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***Liard-mackenzie Corridor And Backcountry
Master Plan, An Innovative Approach To
Regional Tourism Development
Date of Report: 1986
Author: Marshal Macklin Monaghan
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11-28-5



Marshall Macklin Monaghan Western Limited

Consulting Engineers Surveyors Planners

10532-110 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 3C5
(403)423-6820

CS

File: 45-84301

December 1, 1986

Mr. Ted Grant
President
Big River Travel Association
Box 185,
Hay River, **N.W. T.**
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PRODUCT
DEVELOPMENT

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Dear Mr. Grant:

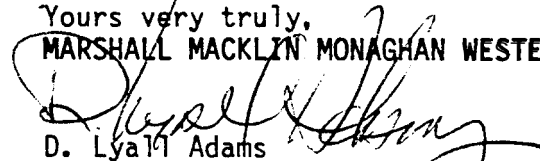
RE: **Liard** - Mackenzie Corridor and **Backcountry** Master Plan

We take pleasure in submitting this report outlining opportunities for the development of a comprehensive strategy and associated tourism projects along the **Liard** - Mackenzie Highway corridor and **backcountry** areas. This report represents one of three sets of reports completed for the Association. Previously, we submitted tourism development plans for the communities of Fort Providence - **Kakisa**, Jean Marie River, Fort Simpson, Wrigley, Tungsten, Fort **Liard** - **Nahanni** Butte and Trout Lake. We are currently preparing a final report that will include for example: market sector analysis, comprehensive market plan for Big River Country, and feasibility analysis of selected developments (yet to be identified).

As you are very well aware, any tourism development, requiring a land base, significant capital investment and the establishment of a new market, involves considerable risk and is very time consuming in securing the necessary approvals. Accordingly, the enclosed plan is programed to occur over a considerable length of time. However, we believe that the strategy selected by the Association will meet your long term requirements but in the short term will require considerable capital and management - organization expertise for the plan to obtain the initial momentum to positively impact upon the local and regional economies.

We sincerely regret not **having** completed this **challenging** plan at an earlier date **but** are very **confident** of the results **and recommendations** proposed in expanding the industry in Big River Country.

Yours very truly,
MARSHALL MACKLIN MONAGHAN WESTERN LIMITED


D. Lyall Adams
Manager, Planning Department
Associate Partner

c.c. P. Neugebauer/D. Lapp
J. Sheehan
T. Ward
V. Latour

DLA/law

LIARD - MACKENZIE
CORRIDOR AND BACKCOUNTRY
MASTER PLAN

Prepared for
BIG RIVER TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Prepared by
MARSHALL **MACKLIN** MONAGHAN WESTERN LIMITED
10532 - 110 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
(403) 423-6820

October. 1986

LIARD - MACKENZIE CORRIDOR AND BACKCOUNTRY MASTER PLAN

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CHAPTER ONE: **LIARD** - MACKENZIE TOURISM CHALLENGE

1.1 Introduction

The tourism industry is growing at a phenomenal rate which is providing new economic and employment opportunities for Canadians in their own regions. The focus of this plan is on the tourism development potential in the Big River Travel Association area, located in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories.

Tourism is a relatively new industry to this region, thus has affected few businesses, general employment or the life styles of **local** residents. To date, opportunities have been limited to a few non-residents traveling in the region for short periods of time. Typically, the man-made and natural tourism attractions, facilities and services have remained underdeveloped or "**undiscovered**", and managed and promoted to meet **local** requirements. In general, air charter services, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the regional associations have been the primary exceptions to promoting greater travel to Big River Country and the Territories in recent years. The opening of the **Liard** Highway between Fort Nelson, and Fort Simpson in combination with the increasing popularity of adventure **backcountry** activities and the growth in tourist traffic along the Alaska Highway corridors for automobile and packaged tour traffic, presents immediate and long-term economic development opportunities for the residents of Big River Country. The challenge to resource managers of this region will be to effectively develop international-national attractions and associated services for the **Liard** and Mackenzie Highway corridors and **backcountry** areas to both meet **local** objectives and tourist requirements.

In June of 1984, the Big River Travel Association commissioned the consulting firms of Marshall **Macklin** Monaghan Western Limited in association with Lutra Associates Limited to develop the **Liard** - Mackenzie Highway Regional Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy.

The Liard-Mackenzie Corridor and **Backcountry** Master Plan is one of a series of reports completed in the development of this regional tourism strategy.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of Plan

The formulation of a tourism strategy is undertaken to establish a course of action in terms of broad goals and objectives to direct in an orderly and realistic manner the growth and development of the tourism industry. Essentially, it provides a framework, rationale and guidelines to assist the public (government) and private (local operators) sectors in the establishment of priorities for development, program formulation and marketing of new, or upgraded services and attractions.

The primary purpose of this tourism development plan is to identify and prioritize the primary development opportunities and related initiatives along the **Liard** and Mackenzie highways and remote **backcountry** areas as identified in Drawing No. 1. Through this approach, the plan will provide a mechanism to co-ordinate investment by government and private sectors to generate non-resident tourism while satisfying both their expectations and needs.

The short and long range tourism developments and marketing initiatives recommended in this document are integrated within an overall Big River Country Regional Strategy which includes the nine communities of Kakisa, Fort Providence, Jean Marie River, Wrigley, Fort Simpson, Tungsten, Trout Lake, Fort **Liard**, and **Nahanni** Butte (Drawing No. 1). As shown in this report, it is important that the industry respond to fluctuations in markets, local interests and skills, funds, natural resources, and other outside influences.

Tourism plans have been prepared for the communities in Big River Country (western section) and are included in seven separate **reports**¹. In the establishment of particular interpretive themes, destination areas, marketing approaches, etc. for the highway corridor and **backcountry** areas: the plan recognizes and reflects both the diversity and similarities found in each community, and their specific role in the successful implementation of tourism investment opportunities for the entire corridor and surrounding region.

1.3 Resident Input to Plan

The consulting team worked in the communities meeting residents, operators and owners of local businesses, band council and municipal officials, service clubs and other key people involved or potentially involved in the delivery of tourism services. Although much of the initial attention was directed at the communities themselves, opportunities for investment in new or expanding existing businesses along the corridor and **backcountry** areas were also examined. Initially, meetings were held in the communities to assist individuals and groups to better understand both the positive and negative implications of an expanded tourism industry. A film was prepared in English and **Slavey** on the Big River Country to introduce each community to what tourists expected and the types of employment opportunities that could be generated on a permanent and seasonal basis.

During the planning process, two newsletters were prepared and distributed through various outlets to residents of the communities. These newsletters were designed to highlight ongoing research results to stimulate local interest, while providing direction and recommendations for regional and community - specific tourism development. From these meetings, discussions, market analyses, and

1 The communities include: Fort **Providence-Kakisa**; Jean-Marie River, Fort Simpson, Wrigley, Fort **Liard-Nahanni** Butte, and Trout Lake.
2 Municipal Tourism Development recommendations are outlined in each of the seven community plans.

assessment of the resource base, a **summary** document was prepared and submitted to the Big River Country **Travel** Association. This document highlighted various conclusions with respect to natural resource capability, social attitudes and concerns, as **well** as recommended **goals** and objectives to be pursued in a recommended strategy. The preferred or recommended strategy was selected by the Big River Country Travel Association following a review of four alternative scenarios. Recommendations for the regional highway corridors and communities were prepared for the preferred plan and reviewed with Big River Country and Northwest Territory Economic Development and Tourism officials. The results outlined in this and associated documents represent an ongoing consultant process over a two year period.

CHAPTER TWO: REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGY

2.1 Introduction

The importance of establishing regional tourism plans has become well established in the Northwest Territories. In areas with a wide range of attractions and limited services, it is important to address growth of the industry in a systematic and well organized manner in order to meet both government and commercial objectives. The markets for tourism facilities and services throughout the **Liard** - Mackenzie region have, however, the potential to grow appreciably in the next 5 to 20 year planning horizon, as a result of a growing awareness of Northern Canada as a unique and exciting tourist destination for national and international visitors.

The tourism industry in Big River Country has been characterized by fragmented growth and lack of overall **policy** direction due to competing resource and land use interests, and until recently, isolation of its communities. Consequently, the extent and quality of tourism infrastructure and services developed in the region are presenting some problems during this rapid transition period where communities and businesses are attempting to meet anticipated market requirements.

The Big River Country tourism strategy will provide the short and long term direction necessary for commercial businesses, communities and government, and will significantly improve the position of the industry in the eyes of the public as greater economic benefits are realized at the local **level**. Further, the plan integrates the diverse components of the plan to enhance the ability of the region to attract non-resident visitors.

2.2 **Framework** for Strategy Development

The recommended strategy has attempted to draw together government objectives, policies, local input and resource and market data into a co-ordinated plan that will maximize the "public good" for the region. The development concepts outlined in Chapter 3 are the result of a logical process that has examined competing resource demands, markets and appropriateness to the region. In Chapter 4 a basic schedule for implementation of the plan identified. In this manner, the final approved strategy and component parts **can** be well explained - justified for use by both government, councils and the commercial sector.

Based upon the assessment of the region, it was found that Big River Country requires the development and associated marketing of specialized tourism **attractions-** services representative of northern Canada. Further, the region suffers from a lack of municipal hospitality services required to meet market requirements and generate significant and long term financial and employment impact on the region.

Within this context, local operators have a number of significant constraints to resolve in capturing a larger part of the market. In evaluating new opportunities a number of factors must be considered including: the remote attractions; location from major non-resident and pass-through markets; **small** resident market; lack of national - international profile attractions available to the visitor and capable of establishing a strong profile for the region; extensive gravel highway system; limited investment potential; and a **labour** market that is generally unfamiliar with the tourism industry. A strategy is therefore required that will attract high investment over a significant period of time for the construction and operation of new/expanded attractions and services in order to be competitive in the regional market place (i.e. Yukon, Northern British Columbia).

Four regional strategies were developed to reflect the resources, markets **and** local input. These plans were presented to the Big River Travel Association and GNWT Economic Development and Tourism for their evaluation. A long term strategy for economic development was selected that involved both a major community commitment as well as development of many of the regions outstanding **backcountry** and highway corridor resources by government and the private sector.

2.3 Regional Tourism Development Strategy

The following strategy is a broad statement reflecting government, tourist association, community, commercial and other special interest **goals** and concerns in the study area. It is designed to be significantly broad in scope and flexible in implementation to accommodate unforeseen developments, and be responsive to a wide variety of specialty markets (e.g. Alaska Highway, **backcountry**, etc.) and resource development opportunities.

Based on the various constraints, opportunities, local and regional considerations, the region - wide strategy for tourism development in Big River country is as follows:

To develop the region as an important tourism destination area, two complementary although distinctly different approaches will be initiated to provide a balanced, comprehensive region - wide plan. The initial step **will** involve upgrading - expansion of tourist facilities, attractions, services and training programs to be applied at the community **level** by both government and the commercial sector.

