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***Highways 2, 5 & 6 Corridor Study: Site  
Developments & Interpretive Plan - Final  
Report***

***Author: Uma Engineering Ltd.  
Catalogue Number: 11-28-21***

11-28-21  
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**HIGHWAYS 2, 5 & 6  
CORRIDOR STUDY: SITE DEVELOPMENTS AND  
INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**FINAL REPORT**

Prepared for:

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Economic Development and Tourism  
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January 1990

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## 1.0 SUMMARY

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The Highways 2, 5 and 6 Corridor Study recommends the recreational and interpretive development of 11 new sites and the upgrading of an additional 14 sites along three highways in the southern region of the Northwest Territories below Great Slave Lake.

The area is one that is often bypassed by travellers driving to or from Yellowknife - statistics indicate that 3 out of 4 vehicles continue on Highway 1 at Enterprise rather than detouring north on Highway 2 towards Great Slave Lake.

The purpose of this study has been to explore the recreational and interpretive potential along these routes working towards improving the driving experience, attracting and retaining tourists in this region for lengthier and more enjoyable visits, thereby enhancing and promoting community-based economic development.

Refer to the first of the two folded maps at the back of this report for an overview of the geographic area, potential points of interest, descriptive comments and existing developments. Refer to the second map - Proposed Concept Plan - for both the overall pattern and type of site developments proposed along the routes.

The region has been broken into two travelling routes that we feel will be an exciting and marketable concept for the driving public. **The Great Slave Route** covers the area from the 60th Parallel Visitors Centre to Enterprise, north to Hay River and then east to Fort Resolution. It follows the Hay River north then parallels Great Slave Lake. **The Wood Buffalo Trail** covers the area on Highway 5 south of The Great Slave Route and down through Wood Buffalo National Park to Fort Smith.

The following information is presented in point form to give a quick summary of the recommendations put forward for this region. The following is proposed based on the type of site - campground, day-use or pull-off as well as a listing of the major interpretive sites and those seen as major recreation sites:

### **CAMPGROUNDS**

Paradise Gardens	- coordinated signage.
Vale Island, Hay River	- upgrade.
Polar Lake	- upgrade.
Mission Island	- new development.
Sandy Lake	- new development.
Little Buffalo Falls	- polish.
Thebacha	- coordinated signage.
Queen Elizabeth Campground	- upgrade.

### **DAY-USE DEVELOPMENTS**

Hay River Golf Course	- additional development.
Vale Island, Hay River	- upgrade.
Dene Settlement Day-Use Area	- coordinated signage.
Polar Lake	- upgrade.
Pine Point	- new development.
Mission Island	- new development.
Sandy Lake	- upgrade.
Angus Fire Tower	- upgrade.
Little Buffalo Falls	- additional development.
Salt Plains Overview	- additional development.
Bell Rock	- new development.
Queen Elizabeth Campground	- upgrade.
Slave River Rapids	- new development.

## **ROADSIDE PULL-OFFS**

Paradise Gardens Pull-off	- new development
Buffalo River Crossing	- upgrade.
Paulette Bay Pull-off	- upgrade.
Nyarling River	- upgrade.
Wetland Viewpoint	- new development.
Salt Mountain Pull-off	- new development.
Fort Smith Pull-off	- new development.

## **REGIONAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

In addition to increased opportunities to stop for recreational or interpretive reasons, we are proposing a series of regional orientation maps. These are located at decision points and cover the entire region, graphically depicting the highways and what to do and see along the routes. They are located at the 7 following locations.

Enterprise	- additional development.
Junction of Highways 2 & 5	- new development.
Hay River Tourist Cabin	- additional development.
Junction of Highways 5 & 6	- new development.
Fort Resolution	- new development.
Fort Smith Pull-off	- new development.
Queen Elizabeth Campground	- upgrade.



## MAJOR INTERPRETATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Locations where interpretation is a significant part of the overall tourism experience.

Vale Island Campground	- Transportation History
Buffalo River Crossing	- Forest/People
Pine Point	- Boom & Bust
Fort Resolution	- Transportation History
Mission Island	- Settlement History
Sandy Lake	- Dune Ecology
Angus Fire Tower	- Karst
Wetland Viewpoint	- Whooping Crane
Salt Plains Overview	- Salt/People
Bell Rock	- Transportation History
Fort Smith	- Transportation History
Slave River	- Transportation History

## MAJOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Locations with a variety of recreational activities available.

Vale Island Campground  
Polar Lake  
Paulette Bay  
Fort Resolution  
Mission Island  
Sandy Lake  
Bell Rock  
Queen Elizabeth Campground  
Slave River

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

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### **2.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

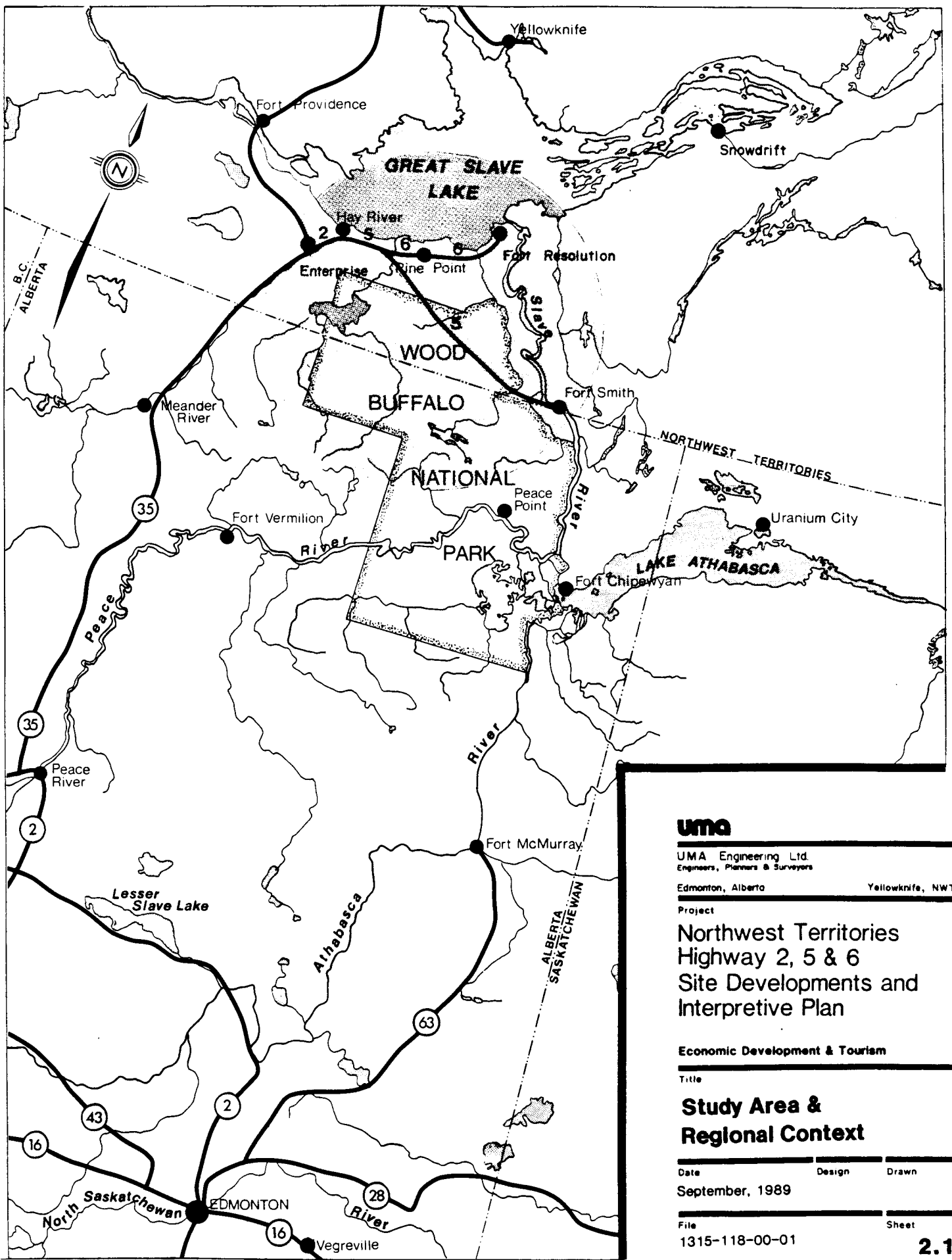
Each year an increasing number of tourists are exploring NWT by vehicle on an organized charter tour or independently with a camping unit. In order to facilitate the enjoyment and continuity of this type of tourism, there is a need for a certain level of service and driving enjoyment along the Highways.

The primary purpose of this study is to provide a series of ideas and development opportunities designed to enhance the attractivity and recreational driving experience for the visitors travelling Highways 2, 5 and 6 in the Enterprise - Hay River - Fort Resolution, and Fort Smith areas.

The following management goals and objectives have been derived from the Terms of Reference and discussions with individuals in Economic Development and Tourism, the Communities of Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Resolution, and Wood Buffalo National Park administration.

#### **Goals**

- To encourage tourists to make increased use of the full range of services and facilities available in the NWT as a means to promote community-based economic development.
- To increase visitors' enjoyment of their experiences in the Northwest Territories, and thereby encourage them to return and to recommend the experience to others.
- To improve the driving experience along Highways 2, 5 and 6 and facilitate the enjoyment and continuity of road-based tourism, and thereby extend the period of time spent in the region.



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Project

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

**Study Area &  
Regional Context**

Date

Design

Drawn

September, 1989

File

1315-118-00-01

Sheet

**2.1**

- To investigate options for interpretation in conjunction with road-based tourism, so as to increase tourist awareness and appreciation of the natural and cultural environment they are travelling in.

### **Objectives**

- To upgrade present recreation sites and provide additional developments in order to make the highway corridors more enjoyable for visitors within the context of the tourism strategies developed for this area.
- To complement the visitor experience on other regional highways.
- To produce a series of ideas and potential opportunities applicable to the various agencies previously mentioned as a starting point for a phased development scheme and further tourism planning.
- To provide opportunities to stop approximately every 45 minutes or 70 kms.
- To identify a variety of sites with a mix of opportunities ranging from short 20 minute stops, to areas with 3 hours of activity, to overnight stops.
- To identify opportunities for public information and interpretation along the corridors.
- To produce initial site designs and a phased plan for developments along the corridor.

## 2.2 PARAMETERS

Parameters of the study are outlined in relative detail in both the Terms of Reference and UMA's proposal. The study area was revised from the original Terms of Reference to include Highway 2 from Enterprise to Hay River. Refer to Map 2.1 for Regional Location.

The study represents a recreational and interpretive planning document to guide the overall marketing, signage and development of the Big River Tourist Zone Highways.

The overall design for the area has strived to offer a balance and variety of both active and passive recreation opportunities in diverse natural settings. The area is addressed at a regional level in Sections 3.0 and 4.0.

The region has been thematically divided into 2 routes - or 1 route and 1 trail as the case may be. The route and trail do not necessarily correspond to Highway numbers. The numbers, we felt, were artificial dividers and from a travellers viewpoint were nothing more than logistical locaters of where you were.

In addition to the designation of routes in our study area, we would like to suggest that a highway outside of the study area be incorporated into the same highway theming as one of the routes here. Again, our study area southern boundary is an artificial line. This is referred to more specifically in Section 4.1.

Along the highways, 3 types of stops have been provided; pull-offs, day-use areas and campgrounds. We have endeavoured to vary the rhythm and type of attraction provided so to better meet the varying needs of the driving public.

For each of the individual sites, recommendations are made on site development, interpretation, signage and operation and maintenance standards. The Technical Appendix Document, Appendix A, is needed to explain fully the operation and maintenance levels. Preliminary design ideas for upgrading and new sites are proposed for most publicly operated facilities. Section 6.0 addresses individual sites.

Development costing is at a very preliminary, gross level and is, of course, dependent on more detailed design or specific site costing at the sites.

## **2.3 APPROACH**

The approach taken on this project has been one which combines community involvement, ideas generation, resource assessment, historical research, and visual analysis of the existing highways.

The project was divided into roughly 4 phases outlined below:

### **Phase 1: Inventory**

- Contacted communities involved; solicited ideas and locations to check. Appendix E lists persons contacted.
- Corridor site reviews, visual assessments and exploration were initiated.
- Preliminary review of regional history and interpretive potential took place.

### **Phase 2: Analysis and Evaluation**

- Analysis of the driving experience, types of facilities needed and available attractions were initiated.
- Development of a matrix summarizing recreation service and interpretive potential along the corridor was undertaken.
- Preliminary decisions on sites, themes and development recommendations were made.

- Consultation with the communities regarding initial recommendations were carried out in the field.
- Recommended sites were field checked a second time.

### **Phase 3: Draft Designs and Technical Report**

- Draft corridor concept plan was prepared.
- Draft concept plans of proposed sites for both upgrading and new development were prepared.
- Draft corridor theming and interpretive recommendations were developed.
- Draft concept plan outlining overall rationale, phasing, costing and development implications was initiated.
- Draft operation and maintenance guidelines were written.

### **Phase 4: Final Report and Designs**

- **Products were prepared:**
  - Corridor concept plan.
  - Corridor themes and interpretive recommendations.
  - Recreation opportunities and recommendations.
  - Development priority and strategy.
  - Preliminary costing estimates.
  - Sign recommendations.
  - Operation and maintenance guidelines and recommendations.
- Final presentations were made to communities and all final recommendations were incorporated into the final report.

## 2.4 CORRIDOR USERS

Visitors to the area can generally be classed as touring (including those visiting friends and relatives), outdoor adventure seekers, local residents and persons travelling on business. Outdoor adventure seekers in the region are largely participating in organized or pre-booked programs and do not travel the highway system. Persons travelling on business who come from outside the region generally travel by plane. Local residents use the highway system extensively and may make use of certain facilities along the highways, particularly campgrounds. We will have the opportunity to make a one-time impact upon local residents with interpretive developments but it is unlikely that local people will use interpretive media more than one time although they may use such associated facilities as walking trails and viewpoints more often and bring visiting friends and relatives to interpretive and recreational sites if they are well designed.

### **General Touring Market**

Our primary target for corridor development is the general touring market. There is a lack of statistical information available but from the information that does exist we have summarized the pertinent details. The document **A Product Development Plan for the Northwest Territories' Tourism Industry** prepared by Derek Murray for the Travel Industry Association of the NWT and Economic Development and Tourism states that the former Fort Smith region (encompassing the entire area south of Great Slave Lake, Yellowknife, and the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers) received 32,500 non-resident visitors in 1986. The report states that the general touring (or "rubber tire") market accounted for 50 percent of that figure in this region. The report also states that the average party size for all visits to the region was 1.8 but we feel it is safe to assume that the average party size for general touring would be at least 2 as data from other North American visitor studies indicate that general touring is rarely an individual activity. This means that the average number of parties engaging in general touring during 1986 in the region (including Yellowknife) was about 8,000.



There are, unfortunately, no firm figures available on what proportion of these parties visited the Highways 2, 5 and 6 region. Cross correlating these statistics with rough figures for Wood Buffalo Park's Visitor Centre (1988) however, we estimate that approximately 20% of the 8,000 parties or 1,600 parties visited this region by car.

Wood Buffalo National Park indicated that ~2,400 persons - not including schools - visited the Visitor Services Centre in 1988 between May and September. (1988 is a more reliable year for counting non-residents at the Centre rather than residents as the facility opened in 1986.) If we consider 2 person parties and a certain percentage of visitors not registering at the Centre, we can roughly assume that 1,200 - 1,600 tourist parties travelled these highways in the peak months. It is recognized that a certain proportion of the traffic from Enterprise to Hay River does not continue onto Highways 5 and 6 and that Highway 2 is the busiest of the three highways.

Once again, extrapolating from the available information, we might assume that approximately 500 parties came, spread over the shoulder season of May, June and September; and 400 parties a month came in July and August. Considering this traffic volume on a daily basis in peak season, we might expect 13 parties a day into the area. With a desirable regional stay of 3 to 5 days (1/3 to 1/2 their trip) the region would have 40-65 parties travelling at any one time in the peak months.

This information has implications for the scale of development in this region. Given that the number of travelling parties is fairly low and the region covers a large area, a number of small scale developments located throughout the region is considered more desirable and appropriate than large scale developments at 2 or 3 points in the region. For example, rather than one campground for 50 units, we felt that the type of experience that is being sought (see below), the traditional use to date and in keeping with the intent of the National Park, the facilities offered should be dispersed in smaller units (average campground is 15-20 units)

and be situated across the region allowing for variety in trip planning and route selection. For example, while Fort Smith/Wood Buffalo National Park is a major destination, depending on the amenities and activities sought, the camping public can stay at one of four different campgrounds.

This style of development also reinforces the overall design that the region is to be travelled over its breadth, thus more equitably distributing the income that tourists bring to the region.

### **Interests**

Regardless of the difficulty in calculating exact numbers of visitors, we know something of their interests. In the Derek Murray report, a profile of Canadian adults interested in visiting the NWT was given. Results of a survey were analyzed to determine what respondents said were the activities they found to be somewhat to very important in selecting the NWT as a destination. As 90 percent of general touring visitors in the region are Canadian, their major interests and activities are extremely important to us. These people responded in the following way:

- 90% were interested in wilderness and undisturbed nature.
- 71% want to visit historic sites.
- 71% want to visit national parks.
- 65% want to participate in local festivals and events.
- 54% are interested in purchasing local crafts.
- 45% are interested in experiencing new and different lifestyles.

This information bodes well for the kind of corridor development planned for the area. Further supporting our initial understanding of visitors is data from the Canadian Parks Service's Draft Visitor Activity Group Profile produced by the staff of Wood Buffalo National Park as a working document. In this document, visitors are divided into standard vacationers, local residents, wilderness experience seekers, traditional users and whirlwind visitors.

By far, the largest visitor group in Wood Buffalo is the first named - standard vacationers and they correspond largely to the general touring group we have targeted our developments to. The Canadian Parks Service working document describes these visitors as:

". . . usually composed of families, young and senior couples, or travelling friends who have chosen Wood Buffalo National Park as part of a mostly leisurely vacation during which they travel by car, family truck, camper, or recreational vehicle. Their home base in the park is a campground and they spend nights either in a tent or vehicle. They are peak season travellers. They see the park as an important and interesting place to experience during their vacation and they have set aside some time to do so."

Initial characterization of their interests are as follows:

"They (standard vacationers) are mostly interested in not too strenuous front-country activities that are educational and provide new experiences, and that can be accomplished from a base such as a campground. Activities include spending time at the visitor centre, hiking, interpretation programs, road touring, camping, swimming, talking with park staff to find out as much as possible about the park and the area, and spending leisurely provisioning time in local communities (especially during poor weather)."

The Canadian Parks Service also provides a list of characteristics including age, group composition and income, etc., but the data of most interest and importance to us lists the following group characteristics:

- Well educated with some prior knowledge of the park and area through readings.
- Interested in natural and human history.
- Interested in learning.
- Interested in activities that contribute to health or are perceived as wholesome.

- Willing to spend time with staff, other local people, exhibits, reading material and other non-personal media that can contribute to their knowledge base about the park and area.
- Interested in buying reading materials and other educational materials about the area.
- Interested in participating in unanticipated, educational experiences if not too costly and available.
- Interested in crafts and other mementoes of visit.

The Parks Service has outlined a few concerns from the perspective of these users including:

- In general, the number of experiences (available in Wood Buffalo National Park) is not worth the amount of travel to reach the park.
- No self-guiding trails.
- No interpretive wayside stops.
- No interpretive road touring.

Through interviews with Economic Development and Tourism staff, Canadian Parks Service staff, tourism operators, area residents and the visitors (we were able to interview when onsite), we learned the major factor leading to the "not much to do here" attitude of visitors was the highway system. The outdoor adventure travel market and specialized or organized travel markets will always find satisfying things to do in a wilderness area such as this region. The self-directed general touring market, however, arrives in NWT expecting that there will be many things to see and do (which will be of interest to them) and that these things will be pointed out to them.

The challenge, then, is that there is a highly motivated, interested group of visitors travelling the highway system in the area who find few outlets for their interests and, as a result, lose some or much of their motivation as their visit progresses. Our goal, as indicated by this visitor analysis will be to maintain a high level of motivation by providing outlets for the many interests NWT and Canadian Parks Service studies have shown these visitors possess.

## **2.5 LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW**

### **Highway 2**

Highway 2 from Enterprise to Hay River has the constructed attraction of being paved. Visitors from the south, as yet unaccustomed to lengthy stretches of gravel road find this paved route to the south shore of Great Slave Lake a pleasant change from Highway 1.

Highway 2 follows the top west bank of the Hay River with occasional glimpses over the deep river valley. This area is one of the most temperate in the NWT and is mixed northern boreal forest. Trees are large as the soil is moderately fertile above the river valley and very fertile on the flood plains.

The road overall is interesting with gentle curves and good site lines. The lack of available vistas and viewpoints onto the river is somewhat frustrating as there are just enough glimpses to know the river valley is there.

### **Highway 5**

Highway 5 has changed little since it was first constructed in the early 1960's. It was the first road access to Fort Smith and is still the only road access to the community and Wood Buffalo National Park.

Twelve years ago, Parks Canada did an assessment of the Potential sites for Roadside Facilities in the National Park. Their description of Highway 5 still stands:

"The completed highway is a gravel-surface, all weather road designed and constructed for the movement of goods by motorized transport rather than as a scenic and tourist experience. A

Northern Canada Power Commission hydro line parallels and shares the road right-of-way through the park. Road maintenance is handled by the NWT Highways Department.

The road corridor is predominantly a wide, enclosed focal corridor through forested landscapes in which the foreground distances predominate. Canopied and detail landscapes dominate the side views. The hydro line is a significant intrusion along the corridor. Due to the simplistic continuity of the corridor (ie. generally highly repetitive characteristics in terms of vegetation , relief, landscape composition types etc.) the variations provided by river crossings, meadows, or marsh/swamp areas becomes important. Differences in forest type also become important in themselves and in the spatial differences they define."

Parks Canada, An Assessment of Potential Roadside Facilities, 1977, pages 4,5.

### **Highway 6**

Highway 6 has only recently been upgraded from Pine Point to Fort Resolution. The initial part of #6 is a continuation of the pavement from Highway 2, Hay River onto Highway 5 through to the former community of Pine Point on Highway 6. The pavement eases a somewhat boring drive. The topography is flat with the northern boreal vegetation "tunnel" only broken by areas of recent burns.

In the Pine Point area, there is evidence of mining activities along the road; slag piles, berms and stockpiles. After the pavement ends at Pine Point there is approximately 45 mins. to an hour of good gravel road to Fort Resolution as you move closer to the lake and occasionally catch a glimpse of the lake from the few higher ridges along the bottom of Paulette Bay. Highway 6 has the lowest vehicle count of the three highways now, with the closure of the Pine Point community as the population of Fort Resolution - the only major community, is approximately 700, one quarter that of Fort Smith.

These forested corridors then, move people and materials from point A to B in reasonably direct lines. Variations provided by topography, water and vegetation are important because they are infrequent and serve as natural starting points for investigating potential stops.

## **2.6 HISTORY**

The history of the South Slave region is an interesting and complex storyline with many players. It lends itself well to small sketches of different times and locations that promise to entertain and inform everyone from boating enthusiasts to gardeners, historians to nature lovers.

Human history is considered the cultural evolution of an area. This, along with the natural evolution of the landscape, form what could be called the background tapestry of the sites and events that one experiences when visiting an area. Similar to aged wallpaper in a room, history is easy to overlook or ignore if there is something more immediate going on centre stage. Tourists, many places, often miss the depth and substance a visit can offer because they do not see or cannot understand and appreciate the background tapestry.

Physical location and the opportunities offered by the landscape itself; for example, a river, have for the most part, determined the human presence and interaction in an area.

Traditional use of land in Canada by aboriginal people is closely tied to the waterways system and the areas that supported a rich diversity of animal habitats. The Chipewyan, Cree, Slavey and Beaver history of the south slave area reflects this in their traditional uses and sites along the Hay and Slave Rivers and Great Slave Lake.

Early exploration by fur traders, settlement by farming missionaries and Europeans also followed this traditional pattern settling along and using the waterways. Use of the land changed as mineral exploration became important in the early 1930-40s and people were prepared to build transportation systems to suit their means rather than be accommodated by the natural systems.

The Second World War had a major impact on this region through the CANOL project on the Slave River and the barge system through Hay River. The CANOL project stands out as an interesting development of a transportation system using both land and water for the movement of a specific product in a specific time frame.

Post World War Two, mineral exploration and continued settlement of the north supported the use of air strips and roads built during the war. This increased use, in turn, spawned the desire and need for further services, additional utilities and a year round transportation system. Highways 2, 5 and 6 have developed in the past 30 years, either following a power line (as in Highway 5), an old settlement track (Highway 2) or accessing a mineral resource (Highway 6).

Because of their recent developments, these highways have very little in the way of in situ cultural features. The highways portray only the most recent history. They bear little relation to any other period of the region's history unlike the waterways. The region offers a rich cultural history at the termini of the highways along the waterways. For that reason, the tapestry of cultural history and the water is recommended at all three destination communities of Hay River, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith. Natural history and landscape will be explored along the highways themselves as the landscape changes and opportunities present themselves. Methods of presenting information and history offsite are recommended later in this report to overcome the absence of cultural history along the highways themselves.



In summary, history is the background tapestry of both cultural and natural evolution that lend richness and appreciation to present day events and experiences. The attraction of tourists and the economic benefits they bring to an area are primarily based on how interesting a destination appears to be, as well as how enjoyable a time they have when they come.

The South Slave Region offers a variety of opportunities based on the natural environment. The addition of the background tapestry will make the area that much more attractive and will encourage more than a one-time interest in the area thus promoting the ongoing viability of tourism as a community based industry.

## **3.0 RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **3.1 THEMES AND IMAGES**

The North is not frozen, neither is it static. Instead, the North moves to rhythms as diverse as the imperceptible cadence of an ice age, the slow throb of the voyage of the earth around the sun and the demanding pulse of the economic engines of the present.

Over centuries, treeline creeps northward, shuffling to the urgings of global warming, then halts and staggers south again, impaired by the grinding of a glacial advance.

Over the years, caribou wander, pickerel spawn and the avens opens to the beat of an annual drum stretched tight by the seasons and smitten by the sun.

And from the time when all men chanted unwritten music and danced close to the edge of survival in nature, people have moved through the north, searching and pursued, their steps choreographed by patterns in the land and the elements which repeat in infinite variations to this day.

For centuries, their movements as fluid as the foam beneath them, men have run the Slave River and pushed warily out into Great Slave Lake. Sweating, slipping, cursing, necks swollen, ligaments tearing, abdomens splitting, they have portaged impossible headlands for masters couched in distant luxury. For family, for honour, for adventure and for profit, they have tested themselves in white water. "Don't let me die wet and alone out here," they prayed. But many did. Dene, Metis; French, English, Scottish; white, black - like to river, the people of the Slave have kept moving.

Today, the Great Slave Route and Wood Buffalo Trail traverse that wedge of land lying north of the 60th Parallel, bounded by the Hay River to the west, Great Slave Lake to the north and the Slave River to the east. The importance of the waterways to the transportation of people and goods

has waned in the southern territories. A modern journey in a motorhome through the region so far removed from man's experience of the region even 25 years ago that it will be hard to give visitors a feeling for the traditions and history of the peoples of this land.

Still, the connection between modern visitors and the people who live here lies in their highly mobile way of life. It is not possible for most residents of the region to sit in one place and survive the way many southerners do - lodged as they are in cities, their movements circumscribed by their houses and their places of work. Northerners of this region travel great distances to hunt and fish, work in the tourism and natural resource industries, buy supplies, enjoy the outdoors and visit friends and relatives. Visitors and northerners share this familiarity with long distances and frequent travel. The movement of people in a moving landscape is the theme we have chosen for this development or, more correctly, it is the theme the land so clearly presents. Man and nature, past and present, are constantly on the move. Although it is a simple theme, easily applied to subjects as diverse as early transportation on the Slave River, karst formation, whooping cranes, subsistence hunting, the rise and fall of Pine Point, and so on, it is up to us to make the connection more clear to visitors so they may be able to identify more closely with northerners and this landscape. In conveying this theme, we will overcome the superficial, side-window images tourists get of the region now and replace them with more accurate and more involving images.

The strongest impression visitors have of the Highways 5 and 6 corridors is that they burrow through about three hours of boreal forest from Hay River to Fort Resolution and Fort Smith. Tourism operators in Fort Resolution and Fort Smith as well as Economic Development and Tourism staff throughout the region say that visitors' most common reaction to the northern boreal forest is boredom. You drive and drive and drive through country that looks the same kilometre after kilometre, eating the dust of the RV in front of you and kicking up a screen of dust for the RV behind you to swallow. The one saving grace of this experience is that you can barrel down the road to Fort Smith, see the place and get back to Hay River all in one day.

Clearly, this has to change. The land these highways travel through isn't boring. People have lived in and off the land here for 10,000 years or longer. Traditional Dene cultures have been joined by Metis, European, North American and other cultures as the economics of the region have grown and changed. The stories of aboriginal life, European exploration, fur trading, northern transportation, logging, commercial fishing, missionary activity, the CANOL project, and modern life can be heard at many sites along the highways. The roads touch on Great Slave Lake, the Slave and Hay rivers as well as dozens of smaller rivers and streams, all part of the largest river system in Canada. Sand dunes, karst features, bedrock exposures, vast plains and marshes, salt plains, permafrost and northern farmland lie along the routes. Whooping crane, white pelican and wood bison stand out as rare wildlife viewing opportunities accompanied by more commonly seen northern species.

Getting tourists interested in these stories and features won't be hard - the statistics gathered by Economic Development and Tourism show that the visitors arrive here to look for them. Showing these things to visitors won't be difficult either - the roads go right by, through or to visible elements of all these stories and features. Our job, then, is to make it possible for visitors to see, hear and experience the things they want to learn about anyway. In so doing, we intend to make the drive from Hay River to Fort Resolution or Fort Smith (or both) not only lively, interesting and involving but to multiply the average time it takes to travel these routes by a factor of two.

Because the roads and the destinations will become so much more interesting and involving, visitors will no longer "do" 5 and 6 in a day or two but will spend the better part of a week or more in the area. They will leave having formed the intention to return in the future and to suggest to their friends and relatives to visit as well. And, finally, not only will they have spent more time in the region and enjoyed their visits thoroughly, visitors will leave feeling they have truly experienced the people, the history and the landscape of the region, and learned something

significant about them. That feeling is all important to a completely successful visitor experience and to efforts to conserve the natural and human resources of the region by making conservation economically essential.

Determining how to accomplish these objectives has merely been a matter of sorting through the experiences possible along Highways 2, 5 and 6, choosing the best according to a number of criteria and suggesting how features, stories and recreational opportunities can be presented in a sensible, enjoyable way.

Using a highway corridor is a very physical experience - it involves all of the senses. Certain aspects of driving northern highways actually assault the senses and most visitors find solid bouts of driving which last more than a couple of hours to be a draining experience. Our plan is to provide frequent opportunities to take a break from the drive. Breaks can be short or long but we suggest providing interesting opportunities for people to stretch out their breaks with mild recreational and interpretive activities. Stretch legs, see something interesting, learn something new, put the road out of your mind, clear the dust out of your nose and be a northerner for a few minutes or a half hour or more.

Following this general rationale, we looked at a series of possible sites along the roadways and evaluated them on the basis of how well each could offer such opportunities. Figure 3.1 summarizes our assessment of the properties, potential and requirements of each site. Basically, we looked at what it's possible to accomplish at each site given its location, its physical layout, how people might get into and out of it, what they might be able to do while they were there, what they might see, what they could experience and what they might learn of the features and stories mentioned earlier.

We paid special attention to places where it was clear there was something really worth doing like canoeing at Sandy Lake on Highway 5, walking at Pine Point on Highway 6, or cross-country skiing at the golf course on Highway 2.



We also emphasized sites where there is something really worth seeing regardless of whether any interpretation will be provided - the view above Paulette Bay, historic buildings in Fort Resolution, the waterfront in Hay River, sink holes at Angus Fire Tower, and the Slave River Rapids are all good examples of these (and there are many more). Once possible sites had been examined this way, we also looked at questions of pacing. Visitors will only stop so often along a road regardless of how riveting each site may be - visitors do have their eventual destinations for that day in mind. Even granting that visitors will have opportunities to stop at sites outbound as well as inbound, there is a practical limit to the number of sites we can string along the highways (not only in terms of visitor attention but also in real budgetary terms). The system we propose here, therefore, is one we feel contains the best sites with an optimum pacing for visitors who will travel the roads in both directions.

Interpretive opportunities, recreational opportunities, overviews of the two routes covering Highways 2, 5 and 6, and a more detailed look at each site follows.

