2018
<i>Expert's Name & Contact Information:</i>	<i>Title:</i>



Patrick Carroll PO Box 750, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0 Patrick.carroll@pc.gc.ca / Tel: 867-872-7936	Cultural Resource Management Advisor, SW NWT Field Unit
<i>Expertise Requested:</i> General information on heritage resource surveys/inventories for both parks	
<i>Response:</i> See information in section 6 (Valued Components)	
<i>Department:</i> Parks Canada / Government of Canada	<i>Date of Request:</i> June 15 , 2017
<i>Expert's Name & Contact Information:</i> Doug Tate 22 Third Street, Nipigon, ON, P0T 2J0 Doug.Tate@canada.ca / Tel: 807-372-0011	<i>Title:</i> Ecologist Team Lead, Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area
<i>Expertise Requested:</i> Information on Common Nighthawk nesting locations	
<i>Response:</i> See information in section 6 (Valued Components)	
<i>Departments:</i> Wildlife Conservation Society Canada Parks Canada / Government of Canada	<i>Date of Request:</i> November 2017
<i>Experts Names & Contact Information:</i> Cori Lausen Suite 204 - 344 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 3A7 cLausen@wcs.org Greg Horne 1 Compound road, Jasper, AB greg.horne@canada.ca / Mobile: 780-883-0253	<i>Titles:</i> Associate Conservation Scientist Resource Management Officer II
<i>Expertise Requested:</i> Information on bat species potentially using Grotte Valerie as a hibernaculum	
<i>Response:</i> See information in section 6 (Valued Components)	
<i>Department:</i> Parks Canada / Government of Canada	<i>Date of Request:</i> February 21, 2020
<i>Expert's Name & Contact Information:</i> Sarah Arnold PO Box 348, Fort Simpson, NT X0E 0N0 sarah.arnold@canada.ca / Tel: 867-695-7768	<i>Title:</i> Ecologist Team Lead, Nahanni National Park Reserve
<i>Expertise Requested:</i> Information on Common Nighthawk nesting locations	



Response: See information in section 6 (Valued Components)

11.1 References

- Arnold, S. 2020. Personal communication February 2020. Ecologist Team Leader, Nahanni National Park Reserve, Parks Canada.
- Babaluk *et al.* 2015. *Distribution of Fish Species within the South Nahanni River Watershed, Northwest Territories*. Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Winnipeg, MB
- COSEWIC. 2014. *COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Nahanni Aster Symphyotrichum nahanniense in Canada*. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. ix + 39 pp. (www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/default_e.cfm).
- Ecosystem Classification Group (ECG). 2010. *Ecological Regions of the Northwest Territories – Cordillera*. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, NT, Canada. Available online at: http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/cordillera_ecological_land_classification_report.pdf
- Horne, G. 2016. *Nahanni National Park Reserve, Report of Bat and Cave Monitoring - 2016*. Unpublished report.
- Horne, G. and D. Critchley. 2020. *Nahanni National Park Reserve, Report of Bat and Cave Monitoring – 2019*. Unpublished report.
- Lausen *et al.* 2014. *Bats of Nahanni National Park Reserve and Surrounding Areas, Northwest Territories*. *Northwestern Naturalist*. 95:186-196.
- Lausen, C. and G. Horne. Email, November 2017.
- Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA). 2016. Available online at: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-0.2/>
- March, A.H. and G.W. Scotter. 1975. *Vegetation Survey and Impact Assessment of the Nahanni Hot Springs and Virginia Falls Areas, Nahanni National Park*. Prepared for Parks Canada by the Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton.
- Nahanni National Park Reserve. 2017. *Bear Observation Database*. Unpublished raw data.
- Parks Canada. 2010. *Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada Nah?q Dehé Management Plan*.
- Parks Canada. 2013. *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.



Parks Canada. 2017. *Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve Management Plan*.

Parks Canada. 2019. Guidelines for Licensing of Guided River Outfitting in Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserves. Available online at: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/nt/nahanni/info/guides>

Tate, D. 2017. Personal communication June 2017. Ecologist Team Leader, Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area, Parks Canada.


Weaver, J.L. 2006. Big Animals and Small Parks: Implications of Wildlife Distribution and Movements for Expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve. Wildlife Conservation Society Canada. Conservation Report No. 1.

