

Recommitted to Prairie Creek Mine

Canadian Zinc and Parks Canada sign a second memorandum of understanding

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The Canadian Zinc Corporation and Parks Canada have signed a renewed memorandum of understanding (MOU) about the operation

and development of the Prairie Creek Mine and the management of the Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Canadian Zinc and Parks Canada signed the original MOU in 2008. The co-operative agreement outlined how

the agency and the company would respect each other's interests and ensure an operating mine and a park could co-exist.

At that point, the park hadn't yet expanded to its current size. Nahanni was

expanded in 2009 and now includes the site for Prairie Creek Mine – it exists in an enclave within the park.

In the new MOU, which replaces the old one and is valid for three years, the two parties have agreed to continue to work collaboratively to achieve their respective goals, namely managing the park and operating a mine.

The MOU creates a framework for a positive working relationship allowing the company and Parks Canada to collaborate on certain areas, particularly the mine's access road that now crosses through the expanded park, said Alan Taylor, Canadian Zinc's vice-president of exploration.

"I think we have a great relationship and this renewal is a continuation of that and is essential for both the park and Prairie Creek to reach each of their objectives to continue

this relationship," he said.

As part of the MOU the two groups formed a technical committee that meets periodically to work on aspects of the assessment and regulatory stage the mine is in. In between the meetings, either side is able to pick up a phone and discuss areas of concern, Taylor said.

Major changes

One of the major changes in the new MOU is it reflects the current regulatory stage that the mine is in, said Taylor. The MOU also shows how the expansion of the park changed the permitting jurisdiction related to the mine.

The mine now has two permittees: Parks Canada, which has jurisdiction over things in the park such as the mine's access road, and the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Parks Canada is also

participating as an intervener in the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board's permitting process.

Signing the renewed MOU wasn't a foregone conclusion for either party, said Rob Kent, Park Canada's field unit superintendent for the southwest NWT.

Both groups had the option not to continue with the MOU but, since the expansion, both Canadian Zinc and Parks Canada have acknowledged that they will work together, he said.

Through the MOU, Canadian Zinc continues to acknowledge the value the park has to Canadians, and to commit to managing the mine so it doesn't negatively effect the management and operation of the park, said Kent.

"It's a pretty unique situation in a national park setting," he said, referring to the mine.



photo courtesy of Canadian Zinc

Workers at the Prairie Creek Mine use heavy equipment to rehabilitate a road from the mine to the Liard Highway in 2010.