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***Liard-mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism  
Development & Marketing Strategy***

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**LIARD - MACKENZIE HIGHWAY CORRIDOR  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND  
MARKETING STRATEGY**

**Prepared By**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	
1.1 Overview and Study Objective . . . . .	1-1
<b>2.0 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
2.1 Introduction . . . . .	2-1
2.2 A Tourism Development Strategy Must Provide Direction for the Industry . . . . .	2-1
2.3 The Strategy Should Not be Interpreted as Inflexible . . . . .	2-2
2.4 Summary of Resource and Market Opportunities and Constraints to Future Tourism Development . . . . .	2-2
2.5 Overview of Market Opportunities and Constraints . . . . .	2-4
2.6 Recommended Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy . . . . .	2-6
<b>3.0 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LIARD/ MACKENZIE CORRIDOR</b>	
3.1 Introduction . . . . .	3-1
3.2 More Than Twenty individual Tourism Development Opportunities Have Been identified . . . . .	3-1
3.3 Development Priorities and Phasing . . . . .	3-6
3.4 <b>High</b> Interest Development Opportunities . . . . .	3-11
3.5 Projected <b>Visitation</b> and Economic Benefits . . . . .	3-26
<b>4.0 TOURISM RESOURCE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS</b>	
4.1 introduction . . . . .	4-1
4.2 Summary of Natural Resources . . . . .	4-1
4.3 Summary of Man Made Resources . . . . .	4-3
<b>5.0 TOURISM MARKET ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS</b>	
5.1 Introduction . . . . .	5-1
5.2 <b>Existing</b> Tourism Market Analysis Characteristics - Non Resident Market . . . . .	5-1
5.3 Resident Market . . . . .	5-4
5.4 Trends in <b>N.W.T.</b> Travel Market . . . . .	5-6
5.5 Trends Analysis Global Market . . . . .	5-6
5.6 Travel on the Alaska Highway . . . . .	5-7
5.7 Market Potential for Arctic Destination . . . . .	5-8
5.8 Profile of Existing Travel Markets . . . . .	5-8

# TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page No.
<b>6.0 IMPLICATIONS OF TRAVEL ARCTIC AND TIA</b>	
MARKETING STRATEGIES . . . . .	
6.1 Introduction . . . . .	6-1

# LIST OF EXHIBITS

		Page No.
3.1	Overall Implementation Plan	3-11
3.2	Projected <b>Visitation</b>	3-26

## LIST OF TABLES

		Page No.
5.1	Non-Resident <b>Visitation</b> Characteristics	5-5
5.2	Alaska Highway Two Way Traffic from British Columbia to the Yukon	5-7
5.3	Summary of Potential Outdoor/Future Market for All Canadian Destinations	5-9
5.4	Travel Target Markets for Big River	5-11

# LIARD HIGHWAY AND CORRIDOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview and Study Objective

The tourism industry of the Northwest Territories is the second largest private employer of the Territory. Developments such as completion in the 1960's of the Mackenzie Highway system and dramatic improvements in air service in the 1970's have brought about rapid growth in the N. W. T.. However, only in this decade have government and industry paid serious attention to the maintenance of the tourism sector and its future development.

In 1980, the **first** regional tourism study was undertaken in the Northwest Territories. **This pilot** project, **initiated** by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, was designed to investigate the current state of tourism in the **Baffin** Region. It was also intended to determine feasible future developments for the **region** based upon available resources and the capacity of the area to sustain any growth in tourism.

As a result of **this** exercise of further regional and community level tourism studies were conducted. At the same **time**, Economic Development and Tourism, determined that tourism developments should concentrate on local population **centres**. The **idea** of community-based tourism was a reaction to the **unique** character of the N. W. T.; a vast expanse (3,376,698 square **kilometres**), with few people (51,000), spread out in 66 communities, many of which are only accessible by aircraft. Any tourism development would require a **centre** which is regularly accessible and provides basic services such as lodging and food. Community-based tourism also would ensure a ready supply of guides, outfitters and other tourism services, therefore local employment.

To date the greatest concentration of tourism **activity** in terms of **visitation** to the **N.W.T.** has occurred in the southwest. For example, in 1986, 32,500 non-resident **visitors travelled** to the Fort **Smith** Region. The total number of non-resident **visitors** for that year to the **entire N.W.T.** was 52,000. The relative ease of access **via** the Mackenzie Highway and the **Liard** Highway explains **this** large **visitation** to the region. Fully 34% of these residents who **visited** the Fort **Smith** Region in 1986 **travelled** by

road to all regions of the **N.W.T.** The only other road accessible region, the **Inuvik** Region, received approximately one **third** the number accommodated by the Fort **Smith** Region. (**This region** includes **Yellowknife**, which tends to skew statistics upward for the region. The study area would be better considered as the western half of the **Big River** Travel zone, although statistics for the zone are minimal.)

Road accessibility, particularly with linkages to southern populations (Alberta and British Columbia), has been a major component in the fact that the southwestern corner of the **N. W.T.** (Fort Smith Region) accounts for 62.5% of total tourism visitation to the **N.W.T.** This also explains why existing development has been concentrated in this area. The Fort Smith Region also accounts for the largest percentage (69.4% in 1984) of all pleasure travel to the **N.W.T.** by non-residents. The **Inuvik** Region by comparison is a distant second with only 22.9%. Due to great distances and therefore greater travel costs, business travel outweighs pleasure travel in the other regions.

There is however, disparity in the distribution of tourism visitation and associated tourist expenditures within the Region. The Mackenzie Highway, which connects Alberta with the Northwest Territories was completed in the 1960's. Other highways were developed from it to connect Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Pine Point and Hay River to the main route. Although the Mackenzie Highway extends as far as Fort Simpson in the west, this half of the Fort Smith Region has not experienced the same level of visitation or tourism growth as the eastern half.

Economic Development and Tourism wanted to address this disparity and attempt to enhance the tourism industry in the western half of the Fort Smith Region. The completion of the **Liard** Highway in 1983 linking this area with British Columbia added incentive to this plan.

The **Liard** Highway and Corridor Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy was initiated in 1984. In co-operation with the Big River Travel Association, the Fort Smith regional office of Economic Development and Tourism hired the consulting firm of Marshall **Macklin** Monaghan to carry out the study.

The area under study, approximately 248,013 square kilometres, incorporates the extreme southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories. Nine communities are included in the study area, namely: Fort **Liard**, **Nahanni** Butte, Tungsten, Wrigley, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Trout Lake, Fort Providence and Kakisa.



The consultant was instructed to determine the current state of the tourism industry in the area, assess **existing** levels of visitation, propose means of **improving** the services offered to visitors, and determine how to attract more visitors. Also the consultant was asked to propose feasible developments for the area for the near future based upon the resources the study area possesses.

During the period of the study a number of background reports were submitted respecting the resource and market analysis program undertaken for the assignment. This material also included a summary of the input received from the team's community visits to the Region. This material is incorporated herein as appropriate, for more detailed information the reader should refer to the draft background studies. As the study program progressed select changes were made to the overall work program to reflect evolving conditions in the study area and more particularly the more focussed direction offered by the recommended tourism development strategy.

## 2. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 2.1 Introduction

**This** chapter details the selected tourism development **strategy** for the **Liard** Highway and Corridor Area. The strategy **is** presented in terms of **its** philosophical **intent** and is further detailed in terms of **specific** development and marketing opportunities.

The development strategy selected for the **Liard** study area was based on analysis of the area's current strengths and weaknesses in terms of tourism plant and services, coupled **with** the **review** of current and future market conditions. The following **pages detail this** strategy. Opportunities are presented by broad market type and further elaborated on **with** respect to the **action** required. **This is** particularly relevant **with** respect to firstly, **building** on the **area's existing** strengths/remedying weaknesses and secondly **identifying** new opportunities.

### 2.2 **A** Tourism Development Strategy Must Provide Direction For The Industry

**Prior** to detailing the elements of the recommended strategy, **it is** necessary for the reader to appreciate the need for an overall strategy statement.

**A** tourism development strategy describes a course of action in terms of broad goals and objectives to direct growth and development in the tourism industry. Essentially, it provides a framework of overall purpose to assist in the establishment of priorities for development, program formulation, marketing and management procedures. [It reflects the objectives of both government and the private sector, is sufficiently broad in scope and flexible in approach to accommodate existing conditions, is responsive to a wide variety of short and long term markets and resource development opportunities, and is generally cognizant of local community aspirations and initiatives.

More specifically, from a government perspective, the tourism development strategy should **assist in** directing tourism funding programs, provide long term objectives for the industry, **assist in** directing related **public** sector agency funding programs, **define** areas of **public** and private sector coordination and clearly enunciate public sector policy to the industry.

From a private sector perspective, the tourism strategy should provide a framework to direct and stimulate private sector investment; it should define areas requiring

entrepreneurial **skills** enhancement and **specifically outline** promotional and marketing strategies and targets to meet strategy intent.

The process **utilized** in the formulation of a tourism development strategy **is** a creative and iterative process. It **is** based upon a sound knowledge of the management and operating philosophies of the tourism industry **in** a national/international context - knowing the competition. **This** knowledge **is, in** turn, applied to the specific circumstances of the study area's:

- resources and competing opportunities;
- market and market trends, particularly specialty markets;
- federal, territorial and municipal goals and objectives for tourism;
- future social/travel trends and influences; and
- industry, municipality, public and special interest group concerns and expectations.

