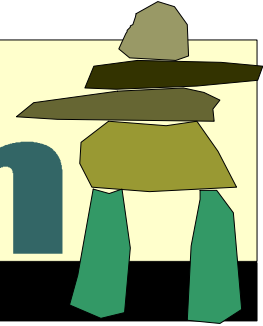


Economic Development & Tourism Research

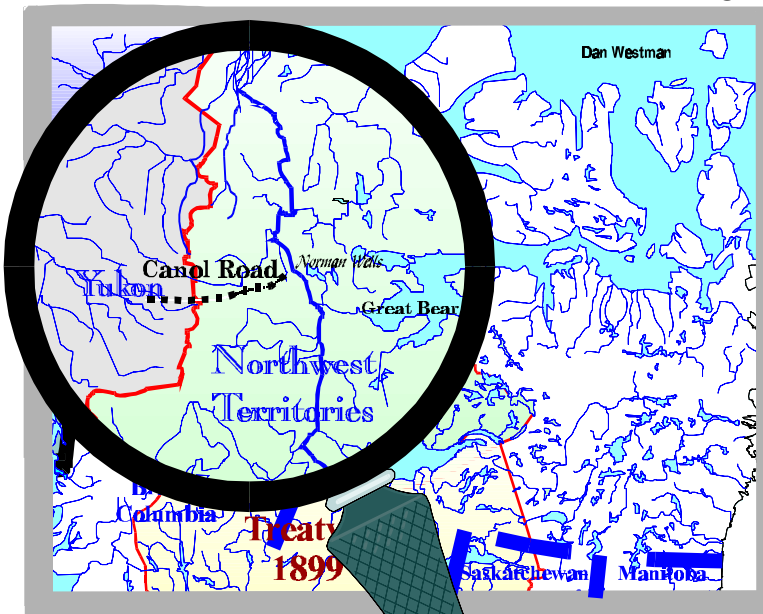
Policy, Planning and Human Resources



Tourism Along the Canol Trail

During the summer of 1994 Economic Development and Tourism conducted a special survey of tourists using the Canol Trail. The survey questions were the same as those used for the major "Exit" survey conducted the same year.

Figure 1: Location of the Canol



The Canol Trail is located within the Inuvik Region of the Northwest Territories. The "trail" was originally constructed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers about 50 years ago to act as a route for transporting oil from the Norman Wells area to a refinery in Whitehorse, Yukon.

By the time the pipeline and road were complete in 1944 they were no longer needed. The perceived Japanese threat to

Alaska had been countered and alternate supplies of oil were found for Alaska. Subsequently the pipeline was declared surplus and sold in 1947. The steel pipe and much of the equipment has been taken away. Parts of the road, buildings and equipment remain.

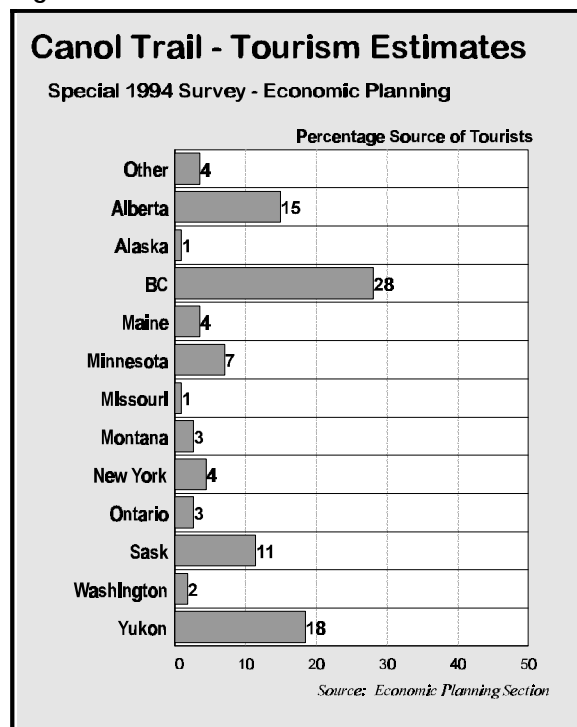
The site has since been designated a Heritage Trail by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The "Trail" begins on the western side of the Mackenzie river and winds its way through to the Yukon. Although the "Trail" is a significant tourist attraction, it is considered long and difficult, with frequent river crossings. For the hiker willing to meet these challenges, however, the "Trail" provides many opportunities to explore buildings and army camps, and ample opportunity to view a variety of wildlife.

