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**Western Arctic Tourism Strategy - Phase 3**

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# Western Arctic

## Tourism Strategy

Interim Report: Phase 3, Concept

**Western Arctic Visitors Association**  
Economic Development and Tourism



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## 1. PHASE III: THEME AND DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

### 1.1

#### OVERALL THEME

The analysis of the region's natural and cultural resources and the **identification** of tourism development opportunities suggests a number of images for the Western Arctic. **When** the results of the market analysis are matched to these resources and opportunities; certain 'themes' become evident. For instance the region is characterized by such well known features as the:

- o Mackenzie River
- o Mackenzie Delta;
- o Beaufort Sea (Arctic Ocean) and coastline;
- o Banks Island;
- o Dempster Highway;
- o Great Bear Lake;
- o **Canol Trail**; and
- o Herschel Island.

As well as such cultural features as:

- o **Inuit**, Dene, Metis and **caucasian** culture and history;
- o oil and gas exploration;
- o northern development and administration; and
- o arts and crafts.

The market analysis also indicates that visitors to the region include:

- o rubber tire travelers (R.V., automobile, motorcoach);
- o hunters;
- o anglers;
- o outdoor adventure travelers; and
- o business travelers.

The majority of the visitors arrive by the **Dempster Highway** via an **automobile or recreational** vehicle. They are interested in experiencing the native culture, the Arctic Ocean, history, midnight sun, **Arctic Circle**, scenery and indigenous wildlife. The theme must therefore reflect both these natural and cultural resources and the visitor's expectations and expressed interest in the region.

Six optional themes or images have been considered:

- o **Inuit** Culture/History;
- o **Dene/Metis** Culture/History;
- o Beaufort Sea/Arctic Ocean;
- o **Dempster** Route;
- o Mackenzie River; and
- o Mackenzie **Delta**.

Unfortunately each one of these themes applies **only** to a portion of this vast region. Even if the Mackenzie River and **Delta** are considered together, visitors to one (for example, the Bear Area) rarely visit the Delta area. Since it is not possible to generate a single theme that expresses the entire region it seems necessary to consider two distinct yet mutually cooperative themes.

The first two, **Inuit** and Dene Culture although very popular would not be appropriate because they are also marketed by other regions. For example, **Inuit** culture is a significant part of the product in the Arctic Coast, **Baffin** and Keewatin Regions. Similarly **Dene** and **Metis** Culture are found in the Big River and Northern Frontier Regions. The '**Arctic**' (circle/coast) is also **common** to three other regions and the Yukon. The difference with the 'Arctic Experience' in the **Western** Arctic Region is that it is accessible by the **Dempster** Highway. The Mackenzie River is usually only experienced by those who visit the 3 communities in the Bear Area so it does not have a common connection with the **northern** or 'Arctic' (Arctic Ocean) portion of the region.

It is therefore proposed to have two themes for the **Western Arctic**. This is the only N.W.T. region to have two distinct themes but there is precedent for developing and promoting a large area with multiple themes. In fact, it is increasingly common as market segmentation in the industry becomes more clearly defined. For instance, in B.C. it is no longer appropriate to sell Vancouver Island as merely an Island destination. It is made up of several **distinct destinations** areas (e.g. **Pacific** Rim, North Island and Victoria) and each one has a particular theme.

Likewise, the **Western Arctic** has two **distinct** themes:

- o the Accessible Route to the Arctic (Ocean and Circle); and
- o the Mighty Mackenzie

They are reached by quite different means and appeal to different segments.

The 'Accessible Arctic' appeals for the most part, to the rubber tire traffic while the 'Mighty Mackenzie' including Great Bear Lake is a pristine, world class fishing, canoeing, hunting, and hiking paradise for the pure outdoor adventure enthusiasts.