### **3.2 INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES**

Interpretive opportunities are defined by first developing interpretive objectives. The following objectives have been set for this project, divided into three types of objectives - cognitive, affective and behavioral.

#### **Objectives**

1. Cognitive objectives: That they may have more knowledge and information on the following:
  - boreal forest
  - native culture
  - development history

- where to stop
  - that there are stops
  - knowledge of where stops are before they get to the Highway.
2. **Affective Objectives:** That their emotional state may be changed to elicit the following reactions:
- excited by drive
  - amazed by features
  - in tune with native life
  - feel like pioneers or adventurers.
3. **Behavioral Objectives:** That visitors move to change their behaviour resulting in the following:
- visits planned well ahead
  - spend 6 hours travelling from Hay River to Fort Smith
  - campground usage outside of Fort Smith will increase
  - trails will be used
  - viewpoints will be used
  - exiting visitors will become amateur travel counsellors for the region.

The broad interests of visitors to the region can be classified as nature, culture and history.

The road system in the region offers plenty of opportunities to look at the natural environment on a general level (boreal forest ecology, wildlife, plants, etc.), a specific level (karst formations, whooping cranes, arctic lakes, etc.) and at an intermediate level (fire ecology, dune ecology, etc.) Our concept is to deal with these topics at the sites which best suit them.



It should be our general policy at sites along the roads to interpret subjects directly connected to features visitors can experience (see, hear, touch, smell, taste) right there. Broader concepts, processes and subjects visitors cannot experience directly at a site should be dealt with off-site if at all. We have identified roadside interpretive opportunities on the basis of what can be experienced immediately by visitors.

While this is a good approach to enhancing the visitor experience on the road system, it presents some difficulties in terms of conveying messages about the region which do not tie nicely into a road system.

First and foremost, the culture and history of the region do not lend themselves to interpretation along the roads as well as the natural environment does. One important reason for this is that the main travel and transportation corridor in the region from the time when people first arrived here more than 10,000 years ago up to the 1960s has been the Mackenzie River system. In this region, the system sweeps from Fort Smith on the Slave River to Hay River on Great Slave Lake at the mouth of the Hay River. The road system contacts the water corridor like a fork puncturing a sausage at three locations: Hay River, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith.

The difficulty this poses for interpretation is two-fold. First, the lion's share of interpretive opportunities are not along the highway corridor but at the termini. Second, the modern visitor's experience of the region is land-based for the most part, looking from a dusty or muddy strip through the forest into the trees on either side. The human experience of the historical corridor has been looking from a dustless, mudless waterway toward hundreds of kilometres of shoreline. If you didn't float, you walked. And nearly none of the historical residents and travellers in the region saw more than a glimpse of most of the country the roads run through. It will be hard to give that kind of perspective to a modern visitor unless we coax them off the land and into a boat once they get here even if only for an hour or so.

## Approach

The approach we must take is evident:

- a) we interpret important stories and features on-site along the roads where the opportunity presents itself (as in karst at Angus Fire Tower, dune ecology at Sandy Lake, resource exploitation boom and bust at Pine Point, climate at Paradise Gardens, etc.);
- b) we reserve major cultural and historical messages for more concentrated on-site developments in and around Hay River, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith where evidence of these stories can be seen (as in CANOL at Bell Rock and earlier transportation history in the Fitzgerald-Smith corridor); and
- c) we interpret integrating concepts, processes, and themes off-site (through interpretive centres, publications and audio or videotapes etc.).

There are also opportunities to integrate concepts developed for use in interpretation of themes and messages along other routes in the Northwest Territories, namely the 60th Parallel, Deh Cho and Dempster projects. The level of integration attempted here includes attention to media type and to themes. In the area of media, we propose a route log or driving guide to be produced in brochure form, containing a simple map of the routes and which will be given away at visitor centres and businesses throughout the region. We also suggest producing a one-hour radio documentary style audio cassette containing a range of programming related to the main messages we tackled in the corridors. The Great Slave Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail will also use the same orientation modules developed for the other highways while displaying their own distinctive name, colour scheme and logo.

## **Host Theme Opportunities**

One important area of thematic continuity is in the carry over use of the host theme from the other highways. We see the opportunity to present hosts in interpretive media in several locations including nearly all of the minor interpretation sites (sites possessing no special interpretive development and generally only one or two interpretive panels). The host theme can also be used extremely effectively at the Pine Point, Wetlands Viewpoint and Slave River Rapids on-site exhibits. The host theme also finds its way into the audio cassette tape. Specific references about how and where the host theme may be adapted to these corridors are made in the Site Recommendations and Plans section of this report.

### **3.3 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Hand in hand with the opportunity to learn and understand more about the South Slave area should be opportunities to do things. Some level of physical activity becomes very important along the highways in fighting physical and mental inertia as travellers will have spent a number of days driving to get to the region and the continuing boreal forest can make even a few hours drive, after the initial 2 days of a trip, a tiresome one.

#### **Objectives**

Recreational objectives have been developed as follows, similar to the interpretive ones:

1. **Cognitive objectives:** That they may have more knowledge and information on the following:
  - what activities they can do in the different landscapes
  - what activities have a traditional history in the area and where one can participate in them
  - that there are opportunities to engage in a number of recreational activities along the routes

- where to stop for different recreational activities
  - knowledge of activity opportunities before they get to the area.
2. **Affective Objectives:** That their emotional state may be changed to elicit the following reactions:
- relaxed, not "fidgety" on the drive
  - sense of anticipation
  - sense of accomplishment
  - feel like pioneers or adventurers
  - state of moderate well being from balance of active and passive activities.
3. **Behavioral Objectives:** That visitors move to change their behaviour resulting in the following:
- spend 6 hours travelling from Hay River to Fort Smith with active "out of the car" time
  - trail use regionally will increase
  - time spent in the region will be longer
  - repeat visitation will occur
  - increased use of local guides and outfitters
  - increased purchase of sporting items by visitors
  - exiting visitors will become amateur travel counsellors for the region.

### **Types of Activities**

In assessing likely opportunities for recreational use of sites along the highways, we developed a list of potential activities and then examined each site for its inherent capability to support that activity. We deliberately chose recreation activities that were extensive rather than intensive, required a minimum of infrastructure, were non-time specific, could appeal to a wide age and cultural range, and were presently perceived to be activities that 'fit' with the northern wilderness and cultural image.

We focused primarily on non-winter activities as the majority of road traffic is summer traffic, although we recognize that segments of the visitor market (friends and relatives, special-event package tours as well as business travellers) travel year-round and there may be a future demand for more winter activities.

Figure 3.1 in section 3.4 summarizes our assessment of the recreation potential at various sites. It only infers capability and not necessarily suitability; capability being the ability of the physical characteristics of the site to support development and suitability being the appropriateness of doing so. The final list of sites was evaluated on all the factors in Figure 3.1 as well as the level of existing development, biophysical inventory, potential cost to access a site, the desires and opinions of neighbouring communities and route spacing or the pace that we were trying to develop along the highways.

### **3.4 SITE REVIEW AND SELECTION**

As mentioned immediately above, a number of factors were considered in the compiled list of potential sites. The actual list of sites had come from a number of sources; Economic Development and Tourism, Renewable Resources, Wood Buffalo National Park, the communities themselves; Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution as well as existing documentation and exploration of the area.

Site selection was based on developing a pool of potential sites that offered recreation and/or interpretive potential and then considering their suitability in terms of land jurisdiction, existing level of development, ease of site access, distance from the highway in contrast to the attractivity, spacing along the highway and the opinions and concerns of the neighbouring communities.

With a list and rationale for potential sites we returned to the communities for input, comments, additions and deletions. This document represents those sites that have been selected and agreed to by the majority of interested parties and individuals that have been involved in the process.

It should be recognized that as an idea and preliminary planning document, site selection has spanned a variety of sites, not all of which the Territorial government may chose to develop or could develop. We have also made some minor recommendations for sites that are privately held.

The following Section 4.0 is a description, rationale and overview of the 2 routes we have proposed covering the 3 Highways discussed in terms of the visitor experience.

## **4.0 VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

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### **4.1 THE GREAT SLAVE ROUTE**

The best way to think about the developments proposed for these highway corridors is to imagine the driving experience as an overview before getting bogged down in the details of each site.

A visitor's experience of the Great Slave Route really begins wherever and whenever he or she starts thinking about making the trip. The complex process of building expectations and manufacturing personal images of the North happens long before and far away from a actual visit. Nonetheless, we believe the actual experience of the Great Slave Route begins at the **60th Parallel Visitor Centre** where visitors' expectations of the North begin to be confirmed or denied based upon their first impressions of the true North. Visitors should see images of the Great Slave Route at the centre and they should be introduced to the themes of the route - a history, peoples and a landscape constantly moving and changing.

Visitors should also be persuaded by the exhibits, displays and atmosphere of the centre to slow their pace now that they have arrived in the NWT and there is so much to see and do (see the Orientation section in the Communication Program for more on these concepts). An orientation module outside the centre and maps and displays inside the centre make visitors aware of the Great Slave Route and the recreational and interpretive opportunities along it. Hay River, Polar Lake Park, Pine Point, and Fort Resolution, including Mission Island are shown as highlights. Tourism products along the route or accessible from the route are also highlighted so visitors may begin planning excursions and side trips. Visitors pick up the Great Slave Route driving guide brochure at the centre and may purchase the Great Slave documentary cassette tape here.

After leaving the centre and heading north on Highway 1, visitors experience the recreational and interpretive developments planned in the Highway 1 corridor study prepared by Avens Associates. These experiences will certainly be dominated by coming into contact with the waterfalls and canyons of the Hay River - spectacular views most visitors are unprepared for. Visitors have also been exposed to the theme of the Highway 1 development which is "Down North" - the idea that people, commerce and rivers flow northward in this part of the country and have done so throughout time. We hope visitors will have gained a sense of this theme by the time they reach **Enterprise** so that the orientation module for the Great Slave Route located along the highway there will show them how following the Great Slave Route will be a natural continuation of the enjoyable and surprising adventure they have already begun.

We should open up views of the river and the river valley along Highway 2 wherever possible and provide opportunities for visitors to get down to the river. The character of the river changes completely as it reaches the Great Slave basin, braking from its headlong plunge over waterfalls and rapids, through steep canyons cut through bedrock, to slow down, spread out and meander back and forth across the floor of a gentler, wider valley. This change can be observed along the route in a few places but the contrast can be seen safely and easily at close range first at **Paradise Gardens** where people can drive to the valley floor and out onto a portion of the flood plain tucked into the crook of the river.

Of course, the valley floor at this point is well drained and covered in a thick coating of rich alluvial soils. The climate here is mild and these conditions, soil and climate, have made it possible to carry on market gardening here - something of a rarity in the NWT as only 400,000 acres of land are classed as arable. The opportunity to purchase seasonal produce here is a tangible tourism product from their exploration. There is also the opportunity to camp here in a grass meadow beside the gardens and an informal boat launch exists just down the road.



Paradise Gardens, then, offers a marked contrast not only in the character of the river but in the character of the land. Visitors have seen the poorly drained, boggy, acidic forests of the upland, at such locations as the 60th Parallel site and Swede Creek on Highway 1. Now they see a landscape with a vertical dimension and broad, grassy flood plain. Here too, they begin to get a sense of the pioneering people who have settled portions of the North. A simple interpretive panel at a pull-off by Paradise Gardens will deal with these ideas.

The lion's share of visitors travelling north on Highway 2 go all the way to Hay River before any of them venture back to the Highway 5 junction to head farther east along the Great Slave Route. Before they reach Hay River, they have the opportunity to see the river valley again at the **Hay River Golf Course** where the greens sweep down to vistas of the valley. A simple interpretive panel at a picnic area located beside the golf course clubhouse will point out the effect the meandering character of the river has had on the valley. The developed picnic stop here will serve as a support facility to the golf course which is public and encourages tourist use of both the course and the clubhouse restaurant and bar services.

As visitors travel through Hay River to get their first look at Great Slave Lake, they become increasingly aware of the major industrial activity centred on **Vale Island**. NTCL's docks and associated works, and the northern railhead come as another surprise to first time visitors who have little idea that Hay River is the entrepot of the North and the centre of modern transportation of goods into the western and central Arctic by rail and water. To accompany their first view of the lake, we will erect an interpretive panel describing the lake and introducing its historical importance to the peoples of the North. At another site along the east channel of the Hay River amid the industrial activity and giving a good view of the Dene settlement across the channel, a small on-site exhibit will deal with the modern era of transportation in the region, relating it to the stories told at Fort Resolution and Fort Smith of earlier eras.

Most visitors will stay at least one night on Vale Island and perhaps more as this will be one of the few campgrounds located in a service centre. At this time the campground and day-use area both need site improvements to adequately meet the high seasonal influx that they receive and to better reflect the quality that this park should offer in an 'urban' location.

Visitors at this point should have visited the sites we have proposed developments for in Hay River and the **Hay River Visitor Reception Centre**. Visitors will have originally stopped for something as simple as directions to the Vale Island Campground but their stop will result in much more.

The centre should be distributing the Great Slave Route driving guide and retailing the documentary tape for the route. Travel counsellors at the centre should also be trained to recommend the Great Slave Route as a satisfying visitor experience and be familiar with the recreational and interpretation opportunities along the route, including the developments implemented from this study. Prior planning based on marketing material, impressions and ideas gained from the 60th Parallel Visitor Centre, a satisfactory experience on Highways 1 and 2 so far, and the orientation modules located at Enterprise and the **Highway 2 and 5 Junction** should combine now to persuade the majority of highway based visitors to Hay River to venture farther along the Great Slave Route, intending to camp at Mission Island, or at least Polar Lake Park.

The orientation module at the junction, therefore, will be designed to draw people eastward along the route and little emphasis will be given to facilities and opportunities along Highways 1 and 2. Special emphasis will be placed on the tourism opportunities and interpretive developments at the Hay River Indian Reserve which are now being planned. This module also provides orientation to the Wood Buffalo Trail, the description of which follows in the next section of this report.

Highway 5 cuts across the lowlands south of the lake to its junction with Highway 6. From that junction the Great Slave Route follows Highway 6, angling north again to reach the lake and terminate at Fort Resolution on the west side of the Slave River delta. Although it runs close to Great Slave Lake, the Great Slave Route remains in the forest for the majority of its length.

The highway offers opportunities to entice visitors off the road and into the forest for a much closer look at how interesting and diverse the landscape really is. From the first section of road from Highway 2 to the 5/6 junction, visitors will obtain varied impressions of the boreal forest - both in a mature state and in a large area of recently burned timber. Visitors often get the impression that they are driving through forests stunted by the extreme cold of the North. While many find the forest boring because their eyes have not been tuned to really "seeing" the forest, we have the opportunity to bring the fascinating qualities of the northern forest to light along this stretch.

At **Polar Lake Park**, visitors will get this new outlook on the tunnel of trees they have been driving through. At the park, visitors can check the orientation module, make midstream trip decisions, and stretch their legs on an interpretive trail which will put the notion of what the northern forest is all about in a lively and involving manner which may include material which introduces some of the people who have lived in the bush through time.

Polar Lake Park will also offer the opportunity to catch a few hours fishing as the lake is stocked with rainbow trout or the opportunity to take an extended walk north to the Great Slave shore. The day-use and beach development will offer a warm-day stop over and the avid fisherman will be able to camp by the lake for a day or two if he chooses.

Moving on, visitors will experience more of the boreal forest ideas from a different angle if they stop at **Buffalo River Crossing** pull-off. Designed as a highway pull-off, this site will be improved with a few picnic tables and outhouse as well as a short path to the abandoned railway line with

an interpretive panel at the parking lot trailhead and a cluster of two or three at the trail terminus. These panels will present ideas about the people of the forest in relation to traditional uses of the forest and the river along with the historical anomaly of such things as railways and roads burrowing through the bush in a region where the means of travel and transportation for thousands of years has been by river and convoluted game trails.

Visitors here should begin to get a sense of their feet and their arms as the traditional means of propulsion in the landscape they see around them - a landscape which has now begun to slowly reclaim the abandoned rail bed.

Visitors have a decision to make at the **Highway 5 & 6 Junction** where an orientation module deals with the enticing opportunities lying farther down the Great Slave Route toward Fort Resolution or along the Wood Buffalo Trail on the way to Fort Smith. If visitors leave Hay River in the morning, they have reached this junction around lunch time allowing for an hour or so at Polar Lake and/or Buffalo River. If we could tip the scales of a visitor's weighing process there, we would suggest they continue down the Great Slave Route, take their midday break at Pine Point if they have not already made that stop and continue on to camp in the Fort Resolution area for the night. We would then recommend returning to travel down the Wood Buffalo Trail.

The orientation matter on the module at this junction should highlight the intriguing and distinctive developments at Pine Point and Mission Island as a means to interest visitors in the remainder of the Great Slave Route, pointing out that Great Slave Lake and the Slave River delta can both be seen at road's end.

Lunch at the **Pine Point Day-use** site offers them the opportunity to eat at tables set along the edges of abandoned fairways, with the golf course in an old meadow state of succession, tangible different from 10 years ago.

Visitors will find the interpretive development at Pine Point memorable for its distinctive design and strangely haunting in its presentation of the Pine Point story. They will find the unusual shape of the structure, its location on an overgrown green of the old golf course and the simple footpath which leads from the parking area through the on-site exhibit and on into the former townsite an odd but appealing juxtaposition of interpretation and the invisible but palpable past.

While visitors will learn about the history of the town and its people, they will remember their visit as one of the most remarkable hours they spent in the region.

At **Paulette Bay** pull-off, visitors will see Great Slave Lake again and will naturally want to pull off the road for a few late afternoon photos if the weather allows. A simple interpretive panel will reintroduce the lake and also introduce the era of the region's history to be dealt with on Mission Island.

Before entering **Fort Resolution**, visitors will pull in at an unmanned visitor information area consisting of a standard orientation module featuring sites and activities along the Great Slave Route and in the immediate area, a special kiosk maintained by the community which will promote local tourism products on a changing basis.

As nearly all road-based visitors stay in their vehicles or in tents for the night, clear directions to the campground will be given and suggestions about ways to spend a day or two in the area making use of local guides and outfitters will be suggested through the kiosk.

Once visitors have reached **Mission Island** and along the road to the campsites out near the tip, good views of the Slave River Delta are to be had and visitors will have the chance to stop at a site near the top of the island and an interpretive panel will talk about the delta and some of the historic features seen from the site.

Once on the island whether for a picnic or an overnight stay, visitors will track down the site of the old mission buildings, for which the site is named. Here they will encounter more major interpretation, style as yet to be determined. The future of this site is under discussion at present and it seems a decision about final disposition may be some time away. In the meantime, visitors should still gain an appreciation for the significance of the site, the stories and the people associated with it. In addition, there is not better place in the area for visitors to learn about the general history of the area and its role in northern transportation and administration from the middle of the 19th Century to the beginning of the 20th.

The on-site exhibit we propose for this site should be distinctive but very low profile. It should not be an intrusive presence on the historic site but it should do the site justice nonetheless. What we recommend and feel visitors will respond very well to would be a surfaced area of modest dimensions with interpretive media inlaid into the pad or platform itself and mounted on supports which barely rise above the level of the ground. Such a development could be extremely striking and involving for a visitor standing on the pad but be nearly invisible to a visitor standing just 100 m away. Certainly some day, the site will receive the major interpretation development it deserves because of the role Fort Resolution has played in the history and development of the modern NWT but, in the meantime, this low profile yet distinctive approach will serve visitors, residents and other interested groups very well.

On the whole, visitors to the Fort Resolution area may find themselves wishing there were more to do and see in the area and in the community but we recommend that development be limited to the level we have outlined here for the time being. With this level of development in place, residents can take time to consider what form of tourism development (if any) will best suit Fort Resolution in the long term.

## 4.2 THE WOOD BUFFALO TRAIL

Physically, visitors begin their trip down the Wood Buffalo Trail at the junction of Highways 5 and 6 when they leave the Great Slave Route and head down Highway 5. As we said at the beginning of our discussion of the Great Slave Route, however, visitors began forming impressions and generating expectations of the experience well before they left home. In most cases, this is much more the case for visitors bound for Wood Buffalo National Park than those bound for any other destination on the southern road network in the NWT. Once the largest national park in the world, Wood Buffalo has a northern wilderness image which attracts visitors who might visit other northern national parks but who opt for Wood Buffalo because it is accessible by road. Few visitors arrive at Fort Smith by accident - people who travel the Wood Buffalo Trail are travellers with a purpose.

Notwithstanding the above, visitors should come in contact with images and ideas of the Wood Buffalo Trail as early as the 60th Parallel Visitor Centre not so much as a promotion for the national park but to make them aware there is much to see and do along the trail itself.

At the 60th Parallel, Enterprise, Hay River, the Highways 2 and 5 junction and the Highways 5 and 6 junction, orientation media must emphasize the fact that the features and facilities along the trail make it worth spending an entire day experiencing. The Canadian Park Service's visitor profiles show that visitors in the general touring market are looking for the kind of experiences we propose in this study. Advising them early in their visit to the NWT that these opportunities now exist will have an important impact on altering their travel plans.

Visitors will want to make a decision early in the day about where they intend to spend the coming night. **Sandy Lake Campground** should be given a high profile in orientation media at 60th Parallel, Enterprise and Hay River so visitors have enough prior knowledge of its existence to plan to include it in their itineraries. The suggestion should be that visitors make an early stop at Sandy Lake and explore the dune complex, the lake

and the interpretive development there, then spend the following day travelling down the Wood Buffalo Trail to Fort Smith because there is so much to see on the way.

Sandy Lake will offer a great location to spend a late afternoon unwinding or even a couple of days boating, exploring, walking and beaching. The campground will offer only basic amenities but the unusual landscape and minimal bug environment provided by the sand dunes in the day-use area will attract both locals and tourists for a visit.

A series of interpretive panels near the campground and an interpretive trail through the dunes will look at the phenomenon of wind-blown sand along the south shore of the lake and relate that to vegetation and life forms visitors have already seen at places like Polar Lake and which they will again see farther down the Trail.

If visitors leave Sandy Lake Campground in the morning, crossing into **Wood Buffalo National Park** as they head southeast will kick off their day with a certain sense of accomplishment in having reached a goal many have been striving toward for thousands of kilometres. A large, impressive entrance sign should be erected at the park boundary, marking that accomplishment.

Once into the park, signage will direct them to **Angus Fire Tower** as both an information and recreational stop. Here, visitors will encounter a major orientation module and a well developed day-use area. They will also encounter one of the biggest holes they have ever seen in their lives. Like all the other karst features in the region, this sink hole is missed by most visitors because they have not known where to look. Karst features visible on the surface result from processes which occur underground and unseen. These features and processes are a major theme of the park's interpretive program and should be interpreted fully at this site.



A trail around the near sink hole, will connect to another through the bush to a second large sink and back to the day-use area past a sulphur spring. This will give visitors a chance to see karst features and learn about them from the interpretive signs placed along the trails.

At the second sink hole, visitors will even get the chance to walk down a stairway to water level where they can learn about what biologist have learned recently about life in these karst systems.

Near the parking area and a focal feature as you enter the site, will be an on-site exhibit housed in a small gazebo-like structure. The story of the unseen processes at work underground and the vast network of underground drainage we surmise to exist in the area will be told and illustrated on a series of panels. This structure will also introduce the north part of the park and house a local orientation map, functioning as an unmanned visitor information centre.

Continuing on south, **Nyarling River Crossing** will give visitors a chance to stretch their legs and have a look at a river which flows but is not seen except perhaps in spring. An interpretive panel at a small viewpoint will explain where we think the river really is.

Forty five minutes to an hour later road based visitors will get as close to the endangered whooping cranes as they are likely to get at the **Wetland Viewpoint**. This viewpoint is recommended for the end of a sand dune in the marshes to interpret this important conservation story.

From a cluster of interpretive panels on two viewing decks, visitors will survey a large portion of the wetland complex in which the endangered whooping crane is making a comeback with the help of conservation agencies and concerned individuals. Visitors will read the words of several of these individuals and get first-hand reports of the progress of the program through interpretive media at the site. By the time visitors have stopped at Sandy Lake, Angus Fire Tower and Wetland Viewpoint, they will have come to feel they have truly penetrated the heart of the north woods where unusual natural features and significant natural values

surround them. This, primarily, is the character of the Wood Buffalo Trail and, somewhere along the route, we hope most visitors will experience the thrill of seeing wild bison and the chances are good that they will.

Visitors may wish to stay in the immediate area for the night or may only wish to stop in at **Little Buffalo Falls Territorial Park** for a brief look see. In either case, certain improvements must be made to the interpretive trail system and a facility for viewing the falls which give the park its name should be constructed. No major changes to the interpretive program are required, however, visitors should learn about the people of the river from the falls viewpoint.

The pace of travel will have picked up for most parties of travellers by the time they reach the turn off to the **Salt Plain Overview** yet it is a wonderful vista all visitors should be encouraged to witness. Orientation media along the road will highlight this site particularly because it is at a distance from the road.

The Wood Buffalo Trail driving guide will also make special mention of the site. Once induced to visit the viewpoint, visitors will be rewarded by an excellent view from a newly constructed platform which is provided with two interpretative panels explaining the natural and historical significance of the plains and the salt. The interpretive program for the site could be enhanced with a small trail leading along the upland and down to the margin of the plain. From interpretive signs along the trail, visitors might learn of the historical people connected with the area and the salt from their descendants who would be profiled and quoted as a form of the host theme developed for the NWT's southern road system.

Opportunities to picnic and walk at this site will positively reward the time spent in taking this detour.

We would like to then begin turning the focus of interpretive development in the area away from the predominantly environmental to the predominantly human (although as always in the north, the two are inseparable). The interpretive program at Salt Plain Overview allows for this transition which will be taken further as visitors move east.

Visitors can get a last, or a second view of the Salt Plain from the **Salt Mountain Viewpoint** at the roadside just east of the turnoff to the overlook. The interpretive panel at this site will point out visible features and will emphasize information related to the people of the area.

As the trail draws alongside the Slave River, it once again enters an area of intensive human activity over a period of centuries. We hope that by now, visitors will have accepted the notion that the corridors they are travelling in their vehicles do not match the traditional travel corridors of the region and that every time they near a major watercourse, they also enter a zone of human activity which may be thousands of years old.

They have seen the evidence and heard many of the stories related to this concept already in Hay River and Fort Resolution, on the documentary cassette tape they purchased and in the Rivers to Roads publication. The interpretive development at **Bell Rock**, therefore, will be a rewarding experience for most visitors for they will be eager to learn about another era in the history of the growth of the North.

Two clusters of interpretive panels - on-site exhibits - mounted on two viewing platforms connected by a trail or boardwalk will overlook the river and the remains of the warehouses and company buildings at Bell Rock. Here, visitors will learn about the era of stern wheelers, steamers and tugs on the Slave River. The terminus of the portage route for many commercial shipments, the site of an American Army Camp during the second World War when the US pursued its improbable CANOL schemes and a busy transportation hub of the North until the railway arrived at Hay River in 1964, Bell Rock will tell its story through these simple interpretive media until plans can be made to mount an interpretive program equal to the major stories residing in the site.

Just before entering Fort Smith, visitors will have an opportunity to stop briefly at the **Fort Smith pull-off** where both a regional and local orientation map will detail the area they are in and the opportunities and services available.

Visitors will find much to do and see in **Fort Smith** including the Canadian Parks Service's visitor centre and the Northern Life Museum. The Town of Fort Smith now works toward a program to interpret much of their heritage in and around the townsite. In addition to what the town may devise, though, we propose to interpret the historic portage routes around the **Slave River Rapids**. A trail system from Fitzgerald to Fort Smith will be improved and at four locations - one at each end and two overlooking historic portages along the route - on-site exhibits with audio stations will be installed. Visitors here will be able to see and hear the stories of men who shot these rapids and portaged these headlands over the full span of time people have moved through this territory.

Visitors will also see other minor interpretive panels along the trail system giving details of events which have happened on the ground they walk. The trail system from **Queen Elizabeth Campground** to Fort Smith will be similarly improved and provided with two or three interpretive panels overlooking the river discussing the details of river stories from the same span of time.

Visitors, of course, are unlikely to stop at every site we have planned along these routes. They may not stop at them in the order we describe nor are they likely to stop at them all while travelling in the same direction. Each visitor experience will be different. Despite that difference, we hope each visitor will come away from the Great Slave Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail with the clear idea that life in the region, like them, is on the move and that this movement can be viewed from several perspectives. Take these ideas home with you. Think about them. Come back again and find out more.

## **5.0 COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM**

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To accomplish the goals and objectives set out earlier in this report, we will need to communicate frequently with visitors throughout the study area. This section of the report has been organized according to the purposes for which we will communicate, i.e. Identification and Direction, Orientation, and Interpretation.

We will use a range approaches and media to mount this communication program. There is a need for personal contact at visitor centres and commercial establishments throughout the region. The bulk of the program proposed here relies on non-personal means of communication including publications, audio cassettes, interactive computer terminals, on-site exhibits and signs. Most of these media have been planned to be specific to a series of sites along the study corridors. Some, however, are specific to no site or apply to several sites. Some are designed to support the provision of personal services. Some are portable, most are stationary. We felt it was important to review the scope of the proposed communication program here, particularly as it applies to media applicable to many sites. The first consideration affecting nearly all media are those elements of their design which are common to all.

### **5.1 COMMON DESIGN ELEMENTS**

While each of the sites identified in this study has its own character and its own story to tell, there are communication needs which extend throughout the highway system. For reasons of economy, recognition and efficiency, certain elements of the concept for communication and interpretation along these routes will bear varying degrees of similarity.

A common colour set should be used for economy and recognition throughout the Great Slave Route and Wood Buffalo Trail. We have already mentioned the need for the special route names and the development of a logo to identify each route.

The route name and the logo along with a government designator should appear on every interpretive sign and route related publication as well as on the packaging of such items as the audio cassette and information kit. This identifier could appear as a small but distinctive element in the form of: The Great Slave Route -(logo)- Northwest Territories, for example.

Strong design elements should be common to the identification and direction sign program used along the routes. These will conform to the government of the Northwest Territories sign standards as outlined in the following section. They will also carry the distinctive logo for each route as shown.

Most of the regular interpretation panels should adhere to a graphic standard set for such panels throughout the territories. A common typeface and dimensions would be a good idea to enhance recognition and to allow for production and reissue of panels at intervals as needed. Most of the artwork for these panels could be produced by EDT in-house or locally in Yellowknife or the region with a quick turnaround.

Interpretation panels designed as part of an on-site exhibit with a special character such as those required for Pine Point, Bell Rock, Mission Island, etc., should employ the basic colour set in a distinctive way, indicating that these are unique developments but that they have a strong relationship to stories presented at the other locations. These special panels should also carry the route identifiers but might also carry a site identifier to emphasize the importance of the site. There is no need, of course, to go so far as to develop logos for individual sites (that would be gilding the lily).

Except for the on-site exhibits where special designs may be required, a standard support system for interpretation panels should also be developed for use on both routes. The supports for the orientation modules will be designed in the same spirit as those to be developed for Highway 1, and potentially other highways in the NWT.

## **5.2 IDENTIFICATION AND DIRECTION**

Sites and features will be marked using the sign program developed by the NWT Department of Transportation and Economic Development and Tourism.

The new Sign Manual available through Economic Development and Tourism, GNWT outlines the policies and guidelines for park signage within Territorial Parks.

Signs along Highways 2, 5 and 6 fall into a number of categories that should have a consistent type of presentation, colour, size and location. Common signage is dealt with below while site-specific signage is noted under the individual sites in Section 6.0.

The following recommendations are made for Highways 2, 5 and 6 on the basis of the government manual. As such, they are recommendations and are designed to guide rather than constrain the final production of camera ready signs.

### **GNWT Sign Manual Section B: General Policies**

General Policies should be adhered to in the message design and production of all camera ready work.

### **GNWT Sign Manual Section D: The Sign System**

**Highway 2:** The sign system used along Highway 2 will be part of The Great Slave Route with the same style, colour, size and construction technique used from the 60th parallel, Highway 1 through and including Highway 6 to Fort Resolution. The sign system should be a graphic logo placed on the standard 300 mm cantilever on the right side of signs. The silhouette of a fishing scow is suggested as the symbol of The Great Slave Route. The scow might be a dark blue on the new blue and white standard.

**Highway 5:** The sign system for Highway 5 is broken into 2 legs. From the junction of Highways 2 and 5 to the junction of Highways 5 and 6, Highway 5 is part of the Great Slave Route and will be signed as such.

From the junction of Highways 5 and 6 down to Fort Smith, the highway is called The Wood Buffalo Trail. The sign system should be a graphic logo placed on the standard 300 mm cantilever on the right side of the sign. The suggested graphic is the profile of a buffalo head. The profile could be a mid to dark brown on the new blue and white sign standard.

