

## **CPAWS – Ottawa (Jill Sturdy, National Conservation and Outreach Coordinator)**

### **Protecting a National Treasure – Expansion of the Nahæâ Dehé- Nahanni National Park Reserve**

On June 18, 2009, parliament passed a Bill to expand Nahanni National Park Reserve to protect over 30,000 square kilometres of spectacular Boreal wilderness. This expansion increases protection of the South Nahanni watershed which supports a remarkable variety of biodiversity, including more than 700 species of vascular plants, 300 species of mosses and lichens, 48 species of mammals and 180 species of birds.

The expanded park now protects habitat for two populations of the threatened woodland caribou and over 500 grizzly bears.

The Dehcho First Nations whose traditional territory falls within the expansion have shown tremendous leadership in their vision to protect the South Nahanni watershed to conserve the land and its people for all time. In 2003, the Dehcho and Parks Canada entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to expand Nahanni National Park Reserve.

In addition, the Dehcho First Nations worked with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) in a shared vision to protect the South Nahanni watershed in an expanded national park reserve. The Dehcho supported CPAWS efforts to raise awareness and engage thousands of Canadians to speak out in support of protecting Nahanni.