## 1.2

### **SUBTHEMES**

In order to recognize all the important resources of the region as well as respond to the major market segments it is possible to have additional **subthemes** connected with the two principal themes. The possible **subthemes** include:

- o the Accessible Route to the Arctic
  - **Inuit** culture/history
  - **Dene/Metis** culture/history
  - Arctic Coastline
  - Mackenzie Delta
  - Arctic Circle
  - Banks Island

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<sup>1</sup> The former applies to what is known as the Delta and Beaufort areas while the latter is defined by the Bear or Sahtu area.

0 the **Mighty Mackenzie**

- **Dene/Metis** culture
- Mackenzie Mountains
- **Canol** Trail
- Great Bear Lake
- Arctic Circle

There are some obvious, overlapping themes such as the 'Arctic Circle', which also goes through the Bear area, but the vast majority of those who experience this attraction do so on the Dempster Route to the 'Accessible Arctic'.

As the study progresses and individual development opportunities become more clearly defined, it will be possible to precisely describe these **subthemes**. However their present identification is important to outlining the overall development concept.

## 2. OVERALL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The Development Concept is the foundation of a master development plan. It sets the framework for the long term orientation of the strategy. Development opportunities may change or be **modified** over the **life** of a strategy, but the focus of the development concept remains constant.

The concept for the Western **Arctic** will **define** in general terms, the long term development for the region. It will also respect the **community-based** tourism approach of Travel Arctic. Each community **within** the Western Arctic will be given a **specific** function or theme **within** the overall context of the region.

### 2.1

#### THE COMPONENTS

A development concept is made up of the following components:

- o Service Areas - contain concentrations of services such as lodging, food, automobile repairs, retail stores. They may or may not include groups of tourism attractions.
- o Activity Areas - are locations for major groups of tourism attractions and activities.
- o Staging Areas - are points of congregation and departure to other **areas/communities/attractions**. For instance, in the **Inuvik** staging area, bus tours may debark, overnight and leave for trips to **Tuktoyaktuk**. In addition, **Tuktoyaktuk** can be a staging area for trips to the **pingos, whalewatching, boat cruises, etc.**
- o Access Corridors and Linkages - bring tourists into the region and provide movement between points of interest or communities.

The first three are all located in the various communities throughout the region. Thus reinforcing the **community-based** tourism concept.



Since the importance of a development concept is to give focus and framework to the Master Plan, it is essential to create a certain hierarchy or order of magnitude distinction between the various **staging, activity** and service areas and corridors.

For these reasons they are defined as primary, secondary and tertiary. 'Primary' of course designates the areas or communities that have and will continue to attract the greatest **number** of tourists. For **this** reason **Inuvik** is the primary area throughout the **region** and **Norman Wells**, which attracts fewer visitors, is second. However within its own Bear area, Norman Wells is clearly a primary area. Of course this could all change if a highway was built to Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope.

The Development Concept for the **Western Arctic** is defined by the following components.

### **2.1.1 Service Areas**

#### **Primary Service Area**

- **Inuvik**

**Inuvik** provides **in excess** of 75% of all the lodging (fixed roof, camping), food services, vehicle services, retail stores, hospital services in the **Western Arctic**. It **will** continue to serve the high number of visitors who arrive via the Dempster Highway.

#### **Secondary Service Area**

- **Norman Wells**

As the first stop on the main air corridor to the region as well as a staging area for the **Canol** Trail and surrounding communities, Norman Wells is a secondary service area within the Western Arctic but a primary service area to the Bear area. Due to the previous activities of the oil and gas exploration it has the second largest tourism plant in terms of hotels/restaurants. The final Master Plan will reflect the importance of increasing tourism to Norman Wells in order to maximize the benefits to these existing operators.

- Fort McPherson

Although Fort McPherson has very few services, it is strategically located **along** the Dempster Highway and potentially could be a secondary service area between **Dawson City** and **Inuvik**. Steps have already been made to improve fixed roof **accommodation**, there is an excellent campground at the Peel River and additional garage and restaurant services would complete its function as a secondary service area.

