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***Boat Tours, A Business Plan: Fort Liard,
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BOAT TOURS

A BUSINESS PLAN: FORT LIARD, NT

June 1993

(Volume III)

BUSINESS PLAN #2 BOAT TOURS

INTRODUCTION

The development of this business plan could bring substantial **economic** and other benefits to Ft. Liard. Spin off economic benefits may include purchases at the store, gas station, coffee shop, air charter company, craft and accommodation.

Other benefits from development of this business may include:

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

THIS BUSINESS PLAN IS DETAILED UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS:

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We suggest that before this Business Plan is read, that the companion document "Tourism Strategy - Fort Liard" be reviewed.

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

Projected capital costs or marketing budgets may have a minimum and maximum. Money actually spent will then depend on the applicants own resources, his/her seriousness and available assistance. For forecasting purposes projected revenue and expenses are based on minimums.

At the completion of this Business Plan a “ To Do” list suggests tasks to be completed in order of priority. The owner/manager can use this as an initial guideline only. Times frames to complete each task will depend on the Applicants available time, enthusiasm and support/assistance. We anticipate at least a number of months before the boat tour potential opportunity is close to the operational stage. We recommend the Business “Year End Review” Appendix #1 and guest questionnaire Appendix #2 be implemented when in operation.

IS THIS BUSINESS FOR ME?

Before entering into this business opportunities we must ask:

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the community located on the **Liard** River, at the mouth of the **Petitot** and 1½ hours by boat from the junction of the **Nahanni** and the **Liard**, we suggest there are 2 potential boat tour developments:

- A. Local boat tours
- B. Nahanni River Tours

Local boat tours by power boat on the **Liard** River of short duration can be developed with a minimum capital outlay and using experienced local guides, many of whom have their own equipment. Local boat tours would provide part-time and seasonal employment activity only. Short distance canoe rafting tours on the **Petitot** River also have potential pending regulation changes.

Nahanni River Tours can be developed through share participation in an established **Nahanni** River Outfitting operation. This investment would provide employment, experience and expansion opportunities. As the **Nahanni** is outside this study area, we have not gone into detail or Financial Forecasts but suggest the concept is worthy of longer term consideration.

These 2 opportunities could be developed independently or by 1 corporate body. Both businesses opportunities would compliment other Ft. **Liard** businesses such as accommodation, taxi, air charter company, coffee shop and craft shop.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Local Boat Tours. Catering primarily to **Liard** Highway Tourist Traffic, licensed guides with good equipment and river knowledge could operate on a part-time seasonal basis to offer **pre-packaged** short duration power boat tours. Locally made river scows or 18' aluminum boats with 25-90 hp outboards and equipment, preferably owned by the guides, would be used.

Packaged tour options may include a 2 hour tour; A 1/2 day (4.5 hours) tour with snacks, A day tour (8 hours), a 2 day, 1 overnight package. Points of interest such as the picturesque waterfall on the stream between the highway and Big Island, scenery on the river, family camps, old cabins can be included in addition to interpretation of the history and culture of the area by the guide. Short side trips such as a hiking trip to Mount Coty Fire Tower, Archeological sites and old cabins at Fisherman Lake as well as seeing Legend Rock up the **Petitot** would add to the appeal of boat tours.

A guide or group of guides might form a company to develop the operation. An established entity such as the **Liard** Valley Band Development Corporation may be the licensed outfitter who in turn has a list of reputable experienced river guides with equipment that they may call on as guests book.

Outfitters are licensed by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and operate within a specific designated area.

The local boat tours operation may be a component of other existing business opportunities in the community or may be completely independent.

An experienced eider may wish to bring along an interested youth more comfortable with **english** to relay information to the guests and to help out with boat operation/ food preparation.

The season would begin shortly after breakup in May and last until late September/ early October. Most business we suggest would occur from Mid-June to late August, coinciding with the **Liard** Highway summer **traffic**.

Area of operation would include a portion of the **Petitot** and the **Liard** upstream to the British Columbia border and downstream to Nahanni Butte, **Blackstone** Park or Lindbergs Landing.

The **Petitot** River originating in Alberta, flowing into British Columbia and joining the **Liard** at the community has appeal for short distance canoe/rafting. A variety of flat and white water varying with seasonal water levels in spectacular canyons and gorges provides a 1-3 day canoe trip from the **Liard** highway bridge access 30 miles south of the community. Trips could be guided or unguided.