This action **will** encourage growth in the industry (investment, employment) through comprehensive programming of local - regional events and attractions (cultural, sporting, historical, etc.) and stimulate greater day use, short term and extended - stay visitation by residents and non-residents on a year-round basis. Further, it will initiate a much needed growth in community awareness of tourism opportunities, while combined with the establishment of local tourism organizations, with a mandate to plan and implement

tourism **initiati**ens. Through integrated and complementary upgrading, expansion and organization of new events and high profile theme attractions **with** extended **value** added opportunities, the strategy **will** significantly increase expenditures locally of resident, pass-through, and tour bus groups. These actions will allow the communities - highway services and attractions to dramatically increase their capture rate of existing and potential market, thus, achieving a greater economic impact from the committed resident and growing non-resident markets.

The second step in the strategy is designed to increase economic benefits through government and commercial investment in the region's most spectacular natural attractions and **backcountry** - highway corridor related outdoor recreation opportunities. This action will stimulate growth in the traditional **backcountry** markets (e.g. river rafting, big game hunting, hiking, mountaineering, etc.) on both a nodal and corridor basis. The existing market appeal of **Nahanni** National park, the **Liard** - Mackenzie Rivers as well as Dene culture, historic, and scenic resources will be enhanced through complementary theme attractions and services. Further, development of these unique resources through packaged programs, will assist to increase and broaden the regional economy and further generate rapid growth in market identity.

Implementation of the **plan will** require considerable inter-government, commercial, and settlement-band council co-operation to ensure that the necessary infrastructure (e.g. lands, facilities, trails, etc.), co-operative marketing and operating procedures are in place and functioning effectively. Special attention will be required in the long term management of the sports fishery, wildlife, lake, park and wild and scenic river resources. These are the major contributors to the strong non-resident market images to be established for the region.

In summary, an increase in municipally directed tourism as well as utilization of the region's outstanding natural resources for **backcountry** adventure activities will have long term complementary positive impacts upon each other and generate significant economic opportunities for the region.

This policy statement outlines the rationale to guide the future preparation of investment proposals for Big River Country as a whole to ensure growth of a healthy industry. The development recommendations outlined in Drawing No. 2 are intended to guide short and long term tourism development in both the **backcountry** areas, corridors and communities to reduce uncertainty within the commercial and government sectors as to development guidelines and principles to be followed in this region. Finally, the scope and intent of the strategy will provide the necessary framework for determining what tourism markets **should** be pursued, where the main types of tourism activities should occur, and how they should be developed.

2.4 Guidelines, Objectives and Principles

Based upon the objectives of Big River Country, analysis, consultation with private operators, government officials and other industry specialists, the consulting team has prepared the following set of development and market program guidelines. These guidelines outline our general policy concerns for the future direction of the industry.

2.4.1 Development - Market Guidelines

A. Backcountry - Highway Corridor

- 1) Encourage the concentration and development of unique "**once-in-a-lifetime**" **backcountry** attractions, facilities and services that will appeal to the international - national markets.

This action will be primarily directed to the high profile Mackenzie Mountain Sub-region (in association with Nahanni National Park where possible), highway corridor, and at other outstanding lake and river resources to attract on a per diem basis, high expenditure visitors.

¹ Because of the close linkage between the communities, and **backcountry** attraction and the highway corridor, we have included development - marketing objectives for both areas.

The initial and most important action in realizing this objective is to establish a high profile image for Big River Country through the development of international - national destination attractions and opportunities characteristic of this northern region and unlike those found to the same extent in the Yukon and Alaska.

- 2) Facilitate increased growth in the spring to fall tourist traffic by capitalizing on the Alaska Highway traffic and the Alaska - Yukon market images.

In the foreseeable future, it will be important to capture an increasing percentage of the Alaska Highway traffic and tourist traffic to Yellowknife. This action will require increased capital investment in roadside attractions, improved commercial attractions - services in the communities, greater marketing of the region's themes (e.g. **Nahanni**) and tourist information on services, accommodation, highway conditions, etc.

- 3) Establishment of tourist information **centres** in critical locations.

In order to attract visitors to the **Liard** - Mackenzie corridor, visitor service **centres** will be required in locations such as Fort Nelson with appropriate communication services (e.g. audio-visual) and direct telephone links to hotels - motels, outfitters, etc. in the region.

- 4) Establishment of a specialized tourist destination **centre** for **Nahanni** National Park and other **backcountry** attractions in the region.

To capitalize on the high profile of **Nahanni** National Park and Virginia Falls, a comprehensive service **centre** complete with lodge, camping facilities, highway services, commercial attractions, outfitter services, etc. is required to first, draw

traffic off the Alaska Highway and second, to provide the opportunity to increase visitor traffic into isolated areas such as Trout Lake Lodge and finally, provide both the region and corridor with a high profile destination that can be reached by vehicle.

- 5) Orient certain facility developments (e.g. lodge) toward corporate and institutional markets with investment participation in return for a guaranteed use for these facilities by its employee/owners on a "pro-rata" basis.

B. Community

- 1) Stimulate a public understanding of the hospitality industry requirements, benefits and costs at the community level.

An integral part of the development process will be an extensive upgrading of the **community's** hospitality industry skills and a continued education process of awareness development associated with tourist needs and interests.

- 2) Develop quasi-public (settlement/band council) owned and operated attractions and facilities in the communities.

Each community requires certain theme oriented attractions (e.g. Fort Simpson Heritage Riverfront Park) that will draw camera enthusiasts, etc. and generate greater understanding and appeal for the community and region. This public investment should be planned as a catalyst for future commercial investment in the community and region.

- 3) Upgrade the level of community recreation services and organization capability.

It is important that each community develop to the point where they are able to participate in and host regionally / territorially significant sporting / **cultural** events. The

facilities and organizational skill development will have an important long term benefit for the community in meeting the requirements of the tourist market.

- 4) Upgrade events in Fort Simpson, Fort Providence, Fort **Liard** and Hay River.

To date, most of the events are marketed at the local community, however, it is proposed that these cultural - sporting events be better planned, promoted, etc. to encourage greater resident and non-resident travel (e.g. Fort Nelson, B.C., High **Level, Alta.**).

- 5) Upgrade community hospitality services.

To date the community's services are oriented to local, industrial and government interests. Increased capitalization is required to both attract and serve the tourist industry.

The types of potential tourism developments described in Chapter 3 meet the above objectives, are often spectacular in nature and may require considerable time for their planning and development (often linked with associated attractions or services). Essentially, the proposed developments are in three forms: first, a combination of themed **backcountry** lodges and outfitting services (e.g. river rafting, mountaineering, **etc**); second, theme community facilities services and spectator events; and last, highway oriented attractions and associated visitor reception **centres** and services. In all cases, it is essential for effective market development to occur that the attractions -facilities be located at or as near as possible to the most spectacular resources or within the major population **centres** in order to serve the special interests of the tourist, and effectively serve the remote facilities -operators.

CHAPTER THREE: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Introduction

To meet future market and development opportunities, the **Liard** - Mackenzie Region must alter its traditional approach to tourism industry development. Government agencies, the private sector, native organizations, and service groups need to develop quality attractions - services and effective marketing programs which have the capacity to create a competitive image for the region as a "last frontier". In the areas away from the highway corridor, emphasis needs to be on the creation of seasonal national-international quality destination features. For example, further development of the **Nahanni** image which currently exists. These attractions should capitalize upon their wilderness resources that will provide local employment and have high market appeal. Along the highway corridor, there is a critical requirement to develop and increase the variety of attractions in order to increase its appeal (e.g., learn and participate through interpretive programming) as scenic travel corridors.

Although some initiatives have been taken to develop the **backcountry** and highway corridors, it will take a considerable amount of time to accomplish this task and will require strong leadership from both the commercial and government sectors. Co-operation rather than confrontation is extremely important to this region's tourism development because of the limited market size and diversity, close linkages between attractions and services, and limited market awareness in order to compete with the more well established Yukon, Northern British Columbia and Alaska tourism industries.

Clearly, the **Liard** - Mackenzie corridor and **backcountry** areas have a number of important wilderness strengths upon which it should build a strategy. These include:

- * White-water canoeing rivers;
- * Presence of international big game hunting;
- * **Nahanni** National Park attractions;
- * Wilderness scenic and wildlife attractions;
- * Historical - cultural attributes of the area;
- * Strategic location on highway route to Yellowknife;
- * Frontier spirit and image associated with Canada's north;
- * Unique cultural handicrafts; and
- * International mountaineering opportunities.

The region also has a number of weaknesses to overcome which include:

- * Limited focus or market identity of tourism opportunities to be an extended stay tourism destination area;
- * Geographical distance from specialty markets (time/cost);
- * Limited summer season;
- * Poor or limited auto touring accommodation services and information;
- * Remoteness of Alaska Highway to attract auto and group tour traffic;
- * Underutilization of outfitters, lodgeowners and aircraft charter services;
- * Gravel highway with few **noteable** cultural or natural attractions: propensity of residents is to leave region for holidays; and
- * Limited work force and financially committed **private** sector to develop and operate **infrastructure**.

The recommendations outlined in the following chapters attempt to build upon the **inherent** and **unique** strengths of the natural resource base and communities, **while** remedying weaknesses when compared with Intervening attractions. The attractions and marketing initiatives provide for a strong and {interconnected approach to the establishment of a competitive image and desirable **activities** for the **Liard-Mackenzie** region, while capitalizing on the lure of the frontier Northwest Territories-wilderness image.