The Survey

During the summer of 1994 the Department of Economic Development and Tourism completed a major survey of tourists leaving the NWT. As part of this survey, the Department of Renewable Resources administered a number of surveys to people traveling along the Canol Trail. In total 29 tourist parties were surveyed representing 114 tourists. In general, the survey may be considered a good representation of "tourists" using the "Trail".

The first survey was conducted July 8th, the last on September 1st, with a fairly even distribution of surveys over this 2 month period.

Figure 2:

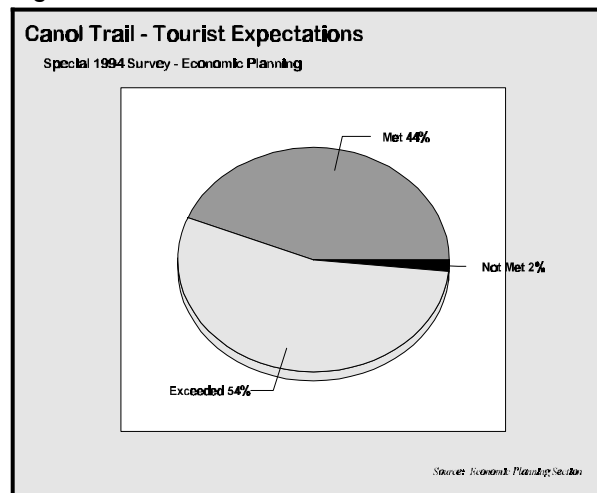


Origin of Visitors

Figure 2 shows the percentage distribution of tourists by their province or state of origin; tourists not from the US or Canada are grouped under the other "Other" category. The distribution of the market is similar to that in other western regions of the NWT.

Those markets closest to the Canol Trail, British Columbia, the Yukon and Alberta account for almost 2/3 of non-resident visitations. The current market is dominated by Canadians, which make up 75% of all visitors, with the largest number of US visitors coming from Minnesota.

Figure 3:



Rating the Experience

One question on the survey asked visitors to rate their overall visit to the Northwest Territories. Since expectations play an important role in determining how a person feels about an experience, visitors were asked how their trip compared to their expectations. Overall the experience of most travelers was very positive, with 54% of the people surveyed stating it exceeded their expectations. Only 2% felt disappointed.

Some comments included:

- "This trail is world class...If promoted I think it would attract international and Canadian hikers. A real wilderness adventure that I will recommend and do again myself"
- "Being in the country I wanted to see all my life, the experience is spiritual"
- "Excellent backpacking opportunities, wildlife viewing and mountain vistas. (However) access is becoming more difficult"

A number of visitors commented on the need to improve parts of the trail.

- "Better maintenance of the trail would facilitate more visitors to the area."
- "Its a shame that the history of the Canol has not been preserved and that road access to the trail hasn't been maintained."

Figure 4:

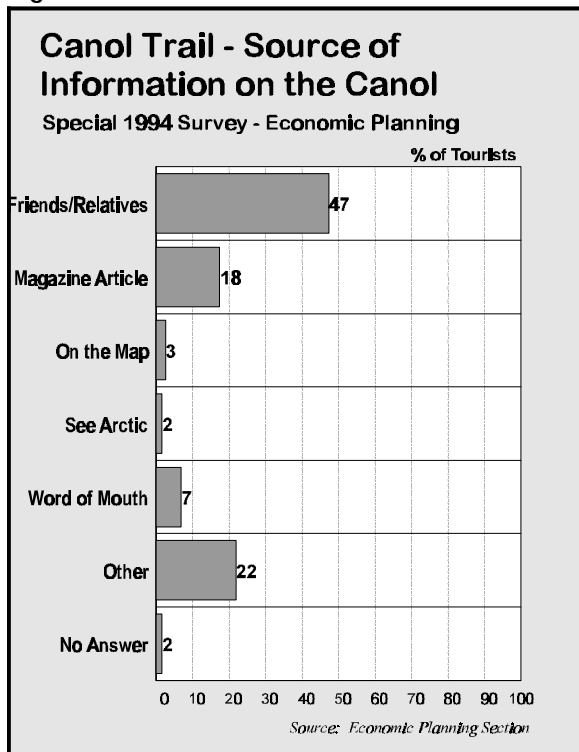
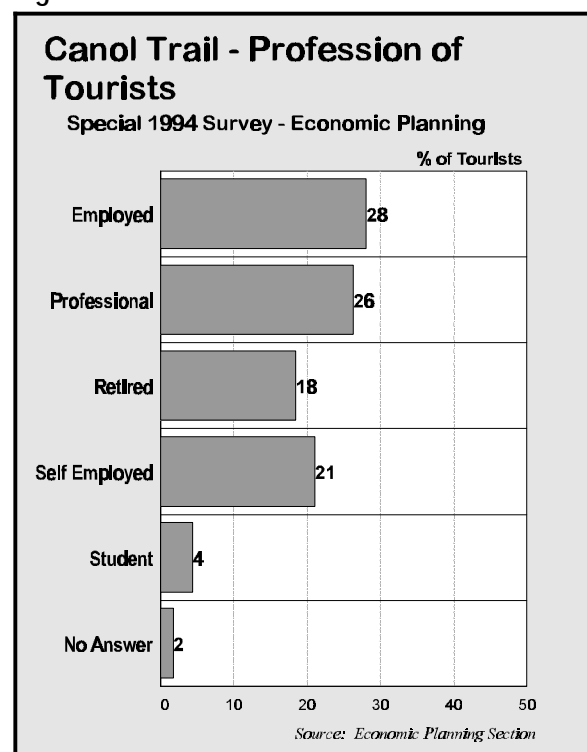


Figure 5:



Information Sources

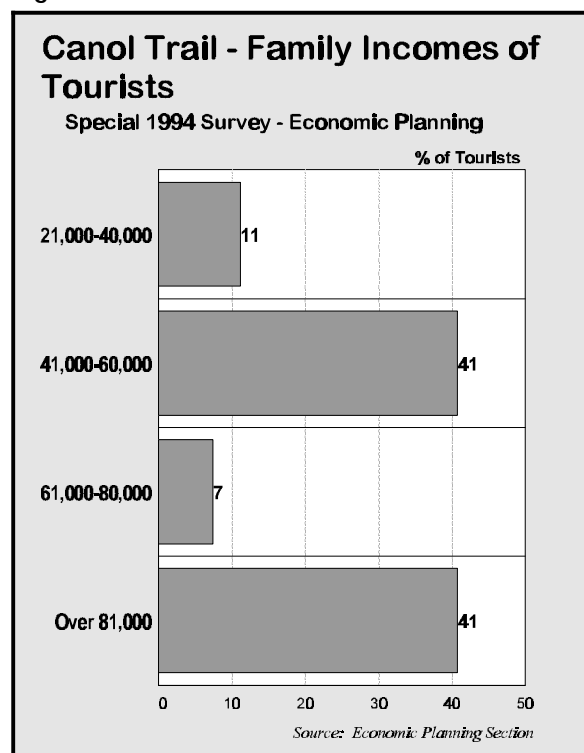
Figure 4 shows information sources visitors relied on in deciding to visit the Canol. The major influence was friends and relatives; almost half the people surveyed rated friends and relatives as the most important influence in deciding to visit the Canol Heritage Trail. Magazine articles were reported as the major factor by 18% of visitors. “Word of mouth” was also significant and reinforces the need to provide the best possible service to all tourists.