### 2.3 The Strategy Should Not Be Interpreted As Inflexible

The strategy proposed for the **Liard** study area defines the **basic policy** direction **within which** the industry can achieve orderly and **realistic** development over **time given** anticipated market conditions. The application of the strategy should, however, be flexible to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. That **is**, the acceptance of the strategy should not **imply** that a development of sufficient **merit** should be rejected **simply** on the **basis of its** perceived **incompatibility with** the overall strategy. **This** would be counter-productive. Certain **shifts** and adjustments may necessarily have to occur **in** the future. The **intent** of strategy acceptance at **this** stage **in** the development of the tourism industry **in** the **Liard** area, **is** to provide consistent but feasible direction to **public** and private sector industry operators and investment interests. As the developments are put **in** place, the strategy, **in** the long term, may change.

### 2.4 Summary of Resource Strengths and Weaknesses

Chapter 4 and supporting documentation noted earlier, **providuan** analysis and associated **implications with** respect to the region's resource opportunities and

constraints to future tourism development. Chapter 5 provides a review of the region's current tourism visitation to the area and possible future tourism market potential.

These are the elements which need to be fully understood prior to the preparation of a responsive tourism development strategy for the **Liard** study area. The following is a point form summary of the primary resource and market conclusions outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

#### 2.4.1- Major Resource Strengths

The **Liard** area offers the allure of a mountainous, wilderness region possesses spectacular scenery. The fact that a highway now carries travelers through this region only highlights its overall value as a major attraction. Other strengths on which the area's tourism industry could build include:

- accessibility to scenic areas
- presence of big rivers with historical significance
- northern environment which is new to most visitors
- the level of current infrastructure and proposals for future development
- significant **cultural/historical** attractions
- combined access provided by two highways allows for **circle** tours
- variety of wildlife

#### 2.4.2- Major Resource Weaknesses

Although the area possess many resources which could easily draw tourism markets, the area is not known to be as readily accessible as it actually is. The entrance to the **Liard** Highway where it meets the Alaska Highway west of Fort Nelson is insignificant. It does not provide a feeling of confidence and security to those who might consider turning onto it. Other constraints which a responsive tourism strategy would need to remedy include:

- traveling through the area involves long distances between **origins** and destinations
- more scenic/interpretive pull-offs are needed on the highways

- much of area falls within the boreal forest zone which is perceived as having less scenic variety than southern forest
- the area lacks in-community attractions and **activities**
- fishing and hunting markets while steady are not strong sectors when compared to other areas
- travel information needs to be revised so that it promotes what the area has to offer in a more comprehensive manner
- **Nahanni** National Park is the **area's** biggest attraction, however, is not currently being promoted to its fullest extent
- accommodation and meals, are both expensive and **limited in** quantity
- few, if any, traditional or northern dishes are offered in the area
- private sector will not develop road-side attractions such as campgrounds, **day-use** areas or interpretive stops because they are non-profit generating developments
- **significant** development is attracted, due to economics, to larger **centres** such as Fort Simpson and Fort Providence, so smaller **centres** can only aspire to spin-off benefits
- services of Big River Travel Association are not well understood and therefore are not utilized to their fullest capacity

## 2.5 Summary of Market Strengths and Weaknesses

### 2.5.1- Strengths

- the Big River/Fort Smith region presently accounts for 62.5% of total N.W.T. visitation
- **existing** visitation to the area is comprised largely of adults aged 40 years and over with household incomes of \$40,000 plus
- **Nahanni** National Park draws approximately 700 **visitors** into the **region** each year
- not having been promoted in the past, and as a relatively new tourism attraction, **Nahanni** National Park shows great potential as an adventure/wilderness destination

- existing network of wholesalers/operators taking trips into Nahanni provide a solid foundation from which to increase future business
- the **Liard Corridor region** allows **visitors** to participate in several types of experiences **including**; the “far north”, the history and culture of the area, as well as the adventure aspect
- the potential **exists** to create a "**circle tour**" of the **Big River** region, with the **possibility** of including **Yellowknife** as a component of **this** tour.
- the region presently offers sufficient **outfitting** services to meet existing demand
- the potential exists for the Liard Highway Corridor to attract rubber-tire visitation traveling along the Alaska Highway between Fort Nelson (B.C.), and the Yukon

#### 2.5.2- Weaknesses

- The limited amount of **existing** community infrastructure **within** the **Liard Highway Corridor** area **limits** overnight **visitations** (particularly at Fort **Liard** and **Nahanni Butte**)
- the bus tour market traveling **into** the area has decreased significantly over the past 6 years
- limited community attractions and events do not induce community based expenditures or motivate increased length of stays
- lack of roadside attractions and services presently does not help attract any "**pass through**" traffic from the surrounding highway network
- neither the fishing nor hunting resources are particularly differentiated from other regions within N. W. T., and therefore these markets are not expected to represent a significant source of visitation
- **while** at the present **time**, approximately 5 operators schedule **trips** into **Nahanni National Park**, the Park has never been promoted or marketed as a unique destination
- overall, the **Big River region** does not **invoke** a particularly differentiated tourism product than presently offered by any of the other regions **within N.W.T.**

## 2.6 Recommended Tourism Development Strategy for **Liard** Highway and Corridor **Area**

The analysis of the study area's current tourism plant and services, natural resources and market strengths and weaknesses clearly indicates that a three-pronged tourism development strategy **is in** order. The **scenic** quality of the **Liard** Highway corridor and its penetration into the natural environment of the Mackenzie Mountains is the strongest of the **area's** attractions; combined with the ready access provided by the highway, the emphasis on rubber-tire traffic becomes overpowering. This is not to suggest that the fly-in trade be ignored. The fly-in trade will become part of the second prong, that of the adventure travel market; much of **this** adventure **is** currently focused **in** the area of **Nahanni** National Park and **will** continue to be **in** future. Finally, there **is** the less **visibly enticing** Mackenzie Highway Corridor **which** constitutes the **third** prong.

### Strategy Intent

The **intent** of proposed tourism development and marketing strategy **is** to put **in** place a prioritized program which:

#### A

- Shifts the focus from the Mackenzie corridor as an entry to the **NWT** to an exit service function.
- Emphasizes the **Liard** Corridor-Mackenzie Mountain Corridor as the primary attraction of the area **with an ability** to draw upon Alaska Highway markets.

#### B

- In support of A above, emphasize and support the adventure travel market use of **Nahanni** Park and the Mackenzie mountains.
- Build on the international image of **Nahanni** Park.

#### C

- Emphasize the Mackenzie Corridor as an exit corridor from the **NWT** by providing after-trip attractions and services in the form of wayside parks, scenic points, food, fuel and accommodation.

**This** strategy recognizes that the primary resource strengths of the study area are **within** the **Liard-Mackenzie** Mountain corridor. By placing public and private sector **priority** in the development of **this** area immediate benefits can be **gained** by **building** on the proximity to the Alaska Highway markets and the “marketing strengths” of **Nahanni** National Park.

**Within this** strategy, the Mackenzie Corridor **is** emphasized as a touring route **with** the Hay **River** area providing a full range of welcomed hospitality services for destination bound visitors. The attached schematic graphically describes the **intent** of the strategy.