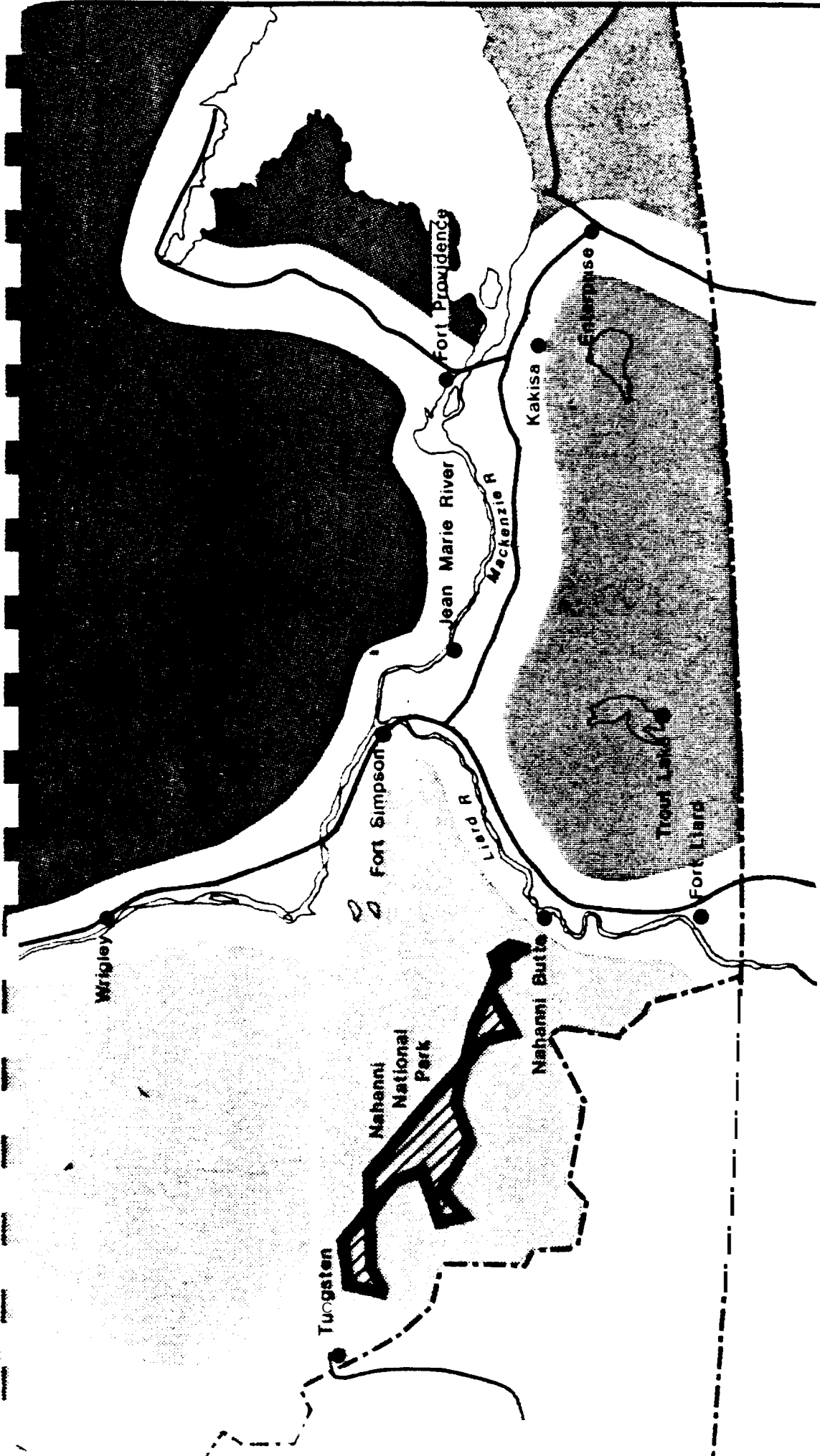
3.2 Liard - Mackenzie Highway Subregion

3.2.1 Description of Subregion

The **Liard - Mackenzie Highway Corridor** provides two gateways into the Northwest Territories and **linkages** to several communities and tourism resources in the **region**. In the east, the highway enters Big River Country from Alberta, 84 km south of Enterprise and stretches 730 km to the most western gateway at the British Columbia border (Fort Nelson - Alaska Highway) south of Fort **Liard**. In addition to this main travel corridor, there are two branches of the highway; one which extends north across the Mackenzie River to Fort Providence, Rae and **Yellowknife**; and a second, which extends 290 km north from the junction of the **Liard - Mackenzie Highways** to Fort Simpson and Wrigley (currently not open to summer traffic). A winter road winds northward along the Mackenzie from Wrigley to Fort Norman and Norman Wells completing the **highway** system in the western section of Big River Country.

Throughout these highway corridors, the landscape varies in only a subtle manner in terms of **topography** (**excepting the** area from **Nahanni Butte** to Fort **Liard** and near Wrigley) and vegetation patterns with only a limited number of accessible natural and cultural attractions. The visitor, **while** traveling the corridor (direction is **generally** not significant), is confronted with extended distances of relatively homogeneous stands of white spruce and aspen with black spruce in low - **lying** areas all typical of western Canada's boreal forest. Only where the **highway** is located close to an ancient **glacial** lake terrace of the Fort **Simpson Land Region** or transverses a contemporary river system (**e.g.** Trout River, **Blackstone Creek**) is the **traveller** likely to notice any dramatic **change** in the landscape.

The **Liard** valley and southern limits of the **Nahanni Range** represent some of the most interesting visual **landscapes** in the route (most **noteable changes**), especially for those visitors **travelling** from east



LIA D-MACKENZIE REGIONAL TOUR SM STRATEGY

BIG RIVER TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

0 50 100 150 km

Marshall Macklin Mueggenhan
Western Limited
Lulre Associates Ltd

- Liard Mackenzie Highway Corridor Subregion
- Franklin Mackenzie Mountain Subregion
- Trout Lake Mackenzie Subregion
- Horn Mackenzie Subregion
- Mackenzie Subregion

to west. In contrast, the tunnel effect generated by the boreal forest in **travelling** the corridor is in most instances the visual **image** which is most dominant and the perception of the route left with most travelers.

As a result of these conditions, increased attention is required in the development of interpretive **programs**¹ to **highlight** and draw attention to these subtle landscape changes and special features (**e.g.** glacial lake features, burned over forest landscape, mountain peaks, waterfalls, distant ridges - rivers, etc.). In contrast to **highway** corridors in British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska where the surrounding landscape is often dominated by strong visual features recognizable to the travelers, greater effort is required **along** the **Liard** - Mackenzie to generate equal interest, understanding and appreciation. Without this **type** of corridor enhancement, the quality of the experience for the tourist will be significantly diminished.

Furthermore, there are few cultural features for interpretation, since highways are located away from the historic river transportation routes. The key elements are the **small** yet interesting communities. With exceptions, the rich and exciting history of these communities is left undiscovered or at best to the imagination of the **traveller**.

For the majority of visitors, this 730 km stretch of paved and gravel highway that comprises the **Liard** - Mackenzie corridor will provide the first and some of the most important images of the Territories and Big River Country. Therefore, the route through its themed natural attractions, facilities and services must have a strong impact in **welcoming** and **informing** the visitor to this southern region of the Territories,

¹ The highway interpretive guide, Rivers to Roads is an excellent example of the type of written material **required** to generate increased interest in the natural and cultural landscapes which otherwise would not occur in traveling the corridor.

Consequently, the strategy for this corridor will be to extensively program the most significant natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources along or near the highway to attract visitors, and increase both travel time and visitor enjoyment. At selected locations (e.g., scenic view points, interpretive facilities, picnic areas, campgrounds, walking and **hiking** trails), specific attractions will be established to encourage travelers to **stop**, experience, **learn**, and enjoy the different cultural histories of Dene communities such as **Kakisa** or natural features such as Lady Evelyn, Whittaker and Coral Falls. In addition, information and orientation centres are proposed at Enterprise and Fort Nelson, B.C. (Alaska Highway) to introduce visitors to the communities and their associated tourist services, and to the numerous attractions and points of interest **along** the route. These types of tourism initiatives are **planned** to: 1) **provide** the basis for marketing the corridor; 2) to extend the stay of travelers **along** the highway; 3) increase the visitors **enjoyment** in traveling in the Territories; and 4) provide additional opportunities for visitors to increase their per capita expenditure. The program will also have the complementary impact of **promoting** the services and attractions of nearby communities.

3.2.2 Development Opportunities

The following is a summary of the development opportunities recommended for the corridor. These recommendations will provide the highway-oriented tourist markets with services and attractions that reflect the specific natural, historical, cultural and recreational assets of this section of Big River Country: while providing a vivid introduction to the Northwest Territories. The **primary** development opportunities are:

- 1) Upgrade campsites and develop interpretive programs at Louise and Alexandra Falls to generate a **strong visual impact** of these features and the Hay River gorge for the "first-time" Northwest Territories visitor.
- 2) Expand/enhance visitor services at Enterprise with special emphasis placed on themed attractions **along** Highways 5 and 6.

- 3) Develop a campground, picnic area and interpretive exhibit at Hart Lake.
- 4) Establish a cultural / natural history interpretive **program** at the **Great Slave** Lake Scenic Lookout (i.e. Tower) for group tour bus **traffic**. **Upgrade** picnic area, walkways and interpretive program at McNally Creek.
- 5) **Design** and implement a self-guided interpretive **walking** trail with exhibits at Lady Evelyn Falls. **Re-orient** park to **day** use activities once **Kakisa** Lake campground is operational.
- 6) Develop a campground and day use picnic area at **Kakisa** Lake to provide tourists with direct access to a **good** sport **fishing**, swimming and boating lake.
- 7) Establish interpretive **signage** at the Mackenzie River ferry crossing (south side) **describing** the natural and historical features of interest at this scenic site.
- 8) Establish interpretive facilities at Unnamed Lakes, **Whittaker** Falls and Wallace Creek with the major emphasis placed at **Whittaker** Falls.
- 9) Expand the tourist services at the Liard - Mackenzie Highway Junction (including themed architecture of buildings) to include a privately operated campground.
- 10) Establish interpretive exhibits and a scenic highway viewpoint at the Fort Simpson ferry crossing.
- 11) Construct a campground, day use site and outfitter terminal at the proposed Mackenzie River ferry crossing (road to Wrigley).
- 12) Develop a territorial park along the Mackenzie Highway in the area of River Between Two Mountains and **Willowlake** River with access to the Mackenzie River.
- 13) Establish a highway pull-off with interpretive **signage** at key location(s) **along** the Wrigley and Mackenzie sections of the corridor concerning the Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

- 14) Develop a riverside picnic site with interpretive exhibits describing the natural - human history and events of significance associated with the lower reaches of the **Liard** River.
- 15) **Blackstone - Nahanni Service Centre** shall be established as the **premier** tourist attraction for auto, package, **group** tour and several other specialty market sectors to the **Liard - Mackenzie region**.
- 16) Establish the Sawmill Mountain scenic viewpoint and picnic site north of Fort **Liard**.
- 17) Establish a highway scenic viewpoint **midway** between Fort **Liard** and the **Petitot** River at the British Columbia - Northwest Territories border.
- 18) Develop the **Petitot** River Crossing campground with special interpretive exhibits **welcoming** visitors to Canada north of the 60° parallel.
- 19) In association with the Peace River - Alaska Highway Tourist Association and the Town of Fort Nelson, etc. construct a visitor services **centre** and attraction in Fort Nelson, B.C.
- 20) Establish an ongoing landscape beautification program for the **Liard - Mackenzie** Highway.

3.2.3 Program Description

The following program description sheets describe the recommended development program and actions that are required to implement these facilities. Furthermore, these program descriptions **should** be considered as **guideline** and updated on a **regular** basis (probably every two years) to reflect ongoing development and other factors that may impact on the program.

PROGRAM NAME: ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY HIGHWAY SERVICE **CENTRE** - GATEWAY
TO BIG RIVER COUNTRY

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Infrastructure - Hospitality Services

LOCATION: Enterprise

SEASON: Year Round

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The development of Enterprise as the south-eastern gateway is recommended. The community should include from a tourism perspective highway services (automobile), restaurant facilities to meet tour bus passenger requirements, and fixed - roof accommodation. It is essential that a highway / backcountry tourist information **centre** be established either in a road side park **setting** or developed in conjunction with one of the commercial services. The information **centre** should include signage - exhibits to direct visitors to Wood Buffalo National Park, for example, as well as those to the North. An information that would attract visitors to be photographed with could be located in proximity to the **centre**.

It is important that this cross-roads community provide an attractive and, where possible, a uniquely northern appearance.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare a master development plan for the community.
- 2) Select and arrange for the purchase of a highway oriented site for an information **centre** (may be part of an existing service).
- 3) Select and prepare designs for the interpretive exhibits and other special features.
- 4) Implement improvements (as identified in master plan) to public sector lands and buildings to meet requirements as the south-eastern Northwest Territories / Big River Country highway gateway service centre.
- 5) Provide **guidance** to private sector in upgrading facilities - services (as identified in master plan).