As the highway bridge access to the **Petitot** is in British Columbia, provincial regulations would have to consider licensed boat operations requirements of the British Columbia portion of the river.

Petitot canoe/raft tours could compliment **Liard** River (or **Nahanni** River) boat tours, canoe and equipment rentals and provide River guides employment.

A **Petitot** River package from Fort **Liard** may include canoe, life jacket and paddles, foam mattress and tent rental; plasticized river maps, and van transportation to the British Columbia bridge access.

A river guide and prepared meals would be optional.

A detailed canoe trip guide which features, legends and points of interest is suggested.

There is currently some “River Taxi” activity such as providing services to canoeists/rafters as they complete the **Nahanni** River at **Nahanni** Butte and need to return to vehicles parked at **Blackstone** landing. Some freight and people transport may also occur between Ft. **Liard**, **Nahanni** Butte, **Blackstone** and **Lindbergs** Landing providing more frequent and cheaper connections than with aircraft.

If Ft. **Liard** interests did own shares in an established **Nahanni** River Outfitting operation and the jump off point at least for a portion of the river trips via plane charter was Fort **Liard**, not **Blackstone** or **Lindbergs** Landing, some increase in River Taxi business would be possible. Parks Canada have indicated they may support a water taxi service contingent on reliable and safe service.

River Taxi and **Nahanni** River outfitting could both be part of an expanded **Liard** based boat tour operation.

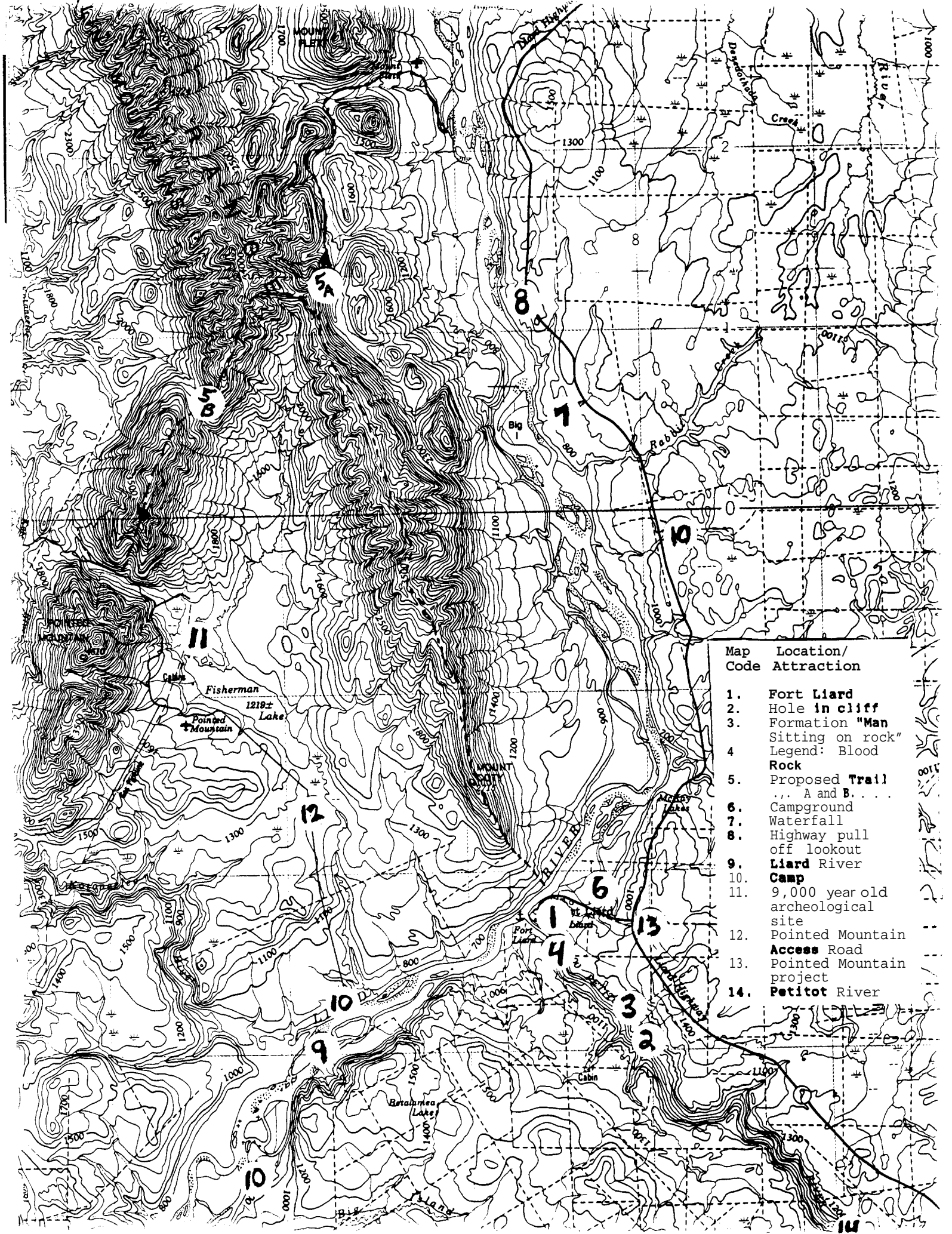
B. Nahanni River Tours: Although a 5th outfitting licence for the **Nahanni** River is possible we suggest in the short term that the purchase of shares in one of the 4 established and reputable outfitters would be the best option.

