

Parks Canada pulling a fast one

"To pull a fast one" is defined as "to succeed in an act of deception," and disappointingly, it appears Parks Canada is doing just that.

We and other Northerners have been participating in good faith in discussions on the proposed Thaidene Nëné National Park. That means sharing our thoughts in public sessions and stakeholder sessions with Parks Canada staff.



GUEST Comment

Gary Vivian is president of the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines.

We told Parks Canada that the known mineral potential in Thaidene Nëné is much higher than they have let on. The reason is due to the paltry \$2 million Parks invested to investigate mineral potential in an area bigger than most countries. It's not even the value of an average NWT exploration program by industry standards. Cynically, one might conclude it would be a quick way to determine (incorrectly) there is little mineral value in the area.

We told Parks they missed occurrences and potential deposits, and that their mineral evaluation investment was insufficient. In a 2014 letter to their minister, we asked them to "invest time and effort to conduct additional mineral resource investigations, ensuring that any missing data that industry has identified is incorporated in establishing boundaries."

What did we get?

Recently, Parks Canada quietly posted a consultation and engagement report on their website. Buried in it are these skinny and puzzling words from the Chamber of Mines on mineral potential: "The mineral potential that exists in the proposed Thaidene Nëné area, and where potential deposits are located."

Huh?

This incomplete sentence certainly does not represent the concerns we raised, or our desire that more investigations be conducted. Nor would it alert the report reader on what Parks Canada is missing here.

Parks Canada then blithely concludes the report with: "99% of identified commenters are either in favour of, or neutral toward, the establishment of the national park reserve."

That's why one might feel they are pulling a fast one, paying lip service without actually listening to the message.

Maybe this is what's wrong with putting Parks Canada in charge of making parks – it's the wolf in charge of the sheep.

I encourage readers who participated in the process to go and read the report, and see if your comments have been correctly acknowledged.

Now let's see what they do about our other request: to establish corridors through the park to get access to mineral potential in the entire southeast NWT. Were you listening to that one, Parks Canada?