12. DECISION

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

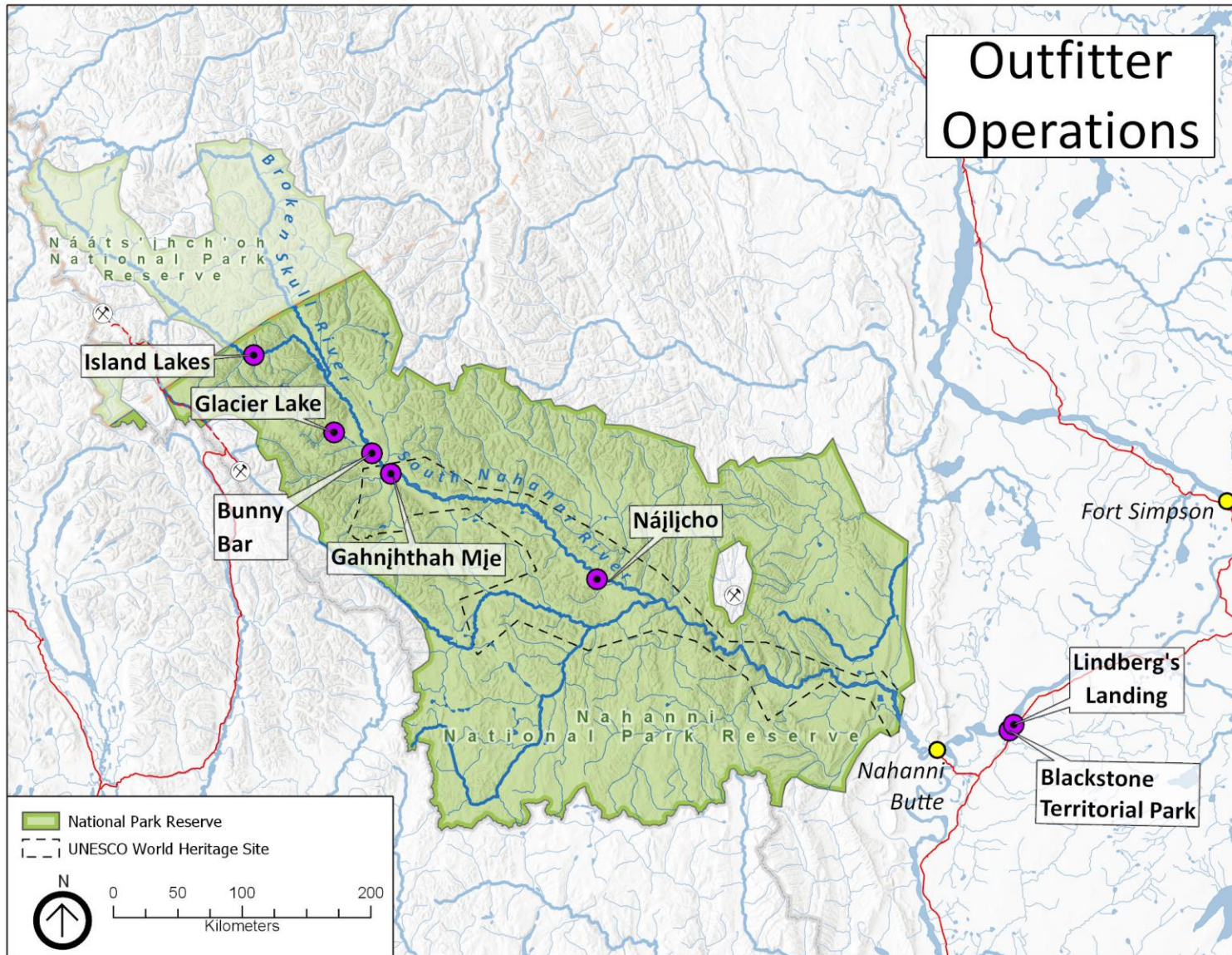
- Might have a significant adverse impact on the environment, and the proposal should be referred to the *Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board* for environmental assessment.
- ✓ Does not have a likelihood of causing significant adverse impact on the environment.
- Might be a cause for public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

13. APPROVAL

Prepared by: <i>Colleen Murchison</i> Ecologist Team Leader, Nahanni National Park Reserve	Date: February 24, 2020
Approved by:  _____ <i>Jonathan Tsetso</i> Superintendent, Nahanni National Park Reserve	Date: February 25, 2020



APPENDIX 1





APPENDIX 2: *Parks Canada Best Management Practice (BMP) for Commercially Guided Eco-tourism Activities in Nahanni and Nááts'j'ch'oh National Park Reserves of Canada*

Note: see attachment in accompanying email



Appendix 3 - Distribution List

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board	preliminaryscreening@reviewboard.ca
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board	jpotten@mvlwb.com; tyree@mvlwb.com
Dehcho First Nations	jackson_mcdermott@dehcho.org; dahti_tsetso@dehcho.org
Chief Jerry Antoine Liidlii Kue First Nation	chief@liidliikue.com
Chief Gladys Norwegian JMR First Nation	chief@jmrfn.com
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Chief Darcy E. Moses Pehdzeh Ki First Nation	pkfnlands@outlook.com
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