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***Dried Meat/dried Fish - A Business Plan:  
Tourism Business Opportunities Study, Fort  
Mcpherson (2 Copies)  
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# **DRIED MEATS/DRIED FISH**

## **A BUSINESS PLAN: TOURISM BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES STUDY FORT McPHERSON, N.W.T.**

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## **BUSINESS PLANS - INTRODUCTION**

The development of any of the five suggested business as documented in the "Tourism Business Opportunities Study" Fort McPherson, N.W.T. could bring substantial economic and other benefits to the community. Spin off economic benefits may include **Co-op** gas, grocery, hardware, coffee shop or hotel business; tire repair and sales; craft sales; canvas shop "awareness" and sales to name only a few.

Other **benefits** from development of these business may include:

- pride of accomplishment;
- setting a positive example for other businesses in the community;
- training and experience of owners and staff which can be transferred to other businesses;
- exposure to visitors...a learning experience;

**FIVE BUSINESS PLANS ARE DETAILED AND BOUND SEPARATELY FROM THIS REPORT:**

- 1. Arts & Crafts**
2. Peel River Boat Tours
- 3. Dried Meat/Dried Fish**
- 4. Gwich'in Cultural Camp**
5. **Bed & Breakfast**

**EACH BUSINESS PLAN IS DETAILED UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS:**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
PROJECT DESCRIPTION  
COMPETITIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES  
MARKET ANALYSIS/MARKET CONSIDERATIONS  
OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAINING  
OPERATIONS  
MARKETING  
FINANCIAL  
LEGAL LICENSING, INSURANCE  
SOCIAL CULTURAL IMPACT  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS  
COMMENTS/CONSTRAINTS  
IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAME  
**BUSINESSPLAN "TO DO"**

APPENDICES

We suggest that before specific **Business Plans** are reviewed the main text of the "Tourism Business Opportunities Study Fort McPherson, N. W. T." be reviewed to **gain an overall** prospective.

In our detailing of the business plans we have attempted to strengthen the viability of each project through **cooperation** with one or more projects.

Some capital cost or marketing budgets may have a minimum and maximum. Money **actually** spent will then depend on the applicants own resources, his/her seriousness and available assistance.

At the completion of each Business Plan a “To Do” list suggests tasks to be completed in order of priority.

Brochures and related information on operations similar to the specific Tourism opportunities, where applicable, is found on the inside back cover of each Business Plan.

For any of these Business Opportunities we strongly suggest interested operators experience **first** hand, similar operations. Potential Bed & Breakfast operators to stay with Bed& Breakfast in Inuvik or Dawson; potential Gwich'in Cultural Camp developers to experience similar facilities (ie: Ste Marie among the Hurons in Ontario, Alaska Land in Fairbanks, Baker Lake N.W.T.)

For implementation of these projects assistance may be sought from one of a number of sources; refer to “Financial & Technical Resources.”

## IS THIS BUSINESS FOR ME?

Before entering into this business opportunity we must ask:

- **Am** I prepared to dedicate the time and effort to make it work?
- Do I have, or can I obtain the resources needed?
- Would I enjoy this type of business?
- Is this the type of business that I want?
- Would I gain more benefit and satisfaction from working as an employee... without the hardship and headaches involved with ownership?
- Am I qualified?
- Do I have the financial resources to provide equity?
- Will it compliment my lifestyle and other work activities?

## #3 DRIED MEAT/DRIED FISH

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A number of people in McPherson and upper MacKenzie area dry fish and caribou and sell primarily to a local domestic market.

This business development opportunity is ideal in a number of ways:

1. Individuals or families, whether young or old can participate;
2. Drying of fish and caribou is an integral part of the **Gwich'in (Dene)** Culture;
3. Fish and caribou both are an excellent food source; in recent years natural "lowfat: foods with no additives are increasing in demand;
4. A low capital cost industry using knowledge passed down from generation to generation;
5. As a part time, seasonal "cottage type" industry can supplement a number of families incomes leaving time to pursue other activities/interests such as crafts, trapping, hunting, carpentry etc.
6. The product - dried meat and caribou if uniquely packaged and marketed could be saleable to both the existing domestic, Dempster Highway, and **Inuvik** ( & other community) markets.