#### Strategy Objectives

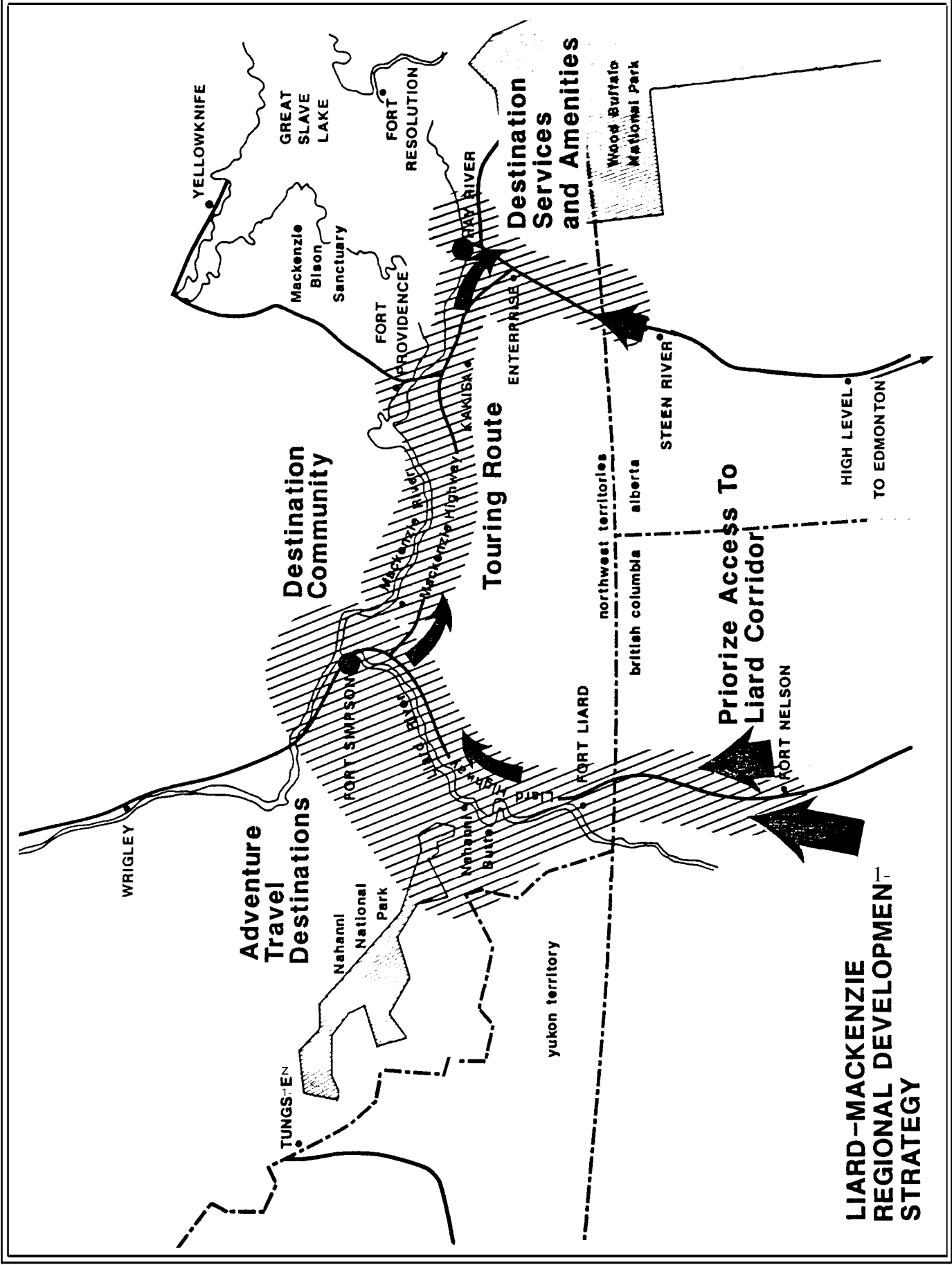
- establish an image and awareness of the Liard/Mackenzie area in the marketplace
- provide attractions and services along access corridors and in area communities in order to enhance visitation and serve visitors
- ensure a scale of development which is in keeping with the area’s accessible northern environment
- development should focus on the **area's** key resources and identified potential to the greatest extent possible
- recognize the current state of the industry and gradually phase in tourism marketing and promotion to establish a destination image for the study area
- help increase the awareness of tourism and the level of hospitality in the Liard study area
- within corridor communities offer services and attractions consistent with **capabilities** of communities to handle **visitors**

In summary, **given** the tourism strengths of the area, the current study maintains that the **Liard/Mackenzie** corridor can capitalize on **its** future growth potential **in** the tourism sector and can sensitively increase **its** tourism market share. **This** can be done, at the same **time** accommodating associated economic impact, **if it** takes a more proactive **position** to tourism industry development. A proactive approach means



increasing market share through the implementation of a tourism development strategy which focuses on:

1. **building** awareness and commitment among local residents and the private sector **with** regard to the benefits and future opportunities of the tourism industry;
2. creating an image in your primary marketplace as "**a** place to visit"; and
3. facilitating the establishment of a tourism plant which is reflective of today's market expectations.



**LIARD-MACKENZIE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY**

### 3. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LIARD/MACKENZIE CORRIDOR

#### 3.1 Introduction

The following pages describe a series of tourism development projects required to implement the intent of the recommended strategy. They are organized so that the three components of the strategy are clearly represented. Therefore, the projects for the **Liard** Highway corridor are presented first, followed by projects specific to the adventure travel market and then projects for the Mackenzie Highway corridor.

#### 3.2 More Than Twenty individual **Tourism Development Opportunities Have Been Identified**

##### 3.2.1- **Significant** Redevelopment of **Alaska/Liard** Intersection

- develop the **Alaska/Liard** intersection as a nodal **point** for the Corridor. **This will** convey to the **traveller** a sense of place, confidence and security to encourage traffic generation **into** the area
- redevelop road surface at intersection by paving for the first 5 kilometres
- establish an unmanned information facility with at least a regional map board at intersection
- once the route becomes better known, develop high quality visitor/interpretive information area. This facility should be manned.

##### 3.2.2- Upgrading Entire **Liard** Highway Corridor Road System

- put in place a more intensive highway maintenance program for the **Liard** Corridor from the **BC.** border to Fort Simpson
- liaison with British Columbia government to upgrade the section of the **Liard** Highway from intersection with Alaska Highway to **N.W.T.** border

##### 3.2.3- Develop Series of Feature Wayside Parks, Stops and Picnic Areas

- with Fort Nelson as a starting point, establish one feature/facility every one to one and a half driving hours apart on route. Points to include on route are; the Fort Nelson River bridge, B. **C./N.W.T.** border, scenic view points or pull-offs, parks etc.

- physical features may be constructed to enhance view/pull-off **points** such as interpretive stops, **viewing** platforms, short trails, etc.

#### **3.2.4- Eco-tour Booklet For Entire Highway System in Study Area**

- develop an eco tour booklet **in** two sections, one for each highway
  - Liard** from Fort Nelson to Fort Simpson
  - Mackenzie from Fort Simpson to **Alberta/N.W.T.** border
- include physical, historical, cultural aspects, background on transportation and resource development
- **as a** result of booklet development, better **signage will** be required on highways not only for general **traveller** information but also for feature interpretation

#### **3.2.5- Development of Visitor Services**

- establish a service **centre** at **Liard** Highway/Fort **Liard** access intersection which provides food, fuel and vehicle repairs
- the **centre** like all other physical developments within this corridor areas should be built around a given architectural/design theme

#### **3.2.6- Development of Northern Rustic Cabins**

- construct a series of rustic log cabins serviced with washrooms and lights, one central bunk house style eating/recreational facility would also be required
- cabins must be established where a view to the mountains is possible. As a supporting recreational feature perhaps even reasonable access to short mountain trails may be developed
- several possibilities exist for locations:
  - Fort **Liard**
  - near **Liard** River along **cutline** at 2nd Gap
  - at Hire North camp
  - at **Blackstone** Park
  - on Edwin **Lindberg's** land beside **Blackstone**
- the scale of accommodation development should keep in mind that 20 to 25 cabins would be needed to service one full tour bus

- cost efficiency of the product should be kept **in mind** - that is facilities should provide the amenities and comforts demanded of a roofed accommodation yet at the same **time** be cost efficient as to be **profit** generating **given** the **limited** occupancy season.

### 3.2.7- Support Park Outfitting Services

- numerous companies provide outfitting services **in** the study area at present. The majority of these **firms outfit** clients who are traveling to **Nahanni** National Park.
- essentially two types of outfitting are offered: delivery and pick-up, and guiding and outfitting. Companies such as Simpson Air, Wolverine Air and Deh Cho Air offer the delivery and pick-up service. Some equipment may also be provided. However, specific packaged experiences with canoeing/kayaking/rafting equipment, food, tents and guides are usually offered by companies specializing in one type of adventure trip. Often the specialized company makes use of the services of air charter companies for pick-up and delivery.
- **in 1986** approximately 720 people **visited Nahanni** National Park. There is potential for much greater **visitation which** means greater opportunity for the existing outfitting companies. One way to increase use of outfitting companies is to **link activities**. For example, area hotels could offer day **trips** to the park for **their** customers **with** one of the **air** charter companies as part of the price of a room for a weekend. In **this** way the charter company **is** insured business and has a better chance of **taking** a full plane. Sport hunting outfitters could offer **their** clients an added bonus by tacking on a **flight** to **Virginia** Falls as part of the quest package. White-water rafting or canoeing outfitters could include a **night** at the Fort Simpson Hotel before and after the **trip** for **their** customer's convenience. In **this** way more business **is** spread throughout the area. Even the charter operators could offer reduced rates on day **visits** or **fly-overs** **during** the **spring** and fall seasons. **This** could provide more needed business **during** slow periods. Local or regional organizations **which** are holding conferences **in** the area could be offered **fly-in trips** as part of the conference package.
- organizing, marketing and reasonable priced packages are the keys to this opportunity. The costs involved would be minimal to the operators. Information leaflets or brochures could be produced for such packages with financial

assistance from **Big River** Travel Association or Economic Development and Tourism.

### **3.2.8- Establish a Naturalist Lodge on Glacier Lake**

- Glacier Lake contain areas of outstanding **scenic** quality as well as mountain **climbing** opportunities.
- further investigation should be undertaken to assess the viability and location of a naturalist lodge at the base of the lake.

### **3.2.9- Access Across Liard River in Area of Second Gap**

- establish rope/pulley ferry at point on shoreline of the river
- develop short duration hiking trails on opposite side of river into the Mountains
- problems in terms of fluctuating water levels, currents and ravages of river ice will need a technical assessment

### **3.2.10- Resource Management Activities to Encourage Wildlife**

- undertake a vegetation management program to establish gathering areas for wildlife along the Highway Corridor.
- develop supplemental feeding programs to ensure a healthy species in study area without **building** dependence on program for species survival

### **3.2.11- Nahanni Butte Campground**

- at present Economic Development and Tourism is assisting the settlement of **Nahanni** Butte develop a campground near the community. The campground, oriented to **river** users leaving **Nahanni** National Park, would be primitive in nature. Individual and group camping areas **with** cleared **sites** for tents, **fire pits**, wood supply, **pit privies**, **picnic** tables and canoe racks would be provided.
- the campground would meet several needs. It would replace the meager facility at the summer Parks Canada warden station on the opposite side of the river. Since the Parks Canada site is being abandoned in favour of a site in the settlement, a campground closer to **Nahanni** Butte makes sense. It would also provide users with easier access to the settlement where basic staples could be obtained at the community store. The campground would also provide a

comfortable location where travelers could rest before they continue down river to **Blackstone** Territorial Park and Fort Simpson. It would also be a convenient location for air charter companies to pick-up clients.