PROGRAM NAME: LOUISE - ALEXANDRA FALLS PARKS

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Louise and Alexandra Falls

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The rehabilitation of **existing** sites, development of interpretive programs, and establishment of improved access to Louise and Alexandra Falls for viewing is recommended. Further analysis is **required to** determine the possibility of **gaining** safe public access to the Hay River at the bottom of the **gorge** for fishing and photography. Special attention in terms of **design**, operations, and maintenance program is needed at these **gateway** attractions to ensure travelers have a positive introduction into the the Northwest Territories and Biq River Country. The facilities - **programs** should be designed to accommodate both **group** tour buses and other tourist traffic.

NOTE: A small amount of visitation may occur **during** winter to observe the falls under these ice **claded** conditions. Special safety precautions should be provided to minimize any hazards related to ice and snow build-up on the walkways and safety fences.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

A. Louise Falls

- 1) Redesign - expand camping opportunities to minimize conflict between campers, day users, pass-through tour buses, and other highway traffic.
- 2) Design day use - scenic viewpoint of **falls** with appropriate natural - human history signage. Establish access route to bottom of gorge for sports fishing, viewing, and photography.
- 3) Implement design program.

B. Alexandra Falls

- 1) In conjunction with the Highways Department, redesign and expand scenic viewpoint and human-natural history interpretive site.
- 2) Initiate interpretive research programs, **design** and construct, exhibits - **signage** to promote further understanding of this natural attraction.
- 3) Encourage establishment of a tourist concession (season) oriented toward the tour bus traffic.

PROGRAM NAME: ESCARPMENT CREEK PICNIC AREA

LOCATION: Escarpment Creek (near Enterprise)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Escarpment Creek is a small and unique natural feature that is currently used in an informal manner for **picnicing**. Because of its natural beauty, limited area, and potential safety hazard from falling: the various use areas require formal planning. In this program, parking lots, trail systems, interpretive **signage**, and picnic areas will be designed to accommodate family automobile / **R.V.** traffic; it is not anticipated that this site will be included in a tour bus attractions program.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Initiate a site development program.
- 2) Commission work for interpretive research programs, design, and construction.
- 3) Undertake detailed design and construction associated with picnic sites, **parking** area, entrance, and self-direct walkways.

PROGRAM NAME: GREAT **SLAVE** LAKE SCENIC **VIEWPOINT** AND INTERPRETIVE CENTRE

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Great Slave Lake Forest Tower

SEASON: Year Round

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The forest tower site on the escarpment above Great Slave Lake is an excellent site to introduce the visitor to the corridor's natural and human history. Through static and active interpretive displays, the site is to be designed to accommodate both group tour bus and other rubber-tired traffic. Walking **trails**, interpretive **signs**, picnic **area**, **parking** site and ongoing university research **would** be the primary components of the site. It is not anticipated that the tower would be used for scenic viewing but this warrants further assessment.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare a master **deve**lopment plan for site.
- 2) Prepare an **interpretive** master plan and exhibit designs.
- 3) Construct landscape components and commission interpretive programming, design and **build** components.

PROGRAM NAME: HEART LAKE CAMPGROUND

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

LOCATION: Heart Lake

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The development of a minor campground at Heart Lake **is** recommended to accommodate group use, pass-through and local traffic. Conveniences should include a designated camping area (individual camp sites need not be provided), group picnic shelter and open space games area, pit toilets, sand beach, boat launch and day use parking area.

In addition to the regional and non-resident group market, this campground will provide the pass-through auto and **R.V.** camping traffic with lake-side accommodation. In the day use-beach area, certain interpretive signage would be provided regarding the natural features of the lake and surrounding area.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare campground development plan.
- 2) Undertake landscape and engineering construction components.

- 3) Research, **design** and construct interpretive exhibits for campground - day use area **emphasizing highway theme.**
- 4) Undertake water quality sampling program for lake.

PROGRAM NAME: **LADY** EVELYN FALLS CAMPGROUND AND INTERPRETIVE
SITE

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Lady Evelyn Falls Park

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The future development of Lady Evelyn Falls Park is recommended as a day use area. The program should include an extensive self-guided interpretive trail above and below the falls with exhibits describing the falls and the nearby community of **Kakisa**. The campground will be removed and replaced with appropriate day use facilities-programs. The interpretive program will be **designed** to provide travelers destined to **Kakisa** Lake as well as pass-through visitors with a chance to view the falls and learn more about the community, **Kakisa** and the Dene people. As one of the outstanding natural features in the **Liard** -Mackenzie Corridor, this site should be a priority in terms of **design** and capital funding.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare a site development plan for the park as a picnic area (**long** term) - interpretive site.
- 2) Commission programing, design and implementation of interpretive programs regarding the falls and the heritage community of **Kakisa**. Design to accommodate tour bus requirements.

- 3) Implement construction plans proposed in park site development plan - program to convert falls into a high use picnic - day use area.

PROGRAM NAME: **KAKISA** LAKE CAMPMOUND AND DAY USE PARK

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

LOCATION: **Kakisa** Lake

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

A lake-side campground and day use beach area is proposed along the west shore of **Kakisa** Lake. The entrance road will be designed to draw traffic south away from the community of **Kakisa**. The campground will be planned to accommodate a range of summer activities **including** sport fishing, beach sports and recreational boating. Opening of the campground will eliminate the need for the existing Lady Evelyn Falls Campground and provide a greater range of activities more suitable to the traveling public as well as regional residents.

Development of this campground should include the following: individual and group camp sites, pit toilets, picnic shelter(s), day use - campground beach, open space area, day use parking area, interpretive exhibits - **signage**, a boat launch and loading area.

It is anticipated that this campground will be very popular to both residents and non-residents due to the limited number of lake-side campgrounds with excellent fishing potential on or adjacent to the highway corridor (including northern Alberta).

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Meet with residents of the community of **Kakisa** regarding issues and concerns about the construction and operation of a **public** campground on **Kakisa** Lake.
- 2) Prepare a site development plan for campground and day use areas including **alignment** for access road.
- 3) Construction roads, shelter, sites and waterfront facilities.
- 4) Implement a promotional program to attract visitors to the **campground.**

PROGRAM NAME: MACKENZIE FERRY CROSSING SCENIC VIEWPOINT AND
INTERPRETIVE EXHIBIT

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Mackenzie Ferry Crossing

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

In proximity to the departure point on the south side of the river would be established a picnic site and natural - historical interpretive exhibits concerning the Mackenzie River. Located at the site would be a parking area (auto, R.V.'s, tour bus), pit toilets, picnic tables and exhibits in the form of pictures and stories regarding the upper Mackenzie. An example of a derelict river boat or boats under repair at this site could be used to form a part of the exhibit.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare a program and site development plan for viewpoint - picnic area - exhibits.
- 2) Undertake research and prepare interpretive story lines for interpretive program.

- 3) Undertake construction program for site (this site will receive considerable use and should be designed to accommodate tour buses).
- 4) Include site in future highway mapping.

PROGRAM NAME: WALLACE CREEK, UNNAMED LAKES AND ASSOCIATED HIGH-
WAY SCENIC SITES

LOCATION: Highway 1 Corridor

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attractions

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Day use attractions to highlight and enhance those natural attractions located in proximity to the highway. This program is to include interpretive sites - lookout towers, self guided walking trails, picnic areas, pit toilets, and sport fishing sites. These sites and associated picnic areas are planned to complement the major highway attractions and enhance the driving time between the major communities. It is anticipated that the family auto traffic will comprise the predominant market although tour bus traffic will use the **selfguided** walks trails when associated with a lookout tower.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Undertake a detailed resource evaluation of each site.
- 2) Prepare site development plans.
- 3) Commission interpretive research programs and designs of exhibits and associated **signage**.

- 4) Initiate phased construction program in association with traffic, operation budgets and **highway** promotion campaigns.
- 5) Prepare written text on sites for use in promotional materials (motoring vehicles).
- 6) Include sites in future highway mapping.

- 3) Initiate, design, and construction of hiking - interpretive **trail** system with appropriate scenic viewpoints with access to bottom of **gorge.**
- 4) Commission research, programming, design, and construction **of** interpretive storylines and exhibits.
- 5) **Designate** a public parking area with connecting trail system for pass-through traffic.
- 6) Designate a location for a summer concession.
- 7) Include in future highway mapping and tourist magazines.

PROGRAM NAME: **LIARD - MACKENZIE JUNCTION TRAVELLER CENTRE**

LOCATION: **Liard** - Mackenzie Highways Junction

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

SEASON: Year Round

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The development of a full service highway auto service **centre** (commercial - tourist traffic) with campground accommodation, food services, and tourist supplies (arts and crafts shop). Facilities at this important and strategic location should be of a high profile and provide an important image for the Territories and this corridor. Buildings, attractions, exhibits, etc., should have a **strong** appeal to the camera enthusiast. The **Nahanni** theme could be introduced to south bound traffic as well as the Mackenzie to north and east bound travelers.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare in co-operation with the Northwest Territories Department of Economic Development and Tourism, a comprehensive development and financial plan for completion of this auto service **centre**.
- 2) Initiate a phased expansion program in accordance with projected commercial - tourist traffic.

- 3) Advertise services **in** appropriate **government** maps, publications and with auto tour companies to encourage increased regional and other non-resident family auto traffic.

Project Number 12

PROGRAM NAME: **LIARD** RIVER FERRY SCENIC VIEWPOINT AND
INTERPRETIVE SITE

LOCATION: **Liard** River Ferry Crossing (East Side)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

At an attractive point overlooking the **Liard** valley and the ferry landing will be established a parking area, picnic site, pit toilets, scenic viewpoint and interpretive signs - exhibits regarding the **Liard**.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare a site development plan for scenic viewpoint.
- 2) Develop storylines for interpretive exhibits - **signage**.
- 3) Initiate detailed design and construction of site.
- 4) Include site in future highway mapping.

PROGRAM NAME: MACKENZIE CROSSING CAMPGROUND-DAY USE SITE AND
OUTFITTER TERMINAL

LOCATION: Mackenzie River Crossing - 80 km north of Fort
Simpson

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Construct a campground and day **use** area overlooking the Mackenzie River near the proposed ferry landing site (south side). The campground will be designed to accommodate some destination travelers, although primarily pass-through **R.V.** and other motoring vehicles. The park will include a boat launch and parking area as well as interpretive exhibits regarding the **Camseil** area. In conjunction with the park will be a section of river front land reserved for river rafting and **backcountry** trail ride operators. The site will act as a staging area for outfitters and private individuals departing into the **backcountry** for extended periods.

The campground will provide an attractive location for sport fishing, camera enthusiasts, and general access to the Mackenzie River. Access to the river is an important component of the highway corridor and should be improved whenever possible. Separation of the campground from the ferry landing site will be important to minimize truck and other traffic noises.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Prepare park development program and site plans including provision of an area for private operators with road and river access.
- 2) Develop day use - campground area on a phased basis according to growing traffic requirements.
- 3) Prepare and implement an interpretive program (**signage**) regarding the natural and human history of the river corridor (**Camsell area**).
- 4) Include campground and outfitter station on future highway maps and other government supported tourist documents.