### **Tertiary Service Area**

All other communities have or potentially **could** have the mix of services to be designated as tertiary service areas. Although they may not all have restaurants (e.g. **Aklavik**) or lodging (Arctic Red River) they all have a **basic** level of service to attract tourists.

## **2.1.2 Activity Areas**

### **Primary Activity Area**

- **Inuvik**

Although no **community** offers a great number of activities for tourists, **Inuvik** represents the greatest potential because of its relatively high volume of visitors. Potential activities include boat tours, native culture, and overnight trips to the communities. The Western Arctic Visitors **Centre** will also encourage greater levels of activity because of its marketing function.

### **Secondary Activity Area**

- **Norman Wells**

This **community's** location, adjacent to the potentially popular **Canol Trail**, and Mackenzie Mountains will provide a strong focus to tourism activities. This will be supported by such activities as sportfishing, oil and gas interpretation, etc. A proposed visitor's **centre** will strengthen Norman Wells' position as an activity area.

### - Tuktoyaktuk

This **community's** unique location on the Arctic Ocean and relatively close proximity to **Inuvik** suggests a number of opportunities to make **it** an important secondary **activity** and emphasis could be placed on marine-based **activities** (**whalewatching**, boat tours), as well as the nationally significant Pingo Park.

### - Fort MacPherson

This is the first native community on the Dempster Highway. Consequently it could become a stop over if activities such as arts and crafts, native foods, trips on the Peel River, local entertainment, etc. were developed.

### **Tertiary Activity Area**

All other communities are tertiary activity areas and usually focus on just one or two activities:

- e.g. Arctic Red River - arts and crafts and fish camp  
 Fort Franklin - sportfishing  
 Fort Good Hope - native culture, hunting

### **2.1.3 Staging Areas**

#### **Primary Staging Area**

##### **- Inuvik**

Approximately 80% of all traffic comes through **Inuvik**, which is the point of departure for most of the tours, specifically to **Tuktoyaktuk**, and **Aklavik** which together account for 95% of all day tours in the region. As the terminus to the increasingly popular Dempster Highway **it** will continue to be a primary staging area to **communities** and attractions in the Delta and Beaufort Area, especially those along the popular Arctic Coastline (**Paulatuk**, Sachs Harbour, **Tuktoyaktuk** and Herschel Island). Its combination of services and activities will maintain its primary service function in the Western Arctic.

## Secondary Staging Area

### - Norman Wells

Norman Wells is clearly the primary staging area for the entire Bear area. Its strategic location on the Canadian Airlines route suggests that it will continue to be the point of departure for most hunters/anglers as well as hikers on the Canol Trail. Visitors to Fort Norman, Fort Good Hope and Fort Franklin will largely pass through Norman Wells.

## Tertiary Staging Area

All other communities are staging areas for the natural/cultural resources and activities that surround their respective hamlet. For instance, Sachs Harbour would be a staging area for the variety of wilderness tours on Banks Island, Aklavik for hunting trips to the Richardson Mountains and Fort Good Hope for fishing trips to the surrounding lakes.

### 2.1.4

#### Access Corridors

##### Primary Access Corridor

###### - Dempster Highway

The Dempster Highway is unquestionably the major access route into the region accounting for about approximately 75% of the traffic. It also has the greatest potential for growth. It appeals to a number of market segments and is linked to the marketing efforts of the Yukon Territory and specifically the 50,000 tourists presently traveling to Dawson City.

##### Secondary Access Corridor

###### - Yellowknife - Norman Wells - Inuvik

Air travel, via Yellowknife is the second most popular mode of access into the region, although significantly lower than along the Dempster Highway. Growth on this corridor will only take place with the development of high quality packages particularly on the Canol Trail, Banks Island, Tuktoyaktuk and Fort Franklin.