- Complementary development opportunities to this campground development include the development of a craft shop and river taxi operation to carry canoeist from the campground to points down river.
- The craft shop/campground area building should contain comfort/storage facilities for canoeists completing their trip in the **Nahanni**.

### 3.2.12- Fort Simpson as a Destination

- upgrade accommodation and food services to meet bus tour needs
- implement street upgrading or clean-up programs
- develop local attractions focused on:
  - Pope's site
  - waterfront park with riverfront path, benches and historical interpretation
  - cultural events
  - local traditions
  - more visible and active craft shop
  - local foods
- encourage more and better promotion of outfitting services in community for visitors looking for interesting trips to surrounding countryside

### 3.2.13- Trips to Nahanni National Park

- there are two **basic** forms of **visitation** to **Nahanni** National park at present: outdoor adventure and day **trips**. Outdoor adventure **trips** (which produced 464 overnight visits in 1986) include such activities as: canoeing, kayaking, **white-water** rafting, hiking, and mountain climbing. Day trips consist of fly-in visits to Virginia Falls, the hotsprings or fly-overs of river canyons and mountain peaks.
- it is evident that other interest groups, if offered the right kind of experience, would also visit the Park. These groups include: geologists/rock hounds, outdoor and wildlife photography enthusiasts, nature lovers, people interested in caves (speleology) and history buffs. Many of these people have neither the stamina nor the interest in a three-week canoe trip through narrow canyons and over treacherous to venture into the Park to catch a **flimpse** of Dan sheep, bathe in

the **hotsprings**, see <sup>(-</sup>**rare** plant species or learn on-site the legends of the Headless Valley. **With** proper packaging, information booklets, proper equipment and food, and knowledgeable guides on hand such **trips** could be promoted.

- well known experts could be invited to host one or two trip for specialized groups. For example, well known photographers like Freeman Patterson or Fred **Bruemmer** could be invited to escort groups of amateur natural landscape or wilderness photographers to parts of the Park. Wildlife experts such as George **Calef** could be involved in wilderness tours. No matter what the possibilities, co-ordination would have to occur among Parks Canada, Economic Development and Tourism and local outfitters.

#### 3.2.14- Continue Outfitting/Fly-in Services

- while **Nahanni** National Park is the focus of most of the outfitting/fly-in activity, other areas also receive some visitation. These other areas should also be promoted more aggressively and packaged more effectively. One example where this has occurred is the case of Simpson Air. The company flies clients into Little Doctor Lake and provides cabins for periodic stays. Spectacular scenery and wildlife are not restricted to **Nahanni** National Park. The Ram Range and Plateau east of the Park are also very scenic and sightseeing flights are available to these areas. Similarly, areas where sports hunting takes place in the Mackenzie Mountains may also be of interest to area visitors.

Companies interested in attracting more business would be well-advised to offer detailed information brochures which indicate areas they can reach, what the customer can expect to see, rates for each type of flight and duration. Often it is only a case of lack of information that keeps visitors from taking advantage of the "workhorses of the North".

#### 3.2.15- Establish a Territorial Park in the <sup>Ram</sup>Lann River Plateau Area

- the unique natural, geologic and scenic features of the Ram Plateau and North **Nahanni** watershed area should be protected through the designation of a select portion of the area as a territorial park. The implementation of this opportunity would require a more detailed analysis to determine boundary location.
- within the territorial park trails and other related tourist facilities including accommodation should be sensitively developed. As above, the latter would



require more detailed analysis to determine the location and intent of development. Development location should 1) provide access to the key features of the area, while protecting the integrity of the resource, and 2) identify the role of Little Doctor Lake in the development and access to the area.

### 3.2.16- Develop New Outfitting Opportunities

- while **Nahanni** National Park holds potential for greater visitation there are parts of the study area which have gone unnoticed too long. Rivers such as the Root, Redstone and North **Nahanni** could be developed as canoeing, kayaking and/or rafting trip alternatives. While perhaps not as spectacular as the South **Nahanni** River, they could offer quieter opportunities for users to "**get back to nature**" without having to contend with the ever increasing traffic of the South **Nahanni**. The Willowlake River provides another choice with its slower speed and interesting history related to native people and the expansion of the fur trade. The growing interest in the **Canol** pipeline route is another opportunity upon which air charter companies can capitalize. Interpretive materials are available on the trail and development of hiker facilities is planned in the near future.
- for river outfitting some initial investigation of routes, places to start and finish, overnight stops and interpretation would be required. It is anticipated that a canoe or kayaking excursion could be started for \$40,000 to \$50,000. A whitewater rafting company would likely have to invest approximately \$90,000, due to higher equipment costs, to get started. These costs assume companies would rely upon existing air charter companies to get clients to and from the rivers.

### 3.2.17- Short Term Boat/Barge Excursions

- develop short term boat/barge excursion trips between Fort Simpson and Jean Marie River
- keep trips to one day, with morning departure from Fort Simpson for Jean Marie River, have brief tour of settlement, lunch and return to Simpson by boat
- develop individual boat excursions on Mackenzie or Liard rivers, incorporating stop at traditional camp, shore lunch of traditional foods

- more developed excursion to Jean **Marie River** could occur once road access is developed **in which** boat **trip** occurs one way and **drive** back or on to next destination from Jean **Marie River**.

### 3.2.18- Develop Stops Along Mackenzie Highway

- the stretch of highway between the **Liard/Mackenzie** highways intersection and the junction of Highway #3 and the Mackenzie Highway is long and generally uninspiring. The only break in the journey is the territorial park at **Whittaker Falls**, 87 **kilometres** from the **Liard/Mackenzie** intersection.
- **Whittaker Falls** Territorial Park offers 13 campsites and a day-use area on the south **side** of the highway. To the north an informal **trail** follows part of the Trout **River** to the **brink** of **Whittaker Falls**. Further development of the trail at **Whittaker Falls** and upstream to Coral Falls, a **kilometre** away, **is** advised. Proper safety precautions and interpretive **signs** would also help the **site**.
- there are two other locations along the highway where interpretive stops could be developed. Further investigation would be required to determine which site is most feasible. At a point 115 **kilometres** from the **Liard/Mackenzie** intersection the highway drops about 9 metres in elevation. Just at the top edge of the drop the opportunity exists to establish a viewpoint which provides a panorama to the east. This would allow travelers an opportunity to view the surrounding countryside while resting, having a bite to eat or making use of the toilet facilities provided on site.

### 3.2.19- Fort Providence

- this community **is** best suited to service travelers on way to or on way back from **Yellowknife**
- **as** service centered **community**, should **maintain** and upgrade destination amenities - food, fuel, accommodation and outfitting services
- a small scale interpretive **facility** should be established **in** community **which** would discuss history of community, exploration of Mackenzie **River** as route to Arctic **Ocean**, bison sanctuary, etc.

3.2.20- Provide Exit Services at 60th Parallel/Enterprise

- provide services for people leaving **N.W.T.** who entered from **Liard** Highway. Services such as:
  - showers
  - last chance for crafts, books, souvenirs
  - information on route south
- also continue to serve people entering **N.W.T.** at this point
- Consideration should be given to moving the current visit **centre** to Enterprise at the exit/entry point to Hay River. The decision to move will depend on the costs of a new development versus upgrading of the existing **centre**

3.2.21- **Hay River**

- Hay River currently functions as service **centre** for travelers who have entered **N.W.T.** from Alberta
- as part of the strategy, Hay River should provide overnight “end-of-the-trip” destination services for bus tour groups and individual travelers who entered **N.W.T.** on **Liard** route

3.2.22- image Creation and Marketing for Study Area

- devise an attractive name for study area which evokes wide interest such as “Mysterious **Nahanni**” or “Elusive **Liard**”
- build upon national image associated with **Nahanni** National Park in regional marketing programs
- embark on a more aggressive marketing campaign including the producing of marketing brochures and conducting direct approaches/sales to tour companies in same way as the Keewatin Zone is currently doing
- develop additional packaged trips including accommodation, a few day trips and tours of attractions

### 3.2.23- Organization

- establish a Fort Nelson, Fort **Liard**, Nahanni Butte, and Fort Simpson tourism marketing co-operative designed to aggressively market the strengths of this Corridor but **co-ordinated** with Big River Travel association

### 3.3 Development Priorities and Phasing

To provide an overview as to the priority and budgeting requirements for the development and implementation of the forementioned tourism development strategies, exhibit 3-1 has been provided on the following pages.

It should be pointed out that this exhibit was constructed to help further illustrate the need for specific tourism developments and the overall scheme of the suggested **Liard/Mackenzie** corridor tourism development strategy.

To facilitate this chart's construction, three assumptions were made and built into this exhibit. These assumptions are:

#### 1. **Phasing Priority**

Development priorities have been established within a ten year span with immediate priority given to developments undertaken within a '0-3 year' period. Secondary and tertiary priorities have been established for those strategic goals required within a 4-6 year, and 7-10 year time frame.