PROGRAM NAME: CANDIDATE TERRITORIAL PARK AND INTERPRETIVE
SITE

LOCATION: Roadside - north of **Willowlake** River

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Development of-a territorial park for resident and non-resident use based upon the strong natural and cultural - historical resources found in the area. The park would include one or more campgrounds for both **highway** and power boating / canoeing enthusiasts.

A key component of the park could be an interpretive centre that would highlight the **pre-historic** peoples of the Mackenzie, the Dene, the historic fur trade period, and current economic - settlement activities in the corridor. This facility should be manned by experienced interpretive staff and include a food and handicrafts concession.

Canoe and other backcountry outfitters should be encouraged to use the park as a terminus for travel on the **Willowlake**, Mackenzie, Root and other rivers in the region. The park would have a strong focus toward the Mackenzie River.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) The Territorial Government in conjunction with the Dene will be required to determine and agree upon acceptable boundaries for the candidate park.
- 2) Develop a comprehensive master plan for the park including: facilities, services, interpretive programming and tourist concessions including outfitter services.
- 3) Develop and implement site development plans for each park component.
- 4) Promote the planning and development of the park in regional, national and international journals as part of the overall market activities for the park, regional attractions and travel along the corridor.

PROGRAM NAME: MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE INTERPRETIVE SITE

LOCATION: Site yet to be determined on the highway corridor

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Highway interpretive site(s) will be established where the pipeline crosses the highway to develop the story of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. The interpretive signage - exhibit(s) should outline the route of the pipeline and key information associated with its development and operation. A storyline of particular interest to the **local** people could be their involvement in the project.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Select locations for establishment of interpretive sites (**pull-offs along** highway).
- 2) Prepare site development and interpretive storyline regarding pipeline in conjunction with pipeline officials.
- 3) Develop sites and include in future highway mapping.

PROGRAM NAME: RIVERSIDE INTERPRETIVE AND PICNIC SITE

LOCATION: **Liard** Highway Roadside (between **Blackstone** and Highway Junction)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Development of a riverside day use site for **picnicing**, photography, boat launching and hiking is recommended. The site is to include interpretive signs highlighting the natural and human history and other special features of the immediate area.

The site will provide a scenic viewpoint of the mountains ranges and the **Liard** River to the west. Also, the site will allow the travelers to rest along the side of the road, especially during periods when the **highway** is very dusty and unpleasant to drive on for extended periods.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Select a suitable site for optimal viewing of the mountain ranges including access to the **Liard**.
- 2) Investigate land ownership as required to develop site.
- 3) Prepare a site development plan.

- 4) Commission research, design and construction of interpretive signage - exhibit.
- 5) Undertake construction of site.
- 6) Include site on future highway maps.

PROGRAM NAME: **NAHANNI - BLACKSTONE VISITORS SERVICE CENTRE**

LOCATION: **Nahanni Butte - Liard Highway Roadside**

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Year Round

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

In this development, it is proposed that a major service **centre** - destination attraction be established on the **Liard** River at **Blackstone** Territorial Park. The establishment of a major service **centre** is required first, to serve the regions **single** most important attraction, **Nahanni** National Park, second, to promote other attractions and services in the region and along the highway corridor, third, to provide a centralized outfitting **centre** to help market the regions **backcountry** attractions and fourth, to provide an attractive site that will encourage travelers to lengthen their stay in Big River Country.

The proposed **Blackstone Centre** concept is outlined in detail in the Fort **Liard -Nahanni** Butte Community Tourism Development Plan. Recommended elements of the **centre** include: an expanded **R.V.** campground; central lodge and cabins; Parks Canada - Territorial Parks interpretive **centre** (possible developed in association with the existing facility); **backcountry** outfitter **centre** - air, water, hiking, trail riding; commercial attractions and handicraft store and production area; and highway auto services **centre**. This **centre** may be the single most important feature in drawing south bound traffic on Alaska Highway into the northwest Territories.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- 1) Undertake land acquisition negotiation.
- 2) Prepare master plan of service **centre**.
- 3) Initiate discussions with the private sector and Dene regarding capital investment and operations.
- 4) Develop in conjunction with private sector detailed plans for individual facilities, services and attractions.
- 5) Implement a phased construction program for the **centre**.
- 6) Implement an internal management, operations and marketing plan for **centre** to ensure the financial and promotional objectives are being realized.
- 7) Include **centre** in future promotional literature regarding the highway corridor, **Nahanni** National Park and Big River Country.

Project Number 18

PROGRAM NAME: SAMMILL MOUNTAIN SCENIC VIEWPOINT AND PICNIC SITE

LOCATION: Roadside site midpoint between Fort **Liard** and Blackstone Park

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility - Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

An interpretive - picnic site is proposed for location along the corridor with an orientation toward Sawmill Mountain and **Nahanni** Ranges to the west. Interpretive signage would be established describing for example the elevation and name of visible mountains, legends associated with the **Nahanni**, buffalo, etc. The **Nahanni** theme should be clear and stressed in **signage** and interpretive messages.

A small picnic area would be established to encourage the **traveller** to increase their length of time in the corridor and at the same time become more aware of the cultural - natural features of interest associated with the corridor and adjacent backcountry areas. The interpretive importance associated with these roadside scenic viewpoints can not be over stated in terms of generating user appeal and understanding regarding the corridor and people who live in the **region**.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Select a site for optimal viewing of Sawmill Mountain.
- 2) Undertake land negotiations as required to develop site.
- 3) Prepare a site development plan for a picnic and scenic viewing area.
- 4) Commission interpretive research program, design and construction of interpretive exhibits - signage.
- 5) Undertake construction of site.
- 6) Include site on future highway mapping.

PROGRAM NAME: **NAHANNI** RANGE SCENIC VIEWPOINT AND PICNIC SITE

LOCATION: Mid-point between Fort **Liard** and **Petitot** River
 (**approx. 19** km southwest of Fort **Liard**)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

At an attractive site overlooking the **Nahanni** Range (to the west) is proposed a scenic pull-off point, picnic site and interpretive area. The legends associated with the **Nahanni - Petitot** River will be reinforced (from **Petitot** River Crossing) through themed **signage** and descriptions of the area's cultural and natural history heritage. Descriptions of Mount Martin and others could be included in the interpretive program.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) **Select** a preferred site with a good scenic view of the mountain ranges to the west.
- 2) Undertake land negotiations as required to develop site.
- 3) Prepare and implement site development plan.

- 4) Commission interpretive research program, design and construction of interpretive exhibits - signage.
- 5) Include site on future highway mapping.

This site and its program must be designed to welcome visitors to N.W. T. and quickly generate a heightened interest in the cultural and natural attractions to be found in Big River Country and beyond.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Undertake land negotiations as required to develop site.
- 2) Prepare a site development plan for day use and camping areas.
- 3) Commission research, design and construction of interpretive exhibits, **signage** with a special **Nahanni** theme as well as a Northwest Territories photogenic gateway feature.
- 4) Undertake construction of site.
- 5) Include site on future highway mapping and- in promotional literature developed for the corridor, Big River Country and the Northwest Territories.

PROGRAM NAME: ALASKA - LIARD HIGHWAY VISITOR **CENTRE**

LOCATION: Alaska Highway: Fort Nelson

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility - Attraction

SEASON: Year Round

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

An attractive visitor services **centre** is required on the Alaska Highway that will be able to advise travelers of the communities, attractions and services (e.g. hotel accommodation) found in the southwest part of the Northwest Territories (road and non-road access) and introduce Big River Country.

It is anticipated that this service **centre** would include: handicraft **shop**; video monitors with information on attractions, short films on attractions and services; restroom services; special natural - cultural heritage features of interest; and administration area. The facility and program should be designed both as an attraction as well as providing tourist information. The facility and staffing would be required to meet the requirements of the tour bus operators.

It is anticipated that this facility - attraction would be developed in conjunction with the Peace - Alaska Highway Travel Association, Fort Nelson and possibly the Alaska Highway Association.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Finalize site location in Fort Nelson, purchase of land, and provision of services with other travel associations.
- 2) Commission architectural and program design for building, land and special tourism generator associated with site.
- 3) Commission interpretive research, design and development of internal - external building exhibits.
- 4) Undertake construction of facility.
- 5) Tender operation of handicraft store to private sector.
- 6) Include **centre** in **all** future promotional literature on highway corridor as both an attraction and tourist information **centre.**

PROGRAM NAME: **LIARD** HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

LOCATION: **Liard** - Mackenzie Highway Corridor (general)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

A highway corridor aesthetics program is required in selected locations to increase the attractiveness of the road side scenery. As one example of potential actions to be taken, concentrations of wild flowers could be strategically located in roadside locations so as to be readily visible from a passing automobile. Concentration of these flowers could occur possibly every 6 - 12 km and be established over several years.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Develop recommendations on specific actions that could improve the aesthetic appeal of corridor.
- 2) Identify highway locations to gain maximum visual benefit from the "natural" flowerbeds.
- 3) Implement planting **program.**

PROGRAM NAME: **DEADMAN VALLEY TRAIL SYSTEM**

LOCATION: **Nahanni National Park (Tungsten - Virginia Falls - Nahanni Butte)**

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Much of Big River Country is managed as a **backcountry** area with few opportunities to travel off the highway corridors. The prime objective of this project is to establish an overnight **backcountry** trail system through **Nahanni National Park** from **Nahanni Butte** to Tungsten. The trail system would pass **through Virginia Falls Interpretive Site** and **Ragged Range Wilderness Lodge**, making it a highly attractive route.

Accommodation on the trail would consist of trail shelters, random and designated campsites. Planning, construction and management of the wilderness trail system will be by Parks Canada.

The **Deadman** Valley Trail system will become, in future **years, a very** important high profile attraction, receive considerable media exposure and generate significant visitation to the region - corridor.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) GNWT - Parks Canada establish a planning, design and construction process for development of the **trail** between Tungsten and **Nahanni** Butte.
- 2) Initiate master planning and **design** of trail system.
- 3) Undertake research of natural - historical heritage interpretive storylines including design and construction of signs and exhibits.
- 4) Undertake construction of trail, shelters and trail head facilities.
- 5) Initiate media **campaign** regarding **planning** and construction of trail system **including** its natural and historical significance.

PROGRAM NAME: FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS LODGE

LOCATION: Little Doctor / **Cli** Lake

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility / Attraction

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Big River Country suffers from a lack of quality **backcountry** attractions with overnight accommodation. In this project, it is proposed that a 20 to 40 person lodge / cabins be constructed at either Little Doctor or **Cli** Lakes.

The primary attractions for the lodge would be the outstanding mountain lake scenery (especially in the case of Little Doctor Lake), hiking - mountaineering, sports fishing, big game hunting, and interpretation.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Assess lakes - shoreland conditions and select a site for development.
- 2) Undertake financial analysis of proposed operation.
- 3) Undertake land negotiations as required to develop site.

- 4) Obtain license(s) to operate lodge from GNWT, Economic Development and Tourism.
- 5) Initiate lodge construction and marketing - promotion plans.