### Tertiary Access Corridors or Linkages

- **Inuvik** to Tuktoykatuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk;
- Norman Wells to Fort Good Hope, Fort Norman and Fort Franklin; and
- **Yellowknife** to Fort Franklin.

There are also minor access opportunities from:

- **Yellowknife** to Holman to Sachs Harbour and Inuvik; and
- Whitehorse to Inuvik (air).

### 3. COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITY CONCEPT

Each community will match its unique natural and cultural resources with the overall regional themes and development concept. In order to respect the integrity of each community, as well as respond to the variety of market segments, it is possible to suggest a distinct focus for each community. In some cases more than one primary tourism activity may be suggested for a community. For instance it is not necessary to suggest that wilderness tours are more important in **Sachs Harbour** than sport hunting. In addition, secondary themes are sometimes appropriate for certain communities.

Designating a particular orientation for a **community** does not imply that **it is locked into a rigid description**. The purpose is however, to create an integrated and balanced development plan throughout the region, as well as promote **intercommunity** collaboration. The latter is potentially achieved, for instance, by two adjacent communities offering complementary activities in an overall two-community package.

The following is proposed for each community:

#### DELTA AREA

##### Inuvik

Theme - Services/Staging Area  
Mackenzie Delta Activities

Subtheme - Native Culture  
Administration **Centre**  
Special Events

##### Aklavik

Theme - wilderness tours to Richardson Mountain  
Mackenzie Delta Activities  
History

Subtheme - Sport Hunting (Richardson Mountains)  
Sportfishing  
Arts and Crafts

Fort McPherson

Theme - Visitor Services  
 - Historical Interpretation

**Subtheme** - Sport Hunting  
 - **River** Tours  
 - Campground

Arctic Red River

Theme - Arts and Crafts  
 - Native Culture (Fish Camps)

**Subtheme** - Mackenzie River Tours  
 - Arctic Red River Tours

**ARCTIC COAST (BEAUFORT) AREA**Paulatuk

Theme - Nature Tours  
 - **Inuit** Lifestyle

**Subtheme** - Sportfishing  
 - Arts and Crafts  
 - Coastal Tours  
 - Sport Hunting

Sachs Harbour

Theme - Sport Hunting  
 - Banks Island Wilderness Tours

**Subtheme** - Staging Area for Future National Park  
 - **Inuit** Lifestyle

Tuktoyaktuk

Theme - Arctic Ocean Cruise  
 Cultural Inclusion  
**Pingos** Tours

**Subtheme** - Oil and Gas Interpretation  
 Sport Hunting  
 Sportfishing (Eskimo Lakes)

BEAR AREANorman Wells

Theme - Canol Trail  
Staging Area

**Subtheme** - Oil and Gas Interpretation  
Arts and Crafts “  
Mackenzie River Tours

Fort Franklin

Theme - Sportfishing

**Subtheme** - Dene Lifestyle  
- History

Fort Norman

Theme - Sport Hunting  
Wilderness/River Tours

**Subtheme** - Dene Lifestyle

Fort Good Hope

Theme - Dene Culture  
- River Tours (Birdwatching)

**Subtheme** - Sport Hunting

Colville Lake

Theme - Sportfishing  
- Dene Lifestyle



# WESTERN ARCTIC

## Tourism Strategy

Western Arctic Visitors Association  
Economic Development and Tourism  
Government of the Northwest Territories

### LEGEND

- Regional Boundary
- Primary Access Route
- Secondary Access Route
- Primary Area
- Secondary Area