**Highway 6:** Highway 6 is the east most leg of The Great Slave Route and should use the same size, colour and construction technique as the other parts of the route.

### GNWT Sign Manual Section E: Sign Categories

**Highway Logo/Identification:** These signs notify the highway traveller that a site is upcoming. Signs are located 1 km from the site turnoff, both directions, and should be a symbol sign of site use with the 1 km distance. Signs locating the turn-off to a site should have a symbol and an arrow showing the direction of turn. All highway signs should be in the new format with blue and white. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate generic highway signage for a picnic site.

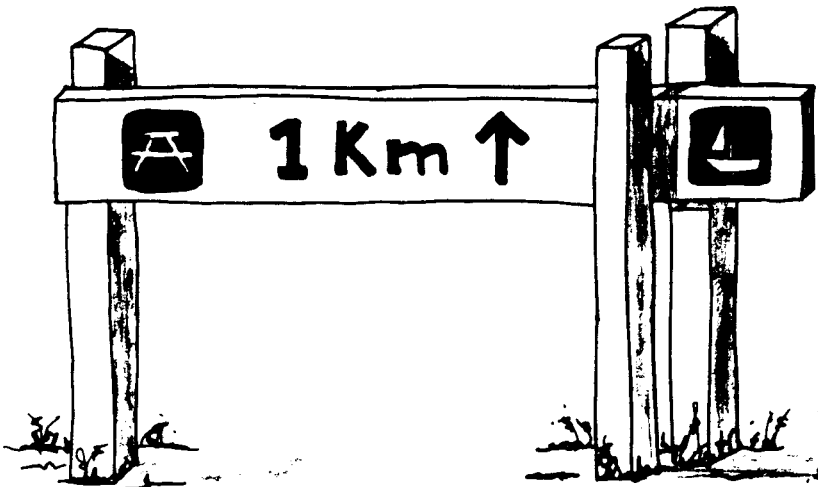


FIGURE 5.1  
HIGHWAY 1 Km. GENERIC SIGN

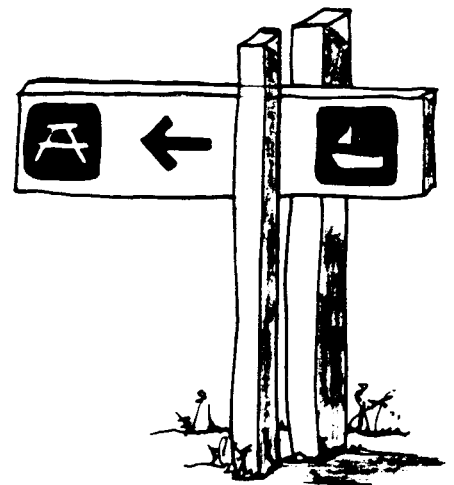


FIGURE 5.2  
SITE IDENTIFICATION  
TURN OFF GENERIC.



**Entrance Signs:** These signs are located at the entrances to Territorial campgrounds and picnic areas. Entrance signs to private developments will be coordinated through a GNWT - wide commercial signage program. Within the National Park the Federal park sign guidelines will apply for the actual sign face but support structures should be consistent with those generally proposed for the highways.

Entrance signs should follow the layout recommended in the Sign Manual and all entrance signs should bear the highway logo and be placed in visually prominent locations. The heavier log backdrop design is recommended for picnic areas and campgrounds, although individual site variations should be incorporated in leaving some non-log space. Figure 5.3 illustrates a generic entrance sign. Entrance signs without the log backdrop are recommended for the roadside pull-offs with minor picnicking and interpretive functions such as Buffalo River Crossing or Nyarling River. Regional orientation map pull-offs at the highway junctions should not have entrance name signs.



FIGURE 5.3  
GENERIC ENTRANCE SIGN

**Guide Signs:** These are internal park signs designed to direct vehicles and pedestrians to features within the park site. Distances may be in kilometres or meters whichever is appropriate. These are illustrated as Figures 5.4 and 5.5. Highway graphics should not be used on these signs.

All sites, other than roadside pull-offs with orientation maps, will require this type of signage to some degree. Larger sites with multiple activities such as Angus Fire Tower or Polar Lake should have detailed sign plans done as part of the design exercise so as to centralize and minimize all internal park signage.

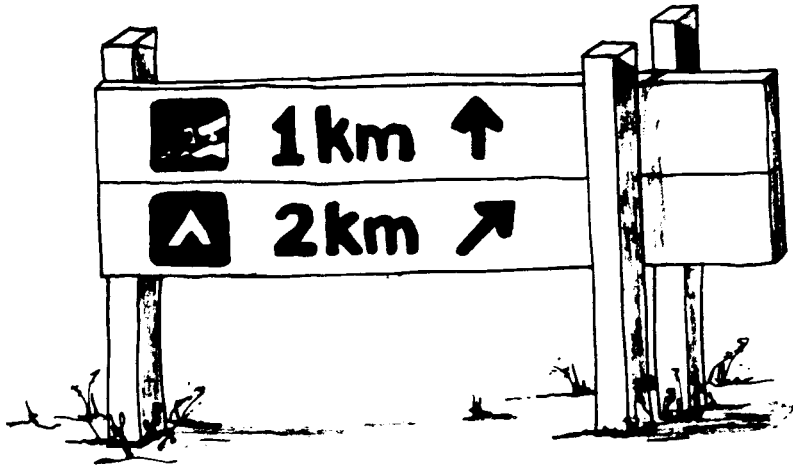


FIGURE 5.4  
GENERIC VEHICLE GUIDE SIGN

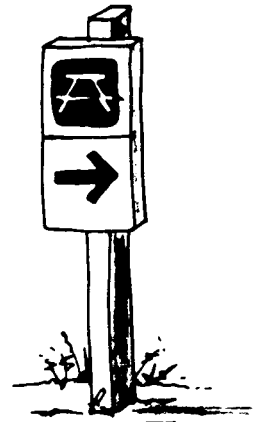


FIGURE 5.5  
GENERIC PEDESTRIAN  
GUIDE SIGN

**Traffic Control/Regulatory/Warning Signs:** These three types of signs are all internal park signs and should be part of the internal sign plans done for the larger sites.

Traffic control will be needed only in the larger sites with hierarchial vehicle control.

Regulatory signs prohibiting activities such as camping or dumping will be needed but should only be erected if a problem arises or knowledge of a specific situation makes pro-active signage valid. Care should be taken not to over sign particularly with control and regulatory signs.

All word regulatory signs should be phrased in positive statement rather than "Do Not . . . or No . . ." directives. Use of symbols with a slash is preferable to worded signs. See Figure 5.6.

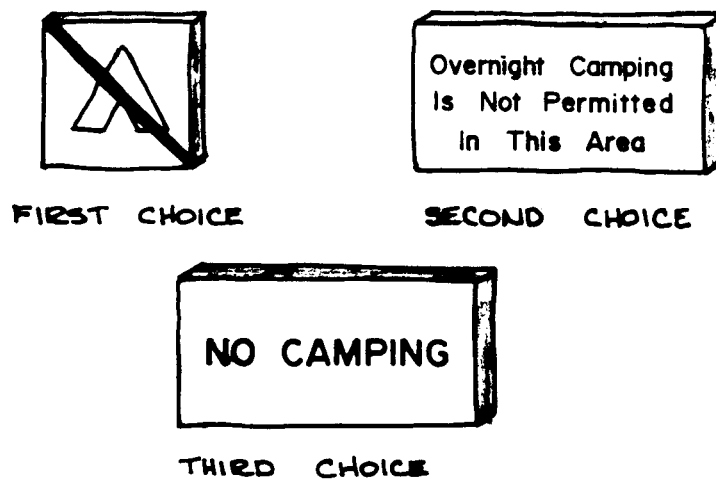


FIGURE 5.6  
STYLES OF REGULATORY SIGNS

A minor amount of identification and direction is also performed by staff at visitor centres and commercial establishments as well as by local residents. Most of the personal contact which occurs in this regard, however, falls more into the area of orientation and is discussed below.

### 5.3 ORIENTATION

Orientation goes beyond simple direction and performs the function of making visitors aware of the potential experiences which surround them. Orientation doesn't just help a visitor locate a destination but plays a very large role in helping to determine what that destination should be and how it should be reached. At this level, the function of visitor orientation is to make visitors aware of opportunities.

Good orientation involves affective learning as well as cognitive. In other words, good orientation alters visitors' feelings as well as their knowledge level. Visitors need to learn to feel secure and comfortable in their surroundings before they can get the greatest benefit from them. Visitors race to the campground at the end of the road because they will not feel

secure until they can establish themselves at a home base. They have a strong sense of destination and keenly anticipate their arrival at it. Good orientation for our purposes will create a true feeling of arrival at an earlier juncture in the visitor experience.

For example, rather than foster the feeling that visitors haven't arrived at their true destinations until they reach Fort Resolution or Fort Smith, we should foster the idea that they have actually arrived when they cross the 60th Parallel. We must give them the sense that once they cross that imaginary line, they have completed their arduous journey and may now commence a more leisurely exploration of their surroundings. It is in this spirit of more relaxed exploration that we would like them to continue on to Hay River, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith so that they will spend more time travelling through the area and more time exploring the areas around each centre.

We must achieve these objectives through several means: pre-arrival information, a significant arrival experience, and reinforcing orientation messages throughout the region.

#### **Pre-arrival Information**

We should instil the sense of the 60th Parallel as being the destination objective for a visit to the NWT at least as early in a person's trip as Peace River and Fort Nelson. The idea that once they reach the 60th Parallel, they can kick back and relax must start to dawn on visitors well enough before they reach the 60th Parallel to have the desired effect when they reach it. Orientation media such as the module to be installed at the Alaska and Liard Highway junctions should emphasize this notion - as should the driving guides to be developed for each of the NWT highway routes. The driving guides should be distributed at visitor centres and commercial outlets along Alberta and British Columbia highways leading to the NWT. This is a good idea from the standpoint of purely physical orientation as well.

## **Arrival Experience**

Obviously, the Liard and 60th Parallel Visitor Centres should be relaxing and involving places which create a certain sense of arrival in their very bearing. These centres should say, "Come in, relax a while, sit, look, listen, learn and take some time to talk to our staff. You can afford to do this because you've finally reached your destination. This is the Northwest Territories, you can now think more fully about getting into an exploration mode and looking at what there is to see and do around you." If the visitor centres merely prime visitors for another long drive to an eventual destination hundreds of kilometres distant, we seriously reduce our chances of interesting visitors in stopping at a viewpoint, picnic area, interpretive development or campground only an hour or so down the road.

In addition, the 60th Parallel Visitor Centre must provide physical orientation to the Great Slave Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail as part of its exhibits and its total orientation program.

## **Personal Services Orientation**

Personal services will be an important component of this orientation scheme. Visitors will want to discuss their travel plans with staff at the visitor centres and at private establishments along the routes. The people who talk to visitors in these locations must have a good knowledge of the region in order to be able to orient visitors adequately. Hosts provide a further important element in the orientation program - by welcoming visitors, they underscore the fact that visitors have arrived. Through every personal contact these hosts have with visitors, they should put the emphasis on welcoming, on establishing that key sense of arrival in the visitors' minds. Hosts should not give the impression they are there to hurry or even help people along to a far off destination (even if that's what they'll end up doing anyway). Hosts should be there to welcome visitors to the immediate area and to share with visitors an excitement or an enthusiasm about things to see and do in the local area and things to see and do only a short distance down the road.

This calls for a familiarity with the objectives of our orientation program and a familiarity with the resources they will be recommending. This in turn calls for training - taking hosts out to see the local and nearby facilities, perhaps touring them down the Great Slave Route and Wood Buffalo Trail for a couple of days and driving (pardon the pun) home the notion that our objective is to encourage visitors to spend more time right around this area and to stay a while longer than they get wherever they're headed. Proper host training is a must.

### **Road Log Brochure**

No visitor driving in this region should be without a driving guide, map, road log combination. It should be an inexpensive full colour brochure costing approximately 10 cents per unit. The folder might contain as many as six panels and would open to show a map of the route from the 60th Parallel Visitor Centre to Fort Resolution and Fort Smith, identifying all major visitor facilities and interpretive sites on the routes. The clear emphasis in this publication will be on facilities - what they are, where they are, what they're like and how to reach them. Capacities and capabilities of facilities should be clearly marked as well as where food, fuel and lodging are available. This information can be clearly and succinctly marked on the map side of the brochure. The flip side should carry photographs of the sorts of facilities and services available on the Great Slave Route and Wood Buffalo Trail. In addition to some introductory material and important addresses and phone numbers, we might suggest three or four brief itineraries based on length of stay and major interests such as wildlife viewing, historic sites, fishing, etc.

### **Standard Roadside Orientation Modules**

A design for standard orientation modules has been developed as part of the Deh Cho, Highway 1 and Dempster Highway corridor studies. These 6' and 12' porcelain enamel steel panels carry coloured, illustrated maps of the entire route with spot graphics highlighting points of interest along the route. Such points of interest will include all the developments

proposed in this report and other existing features. The panels are to be supported by structures composed of materials somehow indigenous to the region. Deh Cho modules will be supported by large logs in the round. The suggestion has been made that Highway 1 use rough sawn timbers for supports. The support structure for the Great Slave Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail should also be rough sawn timbers simply because logging has been a commercial activity in the region over time and it suits the themes of the project.

We propose locating Standard Roadside Orientation Modules at the sites shown in Figure 3.1 which are:

Enterprise  
Hay River Tourism Booth  
Highway 2 and 5 Junction  
Highway 5 and 6 Junction  
Fort Resolution  
Fort Smith Pull-off  
Queen Elizabeth Campground

We would also like to suggest that a module be located at Peace River to attract traffic northward and orient visitors to major features and destinations. The orientation module at the 60th Parallel Visitor Centre should carry a full panel on the Great Slave Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail.

#### **Standard Area Orientation Panels**

At all other development sites proposed in this report (that is, all sites except the regional orientation sites), smaller orientation panels the size of standard interpretation panels will be located. These smaller orientation panels will highlight the recreational and interpretive features of four other sites, that is, the next two in either direction along the route.

These area orientation panels will not only help visitors plan their trips but will encourage them to make more stops, show how the region's theme and stories emerge throughout the region and how the sites relate to each other.

### **Computer Interactive Orientation**

There has been talk among planners on this project and on the Deh Cho, Highway 1 and Dempster Highway projects about implementing some form of interactive computerized visitor orientation medium at major visitor centres. Planners for the Northern Frontier Country visitor centre in Yellowknife and even the Baffin Regional Cultural Centre in Iqaluit are also looking into such systems. Programs being looked into involve a visually oriented laser-disc system, (slides or video) depicting images of the north; an audio-oriented encyclopedia file on cultural and natural history as well as a data-base reference system of services and facilities for information and reservations. While off-the-shelf software systems are being investigated, there is little doubt that a northern supplier can be found for the hardware and the software for the systems and who would be eager to participate in a trial of the technology.

Another interesting note is that this technology and laser disk technology can be married to greatly expand the storage capacity of the system for graphics resulting in the opportunity to present a greater number of graphics, more complex graphics and even film and video images. If the cost of a laser disk were to be spread over a number of new visitor centres, it would be an extremely economical means to support visitors services staff with up-to-date tourism information and to help visitors plan their vacations in some detail.



### **Staff Orientation Information Kits**

Further support should be provided to visitor services staff at visitor centres and commercial outlets in the region. An information kit about features, attractions and facilities in the region should be prepared and distributed to every commercial establishment and government office on the Great Slave Route and Wood Buffalo Trail each spring. These kits needn't be expensive nor need they be glossy. However, they should be easy to use and well enough written and illustrated that people will enjoy leafing through them and learning about the tourism environment they're working in. Advice on dealing with visitors and handling the variety of situations which arise regularly in public contact work should be included as well.

### **Padded Orientation Maps**

Finally, a simple item - padded maps; maps that come in pads of flat sheets like writing paper. A simple, schematic, two-colour map of the area from the Hay to Slave rivers and from the 60th Parallel to Great Slave Lake should be developed and reproduced on 8-1/2" by 11" paper and provided in pads of 50 to visitor centres and commercial outlets along the routes. Major facilities and features can be identified on the maps and, if required, certain of them can be numbered and more information given on the reverse. People can take a felt pen and scribble advice and directions all over one of these maps. A travel counsellor can mark features and make notes on one while discussing options with a visitor. The maps are so inexpensive (as cheap as three cents each) that no one hesitates to tear off two or three to give to a visitor - one with hints written on it and the others for the visitors to mark up and otherwise use and abuse. Every visitor should leave every visitor centre with the colour driving guide and a couple of these map sheets in his hand.

## **5.4 INTERPRETATION**

Some planners would take a broader view and suggest that identification, direction and orientation are all forms of interpretation in that each gives us tools with which we can make it easier for visitors to learn about the region and its opportunities for tourism. Using the term so broadly would make it difficult to figure out what to call our efforts to help visitors learn about the culture and environment of the region in particular. It is essential to the success of an interpretation program, nonetheless, that visitors have good direction and orientation so we have put a great deal of emphasis on those functions and have tried to allow for much cross-over between all three.

In this section of the report, we present those interpretive media which relate to many sites or no specific site. As well, we examine some of the design issues involved in producing an interpretive system for the region. Information about specific on-site media is given in the section on Site Recommendations and Plans, Section 6.0.

### **Documentary Cassette Tape**

The second portable medium, in addition to the Road Log Brochure, should be a one-hour radio-style documentary about the region available on audio cassette. It should focus on history and culture, especially those aspects of these subjects not easily conveyed at a particular site through interpretive panels and signs. The tape should contain music, short reports and interviews with local residents, making it an excellent vehicle for the host theme described earlier. A summary of special events and attractions in the region each year should be packaged with the tape as well as a copy of the road by brochure.

Cassettes would be sold at visitor centres and commercial outlets throughout the region. If professionally produced, these tapes have the potential to satisfy many of the desires for learning outlined in the Canadian Parks Service's visitor profiles. Once the potential of the audio cassette has been proven, a series might be developed dealing with a wider range of subjects including some related more strongly to natural history.

### **Rivers to Roads Highway Driving Guide**

Finally, Rivers to Roads, the existing driving guide for the highways of the southern NWT should be updated and reissued. It contains much useful and informative material on sites throughout the road system. In reprinting the guide, be sure not to repeat information which will appear on site in the new interpretive media. It would be best if the new guide used themes more strongly so that the information presented in it for many sites adds up to tell a larger story. We also suggest that when reissued, the guide take a vertical or portrait format instead of the present horizontal or landscape format. The portrait format is easier to use in vehicles and on site and the present visual content does not make use of the panoramic properties of the landscape format.

### **Issues Common to On-Site Exhibits**

The on-site interpretive media proposed for the study corridors consist of a scale of development ranging from the placement of simple, didactic panels interpreting such features clearly visible on the site as the disappearing river at Nyarling to the construction of distinctive structures to house interpretive media and objects at such sites as Mission Island and Slave Rapids. The factors which suggested the appropriate level of development are site specific in the main and are presented in the Site Recommendations and Plans section of this report and do not belong in this section on common site recommendations.

However, an issue to be looked at in our overall approach to interpretation along these routes is to establish a rationale for the use of common versus distinctive design elements. There are times when you hope to make part of your message clear through the physical design of the medium you employ. At other times, the medium becomes simply a blank tablet upon which you inscribe your message. For example, at Polar Lake Park, we recommend constructing an interpretive trail to familiarize visitors with the boreal forest and some of its more important characteristics. There, we imagine a series of simple interpretive panels along a trail. These panels could be identical in their specifications and design to viewpoint panels to be used at Paradise Gardens, Nyarling River or Paulette Bay. We expect to make our point through graphics and text on the panels and the boreal forest surrounding them. No need for adventure in distinctive interpretive design.

The on-site exhibit at Pine Point, however, is an example of a different matter. There on the overgrown green of a dead town's golf course we seek to tell the story of the big boom and the inevitably bad bust which so often accompany northern resource development. It's a poignant story of real people in a real place but the shops, the school, the offices, the houses and the swing sets are gone. We know that when it comes time to design the Pine Point on-site exhibit, the look and feel of the exhibit panels, the structures which hold them and the trail leading through it will be as distinctive as the story itself.

The challenge, then, is to make the Polar Lake Park nature trail panels and the Pine Point on-site exhibit media look like they are related as members of the family of interpretive developments for the Great Slave Route but have them remain distinctly different in design. Designers may want to look at the use of common colours and shapes in designing the panels but there may be other techniques available to them.

## **Personal Service Interpretation**

There is no personal service component for interpretation in this study primarily because of the logistical difficulty in providing it. We think that training for visitor centre staff should include familiarizing them with the major themes dealt with on the routes. It would be desirable to hire staff based at least in part upon their knowledge of the natural and human history of the region although that may be asking a bit much in an area where finding qualified reception staff may be difficult at times. As much of the development recommended on the Wood Buffalo Trail will enhance the national park's interpretive program, you may be able to encourage them to increase roving along the trail, stopping in at the new interpretive sites this plan will create. In order to bring visitors in contact with trained interpreters, it would be a good idea to promote the park's interpretive program through our orientation media and at the 60th Parallel and Hay River visitor centres.

## **6.0 SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLANS**

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### **6.1 THE GREAT SLAVE ROUTE**

- #1 - Enterprise
- #2 - Paradise Gardens
- #3 - Hay River Golf Course
- #4 - Vale Island Campground, Hay River
- #5 - Junction of Highways 2 & 5
- #6 - Polar Lake Campground
- #7 - Buffalo River Crossing
- #8 - Junction of Highways 5 and 6
- #9 - Pine Point
- #10 - Paulette Bay
- #11 - Paulette Bay Pull-off
- #12 - Fort Resolution
- #13 - Mission Island

### **6.2 THE WOOD BUFFALO TRAIL**

- #14 - Sandy Lake
- #15 - Wood Buffalo National Park - Entrance
- #16 - Angus Fire Tower
- #17 - Nyarling River Crossing
- #18 - Wetland Viewpoint
- #19 - Little Buffalo Falls Territorial Park
- #20 - Salt Plains Overview
- #21 - Salt Mountain
- #22 - Thebacha Campground (Salt River Campground)
- #23 - Bell Rock
- #24 - Queen Elizabeth Campground, Fort Smith
- #25 - Slave River Rapids and Fort Smith

## **6.1 THE GREAT SLAVE ROUTE**

The route unfolds - firing and feeding the imagination with pictures of early inhabitants, adventurers and explorers - the movement of man through the changing and moving landscapes of land and water.

The Great Slave Route is recommended to encompass the 60th Parallel Visitor Reception Centre through Enterprise to Hay River and east to Fort Resolution. It covers 4 highway numbers, 1,2,5 (partially) and 6 and is anchored at each decision point by a community and/or visitor information module.

The visitor experience in section 4.1 briefly describes the drive and attractions that are presented along the way. What follows in this section is a breakdown on each site; summarizing the existing condition of the site, followed by a series of recommendations and discussion of rationale. A preliminary cost estimate is given based on the recommendations and a proposed level of operations and maintenance is assigned. (Operations and Maintenance Guidelines are explained in the Technical Appendix.)

Symbols of activities and services are given for each site to graphically depict both signage requirements and summarize the development of the site.

Sites 1 through 13 are located on The Great Slave Route and are mapped on the overall concept plan in the envelope at the back of the report. Individual site concept plans are located with each site in the following section.

# ENTERPRISE

---

**HIGHWAY:** 2  
**SITE:** #1 - Community of Enterprise  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 0, start and south point of Highway 2.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Junction of Highway 1 to Yellowknife and Highway 2 to Hay River.
- Features small community with a gas station, restaurant and service centre.
- Existing junction is poorly signed as to destination communities.
- Service stop is well used by tourists and truckers.
- Community is planning to develop an old machinery museum adjacent to the Highway.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Use the gas station/restaurant as a multiple use stop. Locate a regional orientation sign at this site indicating route choices and the different destinations including all of south Slave area.
- Erect better directional signs before the junction indicating the destinations of Hay River, Fort Resolution, Wood Buffalo National Park and Fort Smith.
- Great Slave Route and logo will be introduced and explained at Enterprise orientation site.
- Wood Buffalo Trail and logo will be introduced and explained at Enterprise orientation site.
- Each route will be shown on the regional orientation map.
- Highlights of travelling each route will be shown and located on route maps.
- A small orientation pavilion may be required especially if orientation to Highway 1 north of Enterprise is planned for this site (as it should be).
- Orientation material should encourage visitors to proceed to Hay River to reach Great Slave Lake and Canada's busiest freshwater port not on the Great Lakes.
- Enterprise should function as the start of the driving guide that covers the Great Slave Lake Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail.



Recommendations for this site are limited to signage as this community is considered part of the Highway 1 Corridor Plan.

Enterprise offers the opportunity to present southbound traffic with a side trip and "catch" any northbound traffic that has not stopped at the 60th parallel Visitor Information Centre.

Highway 2 from Enterprise to Hay River, Highway 5 from Hay River to its junction with Highway 6 and Highway 6 from the junction to Fort Resolution should be called the Great Slave Route. This designation will appear on all orientation panels in the manner developed for the Waterfall route, the Deh Cho Route and the Dempster Route. A logo should accompany the route designation. We suggest the logo for the Great Slave Route be chosen to emphasize the water transportation history of the region as it applies equally to Hay River and Fort Resolution. The silhouette of a turn-of-the-century Hudson's Bay Company scow with mast and sail would make an appropriate logo.

The orientation map that is located here will be repeated with minor variations at a number of key decision points around the region. A similar appearance to each map, easily identifiable, is recommended.

**PRIORITY:** high - orientation and directional signage should be improved immediately. The driving guide should be provided within a three - five year time frame.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

Refer to Section 7.1 for explanations on costs.

**Total Estimated Cost:** \$49,000

Addition to existing parking area:

Site Work: \$ 6,000

Pavilion: \$20,000

**Regional Orientation Sign:**

NB: Regional orientation signs are done initially as inexpensive silk-screened signs and changed up to 3 times as developments and attractions are completed in the area. The final porcelain enamel sign is done after most developments are completed (See Section 7.1 for further explanation).

Sign Base: \$ 5,000

Initial Signs: \$ 7,000

Final Sign: \$11,000

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- Regional orientation map.
- Directional signage indicating junction for Highways 3 or 2/5/6.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level C. Refer to the Technical Appendix for a discussion of operational levels and tasks.

It is recommended that a contractual arrangement with the gas station owner be arranged for maintenance.



## PARADISE GARDENS

---

**HIGHWAY:** 2  
**SITE:** #2 - Paradise Market Gardens and Campground  
- Highway Interpretive Pulloff  
**MILEAGE:** 11 kms north of Enterprise  
24 kms south of Hay River  
1 kilometre east of the Highway

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Features one of the few existing market gardens in NWT.
- Has been farmed for approximately 40 years.
- Located on the floodplain of the Hay River.
- Privately run by Ben Greenfield as both a commercial market garden and a seasonal campground. Opportunity to purchase seasonal produce.
- Informal campground in grassed area between the river bank and the gardens.
- 24 campsites, showers, toilets, water and childrens' playground.
- Moderate fishing, typical for a warm water river.
- River current is fast here. Distance to Hay River is considered a good day boat trip.
- Existing informal vehicle access down to the river at the end of the road. Used informally as a boat launch.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Better signage on highway and at farm with increased marketing as part of regional attractions. Replace highway signage with new colours and better directional turn off sign.
- Just south of the turn off, a small pull-off should be located at a viewpoint over the river and canyon with an interpretive panel. This would not be a major pulloff for trucks similar to the Department of Highway but rather an opportunity to pull in parallel to a sign for information and a view.

- An interpretation panel at the roadside pull-off will explain that only 400,000 acres of the Northwest Territories is arable, depending on the favourable combination of alluvial soils and a mild climate - Paradise Gardens is such a place and the evidence is apparent.
- Area orientation maps are located at all sites that do not have a regional orientation map and cover the two closest sites in each direction.

**PRIORITY:**        high - signage  
                               medium - pull-off

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

**Total Estimated Cost:**                \$36,900

**Highway signage:**                        6 @ \$280 plus installation.  
   Onsite signage would be land-owners responsibility.

**Pull-off:**                                    Site Work: \$30,000  
   Interpretive Panel: \$ 2,500  
   Garbage Container: \$ 220.00  
   Area Orientation Map: \$ 2,500

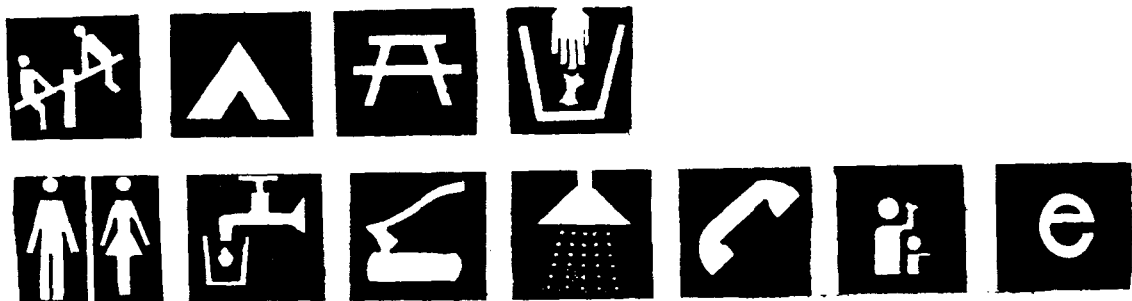
- SIGNAGE NEEDED:**
- 1 km access signs, both directions, gardens and pull-off.
  - Turn off signs for the gardens.
  - Welcome sign at Paradise Gardens.
  - Interpretive panel at pull-off.
  - Area orientation map.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Pull-off; Level C

The garden site is privately maintained.

Operation of the pull-off site may be most easily facilitated through an operational contract with the Golf Course or the Gardens themselves.



1-521

6 - 8

## HAY RIVER GOLF COURSE

---

**HIGHWAY:** 2  
**SITE:** #3 - Hay River Golf Course  
**MILEAGE:** 19 kms north of Enterprise  
16 kms south of Hay River

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Well developed 9 hole golf course on two terraces of the Hay River valley with views from the upper terrace and clubhouse site.
- High visual amenity.
- High recreational amenity with the public golf course.
- High service amenity of the clubhouse as a restaurant/bar.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Golf Course Association is open to idea of developing a picnic area onsite.
- An interpretation panel near the picnic area will show how the Hay River has terraced the land visible in the valley and how frequent flooding and the river's meandering have deepened and widened the valley.

Increased tourism to the site may result in increased revenues to the clubhouse and course as well as a higher market profile for the club.

This site also offers excellent views of the river in a manicured landscape. Immediate area south and east of clubhouse would be recommended locations.

Picnic site would need site work and tables only; washroom facilities are provided in the clubhouse.

**PRIORITY:** Medium - consideration of picnicking site should happen prior to any further golf course development.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>		<b>\$15,640</b>
<b>Highway Signage:</b>		<b>4 @ \$280.00 plus installation.</b>
<b>Picnic site:</b>	<b>Site Work:</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
	<b>Tables:</b>	<b>\$ 3,300</b>
	<b>Garbage:</b>	<b>\$ 220</b>
<b>Interpretive Panel:</b>		<b>\$ 2,500</b>
<b>Area Orientation Map</b>		<b>\$ 2,500</b>

- SIGNAGE NEEDED:**
- 1 km access and turnoff signs, both directions.
  - Upgraded welcome sign.
  - Interpretive panel associated with picnic site.
  - Area Orientation Map

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

A joint-use agreement may be appropriate between parties if the picnic area is financed or built by a party other than the Golf Course Association.