3.3 Franklin - Mackenzie Subregion

3.3.1 Description of Subregion

Located between the **N.W.T.** - Yukon border and the Mackenzie River, the Franklin - Mackenzie subregion has the most diverse and dramatic **landforms** in the **Liard** - Mackenzie region with the greatest national - international tourism development and marketing opportunities. The rugged Mackenzie Mountains and numerous wild rivers dominate the landscape and provide some of the most picturesque scenery and wilderness landscapes in the entire Northwest Territories. The region is also renowned for its many legends associated with gold exploration, historical - cultural events, and **colourful** pioneers who lived or travelled through the area. This area provides attractive wilderness destination potential for remote lodges, wild river valley corridors for rafting and canoeing as well as extensive mountain ranges and plateaus for other related **backcountry** adventure activities.

Nahanni National Park (4,766 sq. km) has been selected as a world heritage site by UNESCO for its internationally significant natural resources and is the primary reason or market attraction for many tourists visiting the region. **In** this remote park, wilderness activities include white-water canoeing, rafting, hiking, photography and **backcountry** camping. Scenic geologic and geomorphic features such as the Rabbit Kettle and **Kraus** Hotsprings, Virginia Falls, extensive canyon systems, and the famous Circle of the **Unclimbables** have captured the interest of scientists, mountain climbers and adventurers on day charter air packages. The park's many legends, myths and **colourful** names have provided an excellent base for the establishment of **films** and published literature to promote **Nahanni** and the **region**. Although recognizing that **Nahanni** National Park is the strongest travel generator in the region, significant expansion in tourist services is yet required, including promotional activities aimed at national - international markets.

The region outside the park has extensive **backcountry** adventure products that have to date only been marginally developed. Big game hunting by non-residents for Dan sheep, woodland caribou, mountain goats and bear is well established providing some local employment and revenue to the region. Outfitters have indicated that there is a growing interest in the establishment of wildlife photo safari tours.

In addition, lakes such as Little Doctor, **Cli**, Little Dal, and Glacier have outstanding mountain scenery, excellent fly-in fishing, and remote lodge development opportunities. Certain of the rivers outside the national park have rafting and **jetboat** possibilities and the area has virtually unlimited opportunities for extended **backcountry** trail ride adventures.

The region is also well suited to fixed wing/helicopter tours **fully** narrated by the pilot. In many instances, these resources and associated tourist services have remained largely undeveloped to the detriment of the region. This has occurred in part as a result of conflicts that have arisen out of **Dene**, industry and government policy or regulation issues. Planning, development and marketing of the region's resources, therefore, remains largely a hypothetical question with often no clear direction to enable implementation of a comprehensive approach to tourism development.

Located at the end of Highway 10 (**Nahanni** Range Road) and the western entrance to the South **Nahanni** River and the national park is the former community of **Tungsten**². This area of the Mackenzie Mountains (Ragged Range) is one of the most fascinating alpine landscapes in the region and provides a particularly dramatic entrance to **Nahanni** National Park.

1 A **jetboat** service was proposed by the Liard Band Valley Development Corporation on the South **Nahanni** from **Nahanni** Butte to Virginia Falls. Parks Canada to date has limited motorized riverboat activity within the park.

2 **Following** an employee strike in the summer of 1986, the Canada Tungsten Mining Corporation closed the mine and all residents were removed by Mid October, 1986. Access into the community by air is restricted and parts of Highway 10 are no longer maintained.

Noteable features of interest include glacier - capped limestone mountains, natural hot springs, and **small** ecologically sensitive high alpine lakes. The area is considered **to** have strong scenic appeal. To the wilderness adventurer (consumptive and non-consumptive), it is an ideal destination as well as jump-off point for rafting-canoeing the wilderness rivers and hiking - exploring the valley corridors. This is a region that is well suited to a limited number of high quality remote lodges, extensive hiking - horseback trail systems, river rafting - jetboat and scenic tour outfitting operations. The intent of this backcountry and corridor tourism strategy is to develop the high adventure products, associated tourist services and facilities that can capitalize upon the international **image** of **Nahanni** National Park-Northwest Territories and the wilderness natural and **colourful** cultural resources of the area. As previously noted, **Nahanni** National Park is currently the major travel generator of non-resident tourists and the adventure activities both inside and outside the park and should continue to be promoted to international target markets.

To improve the economic and employment benefits to local residents and associated businesses, specific tourist services such as package air charters, river rafting, guiding and outfitting operations need to be developed-expanded in the major jump-off communities of Fort Simpson and **Nahanni Butte (Blackstone)** and to a lesser extent Fort **Liard** and Tungsten (should it be **re-established**). It is recognized that Watson Lake, B.C., is currently providing extensive outfitting services into the upper **Nahanni** probably to the detriment of existing and potential tourist operators in the Northwest Territories.

In future implementation stages, care must be taken to recognize the ecological sensitivity of this diverse environment as well as other social - political sensitivities respecting GNWT - Parks Canada resource management policies and resident - big game outfitter hunting areas. Management of the natural resource base combined with close co-operation between the operators is seen as a critical factor in the long-term development of this wilderness destination area.

3.3.2 Development Opportunities

The following is a list of development opportunities recommended for the Franklin - Mackenzie Mountains subregion. These recommendations provide for the establishment of remote destination lodges, corridor activities, **backcountry** extensive activities, cultural - historic northern adventure attractions and tourist services. This region includes many of the high profile opportunities that will draw national - international market attention to not only the Mackenzie-Franklin area but also Big River Country and the Northwest Territories. Key developments prepared for this area are outlined below:

- 1) Establish a remote **lodge** on the shores of Little Doll Lake.
- 2) Locate a wilderness **themed** lodge in the Ragged Range on the **Deadman Valley Trail**.
- 3) Establish rafting tours on the North **Nahanni** (operated by the **Ragged Range Wilderness Lodge**).
- 4) Develop a scenic tour boat service along the lower reaches of the North **Nahanni** and Mackenzie Rivers from the Mackenzie Crossing Campground and Outfitter Terminal.
- 5) Establish a remote camp in the Ram Plateau as part of a **backcountry** trail riding service.
- 6) Plan and develop the **Deadman Valley Trail** between Tungsten and **Nahanni Butte** with special feature sites (e.g. Virginia Falls).
- 7) Continue to market rafting, canoe parties on the **Nahanni River** and day use fly-in tours.
- 8) Continue to manage wildlife in the region to accommodate both big game hunting and photo safari tours.

3.3.3 Program Description

The following program description sheets provide a general description of the recommended development.

Project Number 1

PROGRAM NAME: LITTLE DOLL WILDERNESS LODGE

LOCATION: Little Doll Lake

SEASON: Summer

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility - Attraction

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

A wilderness lodge is proposed on the shores of Little Doll Lake at or near the former exploration campsite. The lodge - cabins **would provide** a base for tourists, undertaking such activities as **hiking** - mountaineering, hunting - fishing, photo safaris and canoeing. The lodge will consist of 8 - 12 units and support buildings. Should demand warrant, the lodge could also be used for winter nordic ski touring - dog sledding. Access to the lodge will be by air charter. Any big game hunting undertaken from the lodge should be programmed in order not to conflict with existing licensed big game hunting outfitters.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Obtain necessary approvals from GNWT for use of the land and lodge development.
- 2) Develop a detailed site plan for the lodge, tourist activity, program and financial - market feasibility assessment.
- 3) Advertise development opportunity to the private sector and obtain developer - operator.

- 4) Initiate construction of the lodge and associated cabins and support buildings.
- 5) Implement marketing, management and operating plan for lodge including training of staff as required.

PROGRAM NAME: RAGGED RANGE WILDERNESS LODGE

LOCATION: Western Terminus of the **Deadman** Valley Trail

SEASON: Summer

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility - Attraction

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The establishment of a high quality wilderness lodge is recommended on the **Deadman** Valley Trail near the western entrance to **Nahanni** National Park. The lodge would be located outside the national park and preferably on or near a lake that could support air charter services. Lodge capacity would be initially 35 to 50 **people** and marketed at mountaineers, nature and gold exploration enthusiasts and hikers staying for an extended period at the lodge as well as fly-in day use visitors, pass-through hikers and canoeists - rafters. Rafting parties traveling the North and South **Nahanni** Rivers could leave from the resort. Winter wilderness nordic skiing - dog sledding expeditions may be provided should demand warrant. The lodge should be designed and staffed to be an attraction itself.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Follow program as outlined for Little Doll Wilderness Lodge (Project Number 1).
- 2) Promote establishment of lodge as part of the Parks Canada's **Deadman** Valley Trail and services supporting the park.

PROGRAM NAME: NORTH **NAHANNI** RIVER RAFTING TOURS

LOCATION: North **Nahanni** - Mackenzie River

SEASON: Summer

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility - Attraction

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

As one of the wilderness activities operated by the Ragged Range Wilderness Lodge, establish a route for white-water river rafting on the North **Nahanni** to the Mackenzie River. Air charter service would be provided between the river and the Ragged Range Wilderness Lodge and the **Blackstone - Nahanni** Service Centre for example. Overnight camp sites would be provided on the river as well as include stop-over opportunities for photography, hiking, fishing and observation of wildlife.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Advertise opportunities to private sector.
- 2) Operator to obtain license to run on the North **Nahanni** from GNWT (Department of Economic Development and Tourism).
- 3) Undertake analysis of the river as may be required to determine rafting season, conditions and other interpretive attractions to be used in the marketing and establishment of rafting programs.

- 4) Initiate financial analysis of the proposed operation.
- 5) Identify outpost camp sites on the river including access site.
- 6) Develop and implement management and marketing plans.

PROGRAM NAME: LOWER **NAHANNI** - MACKENZIE SCENIC **JETBOAT** TOURS

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Lower North **Nahanni** - Mackenzie River

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

It is proposed that a scenic **jetboat** excursion service be provided from Mackenzie Crossing down the Mackenzie to **Camsell** Bend, and up the North **Nahanni** as far as water conditions permit (returning the same way). This operation could also include an overnight trip to an outpost camp on the North **Nahanni** for visitors who wished to spend a day hiking and enjoying the scenic wilderness character of the **Camsell** Range. The **jetboat** service would operate from the outfitting terminal at Mackenzie Crossing and possibly be operated by the Ragged Range Wilderness Lodge.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Advertise opportunity to private sector.
- 2) Operator to obtain appropriate licenses as required from **GNWT**, Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
- 3) Investigate river to determine constraints, **jetboat** requirements, **outcamp** locations, interpretive program and potential schedule.

- 4) Undertake economic feasibility analysis of proposed operation.
- 5) Recruit and train local staff to operate scenic cruise trip (e.g. boat operations, interpretation, etc.).
- 6) Initiate market development and operations plan.

PROGRAM NAME: RAM PLATEAU WILDERNESS TRAIL RIDE EXPEDITIONS

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Ram Plateau

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Wilderness trail ride expeditions from Mackenzie Crossing would cross the gently rolling landscape to **Cl**i - Little Doctor Lakes area, and cross the **Nahanni** Range into the Ram Plateau. Alternative routes and **activities** would be undertaken depending on the length and purpose of the expedition. One destination for the expedition could be the Ram Plateau Wilderness Camp while in other instances it could be **Nahanni** Butte or return to the outfitter terminal at Mackenzie Crossing.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Identify private sector opportunity and advertise for bidders.
- 2) Operator to obtain appropriate licenses from **GNWT**, Economic Development and Tourism and agreement as may be required to cross the **Nahanni** Range at **Cl**i Lake from local land owners.
- 3) Undertake economic feasibility assessment of proposed operation.