Professions and Incomes of Visitors

Figure 5 highlights the professions of visitors using the Trail. The two largest groups are employed people and professionals; as a group, professionals include certified accountants, dentists, physicians and lawyers. Compared to the Exit survey, the number of professional visitors is significantly higher. Around 18% of the visitors are retired; exactly the same as found in the 1994 Exit Survey.

Figure 6 shows the family incomes of people visiting the Canol Trail. Compared to the average tourist in the Inuvik region, visitors to the Canol have significantly higher incomes.

Figure 6:



Only 11% of visitors on the Canol have family incomes of less than \$40,000 compared to 34% of the visitors to the Inuvik Region.

Characteristics of the Market Segment

Overall we can expect visitors to the Canol area to be running their own business, either as a professional or small business. They tend to earn incomes in the high to middle range. We can expect this group to be influenced by the experiences of friends or relatives and to rely on magazine articles.

Proximity plays a major role in determining market size, especially within the Canadian market; the role of proximity is less evident with the US market; Alaska (the closest state) accounts for only 1% of visitors.

Market Interests

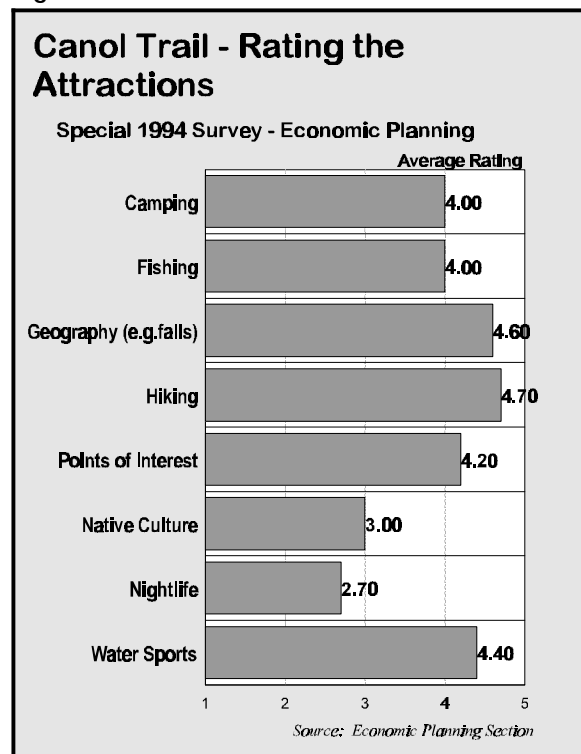
Visitors to the Canol were asked to rate their vacation interests on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents the highest level of interest and a rating of "1" signifies a very low level of awareness. The chart in Figure 7 shows the rating of visitors along the "Canol Heritage Trail".

In general, people using the "Trail" placed a high value on outdoor, recreational activity, and as expected, "Hiking" received the highest rating or level of interest. Visitors to the area also have a high level of interest in geography (falls, rock formations, rivers, etc.). Since this is a heritage site, people also have a high interest in "points of interest" which would include army camps, construction sites and equipment.

In deciding where to travel, visitors placed a relatively low importance on "Native Culture" and "Night life or Entertainment".

Compared to other tourists within the region, visitors to the Canol are less interested in "Native Culture" than tourists to the Inuvik region; within the Inuvik region, native culture was a highly rated attraction.

Figure 7:



Some of the comments included"

- "Excellent backpacking opportunities, wildlife viewing and mountain vistas. Access is becoming more difficult"
- "Highlights were low water conditions, great scenery, good wildlife...good historical aspect"
- "Spectacular scenery and time for reflection "
- "Superb experience and opportunity to see some of the remarkable offerings of the area - scenery and wildlife...Old Squaw lodge was excellent"

Rating the Services

Figure 8 provides a summary of the “score card” of services. The highest rating is 5 (Excellent) and the lowest is 1 (Very Poor). The lowest overall rating was reserved for roads; in this case, visitors are likely referring to the Yukon’s Canol Road which is open during the summer. Airports and air service also received a relatively low rating which may be a reflection of the cost associated with re-supply along the “Trail”. Two visitors, flying their own planes, complained about the poorly maintained strip at mile 222 on the Canol. These same visitors also experienced problems in Coppermine, where the local crew demanded a \$75.00 call-out fee to refuel the visitor’s plane even though they were still at the airport.

