



Nááts'ihch'oh – South Nahanni River Headwaters

Nááts'ihch'oh [pronounced Nah tseen cho] National Park Reserve, to be established in collaboration with the Sahtu Dene and Métis of Tulita and Norman Wells, NWT, borders Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR) in the neighbouring Dehcho region. Nááts'ihch'oh National Park will be one of the final steps in protecting the entire South Nahanni Watershed, as it will join the South Nahanni River Headwaters with NNPR. The result will be two connected national parks working together to protect the globally renowned Boreal wilderness of the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem.

The proposed Nááts'ihch'oh area consists of 7,600 km², covers the upper 20% of the South Nahanni Watershed and accounts for approximately one third of the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem. The development of the Nááts'ihch'oh Park Reserve will play an important role in connecting the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) wildlife corridor in the NWT. This area includes key calving grounds for mountain woodland caribou, and important habitat for grizzly bears – both need large intact ecosystems to survive, and are listed as species at risk. Home to the northernmost population of mountain goats in Canada, this area also holds a Dall's sheep population that is genetically unique to North America due to its isolation during the last ice age.

In addition to its ecological values, Nááts'ihch'oh holds key cultural and spiritual significance for the Shutagot'ine (Sahtu Mountain Dene and Métis). In North Slavey, Nááts'ihch'oh means, "pointed like a porcupine quill", referring to Mount Wilson, the mountain looming over the Moose Ponds, near the southern border of the proposed national park.

For tourists, this new Park will encompass significant canoe routes such as the Broken Skull River and the Little Nahanni River, and the Moose Ponds, which is one of few starting points for advanced canoeists on their journey down the South Nahanni River (whitewater III).

An interim land withdrawal was put in place from March 2008 until March 2012, and Parks Canada has been working with the Sahtu Dene and Métis to finalize the park boundaries. While official dates have yet to be set, Parks Canada will soon be holding public consultations to hear and consider public opinion on boundary options. CPAWS-NWT will engage in this process to support a proposed Nááts'ihch'oh boundary that affords the greatest level of protection to the cultural and ecological values in this region.

We encourage the public to attend these consultations and contribute their views.

For more information please contact
Kris Brekke
Executive Director - Conservation Coordinator
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, NWT Chapter
867-873-9893 ext.24
kris@cpaws.org