- 4) Construct outfitter terminal facilities at Mackenzie Crossing and make provision for transfer of guests, provisions, equipment and horses.
- 5) Construct trails and locate **backcountry** camps.
- 6) Establish and initiate operations and marketing plan for trail ride wilderness service.

3.4 Horn- Mackenzie **Subregion**

3.4.1 Description of **Subregion**

The Horn - Mackenzie subregion is a large area extending between Great Slave Lake and Wrigley north of the Mackenzie River and south of a line between Fish and Birch Lakes. The region includes no permanent settlements with air access being the most common form of transportation. It is an area with landscapes that have the capability of supporting only low density **backcountry** activities that reflect the wilderness characteristics of this region.

In the central and northern portion of the subregion lies the Horn Plateau land region. This **landform** is visible from the Mackenzie Highway to the south, rising sharply 1500 to 2500 m above the Mackenzie River. In contrast to the surrounding landscape, the Horn Plateau is generally well drained and densely treed with a mixture of white spruce and balsam poplar. Several rivers including the Horn and **Willowlake** have their headwaters in this area. The river and lakes have excellent sport fishing capability (e.g., **Willowlake** and **Hornell**) and the **Willowlake** River is a historic fur trade canoe route with some excellent scenery. The area is also recognized as **having** prime big game and waterfowl habitat and is used on a limited basis by a Fort Providence outfitter (Aurora Marketing Ltd.).

South of the Horn Plateau lies the Fort Simpson **landform** which is typically a low-lying seasonally waterlogged landscape. With the exception of winter roads, **access** is a severe constraint. The region is recognized for its high waterfowl, fur and moose populations and some interest has been shown in the establishment of winter trapline tours. The Mackenzie Bison Management Area occurs in this area and is considered an important attraction for non-consumptive activities.

To the north of the Horn Plateau is a series of **landforms**, lakes and rivers. The McConnell Range near Wrigley is the most predominant feature with Cap Mountain reaching 1580 m. Fish and **Balmer** Lakes are

considered to have good sport fishing potential with access available via River Between Two Mountains and **Willowlake** River.

It is the intent of the tourism strategy to develop and market to non-residents wilderness adventure activities-tours including big game hunting, sport fishing, wilderness photography, white-water canoeing and possibly dog sledding expeditions in the winter months. In certain instances, it is the intent of the strategy to develop these activities by employing the traditional lifestyle of the **Dene** as one of the cultural-interpretive experiences. Wrigley, Fort Simpson and Fort Providence will continue to be the primary communities to promote and operate the basic hospitality and outfitting services for motor vehicle tourists and other specialty adventure products for tourists planning to travel in the Horn - Mackenzie subregion.

3.4.2 Development Opportunities

The following is a list of recommended tourism development opportunities for the Horn-Mackenzie subregion. These initiatives will provide future markets and operators with an abundance of tour opportunities that reflect both the wilderness capability and **Dene** culture found in this area of Big River Country.

- 1) Promote the **Willowlake** River canoe route as a formal backcountry heritage canoeing attraction with outfitting services provided by the private sector through Fort Simpson - Wrigley - Fort Providence.
- 2) Initiate in the Caen Lake area an interpretive centre with outfitting services regarding the wood bison found in the Mackenzie Buffalo Management Area.
- 3) Establish a **Dene** cultural camp in the **Hornell - Willowlake** area that will provide tourists with an opportunity to learn and participate in the traditional ways of the **Dene** culture.

- 4) Designate camp sites at Fish and **Balmer** Lakes for fly-in sport fishing.

3.4.3 Program Description

The following program description sheets describe the recommended development program and actions that are required to implement the strategy in this sub-region. The program descriptions should be considered a guideline and **reviewed** - updated on a regular basis (probably every two years) to reflect ongoing development in the region and other factors that may impact on this program.

PROGRAM NAME: **WILLOWLAKE** RIVER CANOE ROUTE

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: **Willowlake** River (Mackenzie River to Willow Lake)

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

It is proposed that the **Willowlake** River between the Mackenzie River and **Hornell** Lake be described in government and other literature as a wilderness - heritage canoe route. The route would be designated on various maps with the mouth occurring at or near the proposed territorial park. Detailed maps of the river would be prepared describing the natural and historic features of interest throughout the route as well as directing travelers to camp sites.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Research river corridor and identify and describe natural and historic sites and events of interest on a route map for purchase by canoeists and the general public.
- 2) Research, design and develop interpretive exhibits of interest at or near the mouth of the river (possibly inside or near the proposed territorial park).
- 3) Establish a terminal point for use by outfitters - canoeists at each end of the route.

- 4) Initiate interest by the private sector in the provision of outfitting services (e.g. canoes, food services, guiding, etc.).
- 5) Initiate a modest marketing program for route including descriptions of route in tourist oriented literature.

PROGRAM NAME: MACKENZIE BISON SANCTUARY INTERPRETIVE **CENTRE**

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Attraction

LOCATION: Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary (**Caen** Lake)

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

It is proposed that a manned interpretive **centre** be established in the **Caen** Lake area. The **centre** would provide a range of services for individuals traveling by group tour buses or going on overnight camping trips into the Sanctuary. The **centre** would be promoted as an important attraction for increasing public awareness and knowledge of the bison and other natural features in the immediate area.

As the bison population increases, it may also be desirable to initiate a trophy hunt. A key objective of the hunt would be to generate increased revenue and employment to local outfitters as **well** as international exposure to the area.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Finalize "Interim Bison Management Plan" for the Mackenzie **Wood** Bison Herd, Northwest Territories including provisions for an interpretive **centre**, walking and horseback trail systems and campsites.

- 2) Develop an operating **plan** including financial analysis for the **centre**.
- 3) Prepare detailed plans, initiate research and program development for the interpretive **centre** including exhibits, films, etc. concerning the sanctuary.
- 4) Initiate marketing of the **centre** and sanctuary in international - national wildlife magazines and with tour bus firms to encourage travel in the area.
- 5) Recruit and train staff to operate **centre** and run tours into the sanctuary.

PROGRAM **NAME:** **DENE** CULTURAL WILDERNESS CAMP

LOCATION: **Hornell 1 - Willowlake** Lakes Area

SEASON: Summer (future expansion may include some winter programming).

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

In an attractive site, establish a traditional **Dene** cultural camp for fly-in non-resident tourists to witness and participate in traditional lifestyle activities. Guests **would** live in traditional tents and experience and participate in traditional family activities during the spring to fall seasons. The camp would be accessible by a chartered flight from **Yellowknife** or one of the regional communities. The camp could potentially operate in the winter months providing traditional trapping (dog sledding) tours and **nordic** touring in the Horn Plateau area.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Initiate discussion with the Deh Cho Regional Council concerning their establishment of camp in the **Hornell - Willowlake** area with a unique summer - winter program. Determine ownership and operating guidelines for camp. Obtain license to operate from **GNWT**, Economic Development and Tourism.
- 2) Undertake financial analysis of proposed operation.
- 3) Identify site and initiate construction of camp.

- 4) Recruit local residents interested in operating camp and train as required to provide **backcountry** tourist services.
- 5) Implement marketing program including agreements with air charter services to transport guests to and from the camp.

PROGRAM NAME: FISH - **BULMER** LAKE WILDERNESS CAMPS

LOCATION: Fish and **Bulmer** Lakes

SEASON: Summer

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

To promote fly-in sport fishing from Wrigley, outpost camps will be established on Fish and **Bulmer** Lakes. Boats, motors, tents and guides would be provided at these designated areas for guests. Fly-in fishing on a single day basis would also be provided from Wrigley.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Advertise opportunities to private sector.
- 2) Obtain government approval (**NWT**, Economic Development and Tourism) for developing outpost camps.
- 3) Undertake financial analysis of proposed camps.
- 4) Locate a sheltered, well drained site suitable for tent camping, launching - storing fishing boats and landing aircraft.
- 5) Obtain equipment and recruit and train staff to operate camps including arrangements with fly-in charter services.
- 6) Initiate operations and marketing program to start business.

3.5 Trout Lake Subregion

3.5.1 Description of Subregion

The Trout Lake subregion is located in the south-central section of the planning area. It is situated east of the Liard Highway, south and west of the Mackenzie Highway and surrounded in the south by the British Columbia, Alberta - North Territories borders. The subregion is characterized by extensive areas of flat to rolling topography of white and black spruce dotted with numerous lakes, marshes and river systems, and is rich in wildlife and fisheries.

The most significant features from a tourism perspective are Trout and **Dogface** Lakes and the potential sport fishery. The lodges developed on these lakes have the potential to provide important employment for the local communities in serving non-resident sport fishermen, big game hunters and other specialty markets. Further tourism potential in this area is very limited. It is, therefore, the intent of this strategy to capitalize upon the unique and significant fisheries of Trout and **Dogface** Lakes by upgrading the lodge facilities, developing an organization and management strategy and actively marketing and promoting these products to key market sectors in the United States, Ontario and Alberta.

The community of Trout Lake can benefit significantly from the upgrading of the facilities and services at the lodge since access is **only** by air and guides, cooks and housekeeping job opportunities will be supplied by the community. Specific recommendations for the community of Trout Lake are outlined in the Trout Lake Community Tourism Plan.

3.5.2 Development Opportunities

The following is a list of the tourism development and marketing opportunities for the Trout Lake subregion. The recommendations effect

the problems associated with access in the area and the limited attractions.

- 1) Develop and expand the existing Trout Lake lodge.
- 2) Establish a second lodge on Trout Lake according to market requirements and resource capability as demand dictates.
- 3) Expand - upgrade **Dogface** Lake Lodge as a fly-in sports fishing - big game hunting centre.

3.5.3 Program Description

The following program description sheets describe the recommended development program and actions that are required to implement the strategy in this sub-region. The program descriptions **should** be considered a guideline and reviewed - updated on a regular basis (probably every two years) to reflect ongoing development in the region and other factors that may impact on this program.

PROGRAM NAME: TROUT LAKE LODGE (UPGRADING)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

LOCATION: South-west Shore of Trout Lake

SEASON: Spring-Fall

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

An upgrading and expansion program for Trout Lake Lodge is recommended as outlined in the "Trout Lake Community Tourism Development Plan". The lodge would be marketed in part through the proposed **Blackstone - Nahanni Service Centre**, accommodating both fishermen and other tourists on an extended stay as well as a day use basis. The facilities and program would be operated to cater to both the non-resident fishermen as well as other special meeting - convention market interests and incentive awards requirements.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Undertake a market study for the lodge to determine the best, most lucrative target markets to pursue and improve occupancy rates and income of Trout Lake Lodge. Key objectives of the market plan would be:
 - a) Analyze existing markets to determine what improvements (see Recommendation 2) to facilities and services, if any, would increase employment, demand, or revenue to the lodge.