Criteria for prioritization was based on implementing those tourism developments which needed to be put in place before others can proceed, yet which would have significant impact to upgrade the **Liard/Mackenzie** corridor tourism plant almost immediately upon implementation.

It should be noted that time-frames for strategic implementation often deviate from schedule as circumstances change based on uncontrollable variables like availability of public sector funding, private sector interest, change in market demands and competing opportunities and/or investment opportunity.

## 2. Initiating Bodies

Agencies or bodies nominated to take responsibility for development of given tourism resources have been so named because they have by their mandate primary responsibility for initiating development implementation. However, these bodies do not necessarily provide the full responsibility for all related planning, development or operational activities.

## 3. Order of Magnitude Costs

Capital costs related to the noted tourism development are based on "Order of Magnitude Costs". That is to say that costs noted on **Exhibit 3-1** have been derived from a standard **unitbasis** as opposed to detailed construction estimates **which** would be impossible to calculate at **this** stage of planning.

Costs have been included within this exhibit to better illustrate the scope of development envisioned and will be further detailed when plans and/or feasibility studies are undertaken for specific development proposals.

### 3.4 High Interest Development Opportunities

**As** part of the overall implementation program, we have identified more than twenty tourism development opportunities to achieve the objective of:

To identify the **Liard** corridor as a legitimate alternative to the Mackenzie corridor as the sole means of access to the southwestern N. W. T.. In the long term the **Liard** area will grow to become a destination unto itself for specialized utilization.

From these twenty-three components of the tourism development strategy, five have been highlighted. These five "high interest" development opportunities were selected to be outlined in further details because they provide to be cornerstones to the overall tourism development strategy for the **Liard** corridor. Namely for their:

- overall **positive** contribution to the **intent** of the corridor plan
- strong market needs and demands
- local interest **in** development
- perceived investors (public/private sector) interest **in** the opportunity

## OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Development Opportunities	Phasing Priority (Years)			Initiating Bodies	Order-of-Magnitude Cost
	0-3	4-6	7-10		
1. Upgrade entire Liard Highway Corridor Road Surface			*	Public Works and Highways	\$3 million
2. Redevelopment of Alaska/Liard Intersection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- road paving</li> <li>- unmanned facility</li> <li>- manned centre</li> </ul>	*	*		Dept. of Highways, B.C. Economic Development Economic Development	\$ .75 to \$3.75 million \$100,000 \$500,000 Total: \$4.375 million
3. Develop Series of Feature Wayside Parks, Stops and Picnic Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- B.C./N.W.T. border</li> <li>- viewing platform</li> <li>- Nelson River Bridge</li> <li>- Second platform</li> </ul>	*	*		Economic Development Economic Development Economic Development Economic Development	\$150,000 \$85,000 \$30,000 \$85,000 Total: \$350,000
4. Eco-tour Booklet	*			Economic Development/ Big River Travel Assn.	\$50,000
5. Visitor Services at Ford Liard	*			Economic Development/ private sector	\$3.7 million
6. Northern Rustic Cabins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- site development</li> <li>- cabins</li> <li>- dining/rec. facility</li> </ul>		*	*	Private Sector Private Sector Private Sector	\$70,000 \$500,000 \$200,000 Total: \$770,000
7. Support Park Outfitting Services	*			Private Sector	
8. Access Across Liard River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rope pulley ferry</li> <li>- hiking trails (\$3 per linear metre)</li> </ul>		*	*	Economic Development Economic Development	\$100,000 \$15,000 - \$30,000 Total: \$130,000
9. Establish naturalist lodge on Glacier Lake facilities	*			Private Sector	\$15,000

**EXHIBIT 3-1**  
**OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Development Opportunities	Phasing Priority (Years)			Initiating Bodies	Order-of-Magnitude cost
	0-3	4-6	7-10		
10. Resource Management to Encourage Wildlife	*			Renewable Resources/ Economic Development	\$60,000
11. Nahanni Butte Campground/Craft Facility	*			Economic Development	<b>\$150,000-\$200,000</b>
12. Fort Simpson as a Destination street cleaning/upgrading upgrade accommodation - develop local attractions	*	* *		Community Private Sector Community/Big River Travel Assn.	\$60,000 <b>\$750,000</b> <b>\$75,000</b>
13. Trips to Nahanni National Park interpretive brochure	*			Parks Canada/Economic Development	<b>\$75,000</b>
14. Continue Outfitting/Fly-In Services	*			Private Sector	
15. Establish Territorial Park in Ram Plateau - feasibility study	*	*		Economic Development Private Sector	<b>\$75,000</b>
16. Develop New Outfitting Opportunities two canoe operations one raft operation		* *		Private Sector Private Sector	\$60,000 <b>\$95,000</b> Total: <b>\$255,000</b>
17. Short Term Boat/Barge Excursions 1 day trips to Jean Marie River general boat excursions boat/road combination (does not include cost of road)	* *	*		Private Sector Private Sector Private Sector	\$60,000 <b>\$80,000</b> <b>\$60,000</b> Total: <b>\$200,000</b>
18. Develop Stops Along Mackenzie Highway upgrade Whittaker Falls - develop second site		* *		Economic Development Economic Development	\$30,000 <b>\$60,000</b> Total: <b>\$90,000</b>

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Development Opportunities	Phasing Priority (Years)			Initiating Bodies	Order-of-Magnitude Cost
	0-3	4-6	7-10		
19. Fort Providence - upgrade services - interpretive facility	*			Private Sector Economic Development	\$150,000 \$100,000 Total: \$250,000
20. Exit Services at 60th Parallel		*		Economic Development	\$100,000
21. Hay River - establish as final destination - signage - information services		*		Community/Big River Travel Assn Economic Development/Big River	\$100,000 \$15,000 Total: \$65,000
22. Image Creation and Marketing - campaign/brochures - packaged trips	*			Economic Development/Big River	\$200,000 \$50,000 Total: \$250,000
23. Organization - co-operative marketing	*			Big River/Communities	\$75,000



Based on this criteria the following projects were identified as "high interest" opportunities.

- redevelopment of **Liard/Alaska** intersection
- series of wayside stops and picnic areas on **Liard** Highway
- rustic cabins near **Liard** River with access across river
- development of Fort Simpson as a destination
- continue existing fly-in services and develop new ones

These high interest opportunities are detailed, where appropriate in the terms of:

- project description
- operational characteristics
- order of magnitude costs
- typical benefits
- implementation action

#### 3.4.1- Significant Redevelopment of the **Liard/Alaska** Intersection

##### a) Project Description

There are essentially three elements involved **in this** particular opportunity. **First** and foremost the physical appearance of the entrance to the **Liard** Highway requires some major changes. It needs a sense of place, arrival and anticipation. It must **instill** a feeling of confidence and security **in the traveller. Visitors** must be reassured that services and attractions occur up the road. **This** can be done by establishing proper **signs** at the entrance to the highway as well as **indicating** the services available **in** the travel literature distributed by Travel Arctic.

However, the appearance of the road also needs upgrading. It is necessary to undertake, with the cooperation of the Department of Highways in British Columbia, redevelopment of the road surface beginning at the intersection and continuing for the first one to five kilometres. For best overall results with regards to having an impact on the potential **traveller**, road resurfacing should use an asphalt material.

In the initial stages, while numbers of visitors traveling this route are still low, an unmanned information facility at the junction would be necessary. Provision

of a regional map board at the site would also provide valuable information on the route ahead.

Once the route becomes better known, a high quality visitor/interpretive information facility could be developed in place of the unmanned facility. The site could also provide a day-use area with parking for highway users. A high profile **centre** would act as an attraction unto itself and would create a better image for the highway north.

b) Operational Characteristics

The intersection road upgrading is straight forward. A cooperative arrangement would have to be established between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of the Province of British Columbia.

The unmanned information facility would entail a covered display map of the route with points of interest indicated as well as available services. Information in the form of road maps, regional brochures and the Explorer's Guide could be available in pamphlet holders. The facility would have to be situated at a point where parking could be provided for travelers} including space for cars, campers, motor coaches and trucks.

A manned facility would involve more space for an associated day-use area and likely a larger parking area. The **centre** itself would require space for display areas, open lobby area, information counter, storage and washrooms. It would be a seasonal facility.

Both the unmanned facility and the manned **centre** could be operated by the private sector on an **annual** contract basis. Only occasional maintenance and upkeep would be required for the unmanned facility.

c) Order of Magnitude Costs

• Highway entrance signage	\$25,000
• Resurfacing	\$3.75 million (5 km)
• Unmanned facility	\$100,000
• Manned <b>centre</b>	\$500,000
Total Capital Cost	\$4,375,000

## d) Typical Benefits

In addition to the number of jobs generated from road work and sign installation, construction of the unmanned facility would also generate employment opportunities. The larger manned information **centre** would generate construction employment as well as staffing positions once completed.

The greater benefit will be the improved image of the **Liard** Highway as a route to the Northwest Territories. This in turn will lead to increased visitor use of this route. This will bring more visitors into the western part of the **N.W.T.** and therefore offer more opportunity for tourism-related businesses. A conservative estimate of traffic on the Alaska Highway indicated that 102,203 people passed the entrance to the **Liard** Highway in 1985. [f the equivalent of one percent of that volume could be drawn up the **Liard** Highway (1,022 travelers) highway use would double.

