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***Liard-mackenzie Regional Tourism
Strategies***

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TOURISM RESOURCE

BASE SUMMARY AND ALTERNATIVE

STRATEGIC **APPROACHES** TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

LIARD - MACKENZIE TRAVEL CORRIDOR, N.W.T.

~~CONFIDENTIAL ONLY~~

JANUARY, 1985

- Secondary to the corner
specialty market such as
hunting, fishing, mountaineering
ETC. should BE INVESTIGATED
by segment & impact .
- PUT THESE LADS ON TRACK !

1.0 TOURISM RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The following chapter summarizes many of the key highlights considered important in the selection and implementation of a tourism strategy for Big River Country and the individual communities. The key highlights where appropriate have been mapped. Within each community tourism plan, detailed text is being prepared identifying and analyzing key resources and related information.

The availability and level of detail of information varies substantially with respect to subject matter. Additional detail is being received on a regular basis allowing for the development of a comprehensive understanding of the region and its communities. Draft final chapters of the resource sections included in each community plan will be prepared prior to the spring meetings with the Steering Committees and individual communities.

1.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

Data Base

- Adequate for strategic planning with the exception of fishery resources data required to direct the location and scale of lodge development and outcamps. Further, data on big game outfitting is considered confidential by GNWT and not available to consultants for assessment of community opportunities.

Observations - Assessment

- . Landscape characteristics vary dramatically from east to west (lake to mountain environment) ; the location of existing roads are not in close proximity to the areas of most outstanding or unique scenery.
- . Long distances over gravel roads occur between major landscape features of economic significant or interest to tourist=. The most important features (destination oriented) are accessible primarily by air.
- . The size and scale of the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers, Great Slave Lake are noteworthy features of interest to tourists. (vehicular and tourbus).
- . Victoria Falls and natural features of Nahanni National Park are the most outstanding or unique features but are not marketed or developed for the regions primary markets. Other falls could be developed as destination or pass-through attraction= and which lie in close proximity to the Mackenzie Highway. .
- . The vast and undeveloped character of the region is of interest to southern tourists. Unique fauna such as the buffalo adds further interest for the traveller.
- . Climate - - the extreme cold temperatures in the eastern section of the region in the winter limits outdoor activities: this constraint is somewhat reduced along the Mackenzie mountains with more predictable snow patterns and higher temperature=. The high summer season is relatively short although the area benefits from long day light hours which in itself may appeal to visitors and private development of certain specialty activities.
- . Rivers and lakes located in close proximity to existing

highway routes have limited sport fishing potential to attract the non-resident rubber-tire traffic.

- Rivers in the western section have significant canoeing potential although many are considered dangerous and unable to be used during certain periods of the year and are difficult to access (limited landing sites). Canoeing and rafting on the Nahanni are however some of the strongest existing tourist activities and images associated with the area.

USUALLY A NEGATIVE IMAGE IS ASSOCIATED WITH HUNTING

Ragged Range is Considered attractive to non-resident climbers. The numbers of climbers is considered small although increasing annually through Tungsten.

Big game hunting provides an important wilderness image to the region. Economic benefit to the region from this activity are generally unknown.

PERMITS FOR TREE LINE FLORA - THAT ISN'T BEING HIGHLIGHTED IN NEIGHBOURING REGIONS
WHAT IS BEING CONSIDERED LARGE - FURTHERMORE IS THIS TYPE OF TOURISM WE WANT.

The region contains few specialized sites with unique natural resources with economic potential such as the hot springs in Nahanni National Park that will draw large numbers provide commercially viable businesses for local communities.

Key natural attractions such as Whittaker Falls, Lady Evelyn Falls, and Blackstone River have been partially developed by the Territorial Government. Future resource oriented development and natural resource attractions such as touring into the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary, river-lake resources for camping and sport fishing, ledge development in Mackenzie Mtns. and river rafting - jet boating are potential economic development opportunities for local communities

WHAT'S MISSING - SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

BUT ARE THE
OTHER REGIONS
CAPITALIZING ON
THESE NATURAL RESOURCES
- OR CAN NOT DEVELOP
UNIQUE POINT OF DIFFERENCE
IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS
STATEMENT A THOROUGH
ASSESSMENT OF
ALASKA PRODUCT SHOULD
HAVE BEEN MADE

. The Liard-Mackenzie Region has the disadvantage that its natural resources are not often uniquely different or as attractive as those found along the Alaska or Cassiar Highways (eg. mountain scenery); thus, this region has few competitive advantages to capture some of the Alaska pass-through traffic. Strong programming along the corridor in terms of natural and human history interpretation sites would help to strengthen the resource opportunities.

. Conflicts of interest and land use policy matters have in the past and may continue in the future, to affect in a negative matter- the planning and use of the region's natural resources to support tourism developments.

1.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Data Base

- . Adequate to access tourism potential

Assessment

- . Slavey cultural heritage are presently not programmed or planned for tourism development.
- . Continued growth and awareness of the popularity of native cultural events is occurring throughout North America.

UPDATE

TAKE IT FURTHER - WHY IS THIS THE CASE

STRATEGY ON WHERE TO PROCEED NEXT IS REQUIRED.

Little development/marketing of Slavey and non-Slavey cultural events and attractions occurs beyond the local communities although potential exist in specific communities.

A desire to further develop the cultural resources was found to exist in most communities.

AGAIN VALIDATE.

- . Continued archaeological research on early communities and other features such as trading is of strong interest to tourist traffic.

?

- . Limited competition - intervening opportunities occurs in the surrounding region with other groups.

HOW DO WE OVERCOME THIS?

Handicrafts produced are of high quality although are often considered over-priced by the market.

1.3 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Data Base

- . Adequate for tourism assessment

Observations - Assessment

*VALIDATE
HOW DOES THIS
AFFECT COMPETITORS
OFFERINGS.*

- . Strong and diverse themes on northern settlement, fur trade, river transportation, exploration, gold mining, petroleum industry of interest to Canadian and U.S. visitors.
- . Metis - Slavey history - legends (data on interpretive potential unknown).
- . Exciting legends associated with travel on the Nahanni River is of interest to travelers.
- . High potential for commercialization and interpretation of historical resource by residents will require specialized training and capitalization + or the construction of interpretive centres.
- . Historical sites or areas must be planned in a systematic framework both along the highway corridor= and at communities and included in other elements of the tourist infrastructure to increase user appeal.
- . Historical themes may be applied to different sections of the corridor (e.g. Headless Valley-Nahanni Legends-Nahanni Butte: Fort Simpson-River Transportation/Fur Trade; Ft. Providence-Missionaries/Exploration;)

INTERP.
Blackstone?

Special purpose mapping is required identifying historical features (e.g. trading post) throughout Big River Country for promotional purposes.

- . Natural history interpretive theme sites are available between Enterprise and Fort Providence (eg. forestry tower site and McNally Creek); Fort Providence to Fort Simpson (3 sites including Whittaker Fall=): Fort Simpson-Fort Liard (1 site between Blackstone & Fort Liard); one site on the Mackenzie south of Wrigley.
- . Mining museum and tours potentially available at Tungsten although considerable negotiation will be required with the mining company.
- . Mountain climbing - backcountry travel exhibit at Tungsten and Nahanni Butte would increase exposure.
- . Re-enactment of historical occurrence at river communities associated with Hudson's Bay and fur trade explorations will increase appeal of communities.

Suggesting many themes, but what is the major one that ~~we~~ could be used to promote the whole route, especially considering that Yukon sells history

1.4 TOURISM FACILITIES

Data Base

- Accommodation -- marginally adequate for strategic planning regarding location and type of facility for physical planning purposes but inadequate data as yet for financial analysis. No summarized data on accommodation occupancy.

Does this mean there isn't any info OR consultant does not wish to add them up & do. See D 166 in b

- Service centres -- adequate data to classify and assess ability to serve various sectors of the tourism industry.