Through our community consultation process, we found there is substantial interest in development of water based activities as well as land based in the southern MacKenzie Mountains, **Nahanni** National Park as well as the immediate Ft. **Liard** Area. As there are established river outfitters on the **Nahanni**, in a World Heritage Site Park, we suggest that becoming involved with one of those established outfitters can have far reaching and very positive results for people of Ft. **Liard**.

There are a number of distinct advantages to becoming involved in an existing licence as opposed to applying for the remaining 5th licence.

1. The 4 established outfitters are doing, in our estimation, a credible job, and have developed individual market “niches”.

2. With 4 active outfitters promoting to the world market, we may be close to market saturation, in a recessed economy making it more difficult for any 5th operator to become successful.
3. Immediate potential for seasonal employment for a minimum of 1-2 residents.
4. Excellent “training on the job” experience and justification for further training.
5. Participation now can lead to longer term purchase” of majority shares and control of company.
6. Provides **Liard** residents who are employed with the outfitter to gain access to the area and an opportunity to be aware of what’s happening on a daily basis ...a form of community control.
7. Parks Canada and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism requires that applying for the 5th **Nahanni** river **licence** must involve consultation; a potentially extensive and frustrating process that include agreement with the communities of **Nahanni** Butte and Ft. Simpson.
8. Potential other benefits to Ft. **Liard** with share participation include encouraging the outfitter to use Ft. **Liard** and not Blackstone or Lindbergs Landing or Fort Simpson as a summer base. Benefits would then go to the accommodation facilities, craft shop, air charter, coffee shop and water taxi company in Ft. **Liard**.
9. If Ft. **Liard** interests did purchase equity in 1 of the active **Nahanni** River Outfitters there would likely be ongoing advantages over the other 3 outfitters who do not have N.W.T. Native participation.



Map Code	Location/Attraction
1.	Fort Liard
2.	Hole in cliff
3.	Formation "Man Sitting on rock"
4.	Legend: Blood Rock
5.	Proposed Trail ... A and B...
6.	Campground
7.	Waterfall
8.	Highway pull off lookout
9.	Liard River
10.	Camp
11.	9,000 year old archeological site
12.	Pointed Mountain
13.	Pointed Mountain Access Road project
14.	Petitot River

COMPETITIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

There is presently no water based licensed outfitter on the Ft. **Liard** or **Petitot**. A previous application to conduct raft and canoe trips from the bridge on the **Liard** Highway in British Columbia down the **Petitot** to Ft. **Liard** was not supported by the community.

There are 4 outfitters licensed by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and Parks Canada to **outfit** non-consumptive, non-motorized trip on the **Nahanni** River. All are based outside of the **N.W.T.**

There is only one other outfitting **licence** available for the **Nahanni** as per **Nahanni** National Park regulations and it is reserved for a native business. Residents of the communities of Fort Simpson, **Nahanni** Butte and Fort **Liard** are logical applicant communities. If more than one of these communities applied, a joint venture situation may be the logical alternative to 1 community accessing use of that license.

Although the existing 4 outfitters would be “competition” to a 5th **licence** holder we suggest their individual experience and reputation may be ideally viewed as being included in a joint venture concept.