## e) Implementation Action

The highway improvements, signs and paving have to occur first to establish a visual presence for the highway. Within the first three years some form of an unmanned information **centre** must also be in place to offer the potential **traveller** some indication of the route ahead and services available. [t then depends upon the rate of use as to when a manned **centre** would be contemplated.

**3.4.2-** Development Series of Feature Wayside Parks, Stops and Picnic Areas

## a) Project Description

With Fort Nelson as the starting point, establish one feature, stop or picnic facility every one to one and a half hours apart on the route. This would include the Nelson River bridge, the B. C./N. **W.T.** border, and any other scenic views, pull-offs or parks. These features could include interpretive stops, viewing platforms to see the Mackenzie Mountains to the west of the highway or short walking trails. During field work for this study several points were identified for just such development.

The intent of these features is to break up a long drive with stops of interest. These provide the **traveller** with the opportunity to view the country he or she is

traveling through. They also offer a chance to rest a sore back, get a breath of fresh air without dust or capture a spectacular mountain chain on film.

b) Operational Characteristics

Economic Development and Tourism would have to finance the development of the stops, viewpoints and parks proposed. Some sites will require more development and therefore more capital than others. For example, the current pull-off at the Nelson River bridge could be used. All that would be required would be some day-use furniture (picnic tables, trash bins and outhouses), since the access road and parking area are in place. Interpretive signs should also be installed. However, at the B. C./N. **W.T.** border more development is anticipated. Included at this site would be a day-use area as well as some form of information **centre** for new arrivals to the **N.W.T.** Such infrastructure would be more costly. Similarly, a few sites were identified as having potential for viewing platforms to provide better views of the Mackenzie Mountains along the highway. At these sites, areas would have to be cleared for the platforms and day-use areas. Infrastructure such as toilets would also have to be installed.

For any development at the Nelson River bridge, agreement would have to be reached between the Governments of B.C. and the **N.W.T.** since the site is in B.C.. Nevertheless, it would benefit both areas to provide quality facilities to potential visitors.

Maintenance of the developed sites could be managed through annual contracts with local individuals or development corporations.

c) Order of Magnitude Costs

Costs would range from \$30,000 for work at the Nelson River bridge, to \$150,000 for the proposed development at the B. C./**N.W.T.** border. The viewing platforms and associated day-use areas would conceivably cost approximately \$75,000 to \$85,000. For the development of four sites, total capital costs could reach **\$350,000.**

Operation and maintenance costs would vary for each site depending upon the amount of infrastructure.

## d) Typical Benefits

During the construction phase of these developments a number of jobs will be available for local contractors and **labourers**. As noted earlier maintenance contracts will also offer benefits to a few individuals. In the longer term, the provision of such facilities will encourage visitors to take breaks during their drive and take in the scenery and features around them. Rather than try to complete the eight hour trip from Fort Nelson to Fort Simpson in one marathon leg, it is expected visitors will be more inclined to stop and visit communities along the way. The longer a journey the better the opportunity for local tourist operators to obtain tourist expenditures.

## e) Implementation Action

**All** sites should not be developed at once. Instead they should be phased in over time. The B. C./N. **W.T** border should be one of the first sites developed. It can service existing travelers and provide a positive image for the Northwest Territories as people cross the 60th parallel.

At least one other site should also be developed in the first three years of implementing this plan. Since the drive north of Fort **Liard** passes close to the Mackenzie Mountains travelers should be afforded an opportunity to view these spectacular mountains. Therefore, a viewing platform should be developed with a day-use area at one of the potential sites north of Fort **Liard**.

**As** traffic volumes on the **Liard** Highway gradually increase, other sites can be developed. The additional sites would shorten the distance between potential stops offering visitors more opportunities for breaks and more chances to see the area they are traveling through. Ultimately, in four to six years, all of the sites needed to provide breaks every one and a half hours would be in place.

### 3.4.3 Development of Northern Rustic Cabins

## a) Project Description

The intent of this project is to construct a series of serviced rustic log cabins (services refers to water, sewage and power) for bus tour groups and the general interest **traveller**. Each cabin would be capable of accommodating two people.

A central bunk house style eating/recreational facility would also be built to serve as the dining and entertainment **centre**.

In order to provide a unique experience for these road travelers the cabins would have to be established where views to the Mackenzie Mountains are possible. One such site along the highway which offers the right characteristics is at the Second Gap. Access to the **Liard** River should be provided with the opportunity to cross the river and hike into the foothills close by.

In order to service one full tour bus at least 20 to 25 cabins would be needed. Since many tour bus travelers are older adults, developments would have to be sensitive to their needs and physical capabilities for example for river access or method of crossing the river and hiking on the other side would have to be relatively easy.

b) Operational Characteristics

With the advent of better quality conditions on the **Liard** Highway, provision of reliable service and development of more points of interest, tour bus companies will make use of the highway more frequently. One of the natural charms of the highway is its proximity to the Mackenzie Mountains. However, at present there are few points from which to view the mountains let alone access them easily.

The development of cabins near an access point would provide visitors who otherwise cannot get near the mountains to have at least a chance to appreciate them close up. The cabins should also be used in the shoulder seasons for hikers, cross-country skiers or nature lovers who wish to be near the mountains without having to be airlifted to them.

Initially, at least, the accommodation would be basic and meals would reflect this as well. Traditional northern cooking might be offered to customers by local cooks. Box lunches could be provided for bus tour groups traveling on from the site or for people venturing along trails developed for hiking.

Further investigation would be required to determine the feasibility of a river crossing system on the **Liard** River. Some form of a rope pulley barge might be possible. However, conditions of the river shoreline, potential impact of currents

and ice formation and movement in winter would have to be studied. Routes for trails in the foothills would also have to be scouted out.

c) Order of Magnitude Costs

The cost of developing 20 to 25 cabins of a rustic nature would be approximately \$25,000 each, without electricity and running water. Therefore 20 cabins **would** cost about \$500,000. Electricity could be provided by gas powered generators. Overall site development for the cabin setting would cost about \$30,000. A bunk house style eating/recreational facility for 40 to 50 people could cost an additional \$200,000. Parking and an access road into the site selected would be additional, perhaps \$40,000.

Where a river crossing system is installed and trails developed additional costs will occur. A river crossing system pulley barge could cost \$150,000. Trail development would vary in costs depending upon the terrain in which it is being developed. However, assuming uniform conditions a five kilometre trail would cost approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Total capital outlay to establish cabins, river crossing and trails would be about **\$940,000**. This is exclusive of land acquisition, electrical hookup and water system installation. Design costs for this development would range between 8-12%.

The following provides some idea of operating revenue generated from such an operation:

	<b>At 100% Occupancy</b>	<b>At 60% Occupancy</b>	<b>At 50% Occupancy</b>
Guests/day	40	24	20
Rate/guest	\$100	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Total days</b>	<b>107*</b>	107	107
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$428,000</b>	<b>\$256,800</b>	<b>\$214,000</b>

\* Assumes all of June, July and August, and 15 days in September.

The figure selected for accommodation rates is based on accommodation and at least dinner and breakfast. By comparison with existing facilities in the study area the amount of \$100 may appear low. However, it was felt that the type of accommodation might not warrant the same cost as full blown hotels or motels.

In terms of operating expenses the following is provided as a guideline:

<b>Item</b>	<b>cost</b>
<b>Manager</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Cook</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Housekeeping</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>13,000</b>
<b>Advertising and Promotion</b>	<b>50,000</b>
Expediting	<b>14,000</b>
<b>Annual set-up</b>	<b>8,000</b>
<b>Licence Fees</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Legal/audit</b>	<b>3,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>

In summary even at only 50% occupancy there would be an annual cash flow of \$54,000 prior to — servicing. At full occupancy the annual cash flow would be \$268,000. Other items have not been factored into these calculations such as food costs, the cost of debt servicing and revenues which could be generated if the facility operated in the shoulder seasons. Nonetheless this estimate provides some general figures to assist in determining the revenues and expenses related to such a project.

d) Typical Benefits

Construction of cabins and related infrastructure would provide numerous jobs. Development of a river crossing and the brushing and installation of trails would also provide employment opportunities. Once the facilities were established, a number of positions would be available in terms of operation and maintenance.



The revenue generated from the operation would also be a benefit to the local economy in terms of purchase of supplies for the facility.

e) Implementation Action

It is not anticipated that such a development would occur in the first years of the plan. Rather the condition of the **Liard** Highway would have to be improved to create better driving conditions for bus tour groups. Also, the **installation** of several point of interest stops would improve traveling conditions for such groups.

The cabin complex should be installed first, perhaps four to six years after implementation of the plan began. Once the cabins are established, development of a river crossing system and trails could occur. In the interim it might be possible to develop access to the **Liard** River and instigate short boat trips in the vicinity.

3.4.4- Fort Simpson **as a** Destination

a) Project Description

In order to present the community of Fort Simpson as a destination for the **traveller**, the community must be presented as offering a range of activities, entertainment and things to discover. A number of actions can be taken to create this image.

It will be necessary to offer various forms of entertainment for visitors. Therefore, local attractions such as the site of the Popets visit, the waterfront park with walking path at the top of the river bank, historic buildings and other features need development and interpreted. Cultural events and tradition should be established during the summer months and made more visible to the visitor. Native arts and crafts should receive a higher profile including northern foods being offered in some of the food establishments in the community.