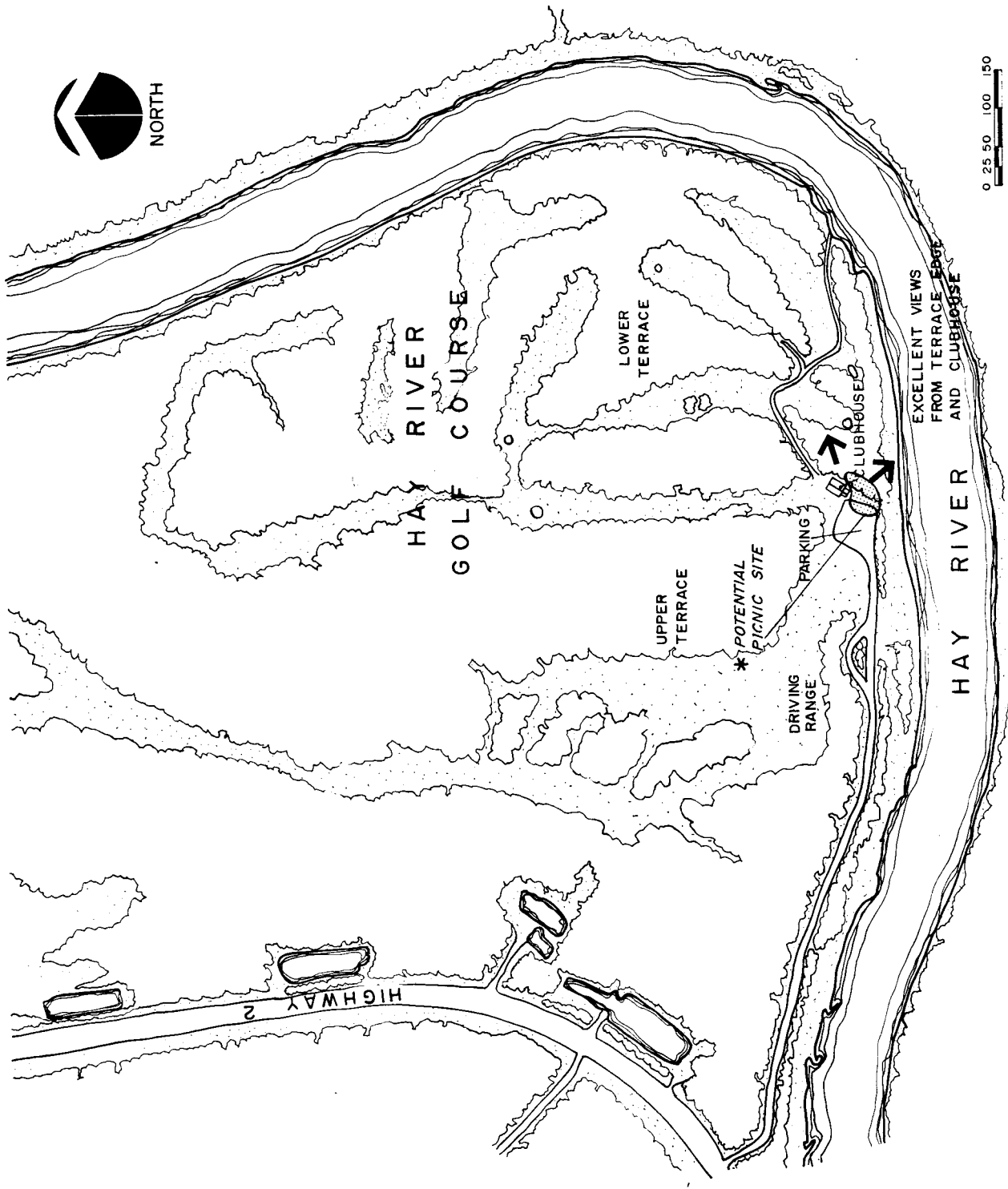


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6 - 10





**Notes / Legend**

1. Information from air photos courtesy of the Department of Energy Mines and Resources, Canada, 1986
2. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.
3. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*
4. Course has little vegetative understorey. Good views and breezes.
5. Course is public.
6. Clubhouse offers light meals and bar service



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Yellowknife, NWT

**Project**

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

**Economic Development & Tourism**

**Title**

Hay River Golf Course  
Existing Conditions  
& Proposed upgrading

**Date**

September, 1989

**Design**

I.B.

**Drawn**

**File**

1315-118-00-01

**Site**

**3**



## VALE ISLAND

---

**HIGHWAY:** 2  
**SITE:** #4 - Vale Island, Hay River  
**MILEAGE:** Town of Hay River, 35 kms north of Enterprise (6 kms from new Town to old Town on Vale Island)

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Existing campground and day-use area operated by the Hay River Lions Club.

#### Campground

- 22 campsites, each with table and stove. Pit toilet facilities in both campground loops, central shower building, playground and kitchen shelter located by the office.
- Campground is located off the water, walking distance to the beach.
- Campground vegetation is an aspen/willow mix, very thick with few open areas.
- Individual camping spurs are overgrown.

#### Day-use Area

- Prime beach area, 1400-1500 metres on Great Slave Lake.
- Narrow strip of backshore separated from the campground by a gravel road.
- 8 tables, pit toilets and a beach parking area.
- Attraction of the site is the Lake.
- Economic Development and Tourism has recently done a redesign and upgrading plan for the day use area.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Implement the day-use upgrading proposed in the June 1989 redesign. Include an interpretive panel on the lakeshore.
- Extend the beach development from the north side of NTCL all the way over to the residential housing on the lake.
- Upgrade the camping area through a redesign and enlargement of sites.

- Examine use statistics to determine if campground expansion should occur. Small group areas and tenting areas are needed.
- Relocate the office and seasonal living quarters onto the main entrance road.
- Institute a landscape cutting and thinning program for more spacious and usable spaces without eliminating the wind protection from the lake.
- Erect improved directional signage and supplement it with hand out material available at the tourist information cabin.
- Develop walking trails to the points of interest in old town including the rail head, port facilities, NTCL, and the Dene Reserve immediately across the Hay River and possibly the west channel and fishing village.
- Locate an interpretive panel at the day-use area on the lakeshore and three others along the west bank of the east channel.
- The lakeshore panel should describe Great Slave Lake and introduce the idea that this body of water has been an artery of the north since before recorded history.
- The panels on the east channel could all be located on one site overlooking the river with views of the Dene settlement, NTCL wharves and warehouses, and the railway terminus - these panels will deal with the transportation history of the region - a thread picked up again at Pine Point, Paulette Bay, Fort Resolution, Bell Rock and the Slave River Rapids.

This is a well used campground and one of the only places tourists can access Great Slave Lake along the Southern shore. Hay River is a primary service centre for travellers in this area of NWT and the use of this campground and waterfront should be actively promoted and marketed.

This facility, although well located from an amenity and resource value, is very difficult to find. A major upgrading of the directional signage is needed. A brochure available at the tourist information centre entering town should be available and include both directions and a map indicating the campground location.

Interpretation in the form of a self guided walk should be developed with the Lake as a start and finish. Most tourists, regardless of their accommodation locations will come to see the Lake while in Hay River.

Visitors receive their first glimpse of Great Slave Lake on Vale Island and must pass through Northern Transportation's extensive port facilities. Here, they come into close contact with the two chapters in the history of northern transportation widely separated in time and atmosphere - the modern port and the historic Dene settlement across the river. Interpretive panels across the river from the Dene settlement with a view of NTCL activities will portray this contrast.

**PRIORITY:** high - implementation of the Day-use area upgrading.  
high - upgrading plan for campground and its subsequent implementation.  
high - walking tour with panels and brochure.  
(should be sponsored by Town or Corporate Enterprise)

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	Planning - \$20,000 Development - \$300,000 Signage - \$18,780
Campground Upgrading Plan and Site Sign Plan:	\$20,000
Site Development:	Estimate ~ \$300,000 but should be based on plan (day use and camping)
Interpretive Panels:	4 @ \$2,500
Campground Entrance Sign:	\$ 2,500
Directional Signage:	6 - 8 @ \$280.00 each plus installation
Trail Head Sign:	\$ 2,100
Area Orientation Map:	\$ 2,500

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

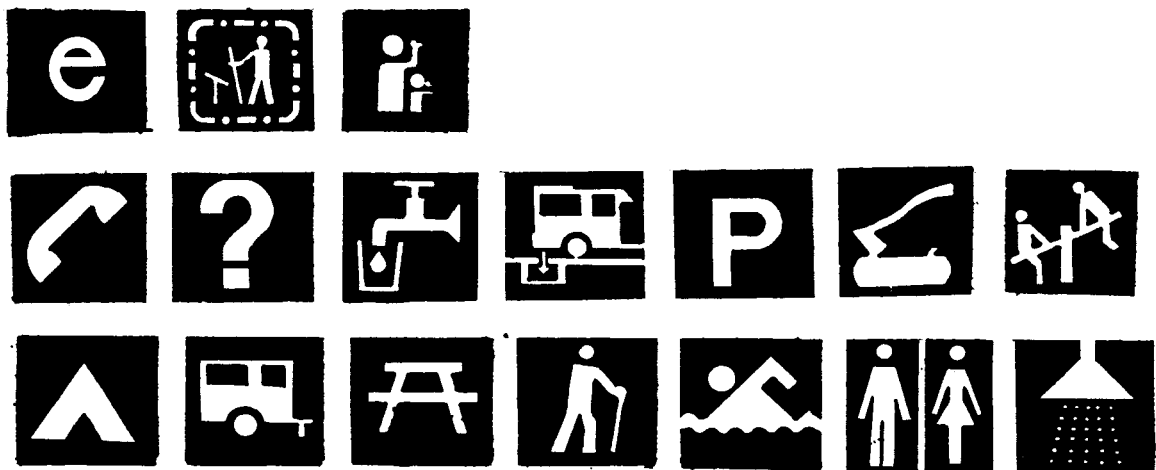
- Directional signage
- Site Entrance Sign
- Internal Park signage
- Trail Head Map
- Interpretive Panels
- Area Orientation Map

## OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:

### Level A.

The relatively high use of this site and its urban location indicates a higher standard and more frequent maintenance is needed compared to other facilities. Its increased maintenance schedule is offset by its urban location and negligible travel costs.

The operating agreement should be reviewed between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the local Lions Club specifying areas of responsibility and performance standards for operation of the site. The day-use area should be included with any agreement involving the campground.



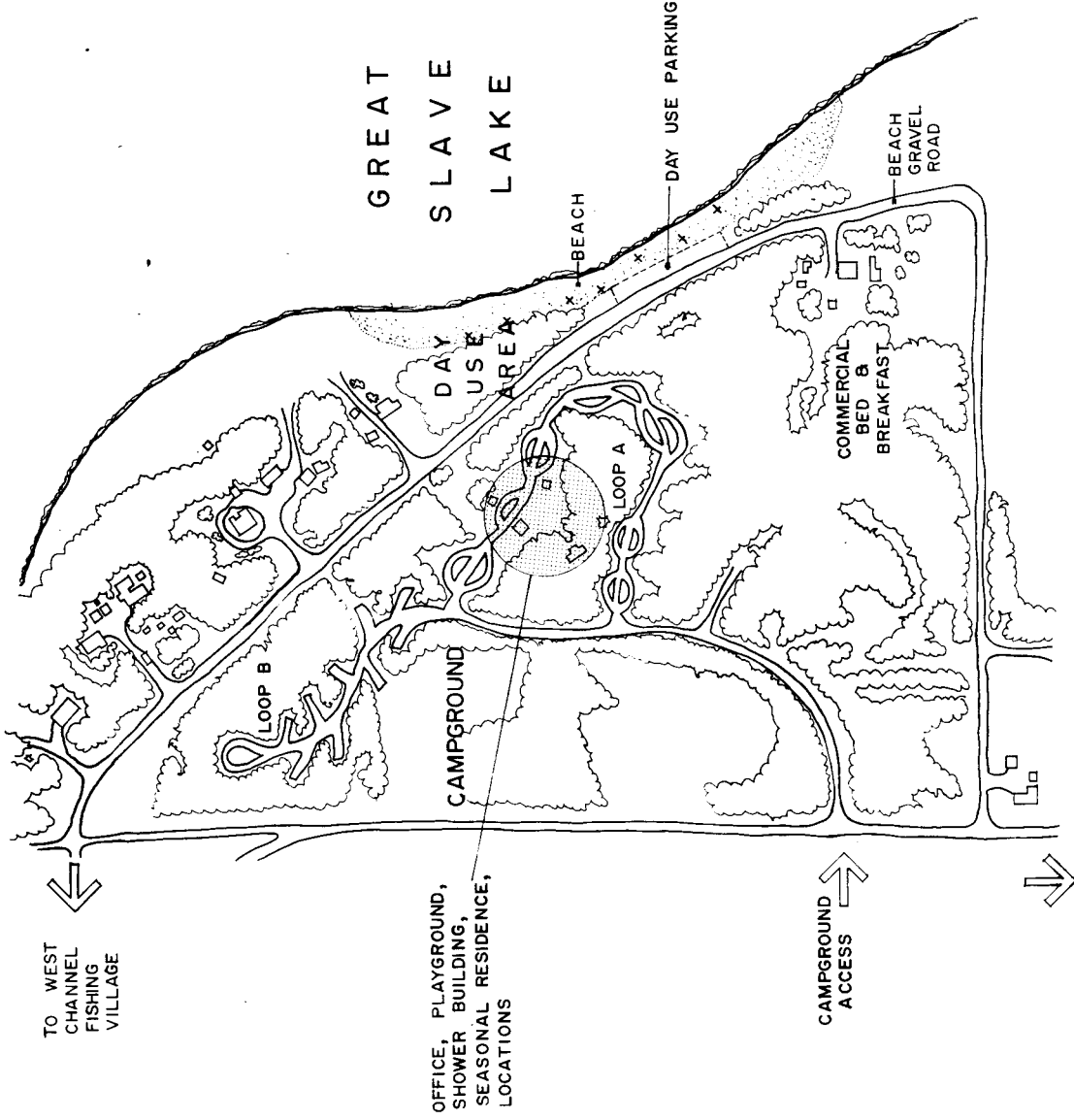


Notes / Legend

1. Information used is courtesy of the Government of Northwest Territories - Economic Development and Tourism.

2. X Denotes tables

3. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.



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Edmonton, Alberta

Yellowknife, NWT

Project

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

Hay River Campground / Vale  
Island - Existing Conditions

Date

September, 1989

Design

I. B.

Drawn

File

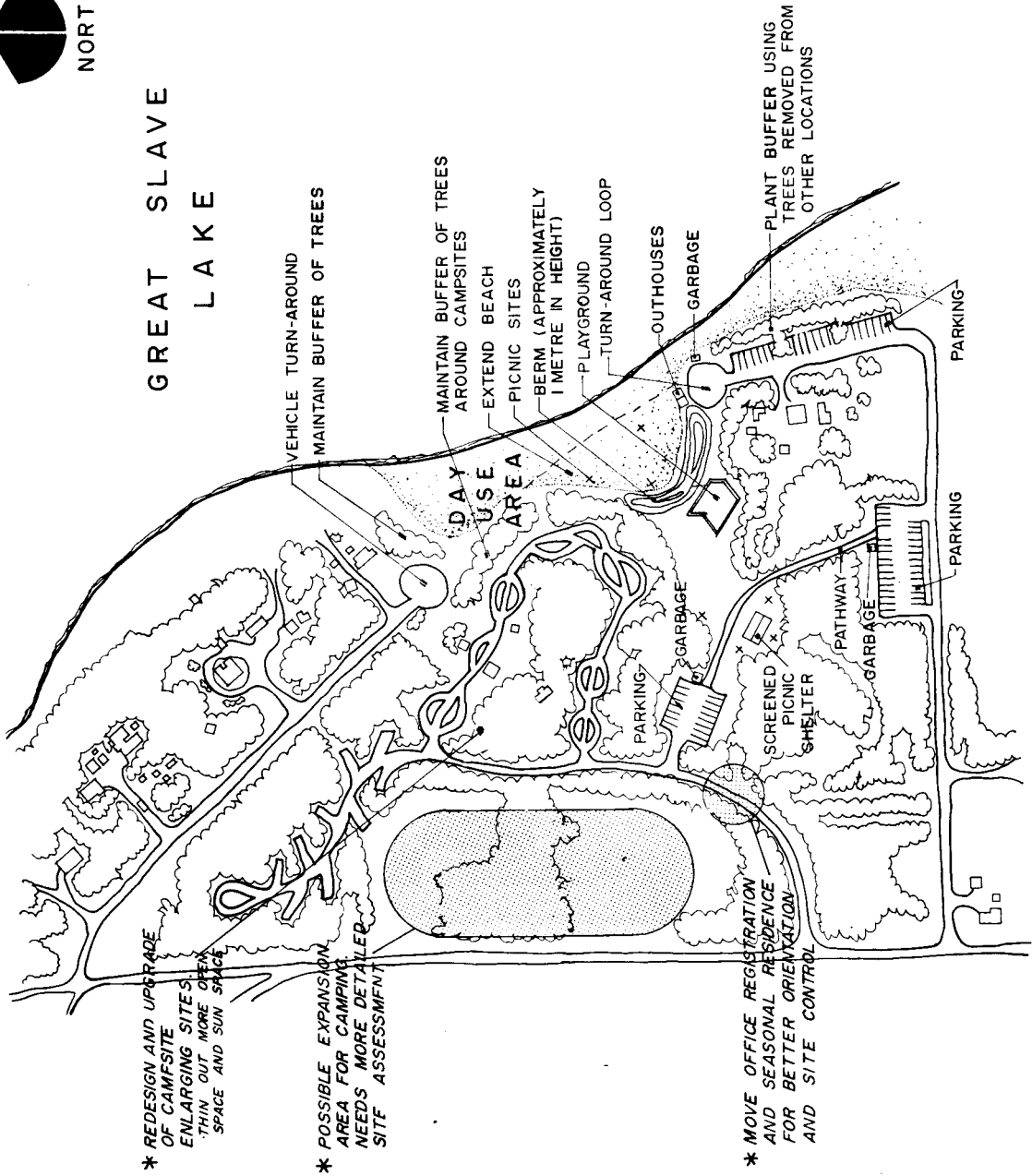
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Site

4



# GREAT SLAVE LAKE



\* REDESIGN AND UPGRADE OF CAMPSITE ENLARGING SITES. THIN OUT MORE OPEN SPACE AND SUN SPACE

\* POSSIBLE EXPANSION AREA FOR CAMPING. NEEDS MORE DETAILED SITE ASSESSMENT

\* MOVE OFFICE REGISTRATION AND SEASONAL RESIDENCE FOR BETTER ORIENTATION AND SITE CONTROL



## Notes / Legend

1. Information is courtesy of the Government of Northwest Territories - Economic Development and Tourism. All Day-Use area upgrading is Government of Northwest Territories Plan, June 1988.
2. X - Denotes tables
3. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes
4. An overall internal signage program for both the day-use area and the campground is needed when re-development is completed.
5. Better signage to the site is needed.
6. An interpretive walking brochure for Old Town should be available at the office
7. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*



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Edmonton, Alberta Yellowknife, NWT

## Project

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

## Economic Development & Tourism

## Title

Hay River Campground/  
Vale Island - Proposed  
Upgrading

## Date

September, 1989

## Design

I.B.

## Drawn

## File

1315-118-00-01

## Site

4

## **JUNCTION OF HIGHWAYS 2 AND 5**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 2 & 5  
**SITE:** #5 - Junction of Highways 2 & 5  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 0, Highway 5

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- No existing development at this site.
- Town of Hay River Tourist Information Building moving to within a kilometre of the junction, on the north leg into Hay River. Will not be visible from junction.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Develop a small pull-off to locate a regional orientation map similar to the one in Enterprise.
- Locate on south east corner of the intersection.
- The regional orientation panel at this site will provide major orientation to the Great Slave Route all the way to Fort Resolution and will also give an overview of opportunities and features of interest on the Wood Buffalo Trail including special mention of tourism opportunities and interpretive developments on the Hay River Indian Reserve.
- This regional map should be similar if not identical to the one located at the Tourist Cabin. The map at the Tourist Cabin may wish to emphasize the immediate Hay River area more.

This is the second in a series of orientation maps designed to orient tourists and promote the local area.

**PRIORITY:** High

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$50,060</b>
<b>Site work:</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Site furnishings: Garbage Container:</b>	<b>\$ 220</b>
<b>Fencing</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>
<b>Regional Orientation Sign:</b>	
<b>Temporary Signs:</b>	<b>\$ 7,000</b>
<b>Final Sign:</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>
<b>Base:</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	<b>3 @ \$280 plus installation</b>

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km access signage, 3 directions.
- directional signage for highways and communities.
- orientation sign board for the region.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level C

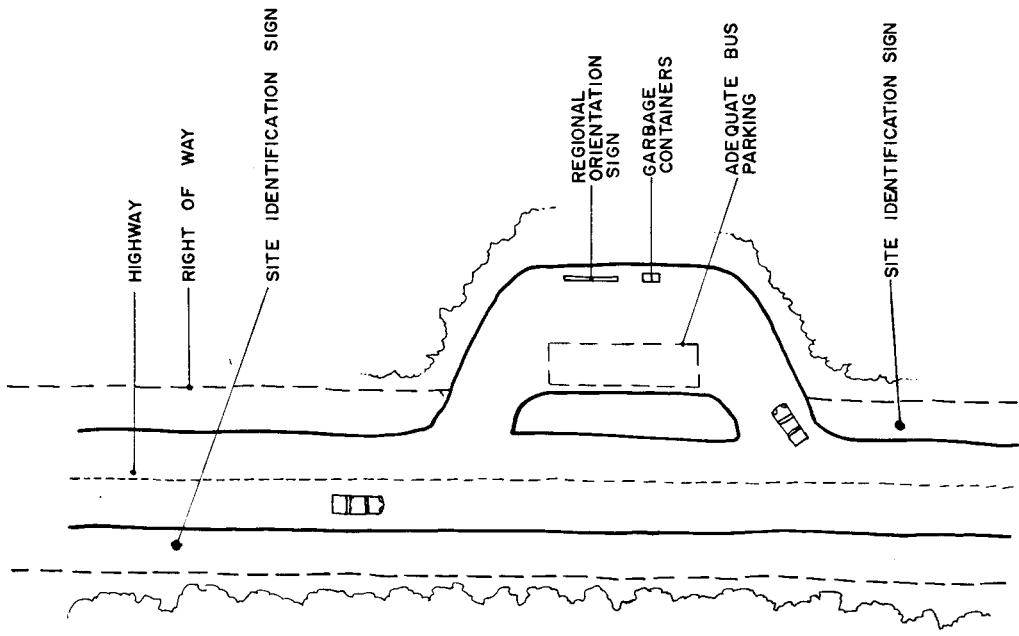
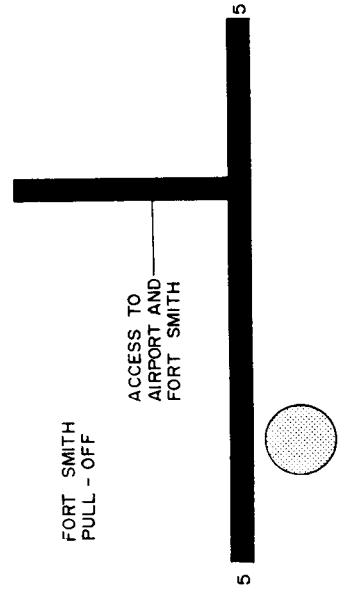
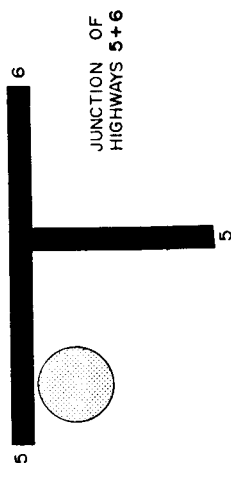
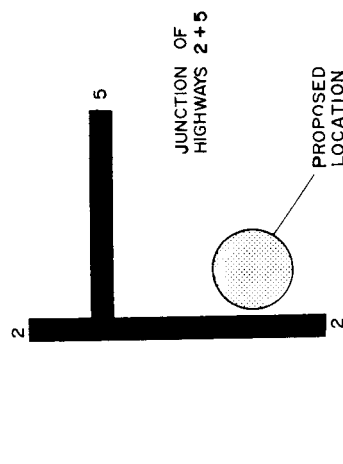
Should be part of a local contract; perhaps as part of the Tourist Information site.





**Notes / Legend**

- 1. Scale is approximate and is not to be used for construction purposes.
- 2. Scale refers to concept plan



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Yellowknife, NWT

**Project**

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

**Economic Development & Tourism**

**Title**

Roadside Pull-Off and  
Regional Orientation Maps

**Date**

September, 1989

**Design**

**Drawn**

**File**

1315-118-00-01

**Sheet**

# POLAR LAKE

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #6 - Polar Lake Campground and Day-use area  
**MILEAGE:** 48 km east of junction of Hwy. 2 & 5.  
2 km gravel access road north of Highway.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Existing campground and day-use area previously developed and operated by the Pine Point community.
- Presently operated by the Town of Hay River.
- Lake is stocked with rainbow trout. Last stocked in 1987. Fishing is considered good for the area. Polar Lake is one of the few lakes that can overwinter fish.
- Fire of 1981 went through this area; majority of vegetation is early regrowth with low visual amenity.
- Resident loons nesting on the lake, 1989.
- 10 tables and stoves, two pit toilets (GNWT issue) and 4 pieces of playground equipment.
- Users are presently camping in the day-use area on the lakeshore as the campground area was not completed.
- Swimming is considered fair due to the muck bottom and the leeches.
- Walking potential is good with nearby track to the mouth of the Buffalo river and Great Slave Lake.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Upgrade and develop as a territorial park with both camping and day-use.
- Market fishing resource and its proximity to the Highway and Hay River.
- Consider renaming the lake to a more appealing sounding place.
- Develop a 1 km interpretive loop through burn area by Lake. This trail will introduce the boreal forest and compare mature stands of timber to recently burned areas visible on the site.

- Locate an interpretive panel in the day-use area to explain how the lake is stocked for sport fishing.

There are few fishing lakes in the south shore area capable of wintering trout while the demand for fishing as a northern tourist attraction is high. Maintenance of fishing resource is integral to continuing use of this site by both locals and tourists.

Upgrading should include redesign of the park developing a day use area with beach, playground and 5 picnic sites. Camping for 15 units should be developed both along the shoreline and backshore area. The existing road system could suffice with minor modifications. One good hand launch is needed for launching fishing boats as well as boat beaching areas are needed along the campground shoreline. Potable water should be provided onsite seasonally.

Walking is relatively easy in this area and should be encouraged through trail signs. A number of existing tracks already exist. A series of half a dozen panels along the trail should cover the basic ecology of the forest, what grows here, what animals are commonly found here and why. Visitors need this kind of simple introduction to the natural environment so they can appreciate it better and feel more comfortable in it and be more alert to subtle changes from place to place (such as those brought about by forest fires, sand dunes, or wetlands, etc.). It would also be valuable to make reference to other nearby nature trails, i.e. the Hay River Nature Trail, so visitors can further explore this avenue if they choose.

One of the main concerns regarding this site in the past was the poor railway crossing on the access road. The rail line will be inoperative as early as winter 1990 or as late as summer 1991. Upgrading and marketing of this site should correspond to rail line closure. A name change to the site would be appropriate to encourage greater use of the area. This may or may not occur with a change in the name of the lake.

**PRIORITY:** high - upgrading should proceed before unrestricted use of area adversely impacts vegetation of site.

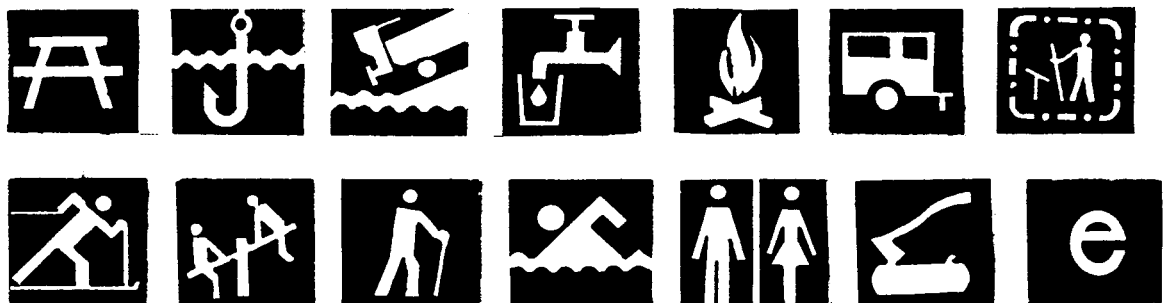
**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

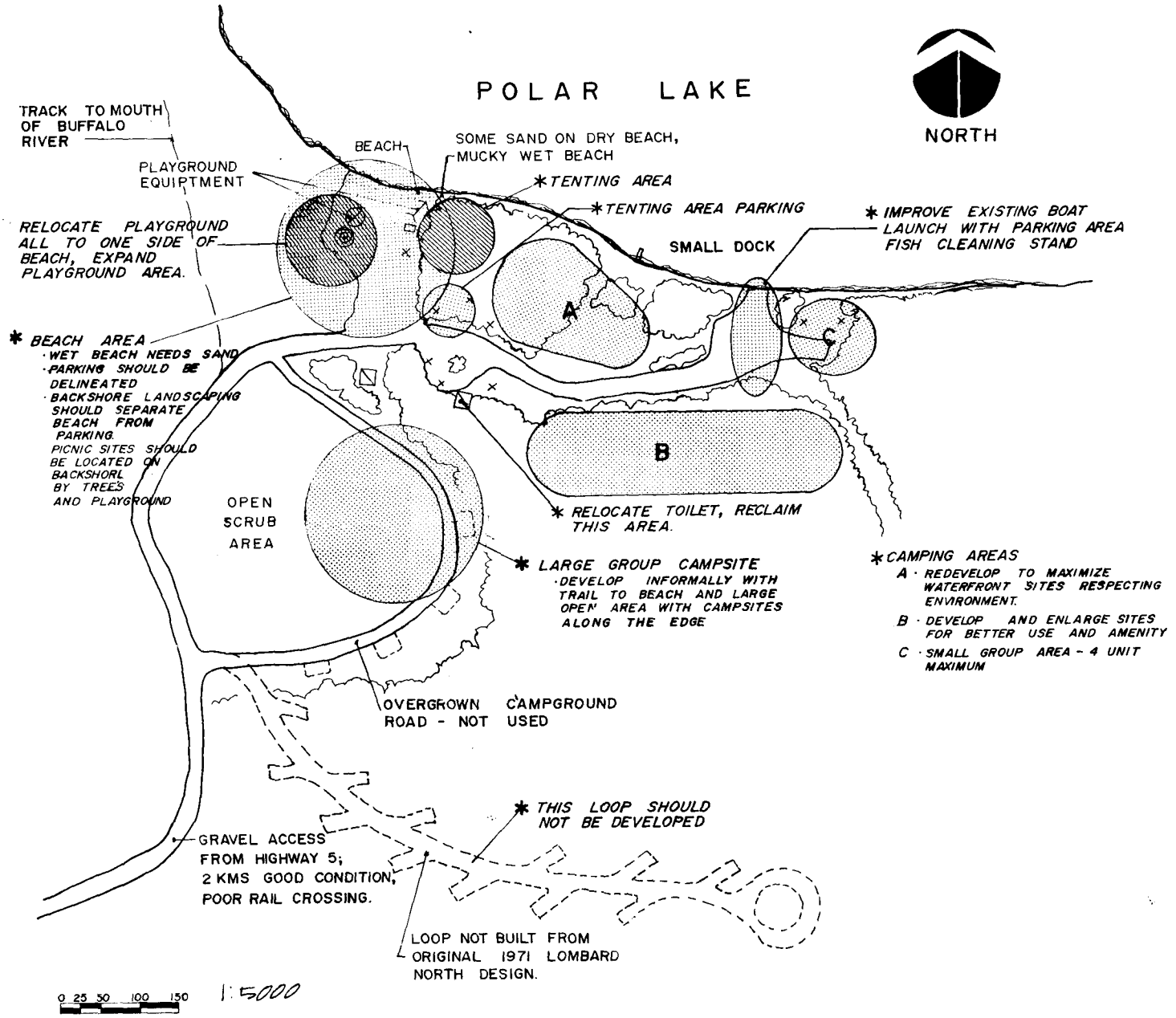
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	Planning - \$25,000 Signage - \$12,620 Development - ~ \$250,000
<b>Site Upgrading, Sign and Trail Plan:</b>	\$25,000.
<b>Site Development:</b>	Estimated ~ \$250,000 but should be based on plan.
<b>Signs:</b>	
<b>Interpretive Trail Signs:</b>	(6) \$400.00 each
<b>Interpretive Panel:</b>	\$2,500
<b>Area Orientation Map:</b>	\$2,500
<b>Trail Head Map:</b>	\$2,100
<b>Entrance Sign:</b>	\$2,000
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	4 @ \$280 each plus installation

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:** 1 km access signs and traffic signs both directions.  
Welcome and site directional signs.  
Trail Head map.  
Interpretive Panel  
Interpretive Trail Signs  
Area Orientation Map

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B. Fishing resource must be preserved and enhanced. Renewable Resources should be involved with this site.





**Notes / Legend**

- KEY**
- X - Denotes existing random campsite.
  - - Denotes pit toilet
1. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.
  2. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*
  3. Polar Park should be upgraded to provide a better destination site for both local use from Hay River and travelling tourists.
  4. Stocking program in lake should continue.
  5. A central water point should be provided.
  6. Improved maintenance is needed
  7. There are a number of bush roads in the area that function as walking, skiing or snowmobiling trails. An over-all map of the area showing trails all the way to Great Slave Lake should be erected.