MARKET ANALYSIS/ MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

In other areas of Northern Canada, such as **Yellowknife, Inuvik**, Whitehorse or **Dawson** and in Alaska, where road **traffic** is a major market, water based products that are in demand are normally very economical, of short duration and entail a variety of components (fishing, historical site viewing, wildlife viewing, etc.). Information on boat tours must be readily available to the **traveller** and the tour easy to book.

The prime markets for **Liard/Petitot** River Boat Tours are: “

1. **Liard** Highway bus tours;
2. **Liard** Highway Tourist vehicle **traffic**(from both Alaska and MacKenzie Highways);
3. **Liard** Motel guests (construction workers, Government and Business Travelers, Tourists);
4. Visiting friends and relatives;
5. Tour wholesalers - who may offer packages to **Nahanni** National Park or Virginia Falls, **Nahanni** River, and MacKenzie Mountains.
6. Canoe/Kayak and Raft outfitters on the **Nahanni**;
7. N.W.T. Residents in, **Yellowknife**, Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Simpson

Much of the itinerant **Liard** Highway traffic is not likely to book activities, such as a boat tour, in advance. information on the boat tour details should be readily available at all tourist information centres in the highway to maximize potential for booking. Operator must be ready to host a trip on short notice.

“Native Heritage and Culture”: are high on the list of interests of Northern travelers. and must be emphasized in packaging and promoting the boat tours. The outfitter and guides can themselves be an important component of the tour.... Northern characters telling interesting stories, legends, demonstrating bush skills, crafts, cooking.

Prime markets for **Nahanni** River Trips as recognized by established outfitters are national and international adventure travelers. Competition is fierce with a growing number of outfitters in many countries offering wilderness trips on little known, but exciting rivers.

OWNERSHIP/MANAGEMENT HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING

A very small business can operate as a sole proprietorship, but as business grows and with the possibility of outside financing and increased liability, we suggest a limited company or joint venture be formed. Partnerships are not recommended.

The **Liard** Valley Band Development Corporation with other tourism interests such as the Motel and “Deh **Cho** Air” may be a logical owner. Individual guides may operate as a sole proprietorship or may contract their services to the **Liard** Valley Band Development Corporation.

We recommend the owner/manager travel to Northern B. C., Southern Yukon, **Inuvik**, Whitehorse or **Yellowknife** to experience from a “tourist” or “training on the job” perspective similar operations. Outfitters boat tour operators include: “Blue Fish Services”, “**Naocha** Enterprises” and “North Arm Adventurers” in **Yellowknife** or “Arctic Tour Company” (tour boat) in **Inuvik**.

Any training on the job or similar work experience ie: with Big Game outfitters, sport fishing lodges, **Nahanni** River Outfitters or Parks Canada would provide a broader understanding of the tourism business and is strongly recommended.

We suggest owners management and staff consider the Tourism Training Group’s Level 1, II, & III guide training programs, the longer “Tourism Entry **Program**”, as well as the St. Johns Ambulance First Aid courses.

Any Tourism “Hospitality”, “Awareness Programs” or short small business programs would also be beneficial.

Various skills not usually mastered by “on the land” oriented people may include bookkeeping, accounting, marketing, public relations - tasks which may be handled by an experienced person already employed by the Band or Band Development Corporation and charged back to the boat tour operation, on an hourly basis.

OPERATIONS

We have outlined below a framework for local boat tours based from **Liard**:

• 2 hour boat tour itinerary

- boat, then hike to legend rock on **Petitot**; also rock formation of “ man sitting on a rock.”
- boat further up **Petitot**, stop and view old cabins.
- boat up **Liard** to Pointed Mountain Access road, traditional fish camp, and return to community.

• 4.5 hour (1/2 day) boat tour itinerary

- boat, then hike to Legend Rock, and formation of” man sitting on a rock” on **Petitot** River.
- boat further up **Petitot** stop and view old cabins
- return by boat to **Liard**, downstream to Big Island, lunch at waterfall between Big Island and Road.
- return to the community.

• 8 hour (day) boat tour itinerary

- same as 1/2 day tour above
- travel from Big Island to **Netla** and return

• 2 day, 1 night boat tour itinerary

- same as **8 hour trip above**
- **overnight at Netla**
- **return upriver to Ft. Liard with options**
 - hike to Mt. Flett
 - hike to Mount Coty
- boat to Pointed Mountain road access fish camp
- return to community.

An outfitting licence issued by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and liability insurance is required. The outfitters application should include a geographic area including sections of the **Petitot** and **Liard**.