Don't make

- Park system - - marginal information on use; data available on infrastructure.
- Special commercial facilities -- Data available on type and location but original research required regarding markets and financial and operating characteristics.
- Transportation -- Data available on traffic flows.

- Assessment

Without occupancy stats how can you suggest that traffic can be accommodated

Fixed-roof accommodate on general 1 y marginally adequate in size to accommodate tour bus traffic as well as summer/winter events that could be established. Tours must "overnight" outside study area at places such as Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Nelson. Some communities have no fixed-roof accommodation.

WHY?

- Accommodation primarily geared toward commercial and government business rather than tourist traffic. Accommodation and associated hotel services infrequently tied (marketed) with community/regional events or attraction%.

AGREE.

- The quality of the accommodation base with certain exceptions is below that found in adjacent areas - presently unattractive to stay in region. Not situated in scenic areas or exhibiting any unique characteristic that would be attractive to the visitor.

- Food services limited in number, scope size and considered marginal in quality. Some unique foods being sold to the public (Fort Providence).

WOULD GUESS LOCAL EVENTS ARE PRIMARILY FOR THE COMMUNITIES & MINIMAL OUTSIDERS ATTENDED.

Current lack of planning of events/attractions to support accommodation during low use periods.

- Lack of available fixed-roof accommodation during summer season to serve tourists due to demands by industry and government. Preference indicated by hotel-motel operators to serve industry-government who present fewer problems and tend not to be as price conscious as tourists.

✓

- Vehicular access only recently becoming available to communities throughout region.
- Packaged information at the community level is currently not developed. Information on community services / activities/ attractions is required and should be made readily accessible (information centres, airports, gift shops) to generate new markets.

address profile
to analyze this
market aspect

National park experiences oriented to restricted
Speciality markets: policies regarding accessibility,
use of park lands and visitor service facilities do not
encourage tourists to visit region. Parks Canada
policies are having a negative impact on capital
investment in the Park and adjacent lands.

- . Unique images associated with Nahanni National Park integrated with appropriate development of visitor services, and ground, water and air tour services would dramatically increase use by speciality, non-resident and resident family, and tour bus markets.
- . Territorial parks require updating of programmes and facilities at key sites along highway corridors that are capable of providing both a unique experience and encourage visitors to stay longer in region. Territorial parks have potential to attract resident short-term use. Limited commercialization except at Blackstone. Interpretive (audio-visual) limited to Blackstone.
- . Special sport fishing lodge facilities not operated, marketed or financed in a manner that would encourage use by resident or non-resident markets (Trout Lake lodge). Major changes and improvements required to develop a viable operation. Other specialized lodges (water or land) have not been developed to attract specialized markets.
- . Ferries across Liard and Mackenzie Rivers provide a unique transportation service to tourists.
- . Completion of an all-weather highway to Wrigley will

create new opportunities for services in Wrigley, demand for services in Fort Simpson and further access to natural resources (e.g. Root, Redstone, North Nahanni Rivers).

- . Improved road access to Jean-Marie River has a potential positive economic impact on the community although strong programming is required to obtain desired social economic impact.
- . Development of a visitor service centre is required at the junction of Highway 7 and the Alaska Highway west of Fort Nelson. More information services required at bus and airport terminals and major attractions both inside and outside the region. Major shopping facilities situated adequate to but outside the planning area (Hay River-Yellowknife).
- . Services for tourist oriented commodities are limited or unavailable in many communities. Night entertainment is unavailable in most communities, and where available, is limited to hotel beverage rooms. Camera film as a ubiquitous tourist item is limited in terms of film size, etc.
- . Limited indoor facilities to attract region-wide tournaments (eg. basketball, curling).
- . Municipal recreation facilities often in disrepair and uninviting to the visitor. Softball facilities predominate summer facility.

1.5 **EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS**

Data Base

- . Marginally adequate for planning but not for financial analysis - community economic impact assessment.
- . Sufficient information available to form observations regarding characteristics and broad implications on tourism industry.

Observations - Assessment

- . Events are generally of local or regional interest although have unique appeal to attract non-resident spectators and competitors.
- . Opportunities for greater commercialization: significant increase in marketing required.
- . Summer/winter events have a significant impact on local services (especially winter).

+ d - AS?

- . No man-made attractions have been established/programmed for use by tourists; require direction and organization at the community level.

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS?

Jet boat and other commercial trips on the Mackenzie and other Mackenzie Mtn. rivers have not in the past, been economically viable due to operating/marketing constraints.

TRAPPING IS SUCH A SENSITIVE ISSUE - IS THIS REALLY A VIABLE OPTION?

Winter tours (trapline, etc.) have not been established in area but local residents have expressed interest and intent in such development.

1.6 FOOD, BEVERAGE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Data Base

- . Data available on type and location of facilities adequate for planning purposes.

Observations - Assessment

- . No organized entertainment in hotels - lower quality than that found in the larger urban center= along the Alaska Highway.
- . Presently nothing unique about food/beverage services being offered that could be used to promote family-oriented or tour package tourism (a few exceptions may be found but are not well known or advertised).
- . Quality of food services generally considered not adequate for a high proportion of the traveling public (facility decor as well as food products).
- . Liquor availability in communities generally considered by industry and traveling public to be restrictive.
- ✓ . Capacity of restaurants not adequate to serve tour buses.
- . Food, beverage and hotel entertainment not integrated with community events. to gain maximum economic benefit/market appeal.
- . No live entertainment by local groups.

1.7 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Data Base

currently being compiled by Lutra Associates.

. Federal Government

. Territorial Government

. Municipal Governments

Observations Assessment

Municipal Governments

HAVE TO BECOME
MORE AWARE OF
WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT.
, OR NOTHING WILL
HAPPEN.

Minimally sponsored tourism activities (eg. events) - -
greater participation (organization, financial
resources) required by village - band councils to
effectively improve local events.

1.8 FINANCING/SOURCES OF FINANCE

Data Base

Currently being compiled by Lutra Associates.

Observations - Assessment

- . Tourist associations have significant funds for marketing/promotion and research.

1.9 ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS, TRAINING, REQUIREMENTS MARKETING OPERATIONS

Data Base

- . Quantitative estimate= of available skill sets in region unavailable from labour departments - limited primary information upon which to assess entrepreneurial skills and operator training requirements.
- . Data available upon which to assess general implication= /direction of marketing programme. Data unavailable regarding the impact of marketing dollars on the tourism industry (Note: some data available on the short term results of private charter air services - special original research ongoing).

Observations - **Assessment**

- . Many study conclusions based upon interviews with private entrepreneurs indicate that they do not have the capital to upgrade/expand the facility base to meet future opportunities (exceptions are possibly hotel operator= and community development corporation=).
- . Entrepreneurial operator skills severely lacking in all communities which limits both the development of new businesses and their successful operation (all types of tourism businesses) .
- . Travel outside of region required to obtaining training (Fort Smith-Yellowknife) .

- . Few successful tourism businesses available in region to act as role models.
- . Training programmed not organized specifically to serve industry needs (possible exception include food services and guiding) .
- . Serious need for innovative industry training and accreditation programme that could lead to greater interest in tourism by local residents (all age groups); industry standards and career opportunities need to be better clarified.
- . Marketing programmes - images require development for sub-regions and specific events and attractions. New brochures with attractive logos and image required for most communities.

WHY?

2.0

LIARD-MACKENZIE REGION'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

The following conclusions have been developed based on the preliminary market analysis.

- 1. The highway corridors have a low travel volume and a comparatively low value of receipts per trip versus the Alaska Highway.
- 2. The projected increase in traffic along the corridor is expected to increase with receipt= per trip typical of the Alaska Highway (Z over the past five years) .

DOES IT HAVE THE ABILITY TO BECOME A DESTINATION
- I DOUBT IT.

The region does not possess a destination image; therefore a significant volume of its non-resident market is, at present, pass-through with low expenditure impacts.

HOW SHOULD THIS BE ADDRESSED

- 4. Residents do not strongly promote the travel amenities of their communities since they have a generally negative image of the tourism resource base or are reluctant to encourage visitors for fear of inter-community problem=.