The local outfitting services, especially the air charter companies are a unique feature of the community. Their use by visitors should be promoted more actively. The idea of a half day trip by charter aircraft should become one of the **"things to do"** while in **town**.

A program of accommodation and food services upgrading should be initiated to give the community a more hospitable appearance. A general street **clean-up**/community beautification would also enhance the welcome visitors appreciate.

b) **Operational Characteristics**

Much of the work involved in this project would fall on the shoulders of the private sector. However, it would be necessary for some form of co-ordination to bring all the various groups on track. If only one or two businesses upgrade their store fronts, but the remainder do not, the overall effect is lost. Perhaps through contribution grants from the Big River Travel Association priority funds or funds accessed through Economic Development and Tourism, a full community beautification project can be launched with full participation.

Improvements to existing and development of new attractions or local sites of significance can be funded through other Government programs. Historic plaques or interpretive signs can also be installed through assistance from the Northern Heritage Centre and Economic Development and Tourism.

Better promotion of business services such as air charter companies is really a responsibility of the individual operator. However, priority funds are available for zone members through the Big River Travel Association for brochure development, attendance at consumer shows and other forms of promotion.

c) **Order of Magnitude Costs**

It is difficult to place exact figures on the proposed improvements and developments suggested in this project. Community/street upgrading or clean-up could range from simply cutting the grass along the , roadside to cement sidewalks, new store fronts and interpretive signs. Costs could therefore range from \$5,000 to \$500,000.

Improvements to some of the visitor facilities could be very expensive. Upgrading of the Fort Simpson Hotel could entail a minimum of \$500,000.

The development of new local attractions, such as a community tour could cost \$5,000 to put in place. Similarly, \$5,000 could be spent adding park benches,

playground equipment and outhouses at the site of the Popets visit. Improvements to the trail along the top of the bank of the Mackenzie River could cost **\$5,000 to \$10,000.**

**A very** rough estimate of costs for such community improvements could reach \$1.5 million. This would include brochures for the community tour, visitor services and trips offered by air charter companies.

d) Typical Benefits

Beyond the benefits provided by the jobs generated by street clean-up and upgrading, such an exercise would get the local people involved in improving the condition and image of their community. The improved image would also enhance tourists impression of the community and encourage them to stay longer or return again.

Improvements in services which tourists use would also benefit the **local** population which makes use of the same services. Better promotion and providing a range of things for visitors to do improves the business opportunities for local operators.

e) Implementation Action

Improvements to the physical condition of the community is the first priority. When visitors enter a new and strange community they judge its character by its looks. If the streets are dirty, with papers blowing all over the place, tall grass growing at the side of the street and store fronts giving the impression that the business might be abandoned, tourists will not be inspired to stay for an extended visit. Beautifying the physical appearance of the community will encourage longer visitor stays.

Local attractions and events have to be developed and promoted. Visitors to any community want an opportunity to discover the character of the community and to meet the local people. If there is nothing to entice visitors out of their hotel room they will not venture out and may also not extend their visit.

**As** the condition of the Liard Highway improves, more bus tours can be expected. That means more pressure on the existing operators to offer package rates to this

form of clientele. It will also mean more pressure on the operators to upgrade their facilities to meet the expectations of this type of visitor.

### **3.4.5- Continue Outfitting/Fly-in Services and Develop New Ones**

#### a) Project Description

The intent of this project is not only to provide continuing service to the regular clientele such as: canoeists, hikers, climbers, campers, and wilderness buffs, but also to develop other types of experiences to capture new markets. One way is to develop trips to cater to specialty markets such as individuals interested in geology, rock hounding, viewing wildlife, nature photography, discovering the diversity of plant life in **Nahanni** National Park, experiencing life on the land as the natives have for centuries, or following the footsteps of early fur traders and European explorers. Specific packages can be put together to satisfy any of these interests. Knowledgeable guides, an informative brochure and the right location can form the basis of a very satisfying experience.

New canoeing, kayaking and whitewater rafting routes are available on area rivers such as the Root, Redstone, Willowlake and North **Nahanni** Rivers. For those individuals who may feel that the "traffic" is becoming too thick on the South **Nahanni** River one of these alternatives may bring them back to nature.

To provide more diversity in the areas which can be visited for a half day fly-over sites outside of **Nahanni** National Park may be equally as attractive to tourists. For example, the Ram Plateau provides spectacular scenery and opportunities for viewing wildlife from the air. Hikers interested in alternatives to the steep canyons of **Nahanni** National Park may wish to be flown to a point on the **Canol** Heritage Hiking Trail for a walk in history and fantastic scenery on a different scale.

#### b) Operational Characteristics

Preliminary investigation of these opportunities is required to determine the feasibility of development and the logistics involved in setting up a particular trip. Although the individual operator is the most capable in determining if a particular spot is worth making use of, assistance is available for funding through Big River Travel Association priority funds (for zone members only) and various

Government funding programs. Economic Development and Tourism, through Regional Tourism Officers and Area Economic Development Officers, could assist operators access funds from these sources.

c) Order of Magnitude Costs

In order to develop a canoeing or kayaking trip on the Root, Redstone or **Willowlake** Rivers an operator can expect to spend about \$80,000 for equipment and start-up. This would not include the cost of an aircraft if the operator intended to be self-sufficient. The costs associated with a white-water rafting excursion would be more, about **\$95,000**, due to the more expensive equipment involved. Operating costs, including expediting, supplies and salaries would add to the total financial outlay.

[n order, for example, to fly six people and three canoes return to the head of the Redstone River by twin otter the cost would be \$4,400.00.

The following provides an example of the likely revenues which could be expected from a canoeing outfitting operation on the Redstone River.

	<b>At 100% Occupancy</b>	<b>At 60% Occupancy</b>	<b>At 50% Occupancy</b>
<b>Guests/trip</b>	6	4	3
<b>Rate/guest</b>	\$1000	\$1000	\$1000
<b>Total trips</b>	23	23	23
<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$138,000	\$92,800	\$69,000

\* Each trip would involve four days and assuming an operating season of 92 days that would allow 23 trips.

Anticipated operating expenses would include the following:

Item	cost
Manager	\$15,000
Guides (2)	20,000
Equipment, including 3 canoes	20,000
Insurance	2,000
Advertising and Promotion	20,000
Annual Licence fee	200
Legal/Audit	1,000
Annual set-up	3,000
Food, assuming \$10/person/day, including guides	8,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$92,500</b>

Therefore, at 100% occupancy the operation would generate an annual cash flow of \$45,000. At 60% occupancy there would be a net cash outlay of \$500. At 50% occupancy that net cash outlay reaches \$23,500. The cost of the air charter into the area would be included in the price to the customer.

For fly-in or fly-over trips the only costs which an existing operator would have to incur would be fuel costs and the normal operating and maintenance costs of the aircraft. Revenues would be based on the distance flown and the type of aircraft required. The larger the group, the larger the aircraft required. However, with more people the price each per person must pay can be reduced.

For four people to hire an aircraft for a fly-over of part of the Ram Plateau a fare of \$300.00 would be charged. This would work out to a rate of \$75.00 per person.

d) Typical Benefits

Although such a project will not generate numerous jobs it will help existing businesses. It may, over the long term, even provide the opportunity for new businesses to start.

The more visible benefits will be the increased number of people taking advantage of the outfitting services. This in turn will mean more people coming into the community who will buy meals, rooms, **crafts**, supplies, film and other goods that tourists will need during their visit. The added business will help the local businessmen and inject more money into the local economy.

e) Implementation Action

The sensible way to proceed is to develop a few alternative trips for the short term. As visitation and demand increases more trips should be developed to cater to more interests. A large capital outlay in the early stages could prove disastrous due to lack of use from a very limited market.

The development of specialized trips hosted by experts in a certain field (wildlife photography, geology or northern botany) would also help to raise the attention of specific interest groups in such trips. Adding one day excursions to the beginning or end of conferences held in the community would help to inform people of the many trips available and sights to be seen.

### **3.5 Projected Visitation and Economic Benefits**

#### **3.5.1- Visitation**

Based upon the market analysis undertaken for the area, the marketing and development proposals in this strategy and the experience of other similar destination areas the following exhibit suggests a “possible visitation scenario” for the Liard - Mackenzie Corridor given a number of basic assumptions.

**EXHIBIT 3-2**  
**VISITATION SCENARIO - LIARD MACKENZIE CORRIDOR<sup>1</sup>**  
**(VISITORS)**

	98	988	989	990	99	992	993	994	995	996
<b>A o a d</b>	00	00	00	00	00	4 00	6 00	8 00	0 00	0 06
<b>A M k</b>	0 00	0 8	0	4	68	996	0	6	99	
<b>Ad n a</b>	0		89	6 6	8	8 6	99			89
<b>G a n B</b>	00	00	00	0	8	6	844	0	09	4
<b>O A</b>	<b>2 405</b>	<b>2 9</b>	<b>3 064</b>	<b>4 460</b>	<b>5 994</b>	<b>6 5</b>	<b>20 35</b>	<b>23 39</b>	<b>25 8 8</b>	<b>26 885</b>

\* These projections are broad estimates and are based upon the implementation of the development proposal outlined in the plan as well as new marketing initiatives being undertaken by the GNWT. Based upon the performance of other less accessible remote destination areas. These estimates are considered conservative. Nahanni Park for example has set an upper limit visitation of 3000 visitors.