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**Project**

**Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan**

**Economic Development & Tourism**

**Title**

**Polar Park Campground-  
Existing Conditions &  
Proposed Upgrading**

Date	Design	Drawn
September, 1989	A.C.	I.B.
File	Site	
1315-118-00-01	6	

## **BUFFALO RIVER CROSSING**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #7 - Buffalo River Crossing  
**MILEAGE:** 54.5 km east of junction of Hwy 2 & 5  
Highway pull-off located at km. 54.6

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Recommended by Baker for a pull-off or picnic area.
- River provides vistas north and south. 5-10 metre banks with mixed vegetation line both sides. The north east bank has a level terrace by the river.
- Rail line crosses the river approximately 100 metres to the north on a small wooden trestle bridge.
- Existing highway pull-off on the north side of the highway 100 metres east of the river.
- Two cabins are located near the bridge; one on the upper terrace of the northeast bank. The other is on the southeast bank approximately 100 metres in from the highway.
- Back country winter road (dirt track) runs north/south on the east bank of the river in this area.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Continue to use existing highway pull-off as a parking and service area. Install toilet facilities, garbage containers and two tables at the pull-off with some minor landscape improvements.
- Develop a trail from the parking area north through the brush to the old railway grade where a two-panel on-site display will deal with the building and abandonment of the railway.
- A single panel at the trailhead will introduce the story and tempt people down the trail for a short stroll.

This site is very close to the Polar Lake site but will be serving a different traveller who does not wish to travel off the highway or to stop for more than 20 minutes. This will be the only pull-off between Hwy 5 at Hay River and the junction of Highway 6 to Fort Resolution.

This site is an opportunity to employ the host theme by introducing and quoting a local person (perhaps someone who uses the area seasonally for fishing) about the changes the railway and the highway have made and what the future may hold now that the railway has gone.

This site was considered for river side development but the existence of the cabins with summer occupancy would suggest this as an intrusive development.

**PRIORITY:** medium - the pull-off is functional as it is now. The cabin occupants and users on both sides of the Highway should be approached about the minor sit improvements.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>		<b>\$26,660</b>
<b>Site Work:</b>		<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>Furnishings:</b>	Outhouse	\$5,500
	Tables (2)	\$1,320
	Garbage (1)	\$ 220
<b>Interpretation Panels:</b>	3 @ \$2,500 each	
<b>Area Orientation Map:</b>	\$2,500	
<b>Brushed Trail:</b>	500 m; \$2,500	
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	4 @ \$280 each plus installation	

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km access signs and turn-off signs, both directions.
- Area orientation map.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B.



1-521



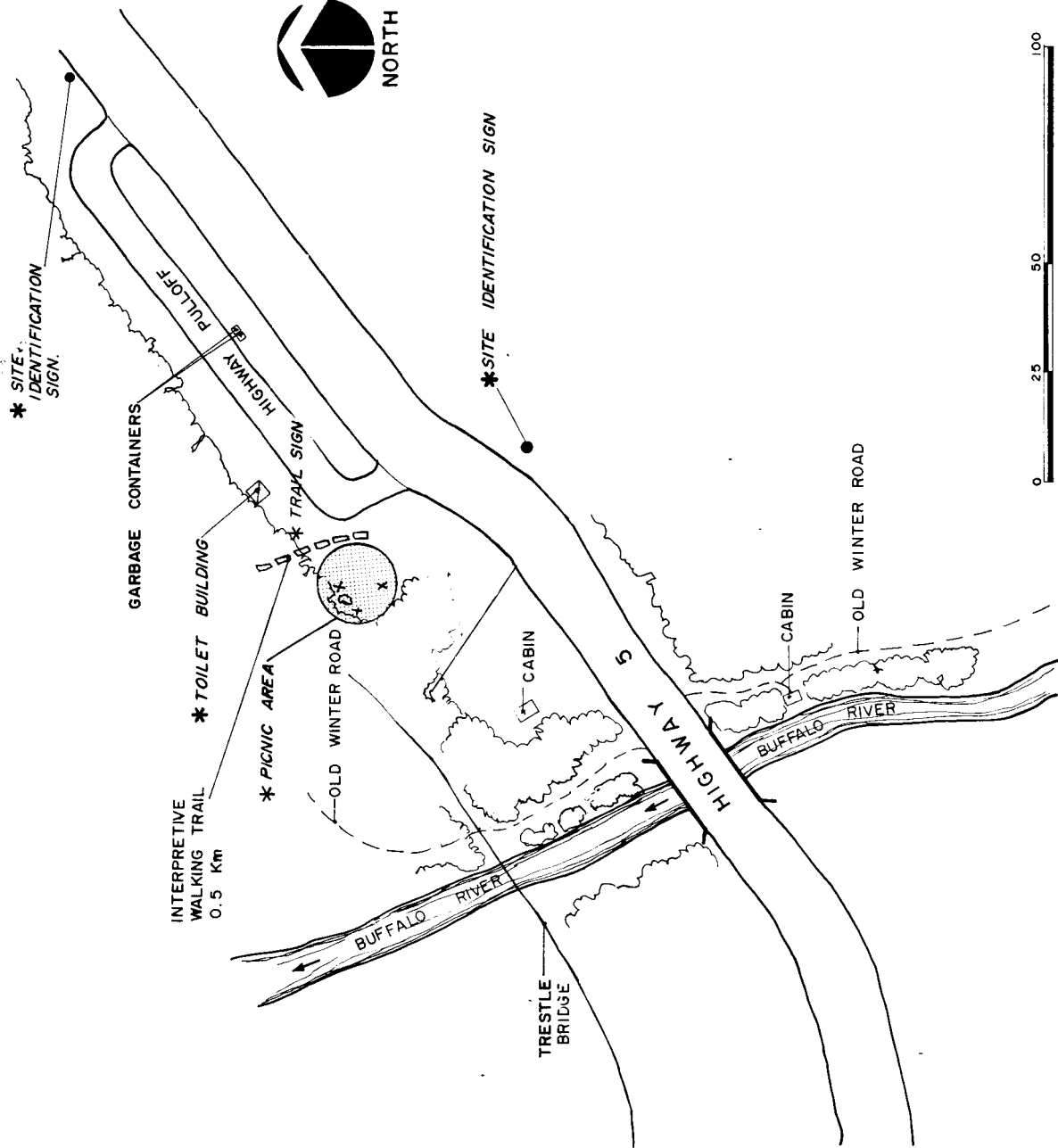
6 - 22





Notes / Legend

- 1. Scale is approximate and is not to be used for construction purposes.
- 2. All proposed changes are noted by an asterisk. \*
- 3. Persons using the trappers cabins should be notified regarding upgrading.



UMA Engineering Ltd.  
Engineers, Planners & Surveyors

Edmonton, Alberta

Yellowknife, NWT

Project

# Northwest Territories Highway 2, 5 & 6 Site Developments and Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

## Buffalo River Crossing - Existing Conditions & Proposed Upgrading

Date Design Drawn

September, 1989 A.C. I.B.

File Site

1315-118-00-01

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## **JUNCTION OF HIGHWAYS 5 AND 6**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #8 - Jct. of Highways 5 and 6  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 60

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Department of Transportation has a maintenance compound on the southeast corner of the intersection.
- No development otherwise.
- Highway signage to Communities located here.
- Low, wet area. Roadbed built up at least 1.5 m. Will require extensive fill to develop.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Develop a small roadside pull-off with a regional orientation map on the southwest corner of the junction.
- An orientation module will highlight the features and opportunities for visitors along the Great Slave Route and the Wood Buffalo Trail.
- The logo for the Wood Buffalo Trail will be introduced - we suggest the silhouette of a wood bison head - and the reason the trail is so named will also be explained.

This site is a decision point and merits a regional orientation sign outlining the options and distances along both Highways 5 and 6. Garbage containers would be provided.

Buffalo River Crossing is 6 kms to the west of this junction and is an existing pull-off with the amenity of the river. It is the more amenable site for a short break with a toilet and picnic tables.

**PRIORITY:** High.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$56,185</b>
<b>Site Work:</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Garbage Enclosure:</b>	<b>\$220</b>
<b>Fencing, Wheelstops:</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Highway Access Signs:</b>	<b>3 @ \$280 ea. plus installation</b>
<b>Directional Signs:</b>	<b>3 @ \$375 each plus installation</b>
<b>Regional Orientation Map:</b>	
<b>Sign Base:</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>
<b>Initial Signs:</b>	<b>\$ 7,000</b>
<b>Final Sign:</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km access signs from all three directions.
- Regional orientation map with points of interest and destinations along both highways 5 and 6.
- Directional and distance signage to both the destination communities and the next highway stops is recommended.

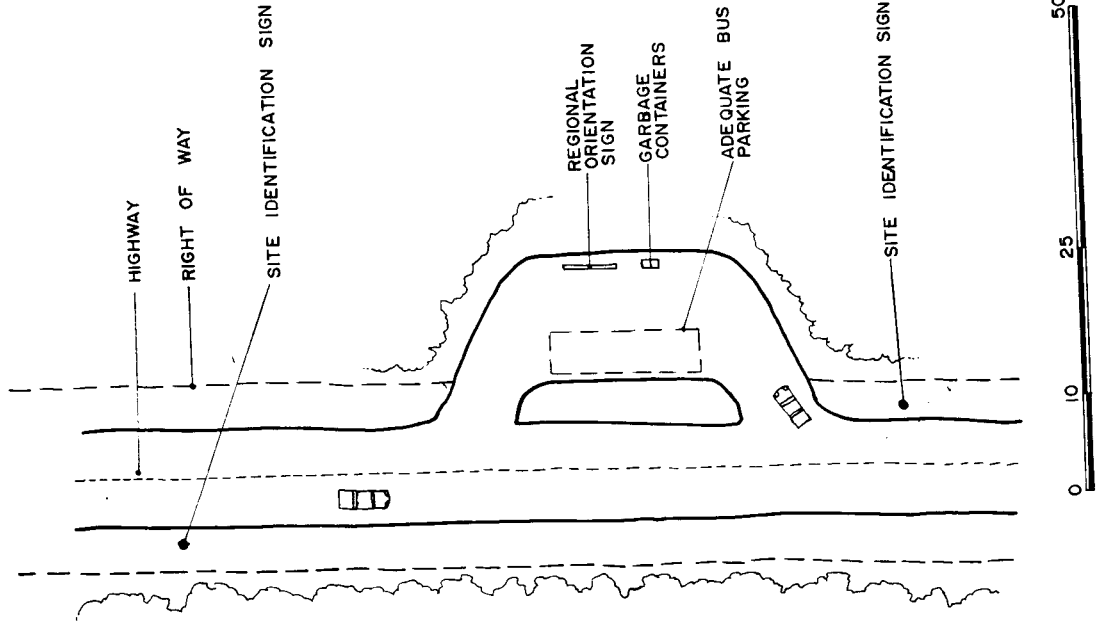
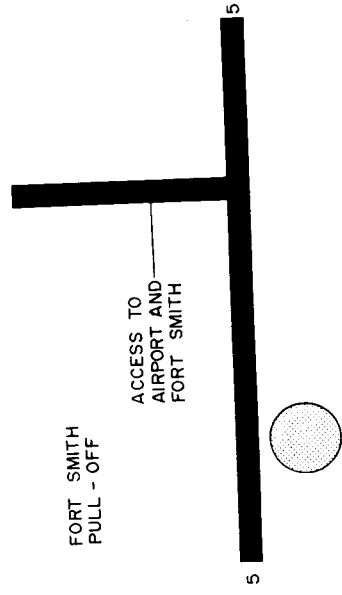
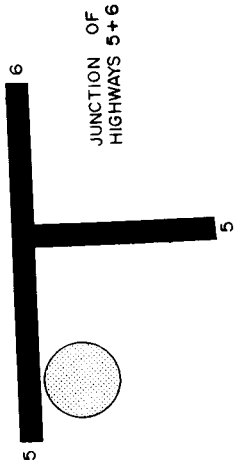
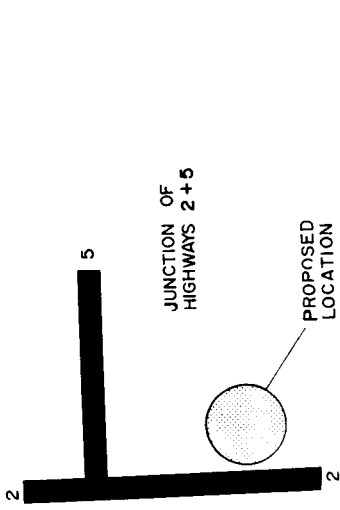
**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level C.



**Notes / Legend**

- 1. Scale is approximate and is not to be used for construction purposes.
- 2. Scale refers to concept plan



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Yellowknife, NWT

Project

# Northwest Territories Highway 2, 5 & 6 Site Developments and Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

## Roadside Pull-Off and Regional Orientation Maps

Date

September, 1989

Design

Drawn

File

1315-118-00-01

Sheet

## **PINE POINT**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 6  
**SITE:** #9 - Pine Point  
**MILEAGE:** Junction of Highways 5 & 6 starts mileage for Highway 6  
Kilometre 21.0

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Ex-mining community in the process of being dismantled after the mine closed in 1988.
- History of the community dates back over 60 years, history of mining exploration even older.
- Town will be dismantled including all buildings, power and light poles. Basements will be filled in. Asphalt will remain in situ unless there is a local re-use demand for it.
- Houses from Pine Point are spread across much of northern Alberta and southern NWT.
- Classic story of one industry company town.
- Old golf course located between Highway 6 and entrance road to town site.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Develop a 1-2 hour stop with walking opportunities and picnicking on the old golf course with access off Highway 6.
- A major interpretive site should be developed at the Pine Point golf course.
- Visitors will walk along a trail from the parking area a very short distance to a distinctive structure which will house, an on-site exhibit about the history of Pine Point.
- The structure should be distinctive but shouldn't necessarily be an interpretive centre. The structure can be quite open, perhaps only a built up area visitors walk through on the trail.

- Panels and artifacts suitable for unsupervised display will deal with the reasons the mine was located here, how the town developed, why it was dismantled when the mine shut down, where the buildings went and, significantly, what life was like in this boom and bust example of resource exploitation in the north.
- Create an informal path that wanders through the golf course and towards town so that visitors with a higher degree of curiosity can walk the streets of Pine Point.
- Provide a sign with the golf course plan as a walking option.
- Maintain the open grassland character of this former golfing site with seasonal mowing.
- Area orientation panel at parking lot will highlight tourism opportunities at Fort Resolution.

This site is the highly emotional story of a created and dismantled town. This site parallels the Bell Rock story and travellers will be continually reminded of this site by the distinctive Pine Point houses scattered through surrounding communities. The story of moving the houses is in itself a story of Northern transportation.

This may be a good location to use elements of the host theme, especially material from interviews with former residents.

This interpretive story and stop sets the stage for the contrast of Fort Resolution, the oldest community in NWT.

**PRIORITY:** High - Site Work may be less expensive as equipment is presently onsite.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	Planning	\$20,000
	Development	\$133,720
Site, Trail and Interpretive Display Concept Plan:		\$20,000
Estimated Site Development:		
Road Access and Facilities:	~	\$80,000

**Interpretive Package:**

Research, design, camera art:	\$24,000
Fabrication and installation:	\$24,000
Highway Signs:	4 @ \$280 ea. plus installation
Trail Head Map:	\$2,100
Area Orientation Map:	\$2,500

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km. access signs, both directions.
- Directional signs.
- Golf Course Map and trail signs.
- Interpretive Panels.
- Area Orientation Map

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B.



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## PAULETTE BAY CAMPGROUND

---

**HIGHWAY:** 6  
**SITE:** # 10 - Paulette Bay Campground  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre ~ 50

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- No development at present.
- Old track road into Dawson's Landing and down to Bay.
- Area is heavily covered with cut lines.
- Road access to Bay is provided at the old float plane base site.
- Vegetation is mixed conifer/deciduous, reasonably mature.
- Terrain is gently undulating on top, rocky terraces back from Lake.
- Limestone shingle beach.
- Developable backshore.
- Water is sheltered and somewhat warmer due to Paulette Island.
- Highway comes within 3 kilometres of the lake.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Consider this site as a future location for a campground and waterfront day-use area along this Bay.
- Work with the community of Fort Resolution to determine the level of development that is desired at Mission Island. Develop this site as an alternative to Mission Island when that area has reached desired carrying capacity.

This site offers good use of Great Slave Lake in one of the few bays with island protection.

This site is located far enough from Fort Resolution not to intrude overly on the community but close enough to use it as the service centre and a day trip.

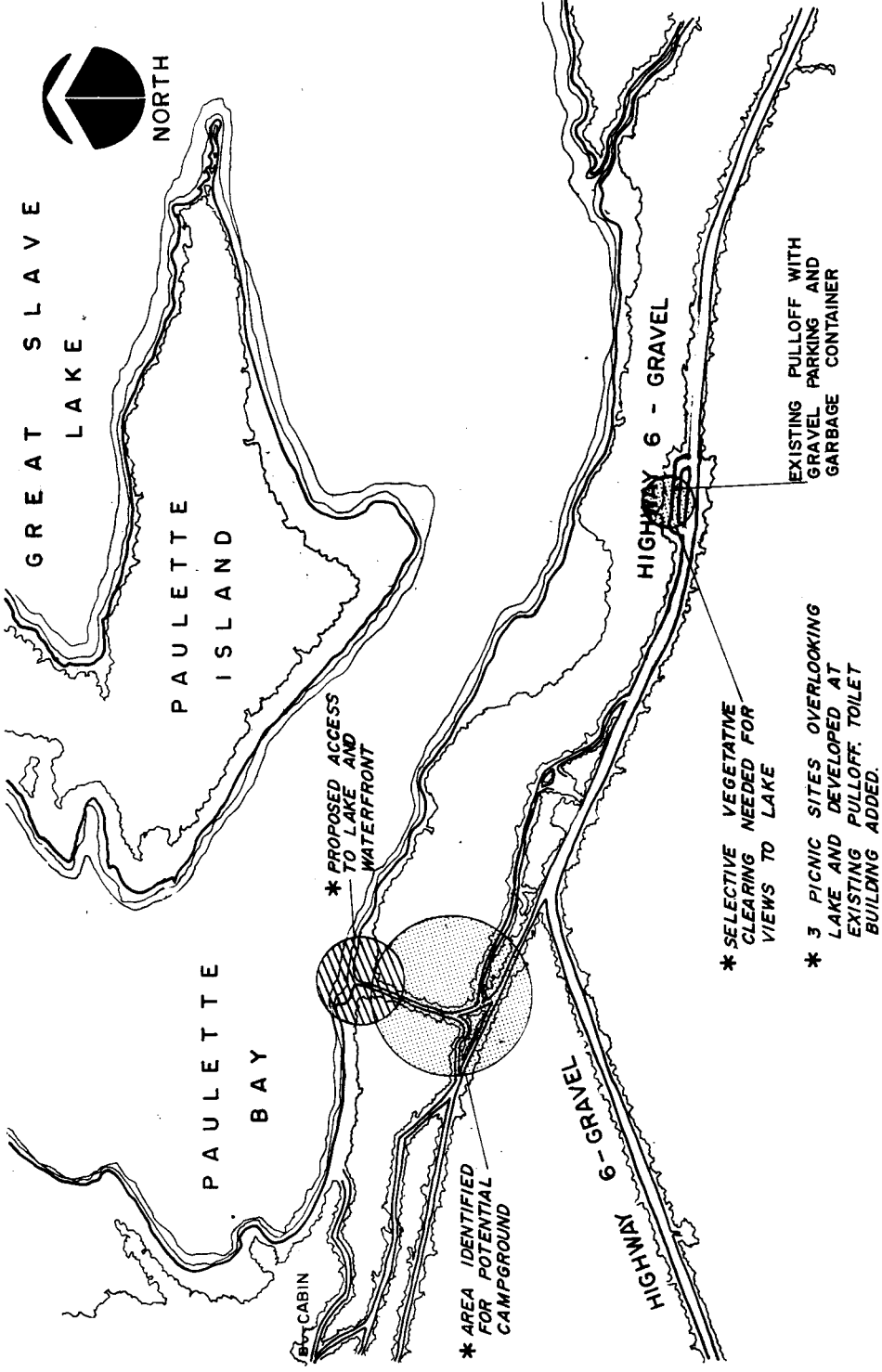
Use of the Lake should be what markets this site.



**PRIORITY:** Low

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:** not needed at this time.

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:** not required at this time.



**Notes / Legend**

Information from air photos courtesy of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Canada, 1986

2. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.
3. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*
4. Campground and waterfront development should be deferred until Mission Island site has overflow clientele.



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Edmonton, Alberta

Yellowknife, NWT

**Project**

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

**Economic Development & Tourism**

**Title**

Paulette Bay - Highway  
Viewpoint & Proposed  
Campground Site

Date Design Drawn

September, 1989 A.C. I.B.

File Site

1315-118-00-01

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## PAULETTE BAY PULL-OFF

---

**HIGHWAY:** 6  
**SITE:** #11 - Paulette Bay Pull-off  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre --

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Existing highway pull-off, north side of road on elevation overlooking Lake and Paulette Bay.
- Site supplied with garbage containers.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Thin vegetation for better views of the Lake and Bay. A short trail development to a good viewing spot should be developed.
- Two interpretive panels at the pull-off will reintroduce Great Slave Lake, telling about the lake in general and referring again to its importance in northern transportation, and will tell a brief story of commercial fishing on the lake. This may be another good site for the application of the host theme, featuring the words of a commercial fisherman or two.
- Locate a pit toilet at this site.
- Future upgrading to the site could add tables.

**PRIORITY:** medium - site is operational at present, but strictly functional. Needs amenity development.

### PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$23,720</b>
<b>Site Work:</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>400 m Trail Brushing:</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>Site Furnishings:</b>	<b>Pit toilet \$5,500</b>
	<b>2 benches \$1,320</b>

Highway Signs: 5 @ \$ 280 ea. plus installation  
Interpretive Panel: 2 @ \$2,500 ea.  
Area Orientation Sign: \$2,500

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km. access signs and turn-off signs both directions.
- Trail sign.
- Interpretive panels.
- Area Orientation Sign

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level C

This site should be contracted out of Fort Resolution.



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# FORT RESOLUTION

---

**HIGHWAY:** 6  
**SITE:** #12 - Fort Resolution  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 69.0

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Small community of Dene, Metis and White.
- Historic location and buildings in community.
- Oldest community in NWT.
- Located in good situation to the Lake and the Slave River Delta.
- Tourist services include a general store and gas station.
- Little tourist development or interaction in the past.
- A few outfitters are active in the area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Contract to develop an overall community tourism strategy plan focusing on the specialty markets that the Community has indicated that they are interested in attracting.
- Locate a gazebo type structure at the entrance of town with an information sign-board and local map to orient tourists and provide them with a range of options for time spent in the area.
- Locate a regional orientation map similar to the other orientation panels on the highway system such as at Enterprise. An additional module will also be devoted to tourism products and tourism opportunities in Fort Resolution.
- Provision must be made for local operators to update information in this development as outdated, unattended material would tend to be a detriment to the orientation function and tourism in general. A means will have to be found to remove the detailed orientation module if it is not regularly serviced.
- Consider the development of a small day-use area near the water for both the community and the tourists.

- Encourage a greater variety of tourist services, initially on a seasonal basis; a cafe and fixed roof accommodation are needed.

This community has the opportunity to develop into a major destination interpretive site with high recreational amenity and opportunity.

An overall Community Tourism Strategy is needed. The Community indicates they are less interested in the self sufficient road traveller as they are the specialty and package tour market. There is the desire to closely control the type and scale of development in the area and a cohesive plan that will allow incremental development is needed. The Community is already working on parts of this.

The amount of travel on Highway 6 will be directly linked to the Pine Point development and Fort Resolution as a destination. Encouragement to travel beyond the Pine Point site to Fort Resolution should realistically highlight the level of services available. Information on booking extended trips and day activities in advance of arrival indicates an important need for trip planning information at the Visitor Centres in Yellowknife and at 60th Parallel.

**PRIORITY:** High - Planning Document - Regional and Local orientation maps and information kiosk.  
Medium - day-use park.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

**Total Estimated Cost:** Community Tourism Strategy - \$30,000.  
Waterfront Day-use Park  
- Planning and Design: ~\$40,000  
Information Area: \$141,060

**Information Area:**

Site Work	\$25,000
Structure	\$30,000
Benches (8)	\$ 5,280
2 Garbage Enclosures	\$ 440
Fencing	\$ 3,000

Pit Toilet	\$ 5,500
Highway Signs:	3 @ \$280 ea. plus installation
Regional Orientation Map:	
Base:	\$ 5,000
Initial Signs:	\$ 7,000
Final Sign:	\$11,000
Interpretive/Information Package in Structure:	
Research, Design, Camera Art:	\$24,000
Fabrication and Installation:	\$24,000

- SIGNAGE NEEDED:**
- Welcome and local orientation signs.
  - Interpretive panels.
  - Orientation map.
  - Directional signs.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B

Should be maintained by the community on contract.



## MISSION ISLAND

---

**HIGHWAY:** 6  
**SITE:** #13 - Mission Island  
**MILEAGE:** 8 kilometres west of Fort Resolution

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Old mission site on a peninsula, formerly an island on the south side of the Slave River Delta.
- Old mission site has historic log building and white wooden cross. Located on southwest shore of 'island'.
- High piece of land, well treed, good views of delta, Moose Deer Island and back towards Fort Resolution.
- Network of old tracks and trails on the island.
- Site is prime hunting area for ptarmigans in the fall.
- Site is used informally by community and in community celebrations.
- Park development scheme done for the site in 1981. Rejected as too upscale.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Develop a series of low key day-use areas amenable to both the community and tourists.
- Develop a new road around the Bay connecting the village and the island that bypasses the dump.
- Develop a partial road network on the island to some of the viewpoints identified in the Project Planner report.
- Develop a seasonal campground of 10 sites, limited to summer use only along the shoreline.
- Locate an interpretive panel at the site of the old lime kiln and at a point which gives a good view of Moose Deer Island and the Slave River Delta - these panels will deal with the material at hand and the views.
- Develop a distinctive on-site exhibit at the mission site in which the visual emphasis concentrate on materials placed at ground level, for example; the development may be a pad 20 feet in diameter although not necessarily circular



with designs carved or set into the material the pad is made of. Low panels mounted only a few inches above the ground around the perimeter of the pad would deal with the mission history and the significance of the site both to the people of the area and the development of the north.

The story of Fort Resolution and its mission is one of the most important keys to understanding the developmental history of the Northwest Territories. The island is a significant historic site with major interpretive potential. Nevertheless, the uncertain disposition of the land and the concerns of some residents of Fort Resolution about the impact an increase in sightseeing traffic might have on the town make it advisable at present to keep interpretive development on the island low key.

- All development on Mission Island should be kept un-obtrusive and in character with the island. Interpretive panels at the mission site should be located at the edge of the site or along the ground plane, so as to be nearly invisible from a couple of hundred feet away and unnoticeable from Fort Resolution.
- No tourist development should occur here until the new road is built or the dump moved and area reclaimed. An improved approach is mandatory.
- Plans should be made to develop a full heritage interpretation program for Mission Island when administrative and social issues can be resolved in the future.

The community is wary of relinquishing developmental control of this site as it is a well used site by the community itself. Development should be a cooperative venture, benefiting both locals and tourists.

**PRIORITY:** High - this is part of the destination experience of Fort Resolution.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

**Total Estimated Cost:** Road Work: \$250,000  
Site: \$180,600

**Road Realignment:** 2 km @ \$70,000 km plus 25% engineering fees  
and contingency

**Road Improvements:** 10 km @ \$10,000 km

**Site Detail Design:** \$15,000

**Site Work - including campsites:** \$100,000

**Site Furnishings:**

5 pit toilets: \$ 27,500

15 tables: \$ 9,900

10 stoves: \$ 4,400

Fencing: \$ 4,000

5 Garbage Enclosures: \$ 1,100

Water Tank: \$ 6,600

**Highway Signs:** 5 @ \$280 ea. plus installation

**Internal Park Signs:** 15 @ \$280 ea.

**Interpretation Panels:** 4 @ \$2,500 ea.

**Area Orientation Sign:** \$ 2,500

**Entrance Sign:** \$ 2,000

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- Directional signs.
- Internal Park signs.
- Interpretive Panels.
- Area Orientation Sign

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B

Community Operated. Close as a camping area for hunting season.



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## **6.2 THE WOOD BUFFALO TRAIL**

A dusty road that becomes the track into the largest National Park in Canada - sand dunes, karst features, vast plains and marshes, disappearing rivers, salt plains, bison and whooping cranes.

A river so turbulent no one gets through - Rapids of the Drowned and home of the pelicans.

The Wood Buffalo Trail covers Highway 5 where it turns south from The Great Slave Route down into Wood Buffalo National Park and terminates at the community of Fort Smith on the Slave River.

The visitor experience in section 4.2 briefly describes the drive, experiences and stops along the way. What follows in this section is a breakdown on each site; summarizing the existing condition of the site, followed by a series of recommendations and discussion of rationale. A preliminary cost estimate is given based on the recommendations and a proposed level of operations and maintenance is assigned. (Operations and Maintenance Guidelines are explained in the Technical Appendix.)

Symbols of activities and services are given for each site to graphically depict both signage requirements and summarize the development of the site.

It should be noted that a number of the sites proposed for development along this trail are within the National Park. These developments offer the unique opportunity to cooperatively develop sites meeting both the goals of GNWT and the Canadian Parks Service. Developments within these areas must conform with the guidelines set out by both the Canadian Parks Service and the GNWT and all work in the future should be carefully monitored and directed by both parties. Discussion,

development and review of all work along the Wood Buffalo Trail should be a cooperative effort between the two governments to develop a recreational and interpretive driving experience that functions as one experience both in and outside the park, and that reflects well on both governments agencies.

Sites 14 through 25 are located on The Wood Buffalo Trail and are mapped on the overall concept plan in the envelope at the back of the report. Individual site concept plans are located with each site in the following section.

## **SANDY LAKE**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #14 - Sandy Lake Campground  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 86.9  
24 km. south of Hwy 5 & 6 junction  
Immediately north of Wood Buffalo National Park

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Partially developed lake with a small cottage subdivision and public boat launch.
- Lake is 13 km. west of the highway on a gravel road, recently upgraded by Department of Highways.
- Originally developed by Pine Point residents.
- Cottage area on north shore is in low scrub/black spruce vegetation with a poor shoreline.
- Small public boat launch and parking area near the subdivision.
- Series of open sand dunes with an excellent beach resource at east end of lake. Accessible only with a four-wheel drive; culvert across outlet stream has been pulled.
- Area has vegetation damage in both primary and back dunes from random vehicle and ATV use.
- There is some garbage onsite.
- Fishing is average to good.
- Lake is one of the better swimming lakes in the area. Some leeches.
- Original concept plan done 1978, Environmental Assessment and Master Planning Study, MTB Consultants. Considered too ambitious now as there is no longer regular use from Pine Point.
- Renewable Resources have recently stocked two karst lakes east of Sandy Lake with arctic char on an experimental basis. If fish successfully over winter, this will be most southern arctic char fishing location. Will dramatically increase site use. Wood Buffalo National Park is concerned about fish movement into Park.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- That the east end dune area be reclaimed and developed as a walk-in day use area and waterfront.
- That the existing levelled parking area at the east end of the Lake be developed into a small campground with 8-10 sites around the perimeter of the open area.
- That a potable water source be provided.
- That the public boat launch be left by the subdivision and upgraded with a fish cleaning stand, garbage containers and shoreline improvements.
- That the dune area be made inaccessible to vehicles and a revegetation program implemented where necessary.
- That contact be maintained with Renewable Resources regarding the arctic char experiment and if the program proves successful; that the area be reexamined with the intention of developing a larger, higher service campground relating to both Sandy Lake and the karsts.
- Locate 3 interpretive panels on walk from campground to beach. These would deal with the extensive dune systems along the south shore of Great Slave Lake, firstly pointing out that these systems exist, then explaining why, showing what to look for in a dune system and explaining the influence dunes have on vegetation and habitats.
- Develop an 800 m loop (1/2 mile) interpretive trail with 6 signs and trail head in day-use area. These panels would deal with the same material mentioned above but would go more deeply into dune ecology and also cover the marsh beside the dunes.

This site has a superb resource attraction in the lakeshore, dunes and vegetation with a well developed access. Development here should be small scale but well done and maintained. Marketing this recreation area off-site will be critical as it is too far from the Highway to attract casual investigation and users.

The upgrading of the old parking area into a random camping area should be done such that the facilities can be relocated to a larger campground should the char fishing resource develop.

**PRIORITY:**      **High** - development of dune area as day-use and beach area with small random campground in former parking lot.  
                         **Medium** - consideration of a larger development if the fish stocking experiment is successful.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$81,040</b>
<b>Site Work: Reclamation:</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Campground Landscaping:</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
<b>Site Furnishings:</b>	
3 outhouses:	\$16,500
15 tables:	\$ 9,900
Fish cleaning:	\$ 500
6 garbage enclosures:	\$ 1,320
8 stoves:	\$ 3,520
Fencing:	\$ 4,000
Highway Signs:	5 @ \$280 each plus installation
Entrance Sign:	\$ 2,000
Area Orientation Sign:	\$ 2,500
3 Interpretive Panels:	\$ 7,500
Trail Head Map:	\$ 2,100
6 Interpretive Trail Signs:	\$ 2,400
Internal Park Signs:	5 @ \$280 ea.

