

BACKGROUNDER

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND TOURISM IN AN EXPANDED NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

This landmark conservation achievement represents a wealth of new opportunities for Canadians and international visitors to experience Nahanni in all its beauty and wonder – and new opportunities for local communities and businesses.

The Greater Nahanni Ecosystem includes world-renowned places for canoeing, rafting, backpacking, climbing, mountaineering, camping, flight-seeing and day hikes. Places with interesting names and fascinating features, such as Hole-in-the-Wall Lake, Death Lake and the Tlogotsho Plateau, will now be protected for all time.

Some of the landscapes offering unique experiences to the adventurous visitor include:

- the **Ram Plateau** - spectacular plateau hiking with amazing vistas and deep canyons;
- the **Nahanni North Karst** - globally significant limestone landscape with caves, canyons, ephemeral lakes - unique in the permafrost zone;
- the **Tlogotsho Plateau** - high, open vistas, Dall's sheep range, great hiking;
- the **Ragged Range** - with the highest mountains and largest glaciers in the Northwest Territories; and
- **Glacier Lake, Fairy Meadows and the Cirque of the Unclimbables** - scenic lake nestled amid high peaks, internationally renowned for challenging big-wall climbing.

There is great potential for new types of visitor experiences that will appeal to all sorts of travellers, from those seeking interesting cultural experiences to those in search of the adventure challenge of a lifetime. New visitor experiences and tourism business opportunities will be explored and developed in consultation with Dehcho First Nations, local communities and existing tourism operators.

Nahanni National Park Reserve is acclaimed as Canada's premier wilderness river national park. It is the most famous national park and World Heritage Site in the Northwest Territories and the one that receives the most visitors. Parks Canada and Dehcho First Nations cooperatively manage the park reserve.

Approximately 1000 people visit Nahanni annually to experience its spectacular scenery and learn about its rich history. Nearly half of these visitors experience the park with the help of licensed professional river guide-outfitters and all visitors fly in with local air-charter companies.

Virginia Falls, with a longer vertical drop than Niagara Falls, is one of Canada's iconic images and the most recognizable image of Nahanni today. Park staff at Rabbitkettle Lake provide guided hikes to the tufa mounds (exotic calcium carbonate formations).

Traditional use by Aboriginal people is an honoured practice in Nahanni National Park Reserve. Visitors may see people traveling by motorboat, gathering plants or hunting. The Dene laws of sharing and of respect for others, the land and the animals are still practiced.

Nahanni National Park Reserve currently contributes on average nearly \$2.8 million per year to the local and NWT economies. This contribution includes approximately \$640,000 to the local economy in wages and benefits for 15 full-time and seasonal staff, approximately half of whom are members of the Dehcho First Nations. Parks Canada practices active mentoring and development of local aboriginal students and staff. The park's maintenance and operations budget contribute an additional \$1.5 million to the local economy. As well, visitors to the park contribute an estimated \$630,000 annually to the region.