GIVEN SENSITIVITIES OF SOME COMMUNITY EVENTS (IE THEY ARE FOR RESIDENTS) DO COMMUNITIES AGREE WITH IDEA TO TRY AND ATTRACT OUTSIDERS

The region's residents (N.W.T.) are strongly automobile oriented and include the highway access communities in the Territories. This means that these communities should be strongly promoted for community event=.

WHAT ARE THEY?

- 6. The region's non-resident markets are attracted to the high quality resources (destination oriented) or are visiting the region as part of a larger tour.
- 7. The Big River Country's prime markets (high volume) will be strongly oriented to community events and family outdoor recreation since these are the likely motivators for traveling within the region (by N.W.T. residents).

8. Big River Country's distant tourism markets will be attracted to the region for specialty high quality experiences such as big game hunting, canoeing, river rafting / jet boating, sport fishing and mountain climbing. An increasing number of distant tourism markets (tourbus) will primarily be oriented towards: the scenery; handicrafts and the cultural-oriented facilities/ services that can be readily made available in the communities (a small number will take speciality trips). An increase in tour bus traffic will reflect changes in hospitality services in the region, marketing and traffic along the Alaska Highway.

ARE THEY SUGGESTING
AN AGGRESSIVE APPROACH
AIMED AT BUS TOURS

9. Future tourism markets will be characterized and influenced by the quality/availability of services and attractions and further by the demand for experiences which are educational, active /participative (outdoor and indoor), linked closely with other attractions outside the region, and which are packaged and delivered with high value/quality at cost competitive prices.

The following sections highlight a number of important objectives to be considered and implemented at the community travel association and Territorial level. They are not strategic specific and would therefore need to be amended once a preferred strategy is selected. The objectives developed reflect the current state of the tourism industry and the gradual approach considered desirable in most communities in moving more and more to a image earning economy.

2.1 MARKET OBJECTIVES

1. Expand resident market expenditures at community sponsored events.

2. Increase non-resident market to region:

1. -Capture increasing south bound traffic along Alaska Highway:

2. - Increase speciality market volumes (traditional);

3. -Develop new speciality markets based on natural/cultural resources /man-made facilities:

4. -Promote package tour bus companies to establish routes through region;

5. -Promote family market - rubber tire traffic.

6. -Utilize major events such as the 1986 World's Fair-Vancouver as a vehicle for developing special tours into region.

3. Increase economic impact from resident and non-resident market% at the community level.

4. Increased marketing of Big River opportunities as part of other Northern tours - Yukon/other N.W.T. tourist regions.

HAVE THEY INVESTIGATED THE NEED OF BUS TOUR SEGMENT & THEN MATCHED TO N.W.T. PRODUCT.

EXPLAIN

WHY FAMILY

ASSUME THEY MEAN PACKAGES & CO-OP MARKET @

DON'T ASSESS
A CENTRAL THEME
FOR THE WHOLE
ROUTE SHOULD BE
DECIDED, THEN
COMPLEMENTARY SUB-THEMES
COULD BE DEVELOPED
ALONG THE ROUTE

5. Develop a system for marketing (initially) specific natural/cultural/historical themes and images based on the corridor's primary opportunities that will provide: first, a significant economic impact to the communities, and second, a competitive market identity. Broader marketing themes/images can be developed at a later date once initial services, infrastructure and trained staff characterize industry.
6. Develop a program for the preparation of operator information packages for promotion of lodges, events, tours to both resident and non-resident visitors,

3

2.2

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVES (ACCOMMODATION, **EVENTS,**
ATTRACTIONS, AND HOSPITALITY SERVICES

1. Selective development of new infrastructure essential in serving the expanding needs of the travel and commercial businesses (eg. service stations, information centres, restaurants, accommodation) :
2. Expand tourism opportunities in specific communities to improve economic impact for hospitality related businesses (increase length of stay).
3. Enhance image o-f existing facilities in order to be more attractive and competitive to resident and non-resident markets. (increase length of stay).
4. Concentrate/co-ordinate facility development (short term) to maximize impact and to provide for support service opportunities (eg. handicrafts).
5. Initiate new facility development that is complementary to:
 - A. Primary natural tourism resources such as Nahanni National Park;
 - B. Existing or proposed tourism and related community infrastructure;
 - C. Existing/planned community recreation facilities, major events or attractions.
6. Increase plant investment= both in response to existing supply/demand requirements but also to increase market requirements.

2.3 RESOURCE (NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL) OBJECTIVES

1. Maximize use of natural resources (consumptive and non-consumptive) within the limits of the resource base and traditional community hunting/fishing areas to accommodate outdoor recreation needs (commercial) of residents and non-residents.
2. Minimize potential Slavey land/resource use conflicts.
3. Capitalize on the high quality and significant natural, historical and cultural resources for primary markets from both educational and commercial perspectives.
4. Capitalize on the opportunities for integrated developments involving tourism and non-tourism resource=.
5. Concentrate development of unique historical, natural and cultural resource in communities on the basis of regional competitive market appeal.
6. Develop new commercial natural resource opportunities that are complementary to existing resources and proposed market themes/images that will increase resident market expenditure.
7. Develop resources where there is greater market access and economic impact.
8. Develop and market specialized resources that will maximize resident and non-resident expenditures.
9. Enhance natural and scenic amenities of corridors, through development of pull-offs at strategic locations, construction of look-out interpretive towers and possibly the planting of wild flowers.

10. Improve the enjoyment of travel along the corridor for family markets through a "put and take" fisheries enhancement programme.

2.4

Economic Objectives

1. Expand and diversify the economy of local communities to increase wage earning opportunities, revenue generated to community and improve life-style of residents.
2. Increase the number and types of seasonal and permanent types of employment opportunities to more effectively use local staff resources at all age levels.
3. Optimize visitor expenditures (economic impact) in the communities from existing and new market development: reduce economic leakage.
4. Maximize local impact multiplier= within the community.
5. Provide long term employment opportunities= that will encourage resident= to complete secondary education and undertake additional vocational training and return to local communities.
6. Co-ordinate and optimize government assistance in order to create a catalyst for resident/non-resident investment in the tourism industry.
7. Maximize leverage of private, development corporations and municipal investment through E.D.A. assistance.
8. Improve and diversify revenue base for municipal levels of government.
9. Road access in large areas of the region will remain difficult or non-existent necessitating the development of new or expansion of existing guiding, outfitting and fly-in services.

10. Improved tourist facilities and attractions are required within or in close proximity to the communities to increase the length of visitor stay and provide greater economic benefits.

2.5 Summary of Primary Objectives for Tourism Development

The establishment of a set of realistic objectives for the Liard-Mackenzie area must be based on a clear identification of the problems or constraints the industry must overcome. Our analysis of the industry and communities (including perceptions and attitudes toward tourists) in terms of its markets and resources, products and services has revealed that the strategy must successfully address the following eight basic needs:

1. To raise the level of per trip expenditure with increased expenditure within the community (eg. trip expenditures by N.W.T. , residents, other Canadians and foreign markets) .
2. To improve both the market image of the communities and natural/cultural /historical resource opportunities for non-resident packaged, and automobile tout-s, and resident travelers.
3. To make the Liard-Mackenzie region's travel receipts less dependent on industry and government, and the Canadian resident market.
4. To develop the Liard-Mackenzie region's best resources on a nodal basis so that they are highly utilized, more effectively generate tourism expenditure=, cause minor environmental impact and cause minimal disruption to communities=.
5. To develop opportunities that have readily accessible markets in the short term (Alaska Highway travelers and other traditional speciality markets) .

6. To provide increasing opportunities for local residents to upgrade their skills at all levels of the hospitality industry.
7. To develop tourism opportunities within communities at a rate that is socially acceptable to the community.
8. To continue to expand/strengthen community tourism economic development organizations working within the umbrella organization of Big River Travel Association.