Until the business is further developed (year #2 or #3) one owner operator can run most of the operation hiring additional guides with equipment on an” as needed basis.” Some efficiencies of operation would occur through **Liard** Valley Band Development Corporation ownership with current staff answering inquiries, and completing bookings, scheduling guests, hiring and coordinating additional staff when required.

Regular communication with the guides on the river with guests should be maintained from the Band Office via **SBX-11** Radios.

Outfitting licenses could be multi-seasonal and in the long term include other opportunities, such as crosscountry skiing or snowmobile trips. We suggest keeping short term **efforts** as summer only boat operation.

We do not recommend investing heavily in equipment (boats, motors, etc.). If the service becomes popular and more than 4-6 guests do confirm at one time, we suggest a list of qualified and interested guides be developed. They must have quality equipment available on a part time/as needed basis be maintained. The owner/manager would sub-contract, on a daily basis, business to qualified and properly equipped local guides. Guides must have a minimum amount and quality of well maintained basic equipment as listed. This minimizes capital requirements for the owner while at the same time maximizes benefits to community guides many of whom own their own equipment.

Basic equipment should include a 25-30' river scow, 2 motors, and other various but basic outfitting equipment (see capital cost for details) for one guide and up to 4-6 guests. This equipment provides for river travel and overnight camp capacity.

MARKETING

With at least 6 target market groups there are a number of ways to derive maximum results from each target group. A "marketing mix" to include some or all of the following is recommended:

- Fam Tours
- Brochure, info kit;
- Professional Photographs
- Booking Agents (on a Commission Basis)
- Advertising

The small, local Resident and (V. F. R.) Visiting Friends and Relatives, Market, Tour Wholesaler (fly or fly drive or fly bus) and bus tour markets are best marketed in close conjunction with an established in bound Tour Operator, or direct with wholesalers. They will expect "fare trips" for themselves and writers, and financial assistance on marketing aids which they might produce in conjunction with the operator.

We recommend building in a **15% to 20%** commission to agents as part of marketing expense. Agents may for example be paid a **15%** commission for the first 25 guests booked and **20%** for those booked over that number. Deposits should be paid on confirmed bookings with balance from the guest or agent prior to departure. Prior to signing an agreement with an agent, the agents promotional program should be discussed and agreed upon,

For an agreement to work the operator and the agent must have a trusting, communicative and well understood agreement. The operator must insure a quality product!

Tourists will rarely book a "Liard River Boat Tour" as a major holiday, but rather as a component of a larger multi-purpose or multi-destination holiday.

A suggested marketing plan for Year 1, 2 and 3 with an initial budget of \$5,150.00 and a longer term, expanded plan includes:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	
	<u>YEAR 1-2</u>	<u>YEAR 3-4</u>
<u>In bound Tour Operator/Travel Agent support:</u> copies of slides, B&W photos, blowups of select tour photos, limited run of brochure with space for booking agent's name and address:	N/A	\$1,000.00
A written " <u>Booking Agent Agreement</u> : should be put in place with selected agents.	N/A	-
That during the first season of operation(summer 1993 or 94)quality targeted and proven <u>SPORTS/TRAVEL WRITERS, WHOLESALERS, BUS TOUR OPERATORS AND AGENTS</u> be hosted to review the product, and in turn to promote and/or write about the product. We recommend hosting two professional writers and two other agents selected wholesalers based on input from established booking agents, Travel Arctic, Nahanni Ram Tourism Association. Writers for local papers, Nt., Yukon, magazines, Uphere, Northwest Explorer and 1-2 specialty magazines are recommended. Costs to cover actual hosting expenses on the boat tour.	\$750.00	\$1,500.00
<u>Information brochure</u> design and production. Basic B&W 8.5 xl 1 folded with separate price insert on one page flyer aimed primarily at highway traffic market and in-Bound Tour operator Market is adequate;	\$750.00	-
Dependant on success of the business, and number and quality of photographs taken during the first and second season of operation a <u>colour brochure</u> is recommended for the year three; estimated at \$3-4000.00	N/A	\$3,000.00
Pop up Portable mini-display for use at local trade shows, travel festivals, events, highway information displays		\$3,000.00