- b) **Assess** the market potential for the use of Trout Lake as a location for the **remote/wilderness, seminar/workshop/conference** market.
 - c) Assess the potential of other new markets for Trout Lake Lodge such as international and domestic markets which may exist but are not being addressed in (a) and (b).
 - d) Evaluate the performance of the current, marketing program to determine its impact on the generation of demand for Trout Lake Lodge.
 - e) Identify markets which offer good potential to expand **use, occupancy and revenues** for Trout Lake Lodge and activities and costs involved in implementing the necessary 5 - year development and marketing plans required to pursue these markets.
- 3) Develop and implement an operating **plan** for the **lodge** including personnel recruitment and training, business development and cash control - the most critical components of management's responsibilities.
 - 4) Establish strong operating - marketing business links with other tourist operations in Big River Country (e.g. **Nahanni - Blackstone Service Centre**, air charter service, etc.) to maximize public exposure to the lodge, both traveling in the region as well as planning a trip to Big River Country. Examine opportunities for group sales, special events, and discounts to help position the lodge in the marketplace.

PROGRAM NAME: NORTH TROUT LAKE LODGE (FEASIBILITY STUDY)

TYPE OF PROGRAM: Facility

LOCATION: North Shore of Trout Lake

SEASON: Spring-Fall

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

With an expanding tourist market in Big River Country, it will become more important to assess tourism trends, expected number of fishermen and other specific markets essential to the lodge. The detailed feasibility will examine everything from site selection and resource capability to lodge receipts. The analysis would outline how much it will cost to operate; including how much to budget for capital development, management personnel, guides, lodge staff, special events and every other detail. If the resource and market studies show that the project is **feasible**, the operator - investor will have everything in order to present the plan to GNWT for approval and to arrange for financing and other matters as may be required.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Initiate feasibility studies that will examine the question of resource capability and financial viability to make the lodge functional, and ensure the owners realize the maximum return on their investment.

PROGRAM NAME: **DOGFACE** LODGE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

TYPE OF FACILITY: Facility

LOCATION: **Dogface** Lodge

SEASON: Spring-Fall

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The lodge is located in the south-east corner of the sub-region to take advantage of fly-in charter traffic from Hay River and Fort Providence. To increase their share of a growing, although competitive market, the lodge will be modernized and expanded to help build repeat business. A more aggressive marketing plan will be initiated to assist the lodge in attracting a larger share of the fishermen entering the Territories.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Initiate a feasibility study to determine the most desirable way to redevelop and manage the lodge to maximize return on the investment.

- 2) Implement results of the feasibility study in terms of financing, lodge construction and marketing - promotion plans.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION

The process **of** establishing tourism infrastructure and related hospitality services in Big River Country, will extend over a period of some **20** to 25 years, assuming that the planning process proceeds on a regular schedule. While it may be possible to initiate a modest growth **in** the number of tourists in Years 1 and 2 of the plan, there is a need to establish a strong regional - corridor image, with minimal acceptable destination facilities and services to meet the long term objectives for the region. Also, in order to expose residents gradually to tourism and to further increase their understanding of its implications, it is suggested that limited controlled tourism activities be encouraged over the next few years.

Table 1 is a strategic guideline providing a framework for achieving the objectives of the plan. Specifically, these guidelines **should** direct the sequence of developments to ensure facilities - services are in place to meet and attract the desired markets. A number of principal factors have been used to influence development phasing for the plan. For example, to attract the rubber - tire markets from the Alaska Highway, public funds for a visitor services **centre** in Fort Nelson and **themed** highway signage **should** precede private investment. Second, due to the lack of quality facilities and destination image, the region requires a strong "Gateway to the Northwest Territories" attraction as proposed for the Petitot River and at the **Nahanni - Blackstone** Visitor Services **Centre**. It is unlikely that significant traffic **will** occur until such time as these services and associated **backcountry** attractions are in place. Third, the corridor requires the establishment of several new and/or upgraded public and private sector services to attract and hold the rubber-tire traffic. It is strongly recommended that these publicly funded highway oriented facilities be completed at an early stage to encourage private investment in motels and other related facilities and services. Fourth, development of the region's market potential will not occur **until** such time as international **calibre** resorts and **associatd** attractions are in place.

The success of future marketing **plans will** depend to a large part on the wilderness images being established through the construction of these expensive "once-in-a-lifetime" adventure products. The support for the plan by the communities and operators will **also** be a significant factor in the timing and approval of the plan.

The following table outlines the strategic guidelines for successful implementation of the plan. For all the benefits to be gained by the plan, there are surprisingly few adverse effects. It should be noted that Table **1** is a framework and may require alterations or adjustments given a change in priorities.

A priority ranking order based upon the above principal factors is as follows:

Priority **I** - projects that **will** have immediate visibility and can be quickly initiated for implementation during 1987 (year 1).

Priority **II** - projects that **will** require planning, design and coordination for implementation during years 2 and 3.

Priority **III** - those projects that can be planned and implemented in years 4 and 5.

Priority **IV** - those projects that have a longer time frame associated with their development (years 6 to 10).

Priority **V** - long term commitments to development of the tourism infrastructure (years 11 - 25).

TABLE 1
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 1 (Year 1)
Project

Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Visitor Travel Log		Marketing technique to increase visitation of attracton _s .
Mackenzie - Nahanni Theme Oriented Highway Signage		Important that the corridors have a strong identity - image for both promotion and user appeal.
Nahanni Range Road	50/50 cost share under review	Important western gateway to Nahanni National Park and other attractions over both the short and long term.
Whittaker - Coral Falls Interpretive Site and Campground		The single most important attraction and campground between Ft. Providence and Ft. Simpson.
Big Game Outfitters		Big game hunting is one of the few activities drawing non-residents into the region and marketing internationally.
Tourism and Hospitality Training		Serious need to upgrade the quality of hospitality services in both public and private sectors.

Note: Capital cost will be completed upon approval by client of projects identified in Table 1 by consultants.

TABLE 1 (con't)
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 1 (Year 1) Project	Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Ram Plateau Wilderness Trail Ride Expeditions	Feasibility analyses and development of trail system. Implementation of regularly- scheduled expeditions as soon as possible.		Opportunity to attract a specialty market into the Mackenzie Mtns. Establish- of a strong market image, complementary to other services / attract- ions in region.

TABLE 1 (con't)
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 2 (Years 2 and 3) Project	Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Alaska - Liard Highway Visitor Centre	Design and construction of a major travel centre in Ft. Nelson for the Alaska Highway. Big River Country, Ft. Nelson and Peace-Aaska Highway Association.		Essential to capture a higher percentage of Alaska Highway traffic.
Watson Lake Interpretive Centre	Design and implement interpretive exhibits-videos for Big River Country and Northwest Territories in visitor centre. Undertaken in cooperation with Yukon Government (year 2).		Opportunity to promote Nahanni Range Road (long term) and the attractions found along or near the Liard - Mackenzie Highway.
Nahanni-Blackstone Visitor Service Centre	Master plan and preliminary design and feasibility analyses for centre. Construction to be initiated in year 3 and continuing on an incremental basis through Phase 5.		Essential to initiate master plan - construction of the key travel generator for the highway route, illustrating commitment to development.
Petitot River Crossing Campground and Interpretive Site	Master plan, preliminary design, cost analysis and construction of campground, interpretive site and border crossing special feature(s) (years 2 and 3).		Whether entering or leaving the Territories, it is essential at this point to have an impact on the traveller re: photogenic features, interpretive exhibit, etc.

TABLE 1 (con't)
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 2 (Years 2 and 3) Project	Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Liard Highway Beautification Program	Landscape program to upgrade the attractiveness of the corridor right-of-way: ongoing over next 10 years.		Desirable to enhance the visual attractiveness of the corridor.
Interpretive Centre Video Films	16 mm films owned by MFB produced for use in visitor service centres.		Opportunity to increase Alaska Highway traffic awareness of Big River Country attractions.
Lady Evelyn Falls Day Use and Interpretive Site	Destination day use park and interpretive site master plan. Construction completed by the end of year 4.		High profile day use attraction with strong orientation to tour bus and other rubber-tire traffic.
Kakisa Campground	Master plan, preliminary design and cost analysis for a campground and day use area on the east shore of Kakisa Lake. Construction completed by the end of year 3.		One of the few attractive lakeside camping opportunities in the entire corridor.
Dogface Lake Lodge	Feasibility analysis, architectural drawing and construction of expansion - upgrading for Lodge.		Essential that the limited existing infrastructure in the region be maintained - expanded to increase market share.

TABLE 1 (cont.)
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 3 (Years 4 and 5) Project	Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Sawmill Mountain Scenic Viewpoint and Picnic Site	Master plan, preliminary design and cost analysis of day use area and interpretive site. Construction in year 4.		One of four interpretive sites established between the Petitot and the Highway Traveller Centre.
Mackenzie Ferry Crossing Scenic Viewpoint and Interpretive Exhibit	Master plan, preliminary design and cost analysis of this riverside day use park and interpretive exhibit. Construction in year 6 and 7.		Opportunity to inform the traveller of the colourful history associated with the river as they travel north to Yellowknife.
Riverside Interpretive and Picnic Site	Master plan, preliminary design and cost analysis. Construction in year 5.		Provides a rest stop for travellers between Nahanni - Blackstone and the Highway Junction Traveller Centre - maintains contact with Liard.
Virginia Falls Interpretive Site	Design and construction of attractive - informative interpretive site in this wilderness setting. Small campsite for hikers, rafters and canoeists.		One of the most significant travel generators to the region will continue to be Virginia Falls.
Dene Cultural Wilderness	Tourist campsite - based on traditional Dene culture in the Willowlake-Hornell area. Operational year 5.		An opportunity for local residents to establish a unique camp for non-residents regarding the cultural heritage of the Dene.

TABLE 1 (con 't)
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 3 (Years 4 and 5)
Project

Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Wallace Creek, Unnamed Lakes and Associated Highway Scenic Sites	Interpretive sites associated with unique natural features located along the highway corridor (year 4).	Opportunity to increase the awareness of natural history associated with highway corridor.

TABLE 1 (con't)
Phasing and Cost Schedule

Phase 4 (Years to 10) Project	Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Justification
Frank in Mountains Wilderness Lodge	Feasibility Analysis of a fly-in lodge, catering to non-resident fishermen, photographers, hikers, etc. Timing dependent on private investment		Unique setting for the establishment of small isolated lodge that will help market the region in terms of backcountry activities.
North Nahanni River Rafting Tours	Feasibility analyses including field investigation. Implementation of regularly scheduled excursions in conjunction with local lodge or by outfitters. Operational in year 6.		Important activity to draw attention to the wilderness rivers in the Mackenzie Mtns. and associated regional attractions and services.
Lower Nahanni-Mackenzie Scenic Jetboat Tours	Feasibility analyses including field investigations. Implementation of regularly scheduled excursions in conjunction with bus tours and other rubber-tired markets. Operational in year 8.		Opportunity to take tourists out on to the Mackenzie and up the North Nahanni to experience the outstanding scenery of the Camsell Range.
Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary Interpretive Centre	Interpretive centre master plan, preliminary design and cost analysis for Caen Lake station in		Unique travel opportunity for tour bus passengers en route to Yelwknife. Essential to initiate