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

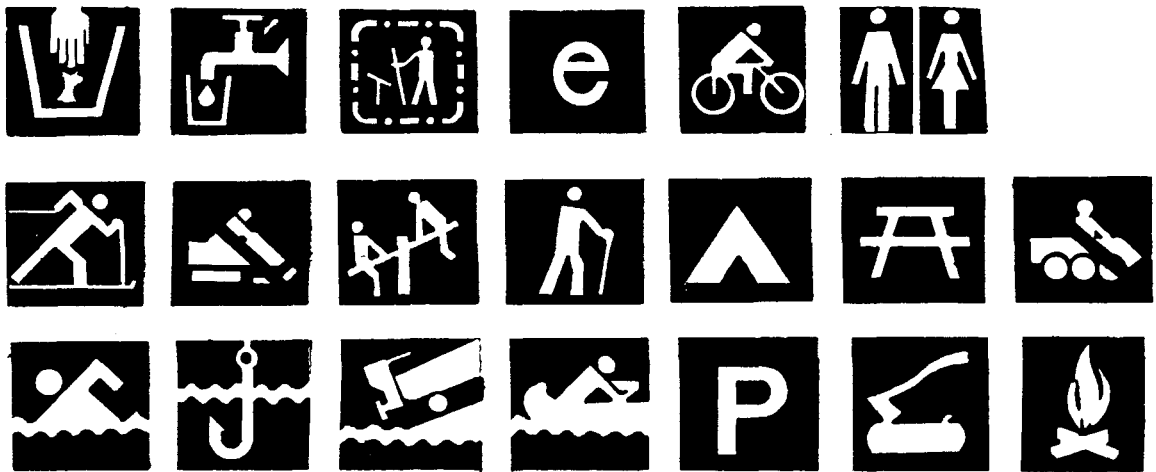
- 1 km. access signage, both directions.
- Internal park signage.
- Interpretive Panels.
- Area Orientation Map
- Directional Signs.
- Trail Head Map
- Entrance Sign



**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

**Level B**

The dune area will require some initial revegetation work. Maintenance of the Day-use site: (garbage collection, toilet building maintenance, and wood supply) may best be accomplished by boat - hence the most logical candidates for this work are those living in the cottage subdivision.



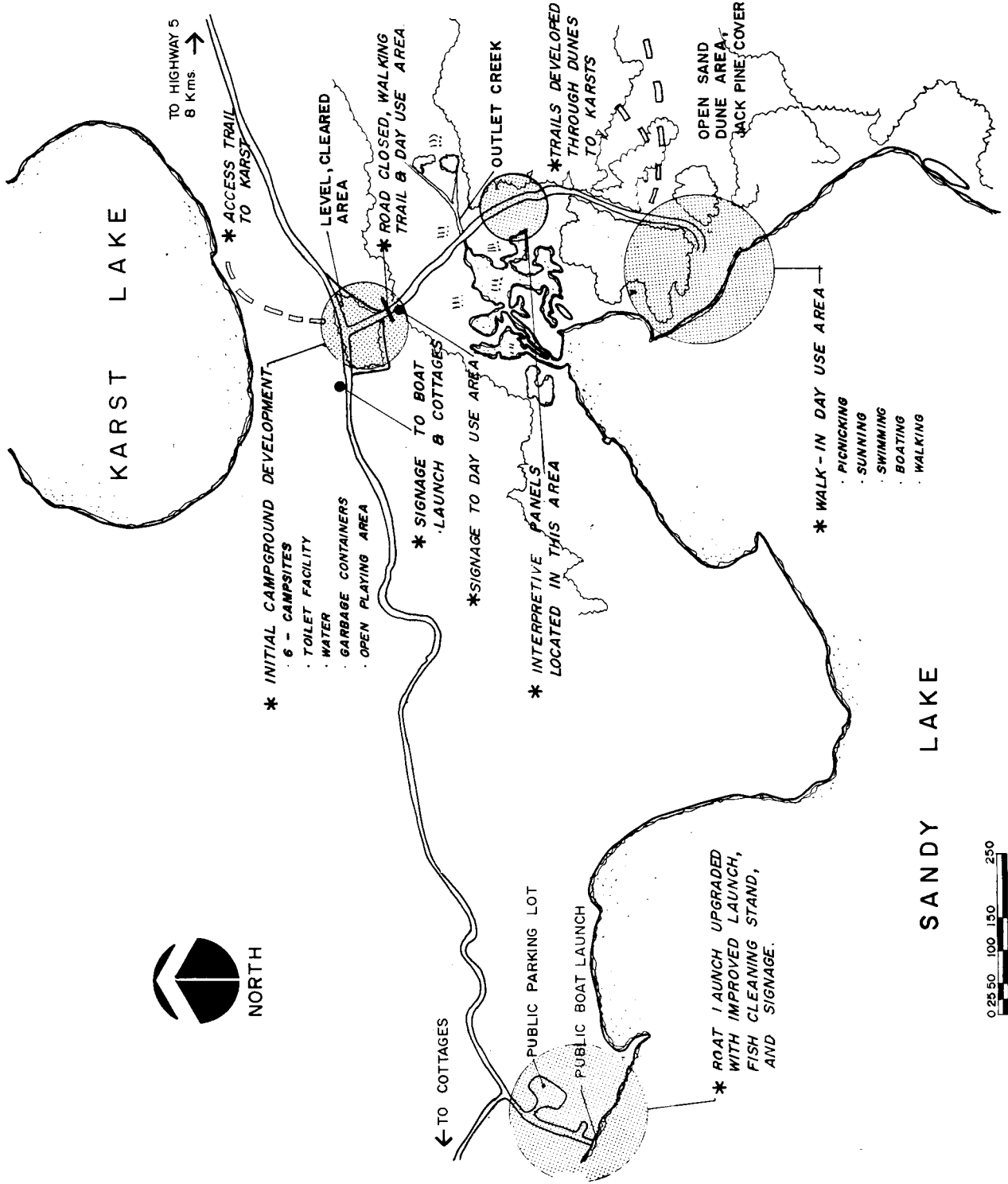
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**Notes / Legend**

1. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.

2. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk. \*



UMA Engineering Ltd  
Engineers, Planners & Surveyors

Edmonton, Alberta

Yellowknife, NWT

Project

**Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan**

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

**Sandy Lake -  
Existing Conditions  
& Proposed Upgrading**

Date Design Drawn

September, 1989 A.C. I.B.

File Site

1315-118-00-01

# WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #15 - Wood Buffalo National Park; north entrance  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 95.7

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Small standard national park boundary signs denotes park boundary.
- Pavements ends approximately 1 kilometre north of the Park boundary.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- That substantial welcoming/farewell signs be constructed for driving interest and tourist awareness.
- Signs should be located within landscaped beds of indigenous material.
- The distance to Angus Fire Tower - the first stop in the Park should be displayed, shortly after the entrance sign.
- Park entrance sign must meet Canadian Park Service sign standards.

Tourist travelling from the north have come a substantial distance to reach this park. It is important to reward that travel with a statement reflecting the fact that this next part of their travel is part of the destination experience. As most tourists will see Wood Buffalo primarily from the car, awareness of having entered and being in the park is important.

Tourists leaving the Park should have a major statement of exit as an epilogue of their visit and as a marker in where they are in their journey.

The driving guide should use this visual statement of boundary to convey some general information about the park and its role in the National system and as a World Heritage Site.

**PRIORITY:** High

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

**Total Estimated Cost:** \$40,560

**Site Work:** \$ 5,000 each

**2 Signs:** \$15,000 each

**Highway Signs:** 2 @ 280 ea. plus installation

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- Welcome/farewell sign.
- Distance signage to Angus Fire Tower and Sandy Lake.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level C.

## ANGUS FIRE TOWER

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #16 - Angus Fire Tower  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 105.2  
approximately 10 kms. south of the Park Boundary.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Site takes its name from a seasonally staffed fire tower located here. Views from the fire tower are homogenous northern boreal forest and some karst lake formations.
- Features a karst lake adjacent to the fire tower and picnic area.
- Existing picnicking site with a gravel entrance and parking area, picnic tables and stoves, wood, pit toilets and garbage receptacles.
- A gravel walkway and short piece of fencing bring visitors to the edge of the karst.
- A second karst lake is located about a 10 minute walk north east of the parking lot. Trail is marked with survey tape. This second karst has access down to the waters' edge.
- A sulphur spring is located within 1 kilometre of the site.
- This is the only picnic site developed immediately along the Highway 5 corridor operated by the National Park.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Develop this site as a major interpretive recreational day-use area.
- Design site to provide a 1-3 hour stop with interpretive trails, walking trails, picnic and playground facilities, park orientation and tourist services.
- Locate tourist information in a screened, roofed display area, approximately 36 sq.m (~ 400 sq'). 'Gazebo like' facility would include an orientation map of the park, brochures and interpretive displays of the immediate northern park environment. Facility would have a small seating area.
- Washroom facilities should be located near the tourist information and in the picnicking area.

- Potable water should be provided.
- Develop interconnected trails. For example; a short interpretive loop around the first karst from the picnic and parking area, linkages to the sulphur springs and the second karst and a loop back to the trail head.
- Explore the possibility of a floating platform and access down to water level in the second karst.

The Angus Fire Tower site offers the attraction of the karst lakes, the sulphur springs and the fire tower as well as a site immediately off the highway close to the north boundary. As there is an existing residence onsite, this location offers a degree of security unavailable at other locations as well as emergency access to radio communications.

The karst feature close to the highway at Angus Fire Tower calls for interpretive development if only to explain the many questions visitors have about what most of them consider to be a very unusual phenomenon. There's no better place in Wood Buffalo National Park to interpret karst topography simply because two large sink holes are easily accessible here as well as a nearby sulphur spring.

The general story of the formulation of karst and the range of distinctive features found in the region should be dealt with in a distinctive structure near the parking and day use area - this structure could be covered and screened and should contain a series of panels forming a small on-site exhibit about karst features. The exhibit would also suggest other places in the park where visitors may see karst features, particularly Nyarling River Crossing as it is also located adjacent to the highway.

A redesign of this site is necessary to improve the quality of the facilities offered as well as the spectrum of things to do. A series of interconnected trails will allow the travelling public to stretch and spend some time in the northern park as well as giving them more of a park experience than just a long drive. Access to the water level in the second karst offers a unique opportunity to experience the karst landscape and appreciate the dynamic water system that will be a reoccurring theme at more southern stops. (Nyarling River, Wetland Viewpoint, Salt Plains Overview). Two interpretive panels would be placed on the floating platform at the second karst.

The sink nearest the fire tower has steep sides and panels along the railing at the lip of the hole could show what the underwater portions of the sink hole complex might be like and how the sink hole formed.

Improved picnic facilities as well a visitor services component are needed for both enjoyment of the site and familiarization of the visitor.

This site was recommended for development in the Parks Canada An Assessment of Potential Sites for Roadside Facilities, 1977.

**PRIORITY:** High - Located in the Park, the logistics of planning, design, construction and operation should be undertaken as a joint effort of both the Federal and Territorial governments.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	Planning \$30,000 Development \$263,520
Upgrading and Trail Plan:	\$30,000. (Base Mapping needed)
Site Development:	Estimated ~\$200,000 but should be based on plan
Highway Signs:	4 @ \$280 ea. plus installation
Interpretive Panels:	2 @ \$2,500 ea.
Trail Head Map:	\$2,100
Area Orientation Map:	\$2,500
Interpretive Trail Signs:	12 @ \$400 ea.
Gazebo Panels:	Research, design, camera art \$24,000 Fabrication and installation \$24,000

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

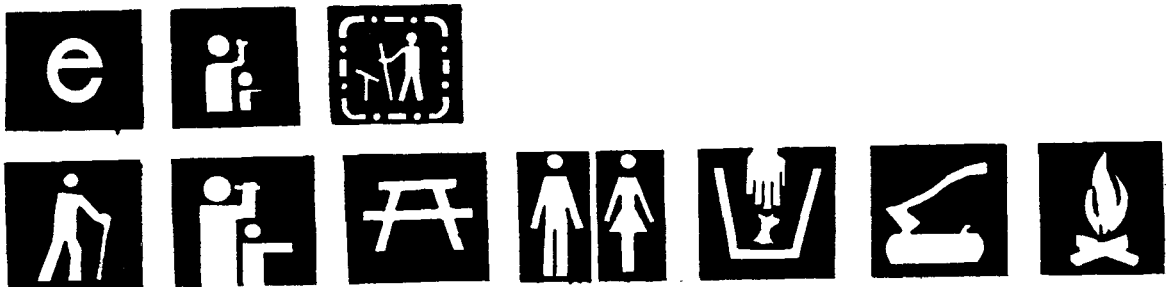
In Gazebo:

On-site:

- 1 km. access signs and turn-off signs both directions.
- Information and interpretive panels.
- Site orientation sign, trail system map, interpretive panels, directional and facility signs.
- Area orientation map.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

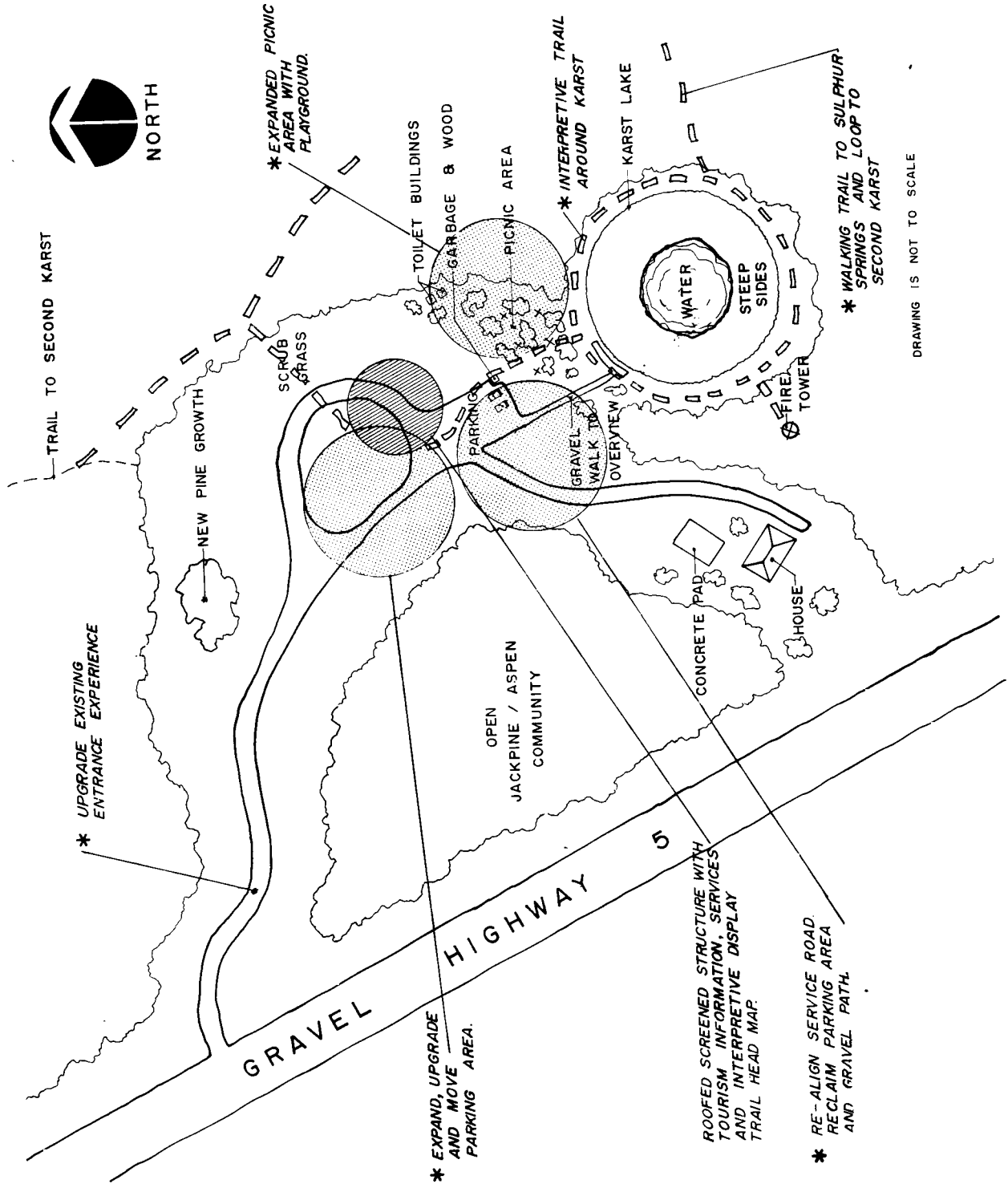
Level A. This site is anticipated to be one of the most heavily used sites in the north park area.





**Notes / Legend**

1. Drawing to be used for familiarization only. Not to be used for design or construction purposes.
2. All proposed changes are indicated with an asterisk \*
3. Site to be upgraded, expanded and redesigned as the "North Park" visitor facilities and information site.
4. Potable water should be available seasonably.



UMA Engineering Ltd  
 Engineers, Planners & Surveyors  
 Edmonton, Alberta

Yellowknife, NWT

Project

**Northwest Territories  
 Highway 2, 5 & 6  
 Site Developments and  
 Interpretive Plan**

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

**Angus Fire Tower -  
 Existing Conditions  
 & Proposed Upgrading**

Date Design Drawn

September, 1989 A.C. I.B.

File Site

1315-118-00-01 16

DRAWING IS NOT TO SCALE

## NYARLING RIVER

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #17 - Nyarling River Crossing  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 118.2

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Features a dry surface river bed with the river still there but flowing underground. According to locals in the area, the river does flow on the surface for a short period in very wet springs.
- Existing highway pull-off on the west side of the highway approximately 100 metres south of the river crossing.
- West side of the road has a wide grassy channel with a clump of aspen in the middle of it.
- East side of the channel is narrower with a ditch that was cut to prevent indiscriminant use by off-road vehicles. (Parks Canada, 1977, Appendix 1, Fig. 14)

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Upgrade this site and develop a short 150 m interpretive trail and viewing area connecting the highway pull-off and the edge of the river bed.
- Develop a small picnic area with 3-4 tables on the edge of the river bank partially visible from the highway. Some minor clearing and grading will be necessary.
- Locate 2 interpretive panels at this viewing area overlooking the river channel to deal with karst features in the area.
- Existing pit toilet should be upgraded and relocated to middle or northern part of pull-off.
- Minor landscaping will make this highway pull-off a more attractive site.
- Locate 2 interpretive panels adjacent to the parking area to deal with the wood bison story.

The existing pull-off is operational at present but the addition of a trail and picnic area with interpretive panels will make it a more pleasant and interesting place to stop.

Nyarling River Crossing is in the heart of the section of the road where visitors often spot bison at the roadside. The park's name creates curiosity about wood bison regardless of whether visitors see the animals. For these reasons, the pull-off at Nyarling River is a fine site at which to recap the story of the reintroduction of wood bison to this area, their history and modern efforts to manage the health and breeding success of a number of herds in the Northwest Territories.

The riverbed itself is an excellent example of a feature of little interest to a casual observer but possessing a fascinating story which will intrigue visitors. The Nyarling runs above ground occasionally during spring run-off but during most of the rest of the year runs underground through a tunnel system we assume parallels the surface drainage pattern (although no one can be sure of this).

Concern has been raised about persons walking down in the river bed and if this is safe walking environment. Our recommendation is that if there is major concern, a geologist familiar with karst landscapes be consulted regarding that site in particular.

It may be possible to make use of the host theme at this site if design and implementation staff can find local residents who have stories to tell about features such as this one - failing that, a karst geologist could be consulted as a possible host. There is an Ottawa-based geologist in the park most summers doing research on the karst geology. He would be a valuable consultant on this site. It is our understanding that because the river goes underground more than a kilometre and a half to the west, the immediate area poses no walking hazard. It is not anticipated that there would be formal trail development down in the river bed.

This site was recommended for development in the Parks Canada An Assessment of Potential Sites for Roadside Facilities, 1977.

**PRIORITY:** Medium - existing site is operational, but forgettable.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$28,070</b>
<b>Planning and Design:</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>
<b>Site Work:</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
<b>Site Furnishings:</b>	<b>Tables (3) \$1,980</b> <b>2 garbage enclosures: \$440</b> <b>Viewing platform: \$4,000</b>
<b>Trail Brushing:</b>	<b>150 m @ \$5 m = \$750</b>
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	<b>4 @ \$280 each plus installation</b>
<b>Directional Trail Sign:</b>	<b>\$ 280</b>
<b>4 Interpretive Panels:</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Area Orientation Map:</b>	<b>\$ 2,500</b>

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km. access signs and turn-off signs both directions.
- 2 Interpretive panel onsite at the riverbank viewing area.
- Trail directional signage.
- Area orientation sign.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B. As this site will be functioning as both a highway pull-off and a recreational/interpretive attraction, we recommend that the operation and maintenance other than gravelling and road work be worked out between Wood Buffalo National Park staff and Economic Development and Tourism rather than with Department of Highways.



Notes / Legend

1. Scale is approximate and is not to be used for construction purposes.
2. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*
3. Picnic area should be brushed out with views of river bed.
4. Access into river bed should be informal.



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Project

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

Nyarling River -  
Existing Conditions  
& Proposed Upgrading

Date

September, 1989

Design

A.C.

Drawn

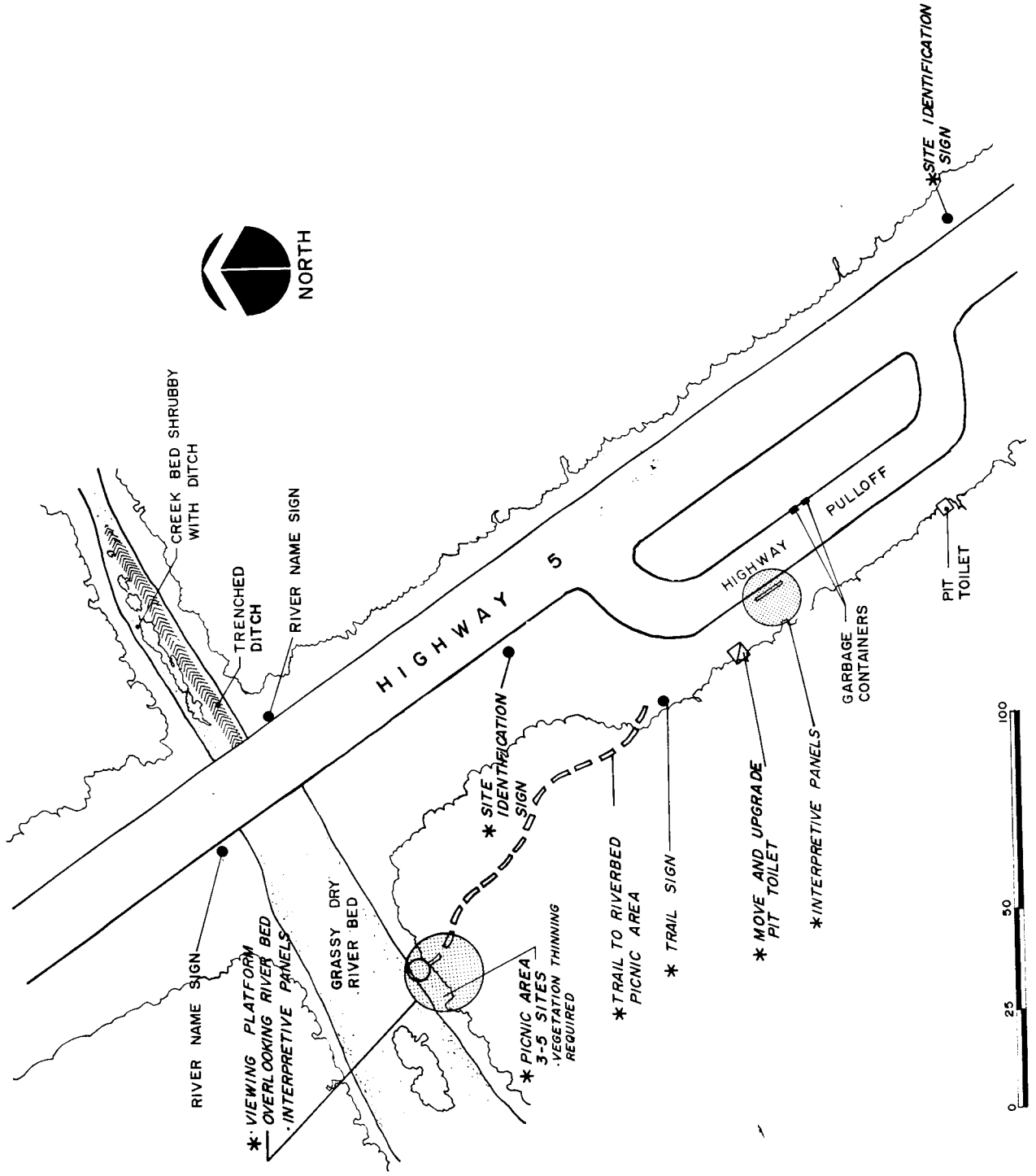
I.B.

File

1315-118-00-01

Site

17



## **WETLAND VIEWPOINT**

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**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #18 - Wetland Viewpoint  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 200.6

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- No existing development at this site.
- Site is a high point of elevation where Highway 5 travels through the southern end of the large wetland.
- Located where the Highway cut through and over a large sand dune which is now partially open facing the Highway cut.
- Wetland exemplifies whooping crane habitat, although closest recorded nest was approximately 1 kilometre off the road.
- Excellent views of the wetland habitat from dune ridge with open water ponds in the foreground.
- Features an example of the whooping crane habitat and as an opportunity to get a good view of the vast wetland. Also an opportunity to see a variety of waterfowl in natural habitat from a vantage point.
- Opportunity to interpret the dune ecosystems in the park.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Develop this dune on the north side as a small pull-off and view point with a major interpretive display.
- Design and develop site to reinforce a stable landform. Walkways should be surfaced and provide tight circulation control.
- Develop a viewing area on the top of the dune towards the east end where there is a wider ridge top. Locate a number of interpretive panels here and possible a viewing telescope.
- Locate 3 or 4 benches in the area of the viewing platform.
- Locate a second viewing area out on the wetland linked by a boardwalk to the sand dune.
- Each viewing platform would support 4 interpretive panels.

- Interpretation on one platform would concentrate on the whooping crane story and the other would deal more generally with endangered species and the importance of northern wetlands as breeding and feeding areas for waterfowl.
- Locate the parking area off the road at the east end of the dune.
- An area orientation module will be located at the parking area for this site showing features along the Wood Buffalo Trail.
- Develop a low impact walking trail across the Highway along the sand dune for approximately 1 kilometre.

Many of the tourist travelling to the National Park are aware of and looking for whooping cranes. As this site is close to active whooping crane nesting areas, certainly as close as visitors planning to stay close to their vehicles will get, the interpretive potential in this site lies in the story of the recovery of endangered species as well as an opportunity to watch an active wetland.

An interesting variation on the host theme is possible here - as so many wildlife biologists have been involved in the whooping crane recovery program and the study of northern wetlands, it would be possible to present interpretive material here in the form of a biologist's field notebook, recording impressions, local stories and lore as well as scientific and personal observations (just as long as the biologist had good sketching skills or was a dab hand with a camera).

These panels should underline how incredibly productive these areas are, how far waterfowl migrate to reach these areas and how essential wetlands in the NWT are to the survival of waterfowl in North America. Mention should obviously be made of how threats to winter habitat in the south are the other side of this story.

The small picnic area on this site is sufficient as it is only 15 kms. north of Little Buffalo Falls Territorial Park and will be used as a short term sitting area. Picnicking would be better encouraged at Little Buffalo Falls; the Wetland site should not be signed as a picnic stop but as an interpretive viewpoint.

**PRIORITY:** High - the whooping crane story is a major attraction of the park and should be interpreted in situ along the Highway.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$121,720</b>
<b>Site Work: Reclamation:</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>
<b>Development:</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Site Furnishings:</b>	<b>6 benches: \$3,960</b>
	<b>Outhouse: \$5,500</b>
	<b>2 garbage enclosures: \$440</b>
	<b>400 m boardwalking: \$24,000</b>
	<b>2 viewing platforms: \$20,000</b>
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	<b>4 @ \$280 ea. plus installation</b>
<b>Trail Head Maps:</b>	<b>2 @ \$2,100 each</b>
<b>Interpretive Panels:</b>	<b>8 @ \$2,500 ea.</b>
<b>Area Orientation Map:</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>1 km Trail Brushing:</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>Entrance Sign:</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>

- SIGNAGE NEEDED:**
- 1 km. access signs and turn-off signs both directions.
  - Site name.
  - Directional trail signage.
  - Interpretive panels.
  - Area Orientation Map

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

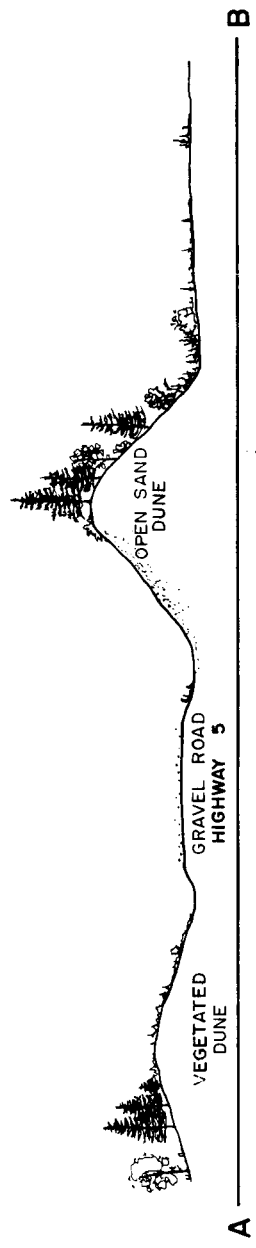
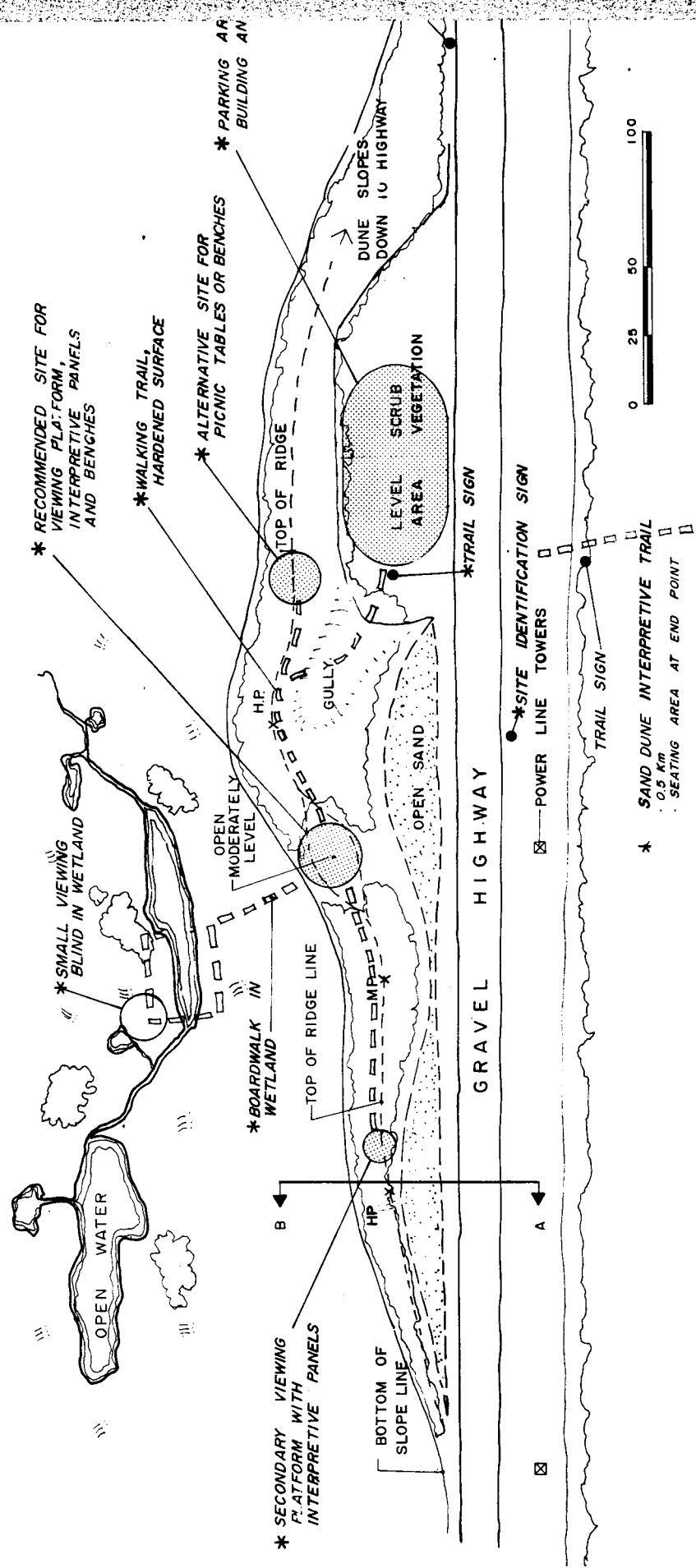
Level B. This site will require monitoring for vegetative damage and prevention. Reclamation should be done on the highway cut to slow the movement and erosion of the north side of the highway.