<u>Festival/Show expenses</u> 2 shows (N.W.T. and Northern BC) aimed at local and road traffic market @\$500		\$1,000.00
<u>Signage and Brochure stand</u> for prominent Highway locations: Ft. Nelson Ft. Simpson, Hay River, Alberta Border, Liard, Tourist Info centres; Dawson, Ferry Crossings, campgrounds, motels in Ft. Nelson, Liard, Simpson, and Hay River (two year 1 and four year 3 and 4)	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
That a <u>Guest Questionnaire</u> (see Appendix 2) be completed by all guests this season and that a summary of the comments be tabulated Action should then be taken, based on the reasonable comments received.	N/A	N/A
That on an on-going basis, photos, slides, and prints and guest testimonials be gathered from guests, booking agents, writers, and photographers.	N/A	N/A
Advertising primarily regionally to Ft. Nelson, Ft. Simpson market via newspapers and in Road Information and Travel Guides.	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00
Cooperative Marketing with established Ft. Liard Tourism business - Deh Cho Air and Motel.	\$1,300.00	\$1,500.00
<u>Professional photographer</u> For specific photos of outfitter and equipment guests without fitter; shore lunch; camp; attractions; staff; community attractions. Nahanni Ram may assist with photography or the Gov't photographer via the "Dep't. of Culture and Communications" may be requested to provide photography services Photos used for brochure, display,		
	<u>\$850.00</u>	<u>\$500.00</u>
TOTAL	\$5,150.00	\$14,000.00

With a "Nahanni River Outfitter" Joint venture or share investment marketing and overall management would continue to be the responsibility of the management/ majority share holders.

FINANCIAL

CAPITAL COSTS

One 25'-30' River Scow (Handmade)	4,000.00
Two 25 hp Enduro Yamaha Outboards @ 2,400	4,800.00
SBX-11 Radio and Antenna(1 only per boat)	2,300.00
Two tents 12x14	620.00
Six Life Jackets @ \$65.00	390.00
Three Paddles @ \$35.00	105.00
Spare Parts, Props etc.	400.00
Tools	300.00
Six Foam Mattresses @ \$40.00	240.00
Misc. Fish Nets, Fire Extinguisher, Maps, lanterns, First Aid Kit, craft supplies.	500.00
Boat Box with Emergency & Kitchen Utensils, Pots and Pans for six;	<u>750.00</u>
TOTAL	\$14,405.00
ROUNDED OFF TO	\$15,000.00

OPERATING REVENUE

125 Guest Days at average \$165.00 each	15,000.00
Craft Sales	500.00
Dep't of Economic Development & Tourist Marketing Assistance (70% of <u>5,150</u>)	
Business Development Program	<u>3,600.00</u>
TOTAL	\$24,725.00

FORT LIARD BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
LOCAL BOAT TOURS
STATEMENTS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
AND CASH FLOWS

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
	=====	=====	=====
GUEST DAYS	125	150	180
AVERAGE PRICE PER DAY	\$165	\$165	\$165
	=====	=====	=====
REVENUES			
GUEST SALES	\$20,625	\$24,750	\$29,700
CRAFT SALES	500	600	720
GNWT MARKETING ASSISTANCE	3,600	3,960	4,356
	-----	-----	-----
	24,725	29,310	34,776
	-----	-----	-----
EXPENSES			
COMMISSIONS	1,238	1,485	1,782
FOOD	1,200	1,440	1,728
OIL AND GAS	750	900	1,080
REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	600	660	726
TELEPHONE, FAX AND OFFICE	500	600	720
INSURANCE	400	440	484
LICENSES	400	440	484
MARKETING	4,000	4,400	4,840
PROFESSIONAL	750	825	908
CAMP SUPPLIES	800	960	1,152
WAGES AND BENEFITS	4,500	5,400	6,480
SUB-CONTRACTED SERVICES	3,000	3,600	4,320
MISCELLANEOUS	500	550	605
CRAFT MATERIALS	200	220	242
INTEREST ON LONG TERM DEBT	348	282	211
DEPRECIATION	3,000	2,400	1,920
	-----	-----	-----
	22,186	24,602	27,682
	-----	-----	-----
NET INCOME (LOSS)	2,539	4,708	7,094
CASH FLOW STATEMENT			
ADD NON CASH DEPRECIATION	3,000	2,400	1,920
DEDUCT REPAYMENT OF LONG TERM DEBT	(752)	(817)	(888)
	-----	-----	-----
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH FLOW	\$4,787	\$6,291	\$8,126
	=====	=====	=====

NOTES TO FINANCIAL ESTIMATES

These are estimated costs for one owner/guide assuming the business starts from O. As a number of residents who are capable and have knowledge of guiding on the river have much of the required equipment (scow, motor, paddles, tents), capital costs could be much less than outlined.