In addressing these basic industry development needs, it is important to recognize that at this time there is not one single core problem to be resolved but rather a series of inter-related problems that must be responded to in the short term. Primary concerns are centered around the lack of community facilities and services required for the traveller to enjoy the natural, cultural and historical resources comparable to that found for example along the Alaska Highway; the lack of organized attractions of interest to the resident/non-resident traveller, the limited number of individuals with required skills to develop and operate hospitality services, and the land use policy issues that frequently restrict free enterprise development of facilities-attractions.

Just as much as the tourism development strategy must address the industry's basic problems and needs, so too must it take advantage of available opportunities. The preferred tourism strategy for the Liard-Mackenzie should effectively capitalize on at least five basic opportunities possessed by Big River Country. These are as follows:

1. The Liard-Mackenzie markets (existing and potential) ,

particularity travelers entering N. W.T. from Alberta as well as Alaska Highway visitors, are characterized by a strong latent demand for activities to "participate in" while enroute. Person trip expenditures and length of time in the region is considered to be low because of a lack of quality attractions and services. Most non-residents have higher than average levels of disposable income.

2. The Liard-Mackenzie region has relatively large pass-through markets located on the Alaska Highway and Highway 1 to Yellowknife which offer an excellent short and long term opportunity to increase non-resident travel expenditure= by capturing additional person-days enroute to points north and west of Big River Country. The region may also become the highway gateway to the lower Mackenzie with the extension of Highway 1 providing new and expanded commercial as well as travel for pleasure traffic.
3. Big River Country has a number of road and non-road access resources and attractions which, if properly developed can be competitive at a regional, national and international scale. Included among these attraction= are the region's big game hunting/sport fishing resources, cultural/handicraft products, river and mountaineering resources, backcountry wilderness hiking/scenery resources, internationally renown national park, and as yet a largely untapped resource, the exciting history of the region.
4. Strong market efforts of the Territorial , Yukon and Alaska governments and the private sector of intervening-complementary resources/attractions in the

surrounding area to Big River Country. It is important to take advantage of these tourist opportunities and the associated marketing efforts to first maximize public exposure of the region and second to integrate/co-ordinate the use of these attractions through the development of packaged tours.

5. A positive and aggressive attitude toward an enhanced growth of the industry at the Territorial government, settlement-band council, other special interest group levels as well as the general public within the communities. At this early stage in the region's development of tourism resources and services, it is critical that support at all levels be obtained and that the benefits to the community be identified where possible to developing a highly positive attitude and understanding of the industry and its community benefits. Support for these projects must be sustained until such time as they are able to operate in a financially viable manner.

How long?

3.0 ALTERNATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

This section of the report outlines four separate strategies that may be pursued by the Territorial to individual settlement councils and private sector in the development of the Big River Country tourism industry. Each alternative has a distinct set of objective% and plan requirements and accordingly has a varying impact on the regional economy, the communities and other related factors.

Research to date has indicated that Big River Country has a number of important opportunities as well as very difficult challenges to overcome. Based upon this information, it appears that the primary objectives are to be directed at:

- 1) improving per trip expenditure:
- 2) improving Big River Country's attractions and essential services; and
- 3) increasing the number of resident and non-resident trips.

The background research has indicated that the neighboring regions and communities in the Yukon, northwestern British Columbia and northern Alberta have a relatively developed industry compared to the youthful position of many areas in Big River Country. Central problems experienced by Big River Country relate to their geographic position (not on a primary destination route), highway condition, and the lack of developed attractions/services that are needed to drive expenditures higher and to motivate greater travel volumes. This lack of attractions was noted to be caused by land use policy issues, poor accessibility to the region, poor industry organization at the local level and general industry undevelopment. With these issues facing the region, the preferred strategy must address essential questions such as:

- . where should development be best encouraged:
- . in what areas should public funding be best directed;
and
- . what type and manner of attractions should be developed
and in what order of priority.

Each alternative addresses these questions in different ways reflecting the complexity of both the industry and the region itself.

In reviewing the development of the tourism industry in Big River Country, it can be seen to be characterized by fragmented growth which reflects many outside influences= and a lack in overall policy direction for both the region and its respective communities=> The lack of involvement by some communities in the Big River Travel Association and strong enthusiastic support demonstrated by others has encouraged the relatively unco-ordinated approach to the corridors natural, historic and cultural resources. This has and will continue to present many problems in assessing market requirement=, developing an integrated marketing programme maintaining a degree of quality control, developing distinct N.W.T. products and finally ensuring that the attractions and service% located in one community complement rather than compete for markets found in another-



Good Points

The Liard-Mackenzie Highway Regional Tourism Plan is considered to be a statement of broad goals and policies outlining a general course of action for the growth, maintenance and development of the industry leading toward the establishment of priorities for resource developments programme formulation, and management procedures. The

preferred strategy will reflect local community and private
 sector goals and concerns, Big River Travel
 Association's programmes, government programmed and
 policies, and be sufficiently broad in scope and flexible in
 approach to accommodate unforeseen development and be
 responsive to a wide variety of short and long term specialty
 markets and resource development opportunities. In a region
 such as Big River Country where the industry is at a youthful
 stage, it may be more important to provide as detailed an
 approach as is possible in order to maximize short term
 resource and market opportunities.

Based upon the various constraints? opportunities= and local,
 regional and territorial considerations, the following
 alternatives are presented. A general review of the
 advantages and disadvantages of each strategy is included at
 the end of this section.

3.1 ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY NO. 1 - INDUSTRY SUPPORT **AND** UPGRADING

3.1.1 Introduction

In recent years a blend of private and public sector initiatives have been undertaken to meet both expanding rubber-tire and fly-in specialty markets. Tourism related services ~~have typically been in association with ongoing commercial requirements rather than other tourism businesses.~~ In many instances the type, quality and quantity of hospitality services is no longer adequate to meet ongoing market require merits..

Strategy No. 1 proposes to secure existing markets with continued strong business/commercial links and a gradual strengthening of the local and regional tourism organization. As markets expand, additional funding will be directed to plant. improvement according to the capability of the operator and ongoing government programmed for all levels of government parks. A gradual increase in tourism related employment would be generated but have little impact on the labour structure of the individual communities.

The benefits to be considered in the strategy are found first in the refocusing of certain departmental budget= and highway oriented traffic and specialty groups, and second, providing financial/technical assistance that will primarily enhance exist ing opportunities. Through implementation of the proposed initiative, the industry will experience both a modest expansion in terms of existing opportunities as well as an increase in the quality of the tourist's experience.

3.1.2 Description

The basic intent of strategy No. 1 is as follows:

THAT IS WHAT IS PRESENTLY HAPPENING - VERY DIFFICULT TO PROMOTE TOURISM WHEN PEOPLE AREN'T INTERESTED.

This strategy is designed to encourage development of the tourism industry in communities where there is a strong interest, in response to existing specialty markets, highway and commercial market demands, and private sector and local government initiatives. Short term (overnight/weekend) visitation by Territorial residents, single family and leisure pass-through traffic will be encouraged primarily during the summer months in the larger communities through an upgrading and expansion of the accommodation, food services, information systems, and increased programming and marketing of existing events and attractions. Commercial traffic will be encouraged in the larger communities on a year round basis and extended stay opportunities will be expanded according to specialty market demands.

DEFINE

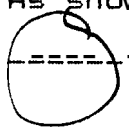
Implementation will primarily be through settlement and band councils, the private sector, development corporations with some economic assistance from the Territorial Government.

I WANT IT

The strategy generally reflects a conservative approach to resource development and does not attempt to stimulate significant new opportunities. It allows for the upgrading, expansion, and/or development of tourism facilities and levels of servicing in those communities where relatively minor changes or impacts on local community lifestyles would be expected to occur.

IN REALITY GROWTH WILL COME AS PRESENTLY VERY LITTLE MARKETING HAS BEEN DONE ON THE ROUTE. FURTHER GROWTH DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED TO SERVE PRESENT LEVELS OF TRAVELERS.