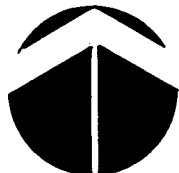


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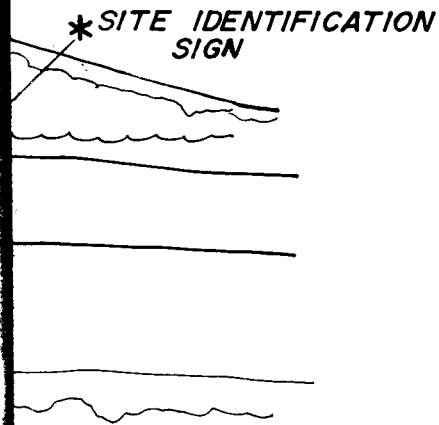






NORTH

AREA WITH TOILET  
AND GARBAGE CONTAINER



Notes / Legend

Key

- HP - High points of ridge
- MP - Mid point (elevation)
- ((( Wetland

1. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.
2. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*
3. Care should be taken to insure and reinforce dune stability.
4. Walkway should discourage pedestrian movement off of developed system.



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Project

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

Wetland Viewpoint  
Existing Conditions &  
Proposed Upgrading

Date

Design

Drawn

September, 1989

A.C.

I.B.

File

Site

1315-118-00-01

18

## **LITTLE BUFFALO FALLS**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #19 - Little Buffalo Falls Territorial Park  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 214.6

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Recently upgraded territorial park with campground and day use area.
- 6 camping sites, 4 picnic sites, camp kitchen, pit toilets, interpretive trails.
- Hand boat launch proposed but not developed.
- Feature is the falls on the river. Trail to view falls stops at fence. Cannot see falls well from viewing area.
- Vegetation in the area is primarily pine regrowth with pockets of old stand mixed vegetation.
- New interpretive trail system; signage needs clarification in spots and vegetation is growing through the boardwalk.
- Park does not appear well used.
- No potable water available.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Rework the design of the viewing area for the falls so that there are good views of it. Possible location for a viewing area is downstream area where a platform might sit halfway down the slope.
- Undertake final polishing of the interpretive trail system:
  - a) The main orientation sign needs turning 180 degrees or a new map.
  - b) Directional signage on the trails should be clearer with a second orientation map.
  - c) The vegetation growing up through the boardwalks needs to be eliminated.
  - d) Interpretive signs needed to explain the changes in trail base; initial perception is that it is incomplete.
- Develop hand boat launch for access to the river.
- Locate a water tank for seasonally available potable water in the park.

This is a pretty site but is not yet heavily used. Minor improvements need to be made particularly giving viewing access to the Falls as this is the site attraction. Should a viewing platform be installed, 2 interpretive panels should explain why the falls are there and some of the history of the area, traditional and modern uses of the river. Here, too, is another opportunity to use the host theme if good material can be found among local residents relating to the falls or the river.

Better signage on the highway and information distribution to the travelling public could result in better use of this site.

The boat launch should be completed as this is a pleasant river to canoe. There is some local interest in 4-5 day trips down this river to its mouth. A boat launch in the park would encourage launching in the park versus the side of the highway.

Potable water will contribute to the viability of the site as a destination or overnight site.

### **Interpretive Evaluation Opportunity**

As formal interpretation in the region is new, this site presents a chance to study the effectiveness of trail media in a park setting in the north.

We recommend that a simple summative evaluation program be set up to evaluate the effectiveness of the interpretive development at Little Buffalo Falls Park or, budget allowing, a more informative formative evaluation program be implemented where mock-ups of several different designs of media and different media types could be installed and studied for their relative effectiveness in this situation.

**PRIORITY:** High - Frustration factor is high when trying to view the Falls. Other work is minor but will improve appearance and enjoyment of the site.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

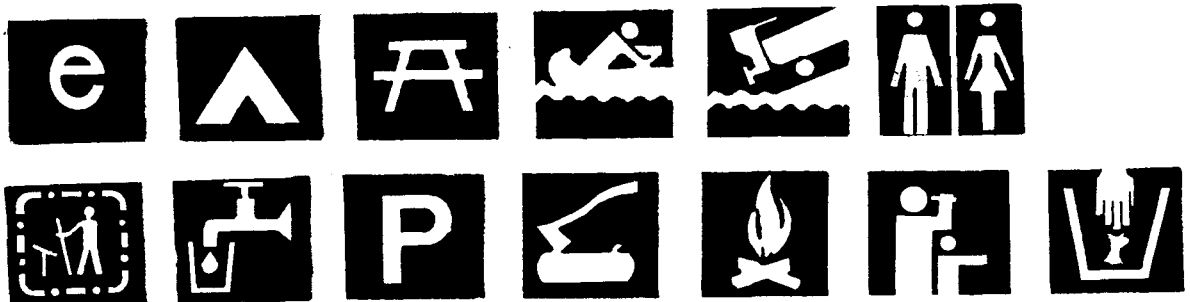
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$63,920</b>
<b>Planning and Engineering:</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
<b>Site Work:</b>	<b>\$40,000 (boat launch and viewing platform)</b>
<b>Water tank:</b>	<b>\$6,600</b>
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	<b>4 @ \$280 ea. plus installation</b>
<b>Trail Head Map:</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>Interpretive Panels at Falls:</b>	<b>2 @ \$2,500 each</b>
<b>Area Orientation Map:</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Trail Signs:</b>	<b>3 @ \$400 ea.</b>

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km. access signs and turn-off signs both directions.
- Reworked trail head map.
- Directional signs on trail.
- Interpretive signs on trail surfacing.
- Area Orientation Map

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level B. Interpretive trail needs more frequent maintenance to keep the boardwalks free of fireweed.



1-521

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Notes / Legend

1. Information used is courtesy of Ross B. Borowicka, Landscape Architects, Park Master Plan, 1986.
2. Scale is approximated and is not to be used for construction purposes.
3. Trail head needs reworking for easier understanding. Sign should be redone to correspond to it's location.
4. Trails require better maintenance on boardwalk areas cutting undergrowth.
5. Increased signage is needed to interpret ground plane changes.
6. More thinning is required to provide views when trails are alongside river.
7. Improved viewing to falls is critical. Location of fence now is frustrating for park users.
8. Boat launch should be completed and signed.
9. All proposed work is noted with an asterisk \*



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Yellowknife, NWT

Project

Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

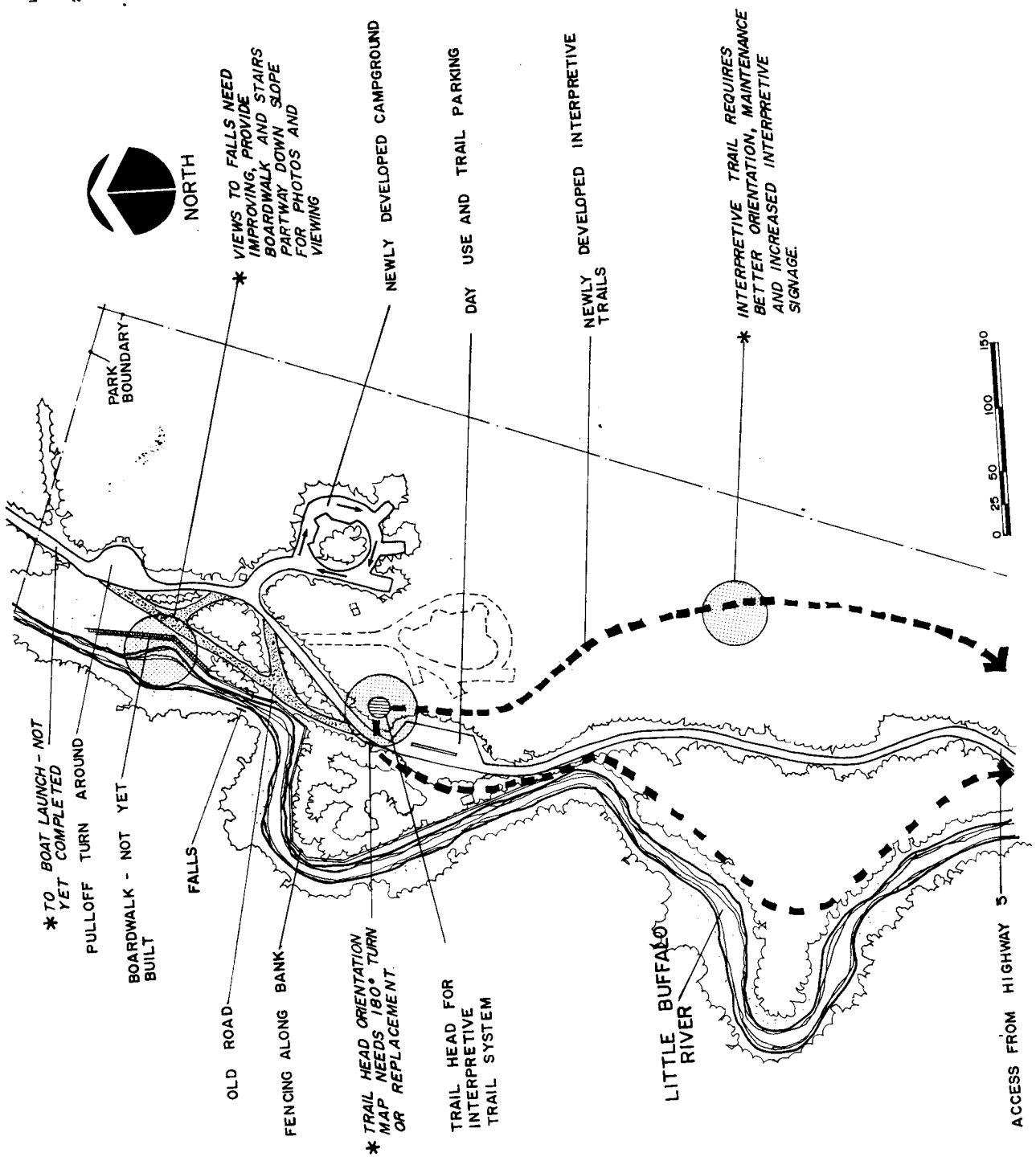
Little Buffalo Falls Park  
Development Area Plan  
& Proposed Upgrading

Drawn  
I.B.

Date  
September, 1989

Site  
1315-118-00-01

File  
1315-118-00-01



## **SALT PLAINS OVERVIEW**

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**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #20 - Salt Plains Overview  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 230.2  
13 km. south of Highway 5

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- National Parks site with viewing platform, interpretive panels, picnic tables, stoves, toilets and trail down onto the salt plains.
- Site used to be the old local ski hill.
- Excellent views onto the salt plains. Site is well used.
- Road to the site is very narrow and rough.
- Trail to the bottom of the hill is steep and rough; many people cut across the switchbacks. Trail ends at bottom of the hill.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Continue developing this site as a viewing area, picnic site and access point onto the salt plains.
- Explore the possibility of a short 1 km looped interpretive trail down onto and along the salt plains and coming back up and along the ridge line with views.
- Improvements to the access road should be made. Improvements to the Parson's road would increase the use of this site.
- Erect more substantial directional signage at the turn-off to this site.

This site is one of the notable attractions of Wood Buffalo National Park and people should be encouraged and directed to visit this site. Something to do when they reach the site is important as they have made an effort to get there; a short interpretive walk with the option to wander informally on the plains is appropriate. The visitor experience should be extended by at least half an hour, making it seem more worth the time taken to drive off the highway to reach the site. Looping a trail back along the ridge top would allow for an easy walk along the edge.

The Canadian Parks Service has developed a viewing platform. Interpretation now consists of two new panels mounted on the platform, one dealing with the salt itself and the other dealing with its historic use. The messages introduced on the viewing platform could be extended further along the trail - in particular, the historic uses of the salt which give us the opportunity to continue the host program and to introduce local residents who can recount the experiences of their grandparents with the salt trade in a more personal way - these experiences can be linked to specific sites and views along the walking trail.

Wood Buffalo National Park Management Plan (1983) recommends upgrading of Salt Plains Overview road from Highway 5. (Parks Canada, 1983, Socio-Economic Statement on the Recommended Management Plan, pg.48.)

**PRIORITY:** medium - this site is operational now. The viewing platform and interpretive panels are 1989 additions. Improvements should continue to be made.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	\$38,580
Trail clearing:	500 m @ \$ 5 m = \$ 2,500
Trail construction:	500 m @ \$ 59 m = \$29,500
Signs:	Highway: 6 @ \$280 ea. plus installation 6 Interpretive Trail Signs @ \$400 ea. Area Orientation Map: \$ 2,500

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- Improved access and directional signage.
- Interpretive trail signs.
- Area Orientation Map.



**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Site is being administered and operated by Wood Buffalo National Park.



1-521

6 - 62

# SALT MOUNTAIN

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**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #21 - Salt Mountain  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 234

## EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Highway 5 travels over a minor elevation known locally as Salt Mountain.
- Approaching from the north/west, glimpses of the salt plains are available from the Highway.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Develop a small roadside pull-off on the east side of the mountain with an interpretive panel, views of the salt plains and an area orientation map for the Fort Smith area and Wood Buffalo Trail. (Existing borrow pit and access to it may offer a good site and approach.)
- Selectively thin for better views onto the salt plains from the Highway as one descends the east side of the mountain.

Views of the salt plains from the Highway will increase the attractiveness of the Highway itself and an area orientation map at this location will facilitate tourists making decisions on day trips, overnight stops etc. Will help promote the area as a **regional** destination.

The viewpoint gives a view of the salt deposits on the salt plain in the distance and for the benefit of visitors who have not yet visited the Salt Plains Overview, an interpretive panel identifying the view and encapsulating the major messages related to the salt plains will encourage them to take the drive down to the Overview.

Note that this pull-off is not considered a heavy truck pull-off because of the downgrade at the site entrance.

**PRIORITY:** High - Improved knowledge of choices and options critical.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>\$37,340</b>
<b>Site Work:</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Site Furnishings:</b>	<b>Garbage Enclosure: \$ 220</b>
	<b>Fencing/Wheelstops: \$1,000</b>
<b>Highway Signs:</b>	<b>4 @ \$280 ea. plus installation</b>
<b>Interpretive Panel:</b>	<b>\$ 2,500</b>
<b>Area Orientation Map:</b>	<b>\$ 2,500</b>

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km. access signs.
- Regional orientation sign.
- Area orientation map.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level C. Clear regrowth as needed; anticipate every 4-8 years.



# THEBACHA CAMPGROUND

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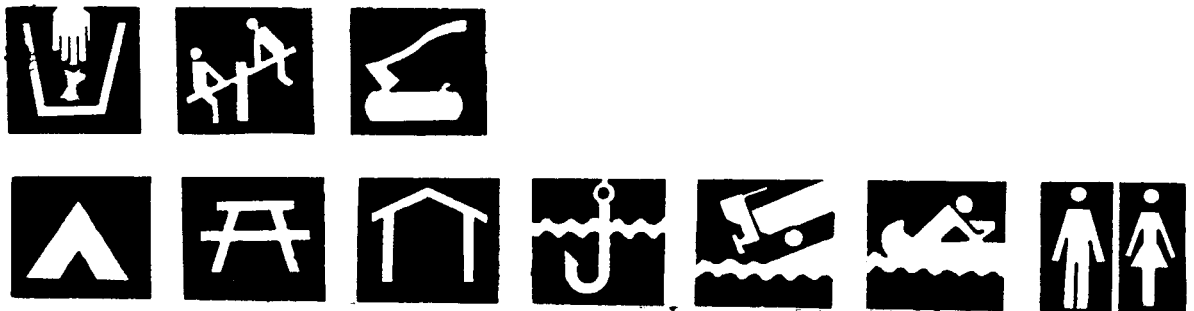
**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #22 - Thebacha Campground (Salt River Campground)  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 244.1  
10 km. north of the highway, east side of Salt River.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Existing campground privately developed and run by the Metis Association.
- Located beside a small settlement area at the confluence of the Salt River and the Slave River.
- Random camping with 6 tables and stoves, 3 pit toilets, garbage containers, 3 swing sets, horseshoe pits, screened picnic shelter, gravel boat launch.
- Site is well maintained. Doesn't appear to be heavily used.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- This site needs a higher profile to receive heavier use. Promote fishing resource and boating opportunities.
- Reference to location of potable water (if any) should be signed onsite.



## BELL ROCK

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #23 - Bell Rock  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 252.7  
1 km north of the Highway

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:

- Abandoned collection of buildings located on the floodplain of the Slave River from the 1940's.
- Old Northern Transportation community.
- Name comes from large solitary rock formation on the river's edge.
- Approximately 20 building shells, old boat launch and water tank remaining.
- One residence located on terrace above the community is occupied.
- Good road access to both the river and the area with the buildings.
- Vegetation is old field with good scattering of raspberry.
- Local metis have proposed this site for a lodge development.
- Site is located within Town limits of Fort Smith, under control of local metis association.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:

- Develop as a major interpretive day-use area with interpretive displays, trails and picnicking. A separate study should be initiated for this site.
- Possibility of a commercial facility at this site should be explored. If the integrity of the site and history can be maintained this may be a good location for such a venture.
- Initial or temporary site improvements should include 2 viewing areas with interpretive panels, a .5 km walk from the boat launch partway to the buildings and a seasonal boat dock at the downriver launch site. Bell Rock offers the potential to be a full day tourist attraction. The location is scenic, easily accessible and has high passive recreation potential that should be developed; walking, fishing, picnicking, photography, berry-picking, site exploration. The

story of this community is similar in many ways to any temporary town and the contrasting but parallel stories of Pine Point and Bell Rock could both be partially told onsite.

Many agencies have an interest in the interpretive development of Bell Rock. Ideas range from the very simple all the way up to a full blown reconstruction of the US Army camp of the Second World War. It may be many years before plans can be made for any extensive development of the site and the stabilization, restoration or reconstruction of any buildings - in the meantime, the site calls out for some form of recognition which in turn will assist in creating an awareness of the importance of preserving and interpreting the site in some more substantial way.

Our recommendation is to create two small on-site exhibits, one near the present boat launch which is accessible by road from the highway and the other about 500 m distant from the first closer to the historic buildings but not actually at the building site. We don't want to necessarily encourage exploration of those old structures. Four interpretive panels will be needed at each on-site exhibit. The panels located at the platform near the boat launch will deal with the transportation history of the area and the Slave River in this century. The panels in sight of the buildings will deal with development at Bell Rock which supported the transportation industry and the CANOL project during the war.

Both of these subjects offer opportunities to employ the host theme, however, if the theme has been used extensively in the other sites along the highway we have suggested, visitors may find the approach a bit tedious by now - if this is the case, plenty of fresh approaches to a story as appealing as this can be found.

The period to be interpreted here is fairly precise: from the 1920's through to the shifting of the transportation entrepot to Hay River due to the construction of the railway in 1964 - we would like to deal with the period from 1850 to 1920 at Fort Resolution some day, the period up to 1850 at Slave River Rapids and the period after 1964 at Hay River.

These time lines aren't so strict as to prevent the telling of important stories from any era at any site, this is just a convenient way to divide up the bulk of the subject matter in parts visitors can digest more easily.

Developing these 2 on-site exhibits and a short walk will encourage informal use of this site while long range planning is in progress.

Consideration of a commercial venture onsite may be appropriate given its location near town, on the River and not in the National Park.

**PRIORITY:** High - Initial Improvements  
High - Long Range Planning

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

**Total Estimated Cost:** Planning: \$40,000  
Initial development: \$50,100

Planning and Feasibility Study: \$40,000  
Site Work: 2 viewing areas: \$8,000  
500 m Trail Brushing: \$ 2,500  
Small Boat Dock: \$12,000  
Garbage Enclosures: 3 @ \$660 ea.  
Highway Signs: 4 @ \$280 ea. plus installation  
Interpretive Panels: 8 @ \$2,500 ea.  
Entrance Sign: \$ 2,000  
Area Orientation Map: \$2,500

**SIGNAGE NEEDED:**

- 1 km access and turn-off signs.
- Entrance sign.
- Interpretive Panels.
- Area Orientation Map.

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

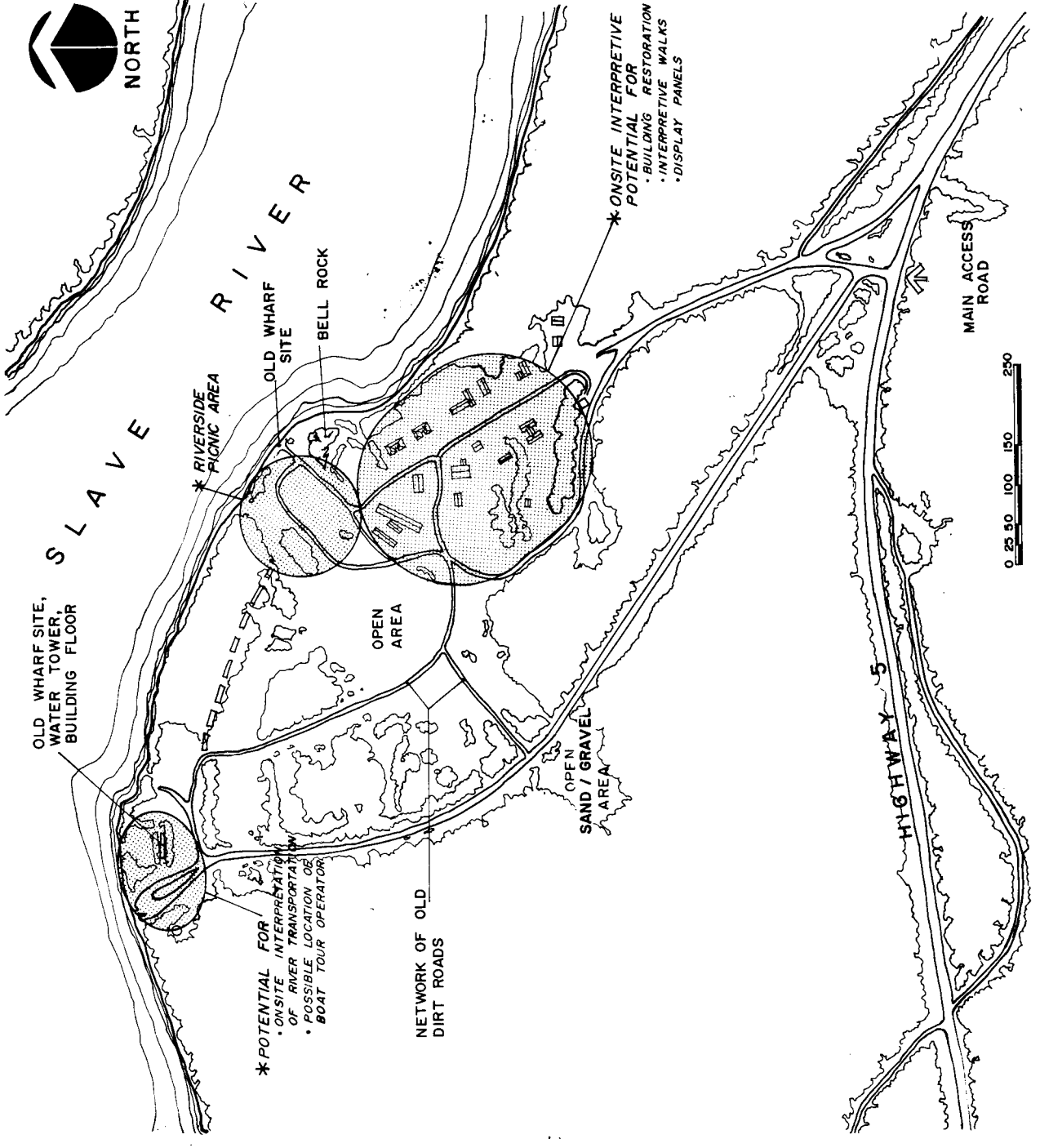
Level B



1-521

6 - 69





**Notes / Legend**

- Information from air photos courtesy of the Department of Energy Mines and Resources, Canada, 1986.
- All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk. \*
- Bell Rock offers a potential for day use recreation and interpretive development.
- Commercial fixed roof accommodation may be feasible but further study is required.
- Campground development is discouraged here due to supply in the area.



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Project

**Northwest Territories  
Highway 2, 5 & 6  
Site Developments and  
Interpretive Plan**

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

**Bell Rock - Existing  
Conditions & Potential  
Opportunities**

Date Design Drawn

September, 1989 I.B.

File Site

1315-118-00-01

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH MUNICIPAL CAMPGROUND**

---

**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #24 - Queen Elizabeth Municipal Campground Fort Smith  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 261.3  
1.5 km. from Highway

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Existing Territorial campground and day-use area on west upper river bank of the Slave River.
- 20 campsites, 4 picnic sites, large picnic shelter, stage, shower/washhouse building, dumping station and pit toilets.
- Seasonal staff residence onsite.
- Washhouse building and residence are within a fenced compound.
- Day-use area is approximately 40 metres from bluff overlooking the river.
- Excellent distance views of river and east shore from bluff.
- Campground is located back in the woods.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Minor redesign of this site is needed to improve the attraction, atmosphere and security of the site.
- Relocate picnic sites closer to the river bank for the views.
- Erect interpretive panels at the viewpoints overlooking the river.
- Thin the vegetation in the camping area for more sunlight at ground level.
- Close those campsites on the left side of the road that are backwards to circulation pattern.
- Outhouses located in the camping loop should be relocated for greater visibility and easier accessibility.
- Relocate staff residence nearer to point of control on the entrance road and upgrade for more comfort.
- Consider providing a year-round residence for greater off-season security in the park.
- Remove compound fence.

- Improve internal park signage.
- Centrally locate an area orientation map that indicates the day-trip possibilities in the area and the location of the Visitor Information Centre in Town.
- Develop a secondary trail head in the day use area with a trail map showing linkages to the river and into Town to the main Trail Head. Trail should be designed to accommodate walking, bicycling, and skiing and should travel along the river as much as possible.
- Two interpretive panels along the trail will give general information about the area and its history, the river and its destination. The host theme could be used here to good effect.
- Improve and sign access for pedestrians down to the river.

An overall upgrading plan, sign and trail plan with a list of priorities should be developed for this site.

This campground is well located and easily accessible from Town. The "security compound" with the residence is an eyesore and detracts from the visual appeal and character of the site. This is not an appropriate location for a security area.

The river is virtually ignored and should be played up. Relocating the picnicking area and developing a secondary trail head is recommended. Signed trail access along and down to the river is needed. This site should be an obvious start and finish for a number of trail options.

This site has the location, service and amenity to be a much more heavily used site. Increased use is usually a deterrent to vandalism.

**PRIORITY:** Medium - High - Site is operational at present.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

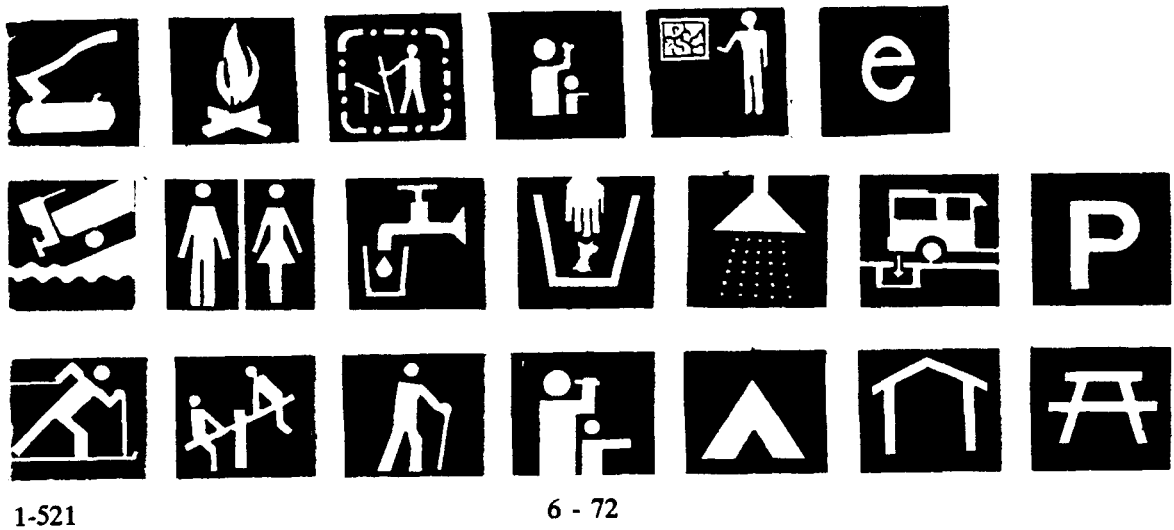
<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	Planning \$10,000 Site Development \$150,000 Signage \$11,280
<b>Upgrading Plan:</b>	\$10,000
<b>Site Development:</b>	Estimated ~ \$150,000 but should be based on plan
<b>Signs:</b>	
Highway Signs:	6 @ \$280 ea. plus installation
Trail Head Map:	\$ 2,100
Interpretive Panels (2):	\$ 5,000
Area Orientation Map:	\$ 2,500

- SIGNAGE NEEDED:**
- Improved directional signage.
  - Secondary trail head map.
  - Internal park signage
  - Regional orientation sign
  - Area Orientation Map

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

Level A

Continued use of seasonal staff onsite is recommended. Upgrading to year-round residence is recommended.



# **FORT SMITH AND SLAVE RIVER RAPIDS**

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**HIGHWAY:** 5  
**SITE:** #25 - Slave River Rapids,  
Community of Fort Smith  
**MILEAGE:** Kilometre 265

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS & FEATURES:**

- Four sets of rapids in a 26 km. stretch with Fort Smith the downstream location.
- Collectively called the Slave River Rapids, attractions are spectacular scenery, pelican colonies and historical significance.
- Rafting trips are offered down the edges of the rapids.
- Existing trail network on east shore links Fort Smith with Fitzgerald using the highway, old tracks and informal trails.
- Most trails are not yet signed and use of system is predominantly local.
- An annual Pelican Rapids Mountain Bike Race is held between the two communities as is the cross country ski day during the Winter fair.
- Old portage trail at Mountain Rapids is still visible.
- Alberta Fisheries and Wildlife has erected an interpretive sign on the pelicans at Mountain Rapids.
- Rapids of the Drowned are the only set located in NWT.
- Entrances into Fort Smith are somewhat confusing.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE:**

- Locate a small pull-off with a regional orientation map on the south side of Highway 5 approximately .7 - 1.0 km before the first access road to Fort Smith. This site should also contain an area access map with more detail of the Fort Smith area.
- Develop an agreement with the province of Alberta that would see cooperative planning and development of a long distance trail system between Fort Smith and Fitzgerald primarily along the river.

- A trail plan should be done for this 26 km stretch, with linkages into the Town of Fort Smith and further to the Queen Elizabeth campground.
- Develop a series of 4 audio interpretive nodes along the main route including 1 each at Fort Smith and Fitzgerald.
- Locate 4 interpretive panels, one at each audio station.
- Develop the main trail head in Fort Smith with parking, trail system orientation and related services. Locate so that part of the route passes some of the history sites of the community.
- Develop secondary trail heads at Queen Elizabeth Campground and Fitzgerald.
- Design the trail system to offer a number of both short and long term hiking options as well as multiple use by bicyclist, skiers and snowmobiles. The 2 audio stations between the communities should have a short trail to them from roadside vehicle pulloffs.
- Locate the main picnic site approximately half way, near Mountain Rapids.
- Locate a hike-in campground approximately halfway along the trail system.
- A number of commercial options should be explored; for example: hiking upriver and returning on the river.

A small pulloff on the highway before entering Fort Smith will function as a stop to orient the travelling public regionally as has been done in Hay River and Fort Resolution as well as providing an area map with the Visitor Information Centres located, campgrounds and area attractions.

Four sets of un-navigable rapids located the communities of Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith where they are now. Their location and history offer tremendous interpretive and recreational opportunity. These rapids represent one of the most dramatic attractions of this area.