A goal of this project maybe five family groups realizing \$2,500.00 to \$10,000.00 each per year. In future years we suggest success be measured in terms of additional family groups selling more quality product. We suggest this not develop into a cooperate style of business but remain a small family type cottage industry.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To provide encouragement, **support** and direction for McPherson residents interested in the production of marketing of traditional country foods - primarily dried meat and dried fish.

We envision a number of individuals or families being involved. Success **lies** with individual effort, simplicity, a strong cultural activity.

The production component - catching and drying fish, caribou is seasonal. By producing a dried product marketing can be extended beyond the summer season.

Small sales stands or outlets run by any family member can sell a number of country/natural food items:

- fresh fish - char, arctic grayling, lake trout, pike, inconnu;
- dried caribo and fish;
- local berries (seasonal) and products made with business berry bannock, berry muffins, berry jams;
- smoked fish, smoked meat - jerky;
- pounded meat - pounded dried caribou meat;

## COMPETITIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

From our research there are 4 to 6 individuals or families seasonally active in producing and selling some **country** food product to a local domestic market. Sales are personal contacts or word of mouth.

Local production and sales also occur in most **Gwich'in** communities **while** Arctic Red has had a moderately successful road side stand next to the ferry crossing on the MacKenzie River selling dried fish.

**Ulu** foods in **Inuvik** presently closed down, had for years been active: gathering, purchasing, processing and marketing various country foods. There is no **country** foods outlet in **Inuvik** or any of the upper Mackenzie communities whereas some success has been met with country food stores in Yellowknife and **Iqaluit**.

One of the downfalls of country food related production and sales centres are a requirement for capital investment (meat cutters, saws, tables, freezers space, storefront). A distinct advantage of small scale, seasonal, family run operations is that capital requirements are minimal with quality of product nearly totally dependent on traditional skills.

## MARKET ANALYSIS/MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

Tourists seek samples of ethnic foods wherever they travel. Dried fish or caribou -if marketed properly in an ideal "travel food", a nutritious unique snack requiring little refrigeration.

With bus tour guests looking for \$15.00 items but sometimes willing to buy slightly higher priced souvenirs/samples, packaging and cost must reflect that.

Our research has found potential markets for small scale **country** foods - primarily fried fish and caribou include:

- bus tours;
  - individual highway travelers; campers, traveling Government workers, construction, trades;
  - canoeists, expedition, Peel River group tours, outfitters;
  - local domestic
- 
- Although production of dried meat and dried fish is substantial, the majority has been used domestically. Families produce for themselves, friends, and the needy elderly. If one wants to purchase dried meat or fish locally sources can be found with word of mouth. Tourists traveling the highway generally are not aware of the product and potential sales outlets do not stock it.

## **OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAINING**

Individuals or family groups would own and operate;

No formal, legal entities is required or do we suggest it.

Due-to anticipated low sales volumes per family the product is **G.S.T.** exempt.

Some hands on technical expertise would assist in areas such as unique **labelling**, written descriptions and packaging; marketing; quality control.

As the processes involved have been handed down through the generations need for "outside" expertise is minimal.

The Bands Economic Development Officer; A. **E.D.O.** - Dept of Economic Development and Tourism Ft. McPherson; Renewable Resources Development officer of the Dept. of Economic Development and Tourism, **Inuvik**; or a C. **E.S.O.** consultant; and Regional Dept. of Health representative - may assist in various ways.

## **OPERATIONS**

Fish are caught, cleaned and prepared for drying at numerous family fish camps along the Peel and its tributaries. Fish racks, nets, implements to clean and prepare fish and caribou are in place. Some minor additional equipment may be required by Dept. of Health - most likely for cleaning and packaging.