As illustrated in Drawing No. 1, the strategy attempts to maintain the existing market share while growing with the overall growth rate of the Alaska Highway traffic. As shown in Figure 1, annual growth rate in tourist trips of -----x maybe anticipated with this approach.



3. 1.3

Development Proposals and Programme Suggestions

A general summary of the development proposals is outlined in the following:

CAN'T BE DONE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT GOVT \$. CONTRADICTS EARLIER STATEMENT SAYING IMPLEMENTATION IS PRIMARILY THROUGH SETTLEMENT & BANDS COUNCILS ETC

significant upgrading of essential hospital it y services is required in all of the communities where an interest has been demonstrated in the development of a tourism industry.

PRIORITY Campgrounds only
Such as?

Upgrade and expand campground facilities in response to increasing traffic and government long range programmed.

THEME ROUTE IS KEY

Encourage the development of small scale theme attraction in communities.

NOT WITHIN TOURISM MANDATE

Develop a stronger co-ordinated approach to interpretation with improved signage along the highway corridor.

Establish a co-ordinated approach to the development and marketing of the handicraft industry.

Expand services at Wrigley as required to meet future auto traffic.

WEAK STATEMENT CONSIDERING NATIONWIDE IS A MAJOR DRAWING CARD TO THE AREA.

Include discussions on Nahanni Park with the establishment of a day use area (fly-in), provision for additional boat tours and other related back country activities that might be established within existing government programmes.

THEMED TO MATCH ROUTE.

Develop a tourist information centre at the Fort Nelson-Alaska Highway junction.

EXAMPLES OF "ENTERTAINMENT" IS IT FEASIBLE

Upgrade and diversify entertainment in communities; should be directed at both the commercial/business traveller as well as the leisure traveller.

Programme actions required to support the development proposals include:

TARGETED PRIORITY PROGRAMS

- . The preparation of technical and financial support programmes and associated criteria outlining eligibility, scale and type of support, condition, etc. for both industry and municipality.

PROFILE THIS BUSINESS MARKET.

The preparation of a primarily summer oriented marketing programme oriented toward business/commercial travelers, vacation travelers along the Alaska Highway (package/non-package) and N.W.T. residents.

- . The development of an agreement on land use development in the Nahanni Butte area as well as resolve other management issues associated with land use development including river activity within Nahanni National Park.

- . Continue to offer various types of tourism skill training courses to upgrade the low level of service currently provided by many tourism establishments.

3.1.4 Potential Markets

HAS CONSULTANT DETERMINED THAT COMMUNITIES WANT THIS.

The basic thrust of the strategy is threefold:

How? ->

1. " encourage N.W.T. residents to travel to events and attractions within the region in greater numbers.
2. Through financial commitments and expert assistance, increase private sector investment in the accommodation industry and related services to attract non-resident rubber-tire markets (Alaska Highway profile).

IDENTIFY
THESE
MARKETS

3. To secure and enhance specialty fly-in markets travelling to existing attractions.

3.1.5 Intervening Opportunities

This strategy is a reaction to "intervening opportunities" located in adjacent provinces and territories, and improves Big River County's capability to compete for the attention of its own residents as well as the Alaska Highway markets. Since the strategy attempts to accommodate the wider range of existing market segments, it is vulnerable; first, to the ongoing expansion and redevelopment plans being implemented by competing destination areas and second, the remoteness of the communities relative to the primary attractions of Alaska Highway travellers and those entering N.W.T. at Enterprise. The advanced position of the Yukon Territory, British Columbia and Alaska in the development of similar tourism projects places Big River Country in a difficult position in terms of both the availability and quality of leisure services. Therefore, expansion of existing or new development% must be able to offer equal better facilities/attractions to secure and hold current markets.

UNIQUE

3.1.6 Public and Private Sector Responsibilities

The primary public responsibilities include:

- Establish priorities and initiate development/upgrading of public parks and day use facilities.
- Prepare technical and financial support programme criteria and guidelines (both on public sector programmes and municipal support programmed).

- . Undertake planning programmed for upgrading of services in communities and park areas.
- . Conclude negotiations with Nahanni Butte community and Parks Canada regarding future federal visitor services development programme, river use policy and site development at Virginia Falls.
- . Territorial Government-Trout Lake Community to conclude negotiations on a future operating plan for lodge to place it in a more competitive position.
- . Complete t-odd construction into Wrigley and Jean-Marie River.
- . Establish Alaska Highway-^{1@@.}Fort Nelson ^{JUNCTION} tourist reception centre.
- . Operate tourism training programmed on an ad hoc basis.
- . Prepare and distribute promotional information on Big River Country resources.

The primary responsibilities of the private sector include:

- . Capital investment into new tourism plant, programmes and services.
- . Upgrade Staff and management capabilities.
- . Provide leadership and direction for the Territorial Government regarding ongoing municipal concerns/objectives.
- . Participate as owners/operators in promotional programmes.

UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN.
 & B.V. GRANTS IMAGINANT BUSINESS.
 # #

3. 1.7 Timing and Priorities

The programme should be initiated as soon as possible with emphasis upon increasing the quality and capacity of the tourism plant. The initial development programme must include essential highway tourist services (eg. food, accommodation, and auto services) that is seriously lacking in many communities. Establishment of a Alaska-Liard Highway Visitor Services Centre is an important requirement to be built in conjunction with the expansion of highway tourist services.

PRIORITY
PARKS

A second priority is the development of interpretive services at the prime tourist locations complemented by the expansion of new park areas. These developments should be phased to correspond with the expansion/upgrading of municipal facilities.

3.2 ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY NO. 2 - GREAT OUTDOORS-WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

3.2.1 Introduction

NOT TRUE
CONCERNING
LODGES.

The Territorial Government has allocated considerable financial resources in the past five years to develop, upgrade and expand the Territorial park system and assist lodge operators and outfitters to promote their products. A clear objective of the Territorial government has been to increase the volume of non-resident visitors to the Territories and this has been reflected in the funding of the interpretive centre at Enterprise, construction of Blackstone Park and initial planning for a car access Territorial park on the proposed Fort Simpson-Wrigley highway.

The federal government through Parks Canada continues to be active in planning of existing and proposed national parks. Completion and acceptance of the draft management plan for Nahanni will finalize important local concerns affecting several tourism initiatives. Boundary discussions and policies concerning site development and commercial operators have severely limited utilization of the park resources. Outside of the study area, research is ongoing regarding the establishment of a national park at the east end of Great Slave Lake. An increasing volume of vehicular and tour bus traffic is being recorded annually along the Mackenzie and Alaska Highways with wilderness scenery, visiting historic sites and museums, sport fishing and boating being some of the most popular activities attracting both resident and non-resident markets. All of these resources or recreational facilities have a common theme - "the great outdoors - wilderness adventure. "

Where is the info supporting this?

The following strategy is designed to increase use and management of the resource base to stimulate increased visitation and expenditure primarily by inter-provincial (Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario), U.S.A., and, to a lesser extent, overseas markets. Increasing emphasis on attracting greater use by N.W.T. residents to highway access parks is encouraged. The scale and quality of facilities and services is dependent upon the specific objectives for the development, and the relationship to other opportunities within the region. The strategy will require considerable financial and long-term planning direction from various government agencies in order to initiate the various development and marketing programmes.

As shown in Drawing No. 2, this strategy expands upon this theme in terms of improving the market image and interpretive

resources along the highway corridor and at other selected sites. The proposal 5 identified will assist in the development of highway oriented support services which in turn will provide the Territories (communities) with more comparable services with other adjacent areas competing for the same markets.

The scope and scale of development will reflect availability of capital funds to initiate the key projects and marketing efforts as well as the continued growth of leisure traffic along the northern highways. Essential to the latter component is a continual upgrading of road condition= in the entire region.

3.2.2 Description

This strategy is designed to stimulate extended-stay visitation on an extended season basis to include the spring, summer and fall vacation periods by capturing high expenditure non-resident specialty outdoor adventure markets. Emphasis initially will be directed toward the western "mountain section of the region and given to the modernization, expansion and development of new highly packaged exclusive-deluxe lodges and related commercial services to increase both the number of outdoor-wilderness adventure vacations and resultant employee opportunities and revenue to the region. These high profile activities/developments will be used as a catalyst to the establishment of other back country opportunities and overall promotion of Big River Country.