Individual guides should be encouraged to upgrade their own equipment, or possibly cooperatively share with a companion guide. Capital items (see financial) such as 1 main motor and 1 spare, life jackets, spare parts are included in a minimum list of equipment each **guide/outfitter** should own.

A new owner may get assistance for capital expenditures though one or more available Federal or Territorial Programs. With Ft. Liard being a level III community up to a 70 % contribution may be available through the Business Development fund for capital expenditures. Using a projected capital expense figure of \$15,000 and assuming approval of a contribution of \$10,500 the balance of \$4,500 could be in the form of a 5 year \$4,500 loan at **8.5%** interest. It is assumed that marketing assistance via Department of Economic Development and Tourism (up to 10,000.00) could be available on a yearly basis for up to 3 years. We projected **70%** of \$5,150 or \$3,600 year #1 increasing to \$4,338 contribution year #3.

The first full year of operation, after an initial test pilot season including marketing may generate 125 guest days. Expected number of days of active guiding is 15-20. Hiring part time 2nd guides with boat and equipment would occasionally be needed. This assumes a mixture of 1/2 day -1 day and overnight trips with various group sizes utilizing an aggressive marketing campaign.

Wages based on \$225. per day per guide who provides the equipment required as listed and \$80. per day for a helper- only required if more than 3 guests per boat.

Substantial efficiency of operation can occur through working with an established corporate body (ie: the Liard Valley Band Development Cooperation) with office space and staff already in place the established corporation may provide marketing/booking/radio contact and coordination of logistics, and expediting on a contract basis.

LEGAL LICENSING INSURANCE

The licensed outfitter/owner/operator, primarily for legal, and liability purposes should be a Ltd. Company with a minimum of one million dollars liability and comprehensive insurance.

Future tourism development on the river has some potential to include permanent tent frames buildings and land leases. Tourism establishment requirements should be kept in mind. **With** an outfitting **licence** available after approval by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism only temporary facilities ie: tent's can be set up.

To obtain insurance at least two insurance agencies should be contacted as well as the **Nahanni** Ram Tourism Association. The licensing of craft longer than 25' may be a problem. Photos of the scows and an explanation of their design would be useful. Obtaining an insurance amendment is preferable to shortening the length of the boats to comply with the 25' maximum as required by insurance companies - especially considering suitability and safety of these boats as designed.

Indications from B.C. Tourism is that any **N.W.T.** Water Based operation on the **Liard** or **Petitot** (in the B.C. portion) may take considerable time to gain approval. Gaining approval for any permanent land use in B.C. may be difficult and is not suggested at this time.

SOCIAL CULTURAL IMPACT

The outfitter can control most of the potential impact through proper management, planning, and presentation of the product. With a "quality product" visitors should have a very positive feeling of the boat tour experience. Spin off economic and special impacts could be substantial given the Band's involvement in other tourism activities, such as Deh Cho Air.

If guests are briefed prior to beginning a trip and have realistic expectations of the product or service, the host outfitter and guides are also more likely to have a positive experience.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the increasing number of environmentally conscious tourists, cleanliness, proper disposal of garbage and human waste, recycling, food packaging, brochures and letterhead on recycled paper are important.

The hosts camp, boats, equipment, and camp sites on the river, must be clean, neat and free of litter.

COMMENTWCONSTRAINTS

The local boat tours opportunity is very part time/seasonal and will not, in the foreseeable, future provide a full time income. It can be, for a number of guides, a supplement to other activities.

IMPLEMENTATION/ TIME FRAME

Local Boat Tours can be in place very soon, especially if a couple of guides are willing to work and have the required equipment. This opportunity could be test piloted this year and become well established in subsequent years.

The "Nahanni River Tours" opportunity can compliment local boat tours. It is however a longer term opportunity which could be initiated at any time after discussion, support and commitment at the community level.

