



# Closing Arguments

**Canadian Zinc Ltd.**  
**Prairie Creek Mine Expansion Proposal**

**MV2021L2-0004 and MV2021D005**  
May 20, 2022

Approved on behalf of Parks Canada Agency:



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Jonathan Tsetso  
Superintendent  
Nahanni National Park Reserve  
Parks Canada Agency

2022-05-20

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Date

## **Introduction**

The Parks Canada Agency (Parks Canada) is pleased to provide its closing arguments to the Makenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) for the Prairie Creek Mine Expansion proposal (MV2021L2-0004 and MV2021D005) (the Project). These closing arguments have been developed after reviewing and assessing the evidence and information provided in all phases of this regulatory hearing. Parks Canada's legislative and policy requirements were also considered while developing these closing arguments.

Parks Canada has expertise in the following areas:

- Management of protected areas, national parks, national historic sites, World Heritage Sites, and historic rivers;
- Cultural resources as they relate to Parks Canada's mandate; and
- Species at risk within Parks Canada's protected areas.

Parks Canada's interest in the Project results from its close proximity to Nah?à Dehé (Nahanni National Park and Reserve), which is located less than seven kilometers downstream.

These closing arguments build upon issues raised by Parks Canada throughout the regulatory process, including the August/September 2021 Technical Sessions, December 2021 hearing, and May 2022 review of the draft Water Licence and draft Land Use Permit, and are intended to support the MVLWB in fulfilling their role in ensuring that the Project will not have significant adverse impacts on the environment.

Throughout this regulatory process, Parks Canada has found the lack of baseline information, commitments to monitoring, and contingency planning to be insufficient for Parks Canada to have confidence that the Project will not have negative impacts on Nah?à Dehé. On May 6<sup>th</sup> 2022, Parks Canada provided recommendations to the MVLWB regarding the draft Water Licence and Land Use permit. Implementing these recommendations would increase Parks Canada's confidence that the Project's negative impacts on Nah?à Dehé will be minimized.

## **Vegetation, Soils, Closure and Reclamation**

As detailed in Parks Canada's Intervention, the diversity of vegetation in Nah?à Dehé is greater than any other area of comparable size in the Northwest Territories and is at risk not only from climate change, but also from increases in dust deposition from the mine site. Given the uncertainty on impacts of climate change at the site level, it is important that appropriate mitigations are implemented at the mine site to ensure that impacts from dust on vegetation and soil are minimized. Parks Canada's comments on the draft Water Licence and draft Land Use Permit recommend measures to update the Air Quality and Emissions Monitoring and Management Plan and include a Vegetation Monitoring Plan. With implementation of these recommendations, impacts to vegetation and soil will be minimized and closure and reclamation planning will be adequately informed so that the likelihood of site contamination at closure is minimized.

## **Water Quality in Tl'o Dehé at Nah?à Dehé Boundary**

The impacts of mining activity on water quality in Tl'o Dehé is the largest risk from the Project to Nah?à Dehé. With the updated Project proposal being assessed through this process, the management of site water at the mine has changed. This may have implications on the water quality in Tl'o Dehé. As indicated in Parks Canada's Intervention, despite numerous requests,

Canadian Zinc has not provided any predictions regarding potential changes to water quality at the park boundary. Without this prediction, it is difficult for Parks Canada to properly assess the potential impacts from the Project on Nahʔą Dehé. In response to the draft Water Licence, Parks Canada proposed a timeline for Canadian Zinc to provide updated water quality predictions throughout all phases of operation, including exploration, operation and post-closure. Having these predictions will ensure that influential physical processes remain within the natural range of variation and that ecological integrity of Nahʔą Dehé will be maintained.

Parks Canada is pleased that water quality monitoring in Tł'o Dehé at the Nahʔą Dehé boundary is considered through all phases of the Project in the draft Water Licence. However, given that Tł'o Dehé crosses a legal boundary when it enters Nahʔą Dehé, Parks Canada maintains that it is most appropriate for this water monitoring station to be an SNP and therefore a legally enforceable condition within the Water Licence.

## **Engineered Structures**

As outlined in Parks Canada's Intervention, failure of engineered structures on site, including the Waste Rock Pile Pond Dam, Water Storage Pond Dykes and the Flood Protection Berm, would result in potentially catastrophic impacts to Nahʔą Dehé. For this reason, it is imperative that Parks Canada and the other parties have confidence in these structures and their integrity. Parks Canada is pleased to see that the draft Water Licence contains conditions that ensures the integrity of these structures. In response to the draft Water Licence, Parks Canada recommended a few points of clarity in the wording to ensure that information is available at appropriate stages to inform design plans and that relevant experts are consulted when appropriate. Implementing these recommendations will increase Parks Canada's confidence that there is sufficient contingency planning to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic events impacting Nahʔą Dehé.

## **Conclusion**

Parks Canada is grateful to the MVLWB for the opportunity to participate in this regulatory process and provide advice and recommendations related to our areas of expertise. We look forward to further collaboration with Canadian Zinc and all parties on the development of various plans, including the Aquatic Effects Monitoring Plan, over the coming months and years of the Project's implementation.