An individual family can dry fish at their camp and set up a small stand by the road, at one of the ferry crossings or in the community and sell the product to the public.

If unique, but standardized packaging (**ie**: canvas bag labels, and descriptions) is available for purchase through a central contact by any individual or family, the rest of the operation ( **ie**: production and sales may be handled easily by family groups). A cooperative approach is suggested for common needs.

A centralized cleaning, drying, smoking, packaging area in McPherson or at an established fish camp or camps central to others but reasonably adjacent to the community is recommended. Dependent on input from Dept. of Health officials, individual camps maybe used for production.

## **MARKETING**

Potential points of sales include:

1. **Road Side Stand** - McPherson Dempster Highway intersection; Peel River Ferry Crossing;
2. Through **established sales outlets** - Ft. McPherson Canvas Shop; Ft. McPherson Tourist information/booking **centre**; **Co-op** Hotel/coffee shop; RJ's bar; Campground Information **Centre**.
3. **Sales Stands at Public Events** - Midway Lake Music Festival, **Inuit** Circum Polar Conference July 1992 (**Inuvik**), Arts Festival (**Inuvik**),
4. **Personal sales** - domestic local sales to friends relatives in McPherson, Arctic Red **Inuvik**, etc.
5. **Target Market** - canoe trippers, expeditions, Peel River Boat Groups, Outfitters,
6. In conjunction with **other potential business** # 4 **Gwich'in** Cultural Camp and # 2 "Peel River Boat Tours".

Selling cooperatively through other sales outlets especially in conjunction with Northern products like Arts and Crafts can be done effectively in small, inexpensive stands or displays. Efficiencies of manpower are important.

A number of producers of dried meat and fish could cooperatively market their product through 1-2 outlets, this ensuring a constant source of supply. Those wishing to sell on their own could also do so at their own leisure and location.

Unique "made in the north: packaging could become a souvenir item to compliment the country food sample that it holds. A canvas (Ft. McPherson canvas shop) bag with caribou skin-strip tie label "Traditional **Gwich'in** Dried Fish" and brief description.

Description might include type of fish, processes for catching cleaning and natural drying (or **smoking**) at Peel River **family** camps, natural low fat, traditional uses as a high protein low weight travel **food**, how to store; suggestions for eating as a snack or with a meal.

Vacuum sealed bays with "sticky label" descriptions in attractive 2-3 colour.

### **MARKETING PROGRAM YEAR #1**

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>BUDGET</u></b>	
Press releases, public relations campaign in newspapers, magazines;	2,000.00	<del>5,000.00</del>
Cooperative Advertising with specialty magazine, country food outlets, W.A.V.A.;	1,000.00	<del>2,000.00</del>
Promotional display stands for project at sales outlets;	2,000.00	<del>3,000.00</del>
Signage - for prime sales outlets	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
	6,000.00	- <b>12,000.00</b>



## FINANCIAL ESTIMATES

- Standardized pricing of product would ensure a “fair” price to both the producer and the buyer. **The** buyer must feel they are receiving value for money spent and the producers time effort and traditional expertise must be recognized.
- Sales outlets may expect substantial markups to make it **worth** while to market the product (ie: the producer receives \$10.00 for a small bag of dried fish; the sales outlet sells for \$18-\$20 per bag.)
- We suggested Year #1 using two sized packages:
  1. one selling at \$15.00 or less; dried fish or dried caribou; a sample tasting, ideal for bus tours, individual or camper traffic;
  2. one selling at \$35.00 or less; primarily for individual or camper traffic willing to spend more both a sampling and a highway snack or supplement to a meal; for those that enjoyed an initial sample and now want volume.
- Capital costs will depend considerably on the requirements of the Dept. of Health.
- We suggest the majority of expenses be as a “Cooperative” group allowing individual families to continue their traditional processing skills at a central “camp” processing unit.