NOT COMMUNITY
BASED ORIENTED
MARKET WOULD
APPEAR TO BE SMALL
FOR THIS ACTIVITY
KEY EMPHASIS
STILL SEEMS TO BE
THE HIGHWAY ESPECIALLY
WHEN YOU CONSIDER
WHAT MEMBERS ARE
ON BIG RIVER ASSOC.

In order to increase the size and impact of non-resident

market= to these remote resources and communities, a market orientation will be undertaken to accelerate existing market trends coupled with an economic orientation that will take advantage of the Yukon-Alaska market%. A market orientation will capitalize on the region's outstanding mountain climbing-hiking areas, historic gold panning streams, trophy hunting, sport fishing, ski touring and photo safari resources located in the Mackenzie Mountains and adjacent areas. Selection and development of these resources according to their capability to support both extended and day use market=, will stimulate and broaden the economic base. An economic orientation will be required in selected areas to assist in the financing of the critical mountain resorts, outfitting terminals, upgrading of sport fishing lodges and other roofed/non-roofed accommodation. It is essential that only a limited number of sites/areas be developed which complement one another and that they be marketed as international "Premier" outdoor-wilderness opportunities. The resort and associated activities must be able to readily compete with other northern specialized resorts.

In conjunction with the development of key resources in remote areas using a marketing approach that reflects Big River Country as a destination area, the strategy proposes upgrading and expansion of the Territorial park system located along the highway corridors by the public sector. These sites will be planned and developed in strategic locations to appeal to the resident outdoor recreation, non-resident pass-through, and limited bus tour markets.

In summary, it is expected that the strategy will secure existing markets over the short term and enhance the position of the region to attract larger volumes of tourist traffic

*CERTAINLY LOOKING AT SAM-MILLAR
& BATHURST WE ARE TAKING
VERY LOW NUMBERS.
- WOULD SUGGEST THE HIGHWAY
TRAVELER IS THE EASIEST TO
ATTRACT IN THE SHORT TO MID-TERMS
AND ALTHOUGH EXPENDITURES ARE
LOWER IT'LL BE SPREAD
FURTHER.*

DISAGREE!

with higher expenditures. The strategy will have the impact of extending the stay of leisure pass-through markets and significantly increase the volume of the destination travellers. We estimate that the strategy would alter Big River Countries position as shown in Figure 2. This change would result in an increase in total direct expenditures after 5-10 years of \$ ----- The estimated cost of the strategy is in the order of -----million.

3.2.3 Development Programmes and Programme Suggestions

The types of developments/activities proposed under this strategy are identified in Drawing No. 2. In addition to the capital development programme outlined, other programmed required include for example: agreement on the development and use of Crown land both within and outside Nahanni National Park; community support and organization to direct local initiatives; training programmed to meet operator requirements; financial analysis of opportunities and preparation of a marketing and promotional programme.

3.2.4 Potential Markets

WHAT'S THIS BULLSHIT!

Strategy No. 2 focusses upon attracting two primary market groups. First, the adventure products associated with backcountry experiences in N.W.T. will be oriented to improving the penetration rates of the non-resident destination market. Destination travel by inter-provincial U.S.A. and overseas specialty markets will be encouraged to undertake these high adventure experience into remote wilderness areas of the Mackenzie Mtns. It is anticipated that these adventures will be primarily packaged through

lodge and outfitting services and, to a limited extent, aimed at pass-through traffic along the Alaska and Liard-Mackenzie Highway corridor%. Second, travel by N.W.T. and other Canadian and U.S.A. markets traveling the Alaska Highway will be encouraged to vacation within Big River Country by creating a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities in close proximity to communities and road access lake and river resources.

3.2.5 Intervening Opportunities

The N.W.T. currently lags far behind the surrounding regions in terms of fixed-roof accommodation and the provision of well-organized, unique, high adventure tourism products. However, following completion of the strategy, the region could be considered to be in a similar or have a competitive advantage over Alberta, some of British Columbia and the Yukon. British Columbia (Peace River-Alaska Highway and the Yellowhead Regions) and the Yukon are currently in the process of expanding and improving the quality/diversity of wilderness adventure opportunities. Although representing potential competition, these developments will generate new markets for the entire region which may benefit Big Country operators. British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon offer similar adventure projects, although none have advanced their government support to place them in any better competitive position over the long term.

EXAMPLES
YUKON ADVENTURE
TRAVEL SEGMENT
IS VERY SMALL

Concerning Territorial road access parks, opportunities found along the highways of British Columbia and Yukon are often more unique and interesting than those of the Liard-Mackenzie Highway system. It is therefore essential that through proper design, and the level of capitalization that a

WE WANT TO DEVELOP
UNIQUE ACTIVITIES. NOT
A "COMPARABLE SYSTEM."
IT ~~W~~ WOULD RESULT IN NO

COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE - 47 -

comparable product be presented to the public. The Liard-Mackenzie region however has the advantage and distinctive image of being in the Northwest Territories (special marketing image).

3.2.6 Public and Private Sector Responsibilities

The public sector will be primarily responsible for:

- Negotiation with all parties respecting the transfer, development and use of designated Crown and non-Crown lands for resorts and related tourism oriented activities.

#+5*

#S,
DOES CONSULT
UNDERSTAND THE
PROBLEMS THAT
PRIVATE SECTOR
RAISING CAPITAL
HAS IN

Identification and prioritization of key 'emote' edge facilities and other wilderness adventure outfitting services; participate in providing "seed" funds to the private sector to develop architecturally distinctive accommodation, food and beverage, and related highway service facilities.

- Construction of tourist information reception centres.
- development of new and expansion of existing Territorial parks. HOW ABOUT GETTING RID OF SOME!
- Road access to Nahanni Butte.
- Planning and development of a multi-purpose visitor reception centre on the Alaska Highway.
- Establishing programmes and associated criteria for eligibility, scope and scale of appropriate funding for

WHERE

*CONSTANT TO
COMMUNITY BASED
TOURISM STRATEGY*

private sector in development of backcountry resorts and outfitting services.

- Organizing and providing major funding for staff training programmed.

*GOV'T WOULD BE
RESPONSIBLE FOR
PROMOTING THESE
FACILITIES &
OUTFITTING
SERVICES.*

Preparation and distribution of promotional material related to new lodges, and

Outfitting services.

The primary responsibilities of the private sector include:

Participation with governments in the planning, capital investment and operation of lodge facilities and outfitting services.

BULLSHIT!

- Participation at the community level in the establishment of tourism planning organizations to identify, assess and respond to ongoing development applications, etc.
- Improving management capability of staff in all types of tourism business opportunities.

3.2.7 Timing and Priorities

*I guess
they haven't
read our
strategy.*

Since the Territory has leaned toward this strategy over the past five years, it will be relatively easy to advance quickly in prioritizing and allocating funding to the establishment of new information reception areas and upgrading of existing and development of new parks. Major capital funds for these projects will be the responsibility of the public sector and consequently, the schedule will be dictated by their ability to secure funds.

STRATEGY #2
IS 7002

Negotiations are required between the Territorial Government, Parks Canada and the community of Nahanni Butte regarding road access and the development of tourist hospitality services. Similarly, immediate input into the Nahanni National Park Management Plan is required concerning the Ragged Range Wilderness Lodge and hiking trails system. This inter-governmental dialogue should represent one step in a public statement regarding the direction of the strategy and its potential impact on existing land area policies and proposed plans/developments in the Liard-Mackenzie corridor.

Immediately, the private sector, in conjunction with the respective government agencies, can begin to make the necessary improvements to their labour capabilities. Further, an important requirement will be the designation of a site for the Ragged Range Lodge and obtaining a commitment by Parks Canada for the development of the Nahanni Butte Visitor Reception Centre. Upgrading of Trout Lake Lodge, both structurally as well as the development of a sound marketing plan, is required before any further damage occurs to the lodge.