BUSINESS PLAN “TO DO”

- Present overall concept to the community via the Band and Hamlet Council seeking support of the community.
- Apply for the outfitting license through the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
- Apply for an N.W.T. Business License
- Become an active member of the "Nahanni Ram Tourism Association" and possibly the "Travel Industry Association of the N.W.T. (T. I. A. N. W. T.) Awareness of training and various assistance programs, tourism studies, marketing trends, lobbying, and up-dates on Tourism in general can be gained through participation in these associations. ,
- Contact "Nahanni Ram" , T. I. A. N.W.T. and insurance companies with request for amendment to 25' maximum boat length insurance requirement.
- Meet with an experienced and qualified Nahanni River, Inuvik and/or Yellowknife based "in Bound" Tour operator to discussing packaging, marketing and booking. Visit a similar outfitting operation in Yellowknife and/or Inuvik.
- Register in Guide Training, "Tourism Entry", St. John's Ambulance - First Aid" and/or Hospitality and Tourism Awareness Programs.
- Develop, market and operate a limited # of "test pilot" packages at economical rates. This will both "test" the market place and offer feedback to the operator as to which components of the package work and which don't.
- Review the attached proposed marketing program and apply for marketing assistance to the Dept. of Economic Development and Tourism Business Development program.
- Implement the Marketing Program.
- Initiate a guest questionnaire (see Appendix) to be completed by all guests. Review and evaluate these regularly and adjust operation where required to meet the most reasonable of guest suggestions.
- To complete a concise internal year end review (see Appendix) This will provide management with a good grounding for price setting and package details.
- Establish package details and prices for the following year.

APPENDIX # 1

LOCAL BOAT TOURS YEAR END REVIEW CHECKLIST

- Operational season: _____
- Total number of guests: _____
- Which package option was most popular: _____
- Which package option was least popular: _____
- What are the three main sources of my customers?
 - [1 Advertising,
 - [1 Travel Shows,
 - [] Brochures,
 - [] Magazine/Newspaper Articles,
 - [1 Word of Mouth,
 - [1 Tourist Information Centre?
 - Fort Nelson
 - Fort Simpson
 - N. W. T./ Alberta Border
 - Other
- On reviewing all completed guest questionnaires (Appendix #2) write a brief summary of answers to each question.
- What are new markets or packages I might develop?

APPENDIX #2

SAMPLE GUEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Guest,

We thank you for having chosen Fort **Liard** and the **Liard** and **Petitot** Rivers area for your recent holiday. As we continually strive to improve our facilities and services, we look **forward** to your comments and suggestions. If you can take a minute two to check (X) the appropriate line or fill in the blanks and return this questionnaire, it will be much appreciated.

1. Did you fish in the **Liard** or its tributaries?

Y e ____ s N ____ o

2. Where did you hear about Fort **Liard** and the **Petitot & Liard** Rivers?

Friends _____	Newspaper Ads _____	Magazine _____
Radio Ads _____	Articles _____	Other _____
Ferry Crossing _____		
Information Centres:	Fort Liard _____	
	Fort Nelson _____	
	Fort Simpson _____	
	N. W. T/Alberta border _____	

Explain briefly _____

3. Did you find your trip as expected after receiving information?

Yes _____ No _____ S o m e w h a t

Explain briefly _____

4. List , in priority, (1st being your main interest) why you visited the Fort **Liard** area?

Hiking _____	Boating _____	Fishing _____
Canoeing _____	Bird Watching/Animal/Flowers _____	
Relaxing _____	Community and Culture _____	
Arts & Craft _____	Historical _____	
Road Touring _____		

5. What is your evaluation on the following?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Unacceptable
Pre trip Info	_____	_____	_____	_____
Boat and Motor	_____	_____	_____	_____
life jackets/ safety equipment	_____	_____	_____	_____
transport to and from camp	_____	_____	_____	_____
food	_____	_____	_____	_____
sightseeing	_____	_____	_____	_____
fishing	_____	_____	_____	_____
hospitality	_____	_____	_____	_____
guide	_____	_____	_____	_____
other staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
services in Ft. Liard	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. What are the 3 main changes/ alteration you wish to see which would make your stay more comfortable with us?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

What are the 3 main features you appreciated most?

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

7. Other comments:

8. Would you be willing to have your name and comments used as a reference?
Yes _____ No _____

9. Do you know friends or business associates who may be interested in receiving more information about our river tours?

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ _____ _____ _____	NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ _____ _____ _____	NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ _____ _____ _____
PHONE# _____ FAX# _____	PHONE# _____ FAX# _____	PHONE# _____ FAX# _____

We thank **you** for your time in answering the **questionnaire**- please return it (signed or unsigned) to the manager or guide.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (hm.) _____ (wk) _____ Fax# _____

Thank you. Good Holiday s...and we look forward to hosting you again herein Fort Liard.

Camp Owner/Manager