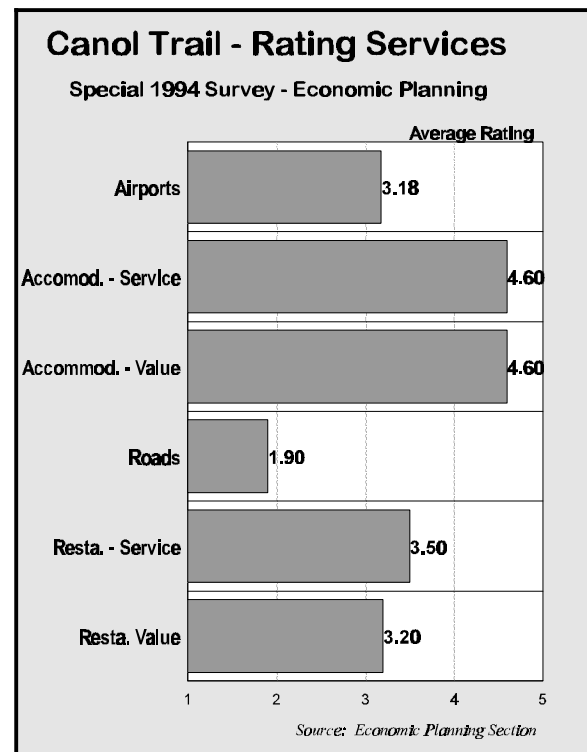
A significant number of visitors wanted to see improvements in the Trail. Examples of some comments included: *“Road access to the trail has not been maintained”*. A number of visitors also commented on the condition of the road, which is on the Yukon side of the Canol Trail; *“The Canol road was awful in places”*; *“some maintenance along the trail would facilitate hiking”*.

The highest ratings were reserved for accommodation services. In terms of value for money and service, accommodation received almost a perfect 5. This was a very high rating and significantly more than the overall regional rating.

Since most visitors along the trail stayed at the “Old Squaw Lodge”, this rating likely reflects an excellent level of service at this facility. *“Old Squaw’s a Great Place”*; *“Great hospitality at Old Squaw lodge”*; *“Very enjoyable stay at Old Squaw Lodge...However some maintenance on the Canol Road would facilitate visitors trips to this area”*

The ratings of restaurants, although above average, were less positive. Some of the ratings may reflect experiences outside the immediate vicinity of the Canol Trail; for example, on visitor complained there was no “restaurant service at Coppermine Inn”.

Figure 8:



Very few visitors commented on the availability of arts and crafts items or souvenirs, which may indicate a relatively low interest in these products. As with restaurants, some of these comments relate to problems outside the Canol area. For example, one party noted that “no craft shops were open in Tuktoyaktuk or Aklavik and no hours were posted”.