### CAPITAL COSTS

Cleaning storing equipment etc. as required by Dept. of Health for one processing location;	<b>5,000-10,000.00</b>
Canvas bags, <b>labelling</b> , product description @ \$2.00 per bag x 1,000 as a test;	2,000- 8,000.00
Training - primarily processing as required by Dept. of Health; introduction to any new equipment;	5,000-10,000.00

Once capital costs are covered we suggest that actual **operating expenses** be the responsibility of individual and family operations. They can, as they have for generations use their **labour** to produce the products. Sales can be centralized through someone representing the group of producers or they can sell on their own. Any **revenues** are theirs less a certain agreed payment per bag and **labelling** (packaging).

## LEGAL LICENSING INSURANCE

- A business **licence** from the McPherson Hamlet at minimum cost will allow **sales to** the public.
- The Dept. of Health may become more concerned with production techniques, cleanliness, storage of product etc. with increased volume of sales to the public.
- **There are few regulations pertaining** to dry fish/dried caribou for family use in a community. However, with the potential development of production for public sales the Government **N.W.T.** Dept. of Health has strong concerns - especially with major food related problems in the **Keewatin** and **Baffin** in 1991. The senior Environmental Health officer - **Inuvik** Region can be contacted at 979-2955. We suggest that **Dept.** be involved from the outset in working with McPherson residents to ensure the product is safe. The Dept. of Health's main concerns include Food Source, Handling, Location, Preparation, and Storage. Please refer to the "**Country Foods**" booklet and relating regulations. Although the regulations appear monumental the Dept. is interested in working closely with an interested group.
- Liability is a concern. Following proper procedures and regulations to ensure an attractive quality product is essential.

## SOCIAL CULTURAL IMPACT

Seasonal benefits to families selling country foods to a growing market can be substantial. As the activity is traditional with skills being handed down through generations - people can be proud to know and share those skills. It provides an opportunity to share an important part of the culture (ie Food) with visitors - bringing an increased knowledge of the Gwich'in people.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Drying of meat and fish takes place now and negative environmental impact is minimal.

## COMMENTS/CONSTRAINTS

- Adopting traditional methods of drying, smoking, to methods acceptable by Dept. of Health officials allowing public sales will take cooperation and patience. With the **Dept's** involvement at the early planning stages, frustrations at later stages should be avoided.
- Participants must be prepared to make required changes from the traditional methods to more stringent health standards allowing public sales; cleanliness is critical.
- Production, use, and exchange of Country Foods usually individual or family driven. To maximize potential for success interested people would have more effectiveness with a "group" approach.

## **IMPLEMENTATION/TIME FRAME**

As the majority of market potential is Dempster Highway sales **June** to **August** the process as suggested in the "Business Plan 'To Do' List" could begin immediately.

We suggest any production be done as a small scale "test project" in close conjunction with the Dept. of Health.

Dependent on the success of the "test: production and sales could begin immediately after open water and fishing begins.

## **BUSINESS PLAN "TO DO": DRIEDMEAT/DRIED FISH**

- Form a loosely knit group of individuals, families in McPherson interested in the expansion of country foods production and sales. Discussion of how to cooperatively work together, what assistance (ie: packaging - marketing) is required.
- As a group interested in public sales of dried fish/dried meat-e the intentions and goals and submit them to the N.W.T. Dept. of Health for comments and suggestions a copy of this business plan with minor modifications may surface. An official from the Dept. would be most willing to comment on the outline and to meet with the group in McPherson.
- With the Dept. of Health and other sources of assistance to chart out a step by step plan to proceed.
- Again with the cooperation of the Dept. of Health to initiate a Year #1 (1992 Spring Summer). Test Program with 2-3 of the most interested families.
- Evaluate Test Program and chart out direction for 1993 and beyond.
- Contact potential sales outlets and make arrangements for these outlets to sell the product of an agreement commission - consignment basis.