The site of many deaths and much suffering, these rapids let us bring visitors to the brink of the escarpment overlooking the route of early voyageurs to stand on ground trodden by the brigade men who portaged these heights. The story is of native use of the river, the Northwest company voyageurs in canoes, the Hudson's Bay Company brigades in York boats and the others who followed them until the modern era. As boats grew larger and got heavier, the portages grew longer.

The trail between Fort Smith and Fitzgerald would locate four on-site exhibits at important viewpoints along the trail. One on-site exhibit would be located at each end of the trail, one will overlook the canoe route on the east side of the river and the other will be located on a portage trail across one of the headlands (see map). Each on-site exhibit will deal with a different era; early native, voyageur, brigade, early mechanized portage road and will focus on how men got around or through the rapids and why.

In addition to interpretive panels at these on-site exhibits, we suggest installing solar-powered audio stations (listening stations) which will use new electronic message storage and playback technology in place of the less reliable tape systems of the past. The audio stations will use the host theme, presenting three-minute messages including music and sound effects to represent people speaking about a period of history they represent. These stations can be made highly vandal-resistant, rendering the audio station itself less vulnerable than the interpretive panels they accompany.

Due to the location of the rapids spanning both Alberta and NWT, intergovernmental jurisdiction and responsibilities for development and operation of a trail system must be worked through.

**PRIORITY:** medium - the extension of Highway 5 south to Fitzgerald will become a major part of this recreational area. The trail system could be developed as phase 1.

**PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:**

<b>Total Estimated Cost:</b>	Planning and design study, Slave Rapids Trail     \$25,000 Pulloff                   \$52,440
Site Development Trail: Pulloff:	Estimated \$250,000 but should be based on plan
Site Work:	\$25,000
Garbage Containers:	\$ 440
Fencing/Wheelstops:	\$ 1,000

**Regional Orientation Map:**

Base:	\$ 5,000
Initial Signs:	\$ 7,000
Final Sign:	\$11,000
Area Orientation Map:	\$ 2,500

- SIGNAGE NEEDED:**
- Orientation signage
  - Directional signage
  - Interpretive panels

**OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:**

This system would require intergovernmental cooperation both in development and in a joint use maintenance agreement. Has the potential to provide year round employment and commercial spin-offs.





Notes / Legend

1. Scale is approximate, and is not to be used for design or construction purposes.
2. All proposed changes are noted with an asterisk \*
3. Base plan adapted from "A Walking Guide to Historic Trails" (Great Circle Innovations)
4. Multi-use trail should be developed linking existing network of trails together.
  - System should be well signed with orientation at each main node.
  - Hierarchy of main trail and secondary loops and side trips needs to be established.
5. Hike-in camping area should be located in the vicinity of Mountain Rapids on the river



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Project

# Northwest Territories Highway 2, 5 & 6 Site Developments and Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

## Fort Smith - Existing Conditions & Proposed Upgrading

Date

September, 1989 A.C.

Design

I.B.

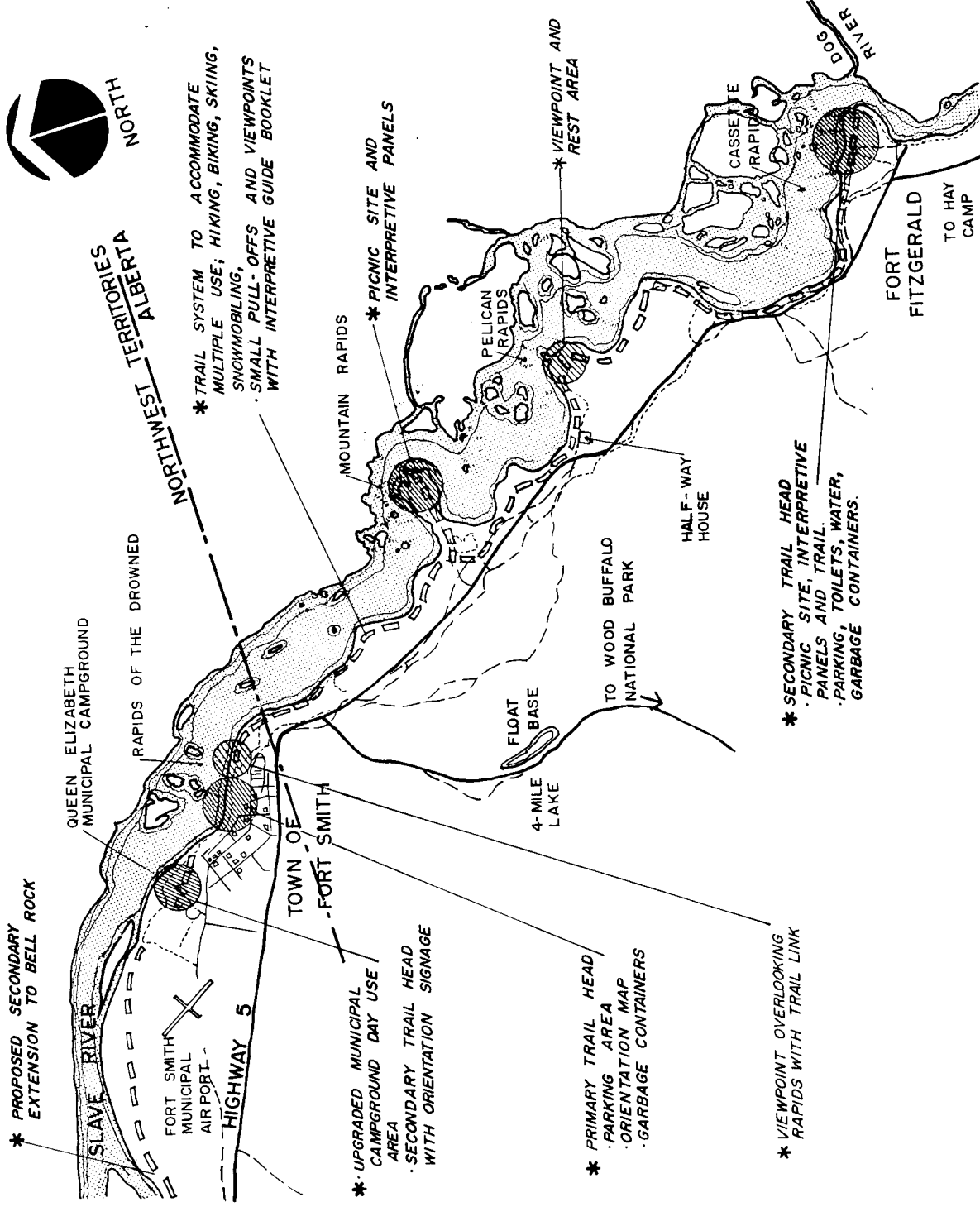
Drawn

File

1315-118-00-01

Site

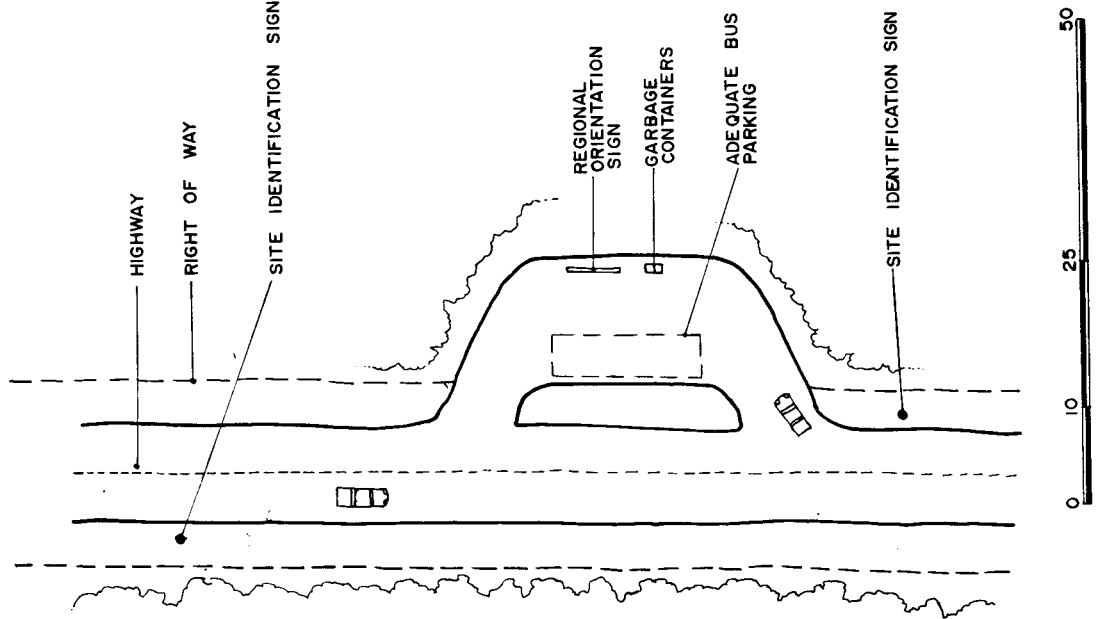
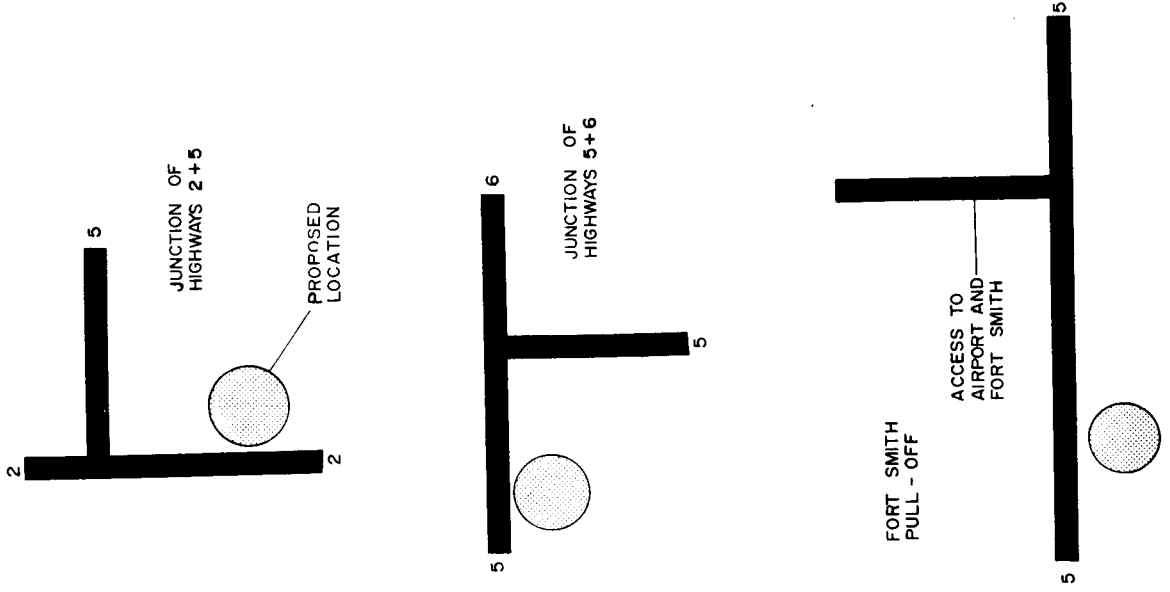
25



**Notes / Legend**

1. Scale is approximate and is not to be used for construction purposes.

2. Scale refers to concept plan



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Project

# Northwest Territories Highway 2, 5 & 6 Site Developments and Interpretive Plan

Economic Development & Tourism

Title

## Roadside Pull-Off and Regional Orientation Maps

Date Design Drawn

September, 1989

File Sheet

1315-118-00-01

## **7.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND COSTING**

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### **7.1 COSTING**

Preliminary Costing has been done for the previously identified sites based on the following information and estimates. These should be used for rough budgeting only.

Specific site budgets and tenders should be let on the basis of detail design and/or more site-specific costing.

#### **A) SITE WORK**

- Site work estimates are rough as they will vary based on local price of fill, quantity needed, cost of transportation and heavy equipment requirements.
- Site work estimates are based roughly on a knowledge of costs in Alberta multiplied by 1.5.
- Pull-off costs are estimated in light of the \$100,000 cost for site development of a 100 m highway/heavy truck pull-off. Additional pull-offs recommended in this report are not anticipated to duplicate the high standards for heavy vehicles nor the overall size and are costed accordingly.

#### **B) TRAIL DEVELOPMENT**

- Based on DPW costing from Little Buffalo Falls Park:
- Boardwalk:
- ~\$53/m; based on LBFP @ 2 x 4 and 4 x 4 = \$43 m installed  
Price increase of 25% to cover better scarifying of ground needed
- Trail Clearing: LBFP brushing: \$4.30/m
- Log edge/gravel: LBFP \$59/m

### **C) SITE FURNISHINGS**

1987 prices + 10%

- Benches: in concrete; \$660 ea. installed
- Concrete Picnic Table: \$660 ea.
- Campstove @ concrete base: \$440 ea.
- Double seat Outhouse: \$5,500 ea.
- 3 can garbage enclosure: \$220 ea.
- Firewood corral: \$550 ea.

### **D) SERVICES**

- Water Tank: \$6,600 ea.

### **E) HIGHWAY SIGNS**

(Symbols, arrows, letters.)

- Costs from Department of Highways, Fort Smith Region.
- Assumed that costs for blue and white colouring will not differ from existing brown and white as this will be a standard issue.
- .81 sq.m. board or less, fabrication only; = \$130.
- Post average height is 10 m = \$150.
- Installation is driving time and 1 hour @ \$26/hr.
- Prices listed at various sites do not include installation of these signs as Department usually puts up this signage. It may be part of the site work fee if site construction has been contracted out locally.

### **F) INTERNAL PARK SIGNS**

- Quotes from Economic Development and Tourism
- Entrance Sign with Logs ~ \$2,000
- Internal park directional/information sign, 3 post type; \$1,000.

## **G) INTERPRETATION PANELS/AREA ORIENTATION MAP**

- Includes all interpretation signs; eg. panels at pull-offs or picnic areas as well as signs along interpretive trails.
- Area orientation maps are located at all sites that do not have regional orientation maps and are the same size panel as the interpretation panels.
- Unlike Regional Orientation Maps (H) these are set up as a one time cost installed when the four nearest sites are also completed and open.
- New future developments should include the upgrading of the 4 signs that are outdated because of the additional development.

### **Panels**

- NB - Price is based on minimum order of 10 panels
- Based on 1.0 sq.m
- Research, design, camera art: \$1,000
- Fabrication and installation: \$1,000
- Sign base design: \$500
- Site Work: \$2,000. - \$6,000. Sign installation lumped in with overall site work estimate if other work is being done.

### **Trail Signs**

Pricing is difficult as costs will vary dependent on number of similar signs.

- Based on cost of trail signs at Little Buffalo Falls plus 30% for increased size and graphics:
- Little Buffalo Falls: 25 cm x 40 cm x 18 signs = \$5,000 installed.
- \$300 each x 30% = ~\$400 each
- Trail Head map: based on LBFP: \$1,500. Add \$600 for design and camera-ready art work.

## H) REGIONAL ORIENTATION MAPS

These maps portray the entire Highway System from 60th parallel to Fort Resolution and Fort Smith. They show the location of all developments and attractions. During the development period, temporary signs will be used so that signage will not be deferred until the end of the development period. Inexpensive signs will be erected and replaced during a 3 to 5 year period with only the final sign being durable porcelain enamel.

### Site work

- Includes grading, fill material, site structures fencing, culverts etc., and landscaping.
- Site plans and working drawings not included as requirements vary from site to site.
- New site: \$25,000.
- Existing site: \$5,000.

### Sign Board

- Initial signs will be inexpensive temporary silkscreened boards that change every year or two years as development occurs. Final sign should be porcelain enamel. Based on approx. 8 sq.m.
- The sign base system should be permanent from the beginning.
- Design and install base: \$5,000.
- Temporary sign boards:
  - Research, design, camera art: \$1,000 one time
  - Fabrication and installation: \$1,500 (4x)
- Final Sign Board:
  - Design and camera art: \$3,000
  - Fabrication and installation: \$8,000

## **7.2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

There are three parts to this strategy.

The first section is phasing and outlines on a project by project basis the yearly phasing that is envisioned. This has been done to clarify the number of years each project will take and to insure that there are sufficient field seasons etc.

The second section is a development chart which summarizes the projects, the year they start and the recommended priority of development.

The third section explains why projects have been grouped together on the development chart. Projects have been grouped where we feel multiple site contracts can be let. These have been designed for financial savings in type and level of design, community input, travel and construction location wherever possible. These, of course, are only suggestions. It should be noted however, that the interpretive signage costing is based on minimum packages of approximately 10 signs. This will necessitate the further combination of at least the interpretive components of a number of projects.

### **PHASING**

#### **Regional Orientation Map Program**

- Refers to **ONLY** the orientation maps located at these 7 sites. Site construction is listed separately.

Enterprise

Junction of Highways 2 & 5

Junction to Highways 5 & 6

Fort Smith Pull-off

Queen Elizabeth Campground Orientation Sign

Fort Resolution Townsite Orientation Sign

Hay River Tourist Information Site

## Project Phasing - Five Year Project

(Refer to 7.1 Costing for the rationale and explanation of the length of this program.)

Year 1: Sign base design.

Research, design and camera ready art for initial, temporary orientation maps.

Year 2: Fabrication and installation of temporary maps in existing sites.

Year 3: Fabrication and installation of remaining temporary maps in newly constructed sites.

Year 4: Replacement of temporary maps annually or every two years, updating developments and sites in the region until construction is completed.

Design and camera ready art for final sign boards.

Year 5: Fabrication and installation of final sign boards.

### **Enterprise**

Year 1: Construction and upgrading at this site will proceed as directed in the Highway 1 Corridor Recreation Study. If developments do not include such a sign, the following is recommended:

Negotiation for sign location at service centre.

Design for upgrading of parking and sign area.

Research, design and fabrication of temporary sign board.

Design sign base.

Year 2: Site construction and upgrading.

Installation of temporary sign board.

### **Paradise Gardens Pull-off**

## Project Phasing - Three Years

Year 1: Clarification of land jurisdiction.

Planning and design of site.

Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive displays.



- Year 2: Site Development.  
Fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 3: Installation of interpretive display.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

### Hay River Golf Course

#### Project Phasing - Two Years

- Year 1: Clarification of site responsibility; joint use or operational agreements.  
Design of site upgrading.  
Design and fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 2: Construction.  
Installation of interpretive panels.

### Vale Island

- Year 1: Clarification of jurisdictional problems relating to road closure and site expansion.  
Initiation of construction for day-use upgrading.  
Planning for campground upgrading.
- Year 2: Completion of day-use upgrading.  
Detail design for campground.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive panels.  
(Brochure should be done simultaneously)
- Year 3: Initiation of construction for campground upgrading.  
Fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 4: Installation of interpretive panels.  
Final construction and landscaping.

## **Junction of Highways 2 & 5**

### **Project Phasing - Three Years**

- Year 1:** Clarification of land jurisdiction.  
Planning and design of site.  
Research, design and camera ready art for temporary regional orientation map.
- Year 2:** Site Development.  
Fabrication of temporary panel.
- Year 3:** Installation of orientation map.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

## **Polar Lake Campground**

### **Project Phasing - Two Years**

- Year 1:** Clarification of site responsibility; joint use or operational agreements.  
Design of site upgrading.  
Design and fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 2:** Construction and upgrading of site.  
Installation of interpretive panels.

## **Buffalo River Crossing**

### **Project Phasing - Two Years**

- Year 1:** Design of site upgrading.  
Design and fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 2:** Construction of trail and site upgrading.  
Installation of interpretive panels.

### **Paulette Bay Pull-off**

#### **Project Phasing - Two Years**

- Year 1:** Design of site upgrading.  
Design and fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 2:** Construction of trail and site upgrading.  
Installation of interpretive panels.

### **Pine Point Day Use Area**

#### **Project Phasing - Three Year Project**

- Year 1:** Clarification of land jurisdiction.  
Planning and design of site.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive displays.
- Year 2:** Site Development.  
Fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 3:** Installation of interpretive display.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

### **Fort Resolution Townsite**

#### **Project Phasing - Three Year Project**

- Year 1:** Selection of site.  
Planning and design of site.  
Research, design and camera ready art for displays.
- Year 2:** Site Development.  
Fabrication of panels.
- Year 3:** Installation of display.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

### **Mission Island**

- Year 1: Clarification of land jurisdiction and joint use or operating agreements.  
Road realignment planning and engineering.  
Design for sites.
- Year 2: Road construction.  
Island road upgrading.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive displays and panels.
- Year 3: Campground site development.  
Fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 4: Final construction and landscaping.  
Installation of interpretive panels.

### **Junction of Highways 5 & 6**

#### **Project Phasing - Three Years**

- Year 1: Clarification of land jurisdiction.  
Planning and design of site.  
Research, design and camera ready art for temporary regional orientation map.
- Year 2: Site Development.  
Fabrication of temporary panel.
- Year 3: Installation of orientation map.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

### **Sandy Lake Park**

#### **Project Phasing - Three Year Project**

- Year 1: Clarification of land jurisdiction.  
Determination of scale for campground development.  
Planning and design of site.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive displays.

## **Wetland Viewpoint**

### **Project Phasing - Four Year Project**

- Year 1:** Planning and design of site.  
Dune stabilization plans.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive panels/displays.
- Year 2:** Detail design where needed.  
Impact Assessment.
- Year 3:** Site Construction.  
Fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 4:** Installation of interpretive display.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

## **Little Buffalo Falls**

### **Project Phasing - Two Years**

- Year 1:** Design of falls viewpoint and boat launch area.  
Upgrading of interpretive trail.  
Additional interpretive panels and signs designed and installed.
- Year 2:** Construction of falls viewpoint and installation of boat launch.  
Installation of falls interpretive panels.

## **Salt Plains Overview**

### **Project Phasing - Three Year Project**

- Year 1:** Rezoning part of salt plains for trail development.  
Planning and design of trail.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive trail signs.  
Impact assessment.

- Year 2: Site Development.  
Fabrication and installation of interpretive signs.
- Year 3: Construction polishing and landscaping.

### **Salt Mountain Pull-off**

#### **Project Phasing - Two Years**

- Year 1: Design of site.  
Design and fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 2: Construction of site.  
Installation of interpretive panels.

### **Bell Rock**

- Year 1: Clarification of jurisdiction.  
Long range planning of site as part of Town Tourism Plan.  
Short term development: site planning and research, design and camera ready art for interpretive panels.
- Year 2: Site planning and concept design for long range developments.  
Construction of viewing areas.  
Fabrication and installation of interpretive panels at viewing areas.
- Year 3: Detailed design for long range development.
- Year 4: Construction of ultimate site development.

### **Fort Smith Pull-off**

- Year 1: Clarification of land jurisdiction.  
Planning and design of site.  
Research, design and camera ready art for regional orientation map.
- Year 2: Site Development.  
Fabrication of temporary panel.
- Year 3: Installation of temporary orientation map.  
Construction polishing and landscaping.

### **Queen Elizabeth Campground**

- Year 1: Design of Site Upgrading Plan.  
Design and Fabrication of Interpretive Panels.
- Year 2: Site Development.  
Installation of Interpretive Panels.

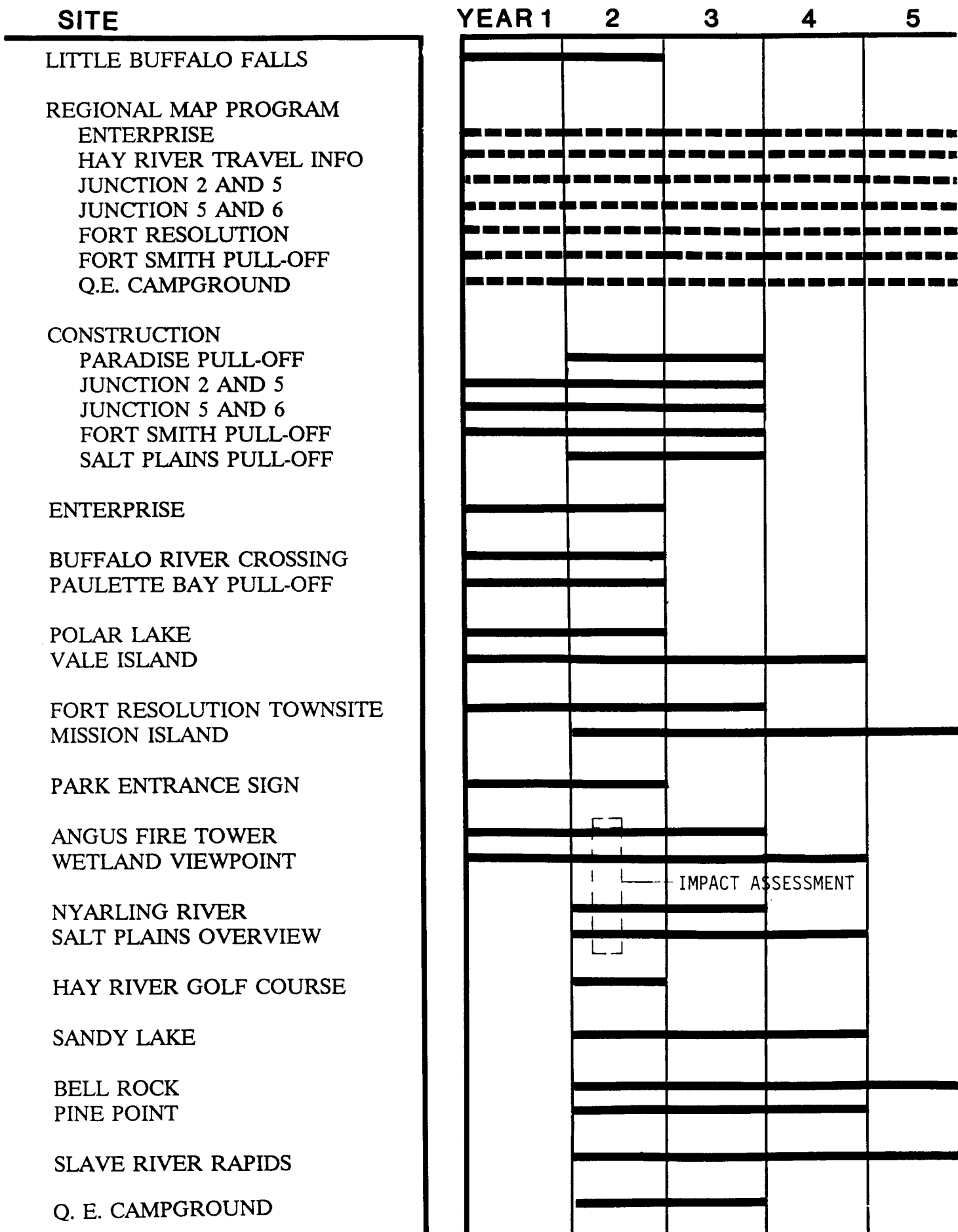
### **Slave River Rapids**

- Year 1: Development of a working agreement for  
Interprovincial/Territorial development.  
Initiate planning and design process.
- Year 2: Trail system planning and design.  
Research, design and camera ready art for interpretive panels.
- Year 3: Trail construction initiated.  
Fabrication of interpretive panels.
- Year 4: Installation of interpretive panels.  
Completion of construction.

# DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY CHART

FIGURE 7.1

Sites are listed in recommended order of development.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT



## **STRATEGY FOR COMBINING PROJECTS**

Work that can be grouped together for contract purposes:

Refer to the Development chart for graphic clarification. The sites are listed below in the same order as they appear on the chart and in recommended order of priority.

### **Little Buffalo Falls**

- Should be an independent project as it is a final polishing and should be completed immediately.

### **Regional Orientation Map Program**

- Research, design, fabrication and installation of the sign boards and bases for the following seven communities; Enterprise, Hay River Tourist Information, Junction of Highways 2 & 5, Fort Resolution townsite, Junction of Highways 5 & 6, Fort Smith Pull-off, Queen Elizabeth Municipal Campground.

**Junction of Highways 2 & 5**

**Junction of Highways 5 & 6**

**Salt Mountain Pull-off**

**Fort Smith Pull-off**

**Paradise Gardens Pull-off**

- All five sites are new developments and will need significant road and heavy construction work.
- All sites are similar in size and function.

## **Enterprise**

- Should be done as part of the Highway 1 upgrading. If not, can be let as a small independent contract for construction. Design will have been done under the regional sign program.

## **Buffalo River Crossing**

### **Paulette Bay Pull-off**

- Both sites need a level of polish rather than complete site development.
- Both sites have one or two interpretive panels.
- Both sites can be done without significant detail design.

## **Vale Island**

### **Polar Lake**

- Both are multiple use sites, catering to both locals and tourists.
- Sites are close enough together that they should compliment each other.
- Both sites will deal directly with the community of Hay River and meetings should be minimized through work at both sites jointly.

## **Fort Resolution Townsite**

### **Mission Island**

- Community will work better coordinated through one consultant even though time span of projects is different and projects start a year apart.
- Best strategy may be to hire someone for the first project - the townsite and if all is progressing after a year, they continue with Mission island project.

### **Park Entrance Sign**

- Design should be done independently as it must meet all the Canadian Park Service sign standards. Installation should be coordinated with other projects in the area.

### **Angus Fire Tower Day Use Area**

#### **Wetland Viewpoint**

- Both require low level aerial photography for base plans, a field season work and detail design in some areas.
- Both contain a major interpretation component.
- Both will require an impact assessment.
  
- Note: Sandy Lake aerial photography should be flown at the same time.

### **Nyarling River Crossing**

#### **Salt Plains Overview**

- These could be included with the other Wood Buffalo National Park developments as all sites will conduct impact assessments the same year.

### **High River Golf Course**

- This should be a separate project because of site ownership. Work should be a cooperative effort with Golf Club Association.

### **Sandy Lake**

- Planning and design of this site could be an independent contract but construction should be coordinated with that being done at Angus Fire Tower for economic reasons of moving equipment and manpower.

**Bell Rock****Pine Point**

- Projects may be handled independently but should be driven by interpretive planning and potential.
- Stories should be coordinated in areas of overlap - eg. abandoned, boom/bust communities.

**Slave River Rapids**

- Should be handled independently because of Interprovincial/Territorial status.
- Interpretation should be coordinated with the Bell Rock work.

**Queen Elizabeth Campground**

- Upgrading should wait on results of the Town of Fort Smith Tourism Plan to include any additional signage requirements, trail linkages etc.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FURTHER TO THIS REPORT**

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The following recommendations are made in light of the response and comments received from the communities, Wood Buffalo National Park and Economic Development and Tourism.

- From the lack of existing information on Corridor users, it is our recommendation that base line information on highway users is needed in this region and that a licence plate survey be undertaken in the summer of 1990, north of Enterprise and east of the Junction of 2 & 5 to determine who travels and how long they stay in the area.
- In conjunction with the above, the community of Fort Resolution has indicated an interest in collecting statistics on who drives into their community, what services they are seeking, length and reason of visit, etc.

It is their suggestion that they man a small booth in conjunction with the information kiosk to collect this information. We recommend this project be undertaken in 1990 as well.

- We strongly recommend that at the very minimum, the Regional Orientation Map Program be initiated in 1990 as all three communities have voiced a strong desire to see a product.
- The community of Fort Resolution has indicated an interest in forming a chapter of the Big River Tourism Association and participating regionally. This should be followed up as needed.
- It is our recommendation that in the initial discussions between Wood Buffalo National Park and GNWT that co-development of an operations and maintenance agreement also be struck as part of the development agreements.

- The suggestion has been made to consider the production of a second regional cassette for children if the first one seems to be an appealing product. We recommend the idea be reviewed in conjunction with the regional cassette evaluation as we think it has merit.
- Two suggestions from the community of Fort Smith public meeting:
  - 1) That 'teaser' signs be spaced along the highways to pique the travellers interest of thing to come.

We would suggest that hinting about the next attraction be done at previous stops and that sites build on each other as well as 'teasing' in the road log and on the cassette. With improved orientation and directional signage, we feel that there is a need to limit additional signs so that the 'wilderness adventuring' flavour still comes through in uncluttered roadways as this is an important character of the region and of all the NWT. We would recommend this style of marketing be used very selectively, if at all.

- 2) That the idea of travelling slowly be communicated to visitors so that they will have an opportunity to see and appreciate things along the Highway while they drive.

We think this is a very valid reinforcement of the idea that the region is the destination experience and have made similar recommendations in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

- It is our recommendation that all four sites that require environmental screening in the National Park be coordinated as a unit for this stage of their development.

- Wood Buffalo National Park has recommended and requested that the following people be contacted as appropriate:  
John Aldag will be the primary contact for all further design work within Wood Buffalo National Park. He has specific information relating to Angus Fire Tower site and Salt Plains Overview.  
Bart Hartop, General Works Manager will be the primary contact on design requirements for signs in the Park.