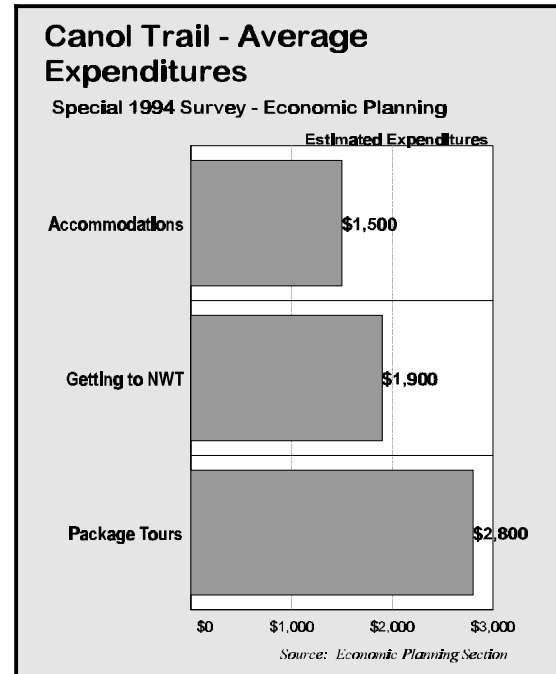
Expenditures

Due to the relatively low number of visitors along the Trail, detailed expenditure patterns could not be calculated. Figure 9 shows the general distribution of visitor costs between major groups. The largest single expenditure was on package tours, followed by the cost of getting to the NWT and Accommodations.

The cost of package tours was not seen as a problem, and visitors were impressed with the service and support:

“Impressive organization and tremendous amount of work involved in horse pack train...Spectacular scenery of a lifetime.”

Figure 9:



Recent Developments - Canol Heritage Trail

In November 1994 the Department of Economic Development and Tourism signed an agreement with the Sahtu land claim to develop a Territorial Park along the Canol Trail. A corridor of land plus a larger core area around the Dodo Canyon was transferred from the federal to Territorial Park administration in February 1995.

Over the next 2 years the department will be working with representatives of the Tulita Land Development Corporation to prepare plans, policies, budgets and schedules to prepare the trail and canyon to be a major tourism/travel destination.

The Territorial Parks system is well developed in the Western NWT, with a notable lack of facilities in the Sahtu. The Canol Trail/Dodo Canyon project will redress the balance. It is the largest park in the entire Territorial park system. Other large territorial parks are the Gwich'in near Inuvik, and Katannilik near Lake Harbour.

The route crosses through scenic sections of the Mackenzie Mountains, passes several International Biological program interest sites,

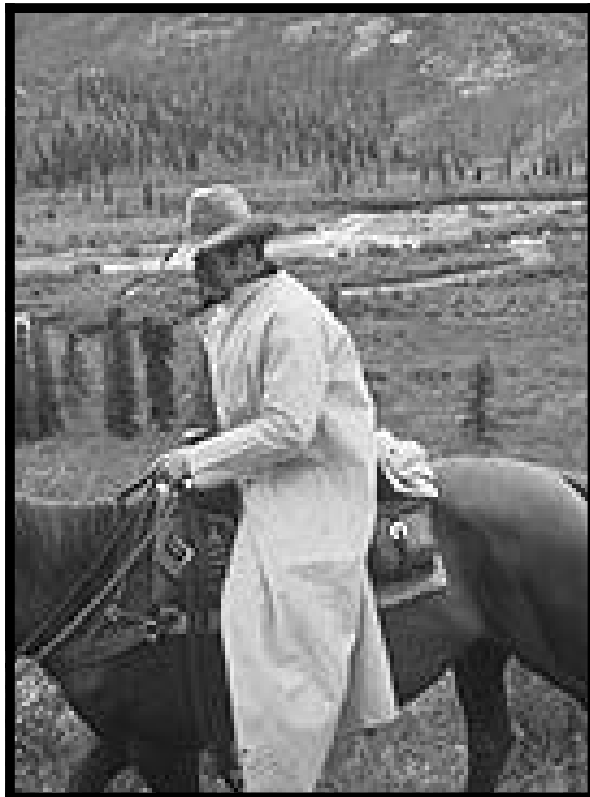
and features many historical artifacts from the remote past through to the Second World War.

With each year the original road and associated buildings are reclaimed by nature. In some places the route has disappeared. All bridges and river fords have been washed out. Over the next 10 years the Department will be transforming the remnants of the road into a hiking and mountain bike trail. This will involve a system of maps and markers, emergency shelters, group campsites and bridge cables. Many of the historic structures will be adapted to serve trail users.

In preparation for this work the department has compiled information from topographic and satellite maps, recorded historic structures, arranged archeological surveys and mapped potentially hazardous sites. Repeated surveys of current and potential users will be combined with this base information to guide the development of a management plan



Notes



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ALL ABOUT IT!**

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