3.3 ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY NO. 3 - RESTRUCTURE INDUSTRY THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMMING FOR PACKAGED TOUR INDUSTRY

3.3.1 Introduction

The packaged tour industry has seen tremendous growth in the past five to ten years world-wide. The types of leisure products, travel arrangements, financial investments now vary widely. The Liard-Mackenzie corridor in 1984 experienced only a minor impact of this large and growing market group but it is apparent that additional tours to the region are eminent.

Profile these
companies

British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska are presently actively promoting the package tour market and licensing new operators. Increasingly, Canadian, American and European wholesalers are looking for new and exciting products for their clients, yet most of the tours to date have avoided this region with the possible exception of scenic trips to Virginia Falls.

Road access resources within the Liard-Mackenzie corridor typically are not spectacular and do not have a strong natural resource capability to support extended-stay travel markets. Those resources in the region that have the capability to support destination traffic are in most instances operated by the private sector or development corporation. Consequently, a strategy that can "tap" a nearby market (Alaska Highway) and draw large numbers of visitors through the region during the summer season has a number of advantages. First, from a marketing perspective, direct links can be made for example with the wholesale and tour bus operators, reducing public/private sector costs and increasing the reliability of bookings. Second, potential disruptions caused by tourists to communities is a concern of certain residents. An integrated tourism package of activities at the local level would allow the development of select, quality products/activities, and minimize the movement of tourists beyond the designated programme. Third, the strategy will allow a more gradual introduction of the tourism industry to the community; only those people who are strongly interested in working as tour guides, interpretive officers, and creating handicraft products will be required (beyond the existing tourism labour force) in the short and middle term. The gravel highway system and lack of developed and uniquely different attractions available without special fly-in services are however serious drawbacks to the strategy that must be addressed in the implementation and marketing of the plan.

SUGGEST
SOME!

3.3.2 --Description

The basic intent of Strategy No. 3 is as follows:

To enhance and promote the tourism industry at the community level through integrated programming of local events and cultural/historical attraction primarily for the packaged tour bus and, to a limited extent, the fly-drive industry. Developments proposed in the plan description are to broaden the tourism base and diversify the local economy in selected areas. Facilities required to support the hosting of events-attraction would be developed so that a strong market image of the region and communities can be promoted in a variety of package tours. Significant increase in regional travel by residents is promoted with the improvement in municipal services and facilities.

HOW DO YOU DO THAT WHEN YOU'RE INFLECTING BUSLOADS OF VISITORS WEEKLY

Emphasis would be placed on low capitalization, low to moderate employment requirements and minimal disturbance to the community. The strategy requires further development of the handicraft industry, creative development of cultural and historical interpretive programmed aimed at generating high audience appeal for short periods of time. An integrated approach to programme development is required on a community to community basis in order to generate distinct northern themes and linkages. Promotion of the community's resources-attractions must be tied to other important destinations outside Big River Country: however, the market strategy for Big River Country would not have to promote the region as a primary destination. Travel through the region would be promoted as a unique northern experience with strong emphasis on the cultural, historical and visual attractions.

The plan assumes that additional capital expenditures

required for accommodation and other related services required by the tour operators would primarily occur in the larger communities outside the planning area, such as Hay River, Yellowknife and Fort Nelson, B.C. although some expansion/development may be necessary at Fort Providence, Fort Simpson and Nahanni Butte. Provision of specialty food services will be provided within the various communities and be included as an integral part of the community programme image.

As illustrated in Drawing No. 3, this strategy is based on the assumption that the various communities in association with the Big River Travel Association are able to cooperate, and organize at all levels highly successful events and attractions that would have a distinctive appeal to tour groups. The region presently offers a number of events within the community but a balance between those that are strictly local events and those of regional or territorial appeal does not exist. Finally, the Liard-Mackenzie communities have failed to a large extent (like so many other Canadian communities), or perhaps not recognized, the commercial opportunities that could be realized from developing and promoting these events as tourism generators of economic growth.¹

Territorial/regional events or championships would be held in the larger centres where facilities are available. In addition, events such as Cabin fever Daze, Gerry Antoine Canoe Races. etc. ,

1) Lack of organizational expertise combined with minimal budgets has severely limited the development of regionally significant events in the Liard-Mackenzie communities.

would be programmed and promoted to attract visitors from adjacent communities, northern British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon. More importantly, both through the tour packages and ongoing Community events, organizations such as the Fort Simpson Chamber of Commerce must develop a strong link between the business centre, hotels/motels and all areas of entertainment in order to gain the desired leisure (quality, availability, service, etc.) and economic benefits. In planning for the growth of these events and attractions, it is important that promotions be aimed at capturing a significant portion of the 'visiting friends and relatives' tourism market which is quite important in this region.

3.3.3 Development programmes and Programme Suggestions

The major highlights of the programme are identified in Drawing No. 3. Certain general comments on the direction taken by this economic development strategy the proposal are summarized in the following:

- Upgrading/development of municipal tourism facilities and programmes (accommodation, food and entertainment), centred on unique/special themed events characteristic of the region.

Development of new or upgrading of existing community facilities used to stage special events. This programme would require the construction of auditoriums, arenas, curling clubs, visitor service centres, historic attractions, etc., to be able to host these events.

*AS ~~THESE~~ WERE ISOLATED APPROACH
BE PACKAGES WOULD ONLY
SPORADIC IN NATURE
- doubt be up to P
twice a week
towns*

*TALKING A SMALL TOWN
TO HOST A PACKAGES TO
SUMMER.*

- . Planning and development of unique interpretive sites, history-in-action programmes (live entertainment) and handicraft products to provide greater interest and understanding of the region.
- . Strengthening the attractiveness of existing events to attract larger numbers of spectators (increase audience appeal) and expand value-added opportunities of these events.
- . Improvement of the image/profile of Big River Country communities as having a unique/interesting appeal.
- . Municipal aesthetic upgrading programmed. Main streets of communities and their important riverfront/lakefront areas must become more entertaining-interesting places to visit.
- . Develop regular scheduled programmes for tour companies and unique mini-travel packages (eg. fly-in service to Virginia Falls and sport fishing lakes) to develop and maintain visitor interest.

REPS
@
J
NE

Programme actions required to support the development proposals include:

- . Financial analysis regarding the Territorial-municipal governments concerning funding of sporting and related community facilities.
- . Structured training programmed to upgrade/expand the level of hospitality services.
- . Preparation of individual event plans with the objective

of increasing the economic significance/impact of local events to the Big River Country travel industry.

- . Improvement of highway services and creation of "special travel and touring packages" of the region (to be included as part of larger extensive tours as well as those originating from Alberta and British Columbia and centred on Big River Country) .
- . Establishment or redefinition of community organizations or groups (eg. chambers of commerce, tourist bureaus, band councils, economic development groups), to co-ordinate and promote special events, daily tour events, support services and ongoing infrastructure development/upgrading.
- . Creation of administrative and promotional grant programmed including positive incentive= for successful event=. The programme could be based on market appeal or attendance statistics.
- . Promotion of the major U.S. , Canadian and, to a limited extent, European tour companies to sell trips into the Liard-Mackenzie region.

3.3.4 Potential Market

The overall objective is to expand the region's market share and extend the stay of residents and non-residents traveling through Big River Country. Through the development of strong municipally directed tourism/recreation opportunities, it will be possible to attract particular Canadian (eg. Ontario)

and related studies to strengthen industry at the community level.

The private sector would be responsible for:

- . ⁷₀ Capital investment into promotional programmed. and support services for hotel=, food/auto services and private concessions/attractions.
- . At the community level establish industry co-ordination, promotional and administration organization to direct planning and implementation of local programmes.
- . Apply for grants and skill training programmed.