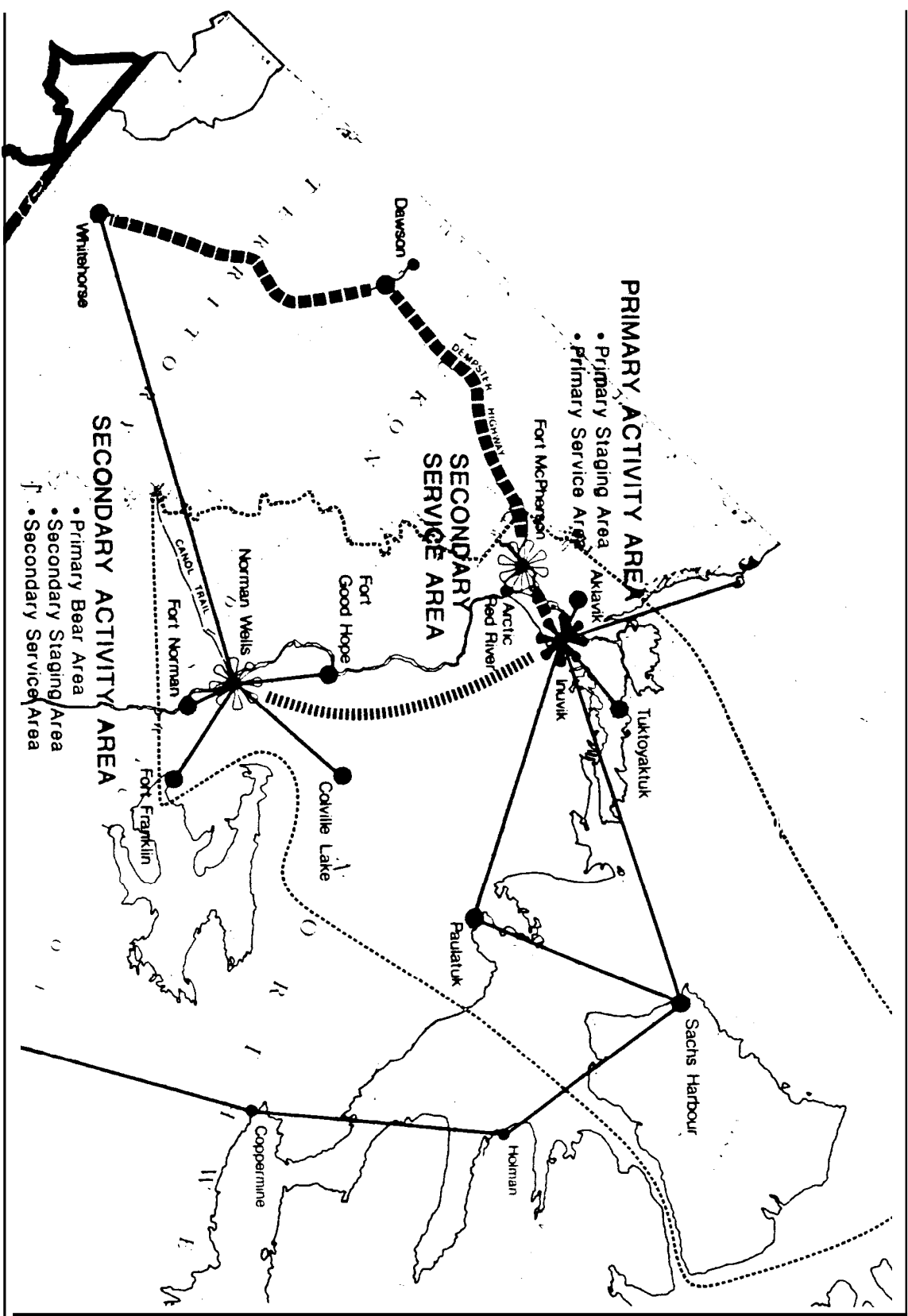
**Development Concept**

date 1987

Scale

Map made by M. A. B. and Associates  
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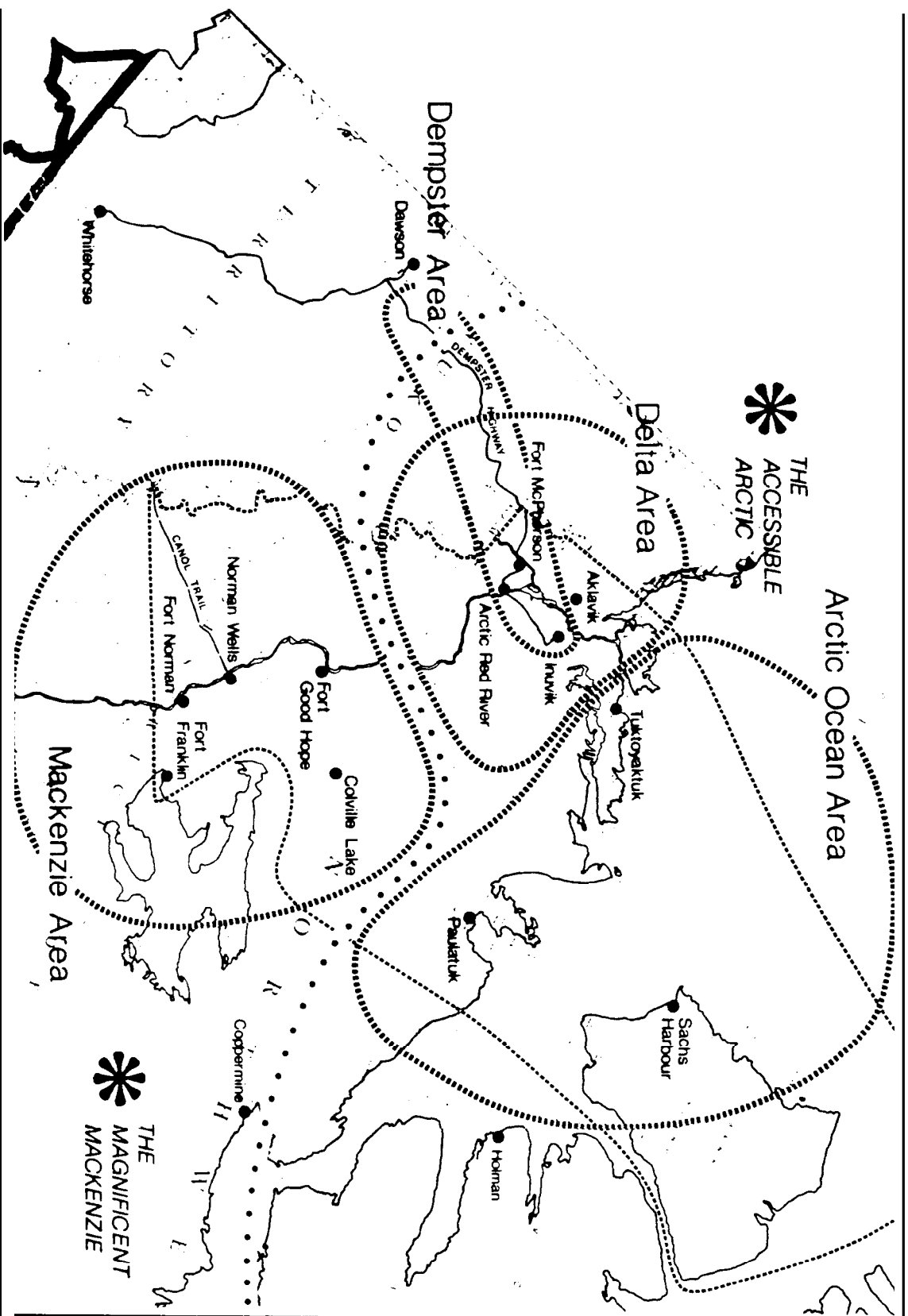
# WESTERN ARCTIC

## Tourism Strategy

Western Arctic Visitors Association  
Economic, Development and Tourism  
Government of the Northwest Territories

### LEGEND

- Regional Boundary
- Sub-Region
- Theme
- Area/Corridor Boundary



## Attraction Concept

date 1987  
scale

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