3.3.7 Timing and Priorities

In order for the strategy to effectively compete with other regions, an active programme designed to assess existing and develop new events/attractions is required at specified communities. Those events/attractions which have the strongest appeal to residents and non-residents should be considered a high priority.

Another high priority needed to enhance the region image/profile, is the development of a National Park visitor services centre in the area of Nahanni Butte-Blackstone. The lack of interpretive facilities/services has been a serious limitation.

A critical component of the strategy is the required co-ordination and leadership at the community, region and Territorial levels.

Programmes must be complementary and creative in terms of events (even if only of a short term duration) and attractions to capture both resident and non-resident shares. Development of services and programmes that complement rather than conflict with the Liard-Mackenzie are a priority and required in communities such as Yellowknife in order to generate the necessary destination appeal to sell the tour.

3.4. ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY NO. 4 - INDUSTRY **UPGRADING** THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMMING **AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL COMPLEMENTED BY DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIZED WILDERNESS RESOURCES**

3.4.1 Introduction

Big River Country requires the development and associated marketing of specialized tourism destination attractions and extensive upgrading of municipal hospitality services in order to have a significant and long term impact on the regional economy. However, the region's remote location from major non-resident markets, small resident market, limited unique opportunities, gravel highway system, modest infrastructure and limited available staff with appropriate training are severe drawbacks. In order to stimulate long-term growth and economic investment, a strategy is required that will attract high investment, initiate development of the unique attractions and have a significant impact on the level of municipal facilities.

3.4.2 Plan Description

The basic intent of Strategy No. 4 is as follows:

Have the consultant determine what present market share is for the region

•dramatically increase their existing market share (number of trips, length of stay) and tourist season. Introducing regional sporting events and extensive programming of community-wide activities will generate greater economic impact from the committed resident and growing pass-through market=. The strategy will require considerable community-wide involvement and commitment and government technical and financial support to stimulate development of opportunities.

Agree that the type of development becomes secondary but there is potential there

The second component of Strategy No. 4 is to stimulate the growth of the traditional specialized wilderness markets (river rafting, big game hunting, mountaineering? etc.) on a nodal basis outside Of the communities. The intent is to encourage development of the unique natural resources through packaged programmed as outlined in Strategy No. 2 to both increase and broaden the regional economy. The plan require= considerable inter-government and settlement-band council co-operation to ensure that the necessary infrastructure (lands, facilities, trails, etc.) , marketing and operating procedure= are in place and functioning effectively. Special attention will be required in the long term management of the sport fish, wildlife, lake, park and wild and scenic river resources as they are the major contributors to the strong non-resident market images to be developed for the region. Considerable financial expenditure will be required by the private sector as well as different levels of government to stimulate market demands. The combination of both municipally directed tourism as well as the utilization of the region 's outstanding natural resources for wilderness adventure tours will have strong long term positive impact upon each other and generate significant economic opportunities for the region. It must be recognized that although this strategy has a number of high profile products, it has a much higher risk and will take a longer period of time to become fully developed and operational.

Based upon this approach to regional economic development, several development/marketing objectives have been identified to guide the strategy. These are as follows:

1. To encourage the concentration and development of unique wilderness expedition attractions/facilities in various locations in close proximity to Nahanni National Park that will have a broad market appeal and attract large numbers of high expenditure visitors to the region. The initial and most important action in realizing this objective is to establish a high profile image for the region through the development of interesting attractions and opportunities characteristic of the region and unlike those found to the same extent in the Yukon and Alaska.

VERY SPECIALIZED SEGMENT NOT CONCLUSIVE TO LARGE NUMBERS.

2. To stimulate an understanding of the industry benefits and costs at the community level. An integral part of the development process will be an extensive upgrading of the region's hospitality industry skills and a continued education process of awareness development associated with tourist needs and interests.



3. To facilitate growth of the industry and regional economy through high capital investment by the public and private sectors to sustain maximum economic benefit.

FIRMLY BELIEVE WE REALLY ONLY HAVE 3 areas 4: To sell, and even that is stretching it.

To develop attractions and facilities in the communities that will serve the region on a four-season basis and can act as a catalyst for future private sector investment in the community/region.

5. To develop a tourism plan that is oriented toward the committed tour bus and specialty markets.

IDENTIFY
PRESENT
SHARE 64 -

As shown in Figure 4, the objective is to increase the over a 11 market share. Based upon the strategy ability to attract new markets and capture greater economic impact from existing markets, it is estimated that a growth of over ___ million dollars (_____x increase in direct expenditures) would occur by year 5 of the implementation programme. The capital cost of the strategy is further estimated to be _____ million dollars.

3.4.3

Development Programmes and Programme Suggestions

The types of developments/activities proposed in this strategy include:

- . Major upgrading of community recreational facilities to accommodate regional and Territorial events and other shows.
- . Upgrading of events in Fort Simpson, Fort Providence, Fort Liard and Hay River.
- . Establishment of a primary destination (cultural-historical theme park) attraction and riverfront project in Fort Simpson.
- . Integrated private-public sector programme of resort and related developments centred in the Mackenzie Mountain=.
- . Nahanni-Blackstone visitor services centre to promote Nahanni National Park and a central outfitting centre for servicing river and backcountry travelers into Nahanni Park.

DISAGREE
GIVEN THE MARKET SEGMENT
- 66 -

- 1) to attract large numbers of non-residents to the major remote wilderness opportunities;
- 2) to stimulate use of the Liard-Mackenzie travel corridor by packaged non-resident tour groups;
- 3) to attract a higher volume of non-resident rubber-tire traffic (destination and pass-through) to the corridor;
- 4) and to stimulate more resident N.W.T. travel to community events and attractions on a four-season basis.

THERE WAS NO MENTION ANYWHERE OF WHERE LARGE AMOUNTS OF ADVERTISING WILL COME FROM.

as previously described, because of the integrated and comprehensive nature of this strategy, considerable growth may be anticipated in the entire industry due to the large amount of advertising and local exposure Big River Country will obtain/generate.

3.4.5 Intervening Opportunities

DISAGREE
YUKON IS SIMPLY A PASS THROUGH ZONE ENROUTE TO THE REAL DESTINATION / ALASKA

The Yukon Territory (eg. Kluane National Park) is the strong intervening or competing market to be experienced by Big River Country and the Liard-Mackenzie corridor. However, through a strong step-by-step approach to facility and market developments, a strengthening of the resource-facility attractions will develop, enabling Big River Country to become more competitive with the Yukon.

Development of international-scale wilderness resorts will attract visitors from many parts of the world. As a resort facility, development and services must be able to compete with the comfortable lodges of the world.

3.4.6 Public and Private Sector Responsibilities

Strategy No. 4 is much more complex than the other three strategies and involves increased pre-planning and associated feasibility studies. Further, this strategy requires a stronger integrated approach at both the community level as well as in the development of wilderness resort opportunities in order to generate the necessary visitor volumes and revenues to be financially viable.

In the implementation of Strategy No. 4, the primary responsibilities of the public and private sectors are described in Section 3.2.6 and 3.3.6. In addition it is considered most essential that a municipal by-law be passed to support/direct the community tourism plan. Specific staff will need to be given specific responsibility for the plan's ongoing implementation. In the western section of the region, it may also be desirable to expand or alter the Big River Travel Association image in order to be more clearly identifiable with the opportunities associated with the Mackenzie Mountain. With high capital and operating expenditures, the importance of an integrated comprehensive marketing plan cannot be understated. Co-operation between communities and private lodge owners will be essential in realizing the strategy prime objectives.

3.4.7 Timing and Priorities

The major priority is to resolve land use issues associated with lodge development and use of the river and land resources in Nahanni National Park for tourism development purposes. A second priority is to gain the acceptance of the community tourism plans and initiate an integrated programme

of development both on a region-wide and community-to-community basis. A part of this task will be the establishment of visitor reception centres and upgrading of tourism interpretive information. Expansion and development of new events will need to be co-ordinated with the development of community recreation facilities. Organizing throughout this entire process (expected to take a minimum of 10 years) is the upgrading of skills to meet industry requirements.