### 3.5.1.1- Visitation Assumptions

**Auto Access - Liard Highway:** Remain stable to 1989 and increase 1% of 1985 Alaska Highway travel to 1992, then 2% of Alaska Highway travel to 1995, then 3% growth thereafter. The latter being the average annual growth rate to natural attractions.

**Auto Access - Mackenzie Highway:** increase at the 1982-1986 historical growth rate of 2.7% to 1996.

**Adventure Travel:** Increase at the rate of growth in use of **Nahanni** National Park of 8% between 1986 and 1987 to 1990, then 16% per year to 1994, and 2496 to 1996 with the development of new adventure travel destinations in the region.

**General Interest Tour:** stable to 1989; then increase by 25% in 1990; by 50% annually in 1991 to 1993; by 25% in 1994 then grow at 4% per annum thereafter. The latter is the national growth rate for the 55+ age group; the primary market for general interest bus tours.

### 3.5.2- Economic Benefits

In 1996 the implementation of the plan may generate new visitation to the area of 14,480 visitors for a total visitation of 26,885 visitors. These visitors will generate \$4,054,400 new expenditures in tourism. This is based upon \$280/visitor which is the 1982 actual visitor expenditure characteristic inflated to 1987 dollars not including air travelers'.

From other sources, it is estimated that tourism **activities** in similar destination areas will yield one direct/indirect job for every \$20,000 of income generated.

On the basis of these assumptions, the plan may be expected to generate up to 200 new **opening** jobs (direct/indirect) in the study area.

- 1) Tourism Division, Newfoundland Labrador, Department of Development

## 4. TOURISM RESOURCE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

The intent of this data inventory and analysis section was not to prepare exhaustive inventories of the natural, physical and social characteristics of the **Liard** study area. Rather the purpose was to isolate and highlight those factors that must be considered and incorporated into a tourism strategy for the area.

The actual data assembly and analysis consisted of identifying trends and characteristics inherent in the various tourism sectors from both primary and secondary source research materials. Much of the more detailed information has already appeared in specific community tourism development plans and the highway corridor and **backcountry** reports.

This section is divided into the following two areas:

Summary of natural resources

Summary of man-made resources

### 4.2 Summary of Natural Resources

The study area is located in the southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories. On the west the Continental Divide separates Yukon from the Northwest Territories. The 60th parallel to the south forms the southern boundary with British Columbia in the west and Alberta in the east. The study area extends west from the western edge of the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary. It extends as far north as an east-west line generally running parallel to the Keele River in the Mackenzie Mountains.

The **Liard** study area is comprised of two main geographic regions known as the Interior Plains and the **Cordillera**. The Interior Plains are a continuation of the Great Plains which reach as far south as the Gulf of Mexico. This geographic region is dominated by the Mackenzie River. It is bound on the west by the **Cordillera** consisting of the Mackenzie Mountains. To the east the rocky outcrops of the Canadian Shield are encountered. Formed on a vast sedimentary basin deposited by an inland sea which once covered most of the prairie provinces, the Plain surface consists mostly of glacial gravel, sand and clay. The combination of discontinuous permafrost and continental glaciation have produced large areas of poor drainage. These are characterized by

**muskeg**, stunted spruce and fir growth, bogs, swamps and lakes. Elevations are generally less than 300 **metres** above sea level with several small plateaus and hills. None of the hills exceed 750 **metres** in height.

The **Cordilleran** region, locally termed the Mackenzie Mountains, is an 800 **kilometre** continuation of the eastern Rocky Mountain system. Altitudes range from 900 to over 2000 **metres**. Minerals such as tungsten, lead-zinc, copper, silver and placer gold have been found in this area. The boundary between the **Cordillera** and Interior Plains passes through the extreme southeast corner of Yukon, crosses to the east side of the Mackenzie River north of Fort Simpson, then crosses the Great Bear River west of the Mackenzie River beside Fort Good Hope.

**Nahanni** National Park centred on the South **Nahanni** River within the **Nahanni** Range is the "**showcase**" of the Mackenzie Mountains. It is also the highlight of the Liard/Mackenzie study area. Established in 1977, the park received international recognition when it was named a World Heritage Site in 1979. This distinction occurred because of its impressive river canyon system, the biggest found north of latitude 60, the undisturbed setting of Virginia Falls, the remarkable karst topography including major cave systems and the many hot springs.

Numerous lakes and rivers occur throughout the area. Many rivers have their headwaters in the Mackenzie Mountains, including the South **Nahanni** River which is 563 km in length. The Mackenzie River, 1,800 km long and the second largest river in North America, dominates the study area. The Liard River, at 1,115 km, is a significant feature in the western portion.

The vegetation of the study area is predominantly boreal forest or **taiga**. Within the **Cordillera** the vegetation takes on alpine or arctic characteristics typical of Rocky Mountain conditions to the south. In the **taiga**, glaciation, discontinuous permafrost and the accumulation of acid in the soil from coniferous tree species have conspired to produce harsh growing conditions. Short, moderate summers and long, cold winters add to the limited growing environment. Subsequently, coniferous tree species such as tamarack, jack pine, black spruce and deciduous species such as poplar, birch and alder are common. Lichens predominate in open areas without soil.

Principal species of terrestrial mammals include caribou (woodland), **grizzley** and black bear, buffalo, **dall** sheep, mountain goat, lynx, wolverine, wolf, porcupine, snowshoe hare, squirrel, beaver, muskrat, river otter, marten, fisher, mink and weasel.

Most birds in the **N.W.T.** are migratory summer residents or transients. Nevertheless, over 200 species breed and stage in the area. One-fifth of the continental population of ducks, geese and swans spend some period of time north of 60. Eagles, swans, whooping cranes, loons, hawks, falcons, ptarmigan and numerous species of ducks and geese are common in the study area. Species of **gallinaceous** birds, plovers, sandpipers, shore birds, **phalaropes**, owls, woodpeckers and numerous perching birds are also known to frequent the area. Opportunities for viewing and photography are therefore available, as well as game bird hunting where permissible.

Several species of fish including, arctic **grayling**, goldeye, yellow walleye, great northern pike, dolly **warden**, lake trout and whitefish are also found. While present in the area, other nearby regions likely offer better established infrastructure for the sportfishing enthusiast and have already established a position in the marketplace.

#### 4.3 Summary of Man-Made Resources

As noted earlier, the eastern half of the Fort Smith Region (which is exclusive of the study area) has the greatest concentration of tourism services and receives much of the visitation. This is still true even when part of the region north of Great Slave Lake, including Yellowknife, is excluded. For example, using the Big River zone as the entity under examination, there are 17 accommodation facilities in the zone, but only 5 in the study area. In terms of total number of rooms, Big River can offer 398 rooms to accommodate 928 people. In contrast in the study area there are only 91 rooms (23% of the total available in the Big River zone) for a total capacity of 179 (19% of the total). Of 13 lodges available in the Big River zone, 2 occur in the study area. In terms of commercial food service, the study area offers 8 facilities, approximately one quarter of the total available in all of the Big River area.

The concentration of services such as food, fuel and accommodation is in the larger, road accessible communities. It is also noteworthy that these same services are concentrated in the better known, more frequented communities in the eastern part of the Big River zone. Of a total population of 11,009, 62% occur in the east, while 3,046 or 38% occur in the nine communities of the area under study.

Some tourism infrastructure development has occurred outside communities but this construction has been largely restricted to roadside developments and these are almost all day-use or campground facilities established by the territorial government. There are 12 such territorial park facilities including one each in Fort Simpson and Fort Providence. The presence of Nahanni National Park, established and operated by Parks Canada, has inspired the development of numerous outfitting businesses and air charter firms which cater to visitors to the park.

Specific information regarding services found in each community (food, fuel, accommodation? outfitter **services**, rental equipment, etc.) has been provided in the community tourism development plans.

## 5. TOURISM MARKET ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

The following market information has been derived from several sources including the 1986 Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan for GNWT by Briar International Business Resources, the 1986 Strategic Marketing and Implementation Plan for the Travel Industry Association and the Tourism Zone Association of the Northwest Territories, the 1984 Mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism Study by I.D. Systems, the Product Development Plan for the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry by Derek Murray Consulting Association, 1987 Liard Highway Corridor Tourism Study preliminary market information by Marshall **Macklin** Monaghan and various discussions with **N.W.T.** tourism and travel representatives and officials. While some of the data pertains to the "**Fort Smith**" region, this information is seen as representative of the Big River scenario and in fact has been utilized as such in several of the above mentioned reports.

### 5.2 Existing Tourism Market Analysis Characteristics - Non-Resident Market

#### 5.2.1 .- Levels of Visitation

- Table 5.1 outlines existing visitation to both **N.W.T.** and the Big River region, showing 1986 visitation of 52,000 and 32,500 person trips respectively
- the Big River region accounts for the majority of visitation to **N.W.T.** (62%) of the 6 tourism zones
- **N.W.T.** experienced a 3% decrease in visitation between 1982 and 1984, and a 25% increase between 1984 and 1986
- Big River experienced a 25% decrease in visitation between 1982 and 1984, and a 48% increase between 1984 and 1986
- of the Big River 1986 visitation it is estimated that Nahanni National Park accounted for 464 overnight visits and 260 day use visits.
- in Big River, the month of July (38.2%) accounts for the greatest share of visitation followed by August (23.6%), June (16.3%), May (6.5%) and September (3.6%)

- of all the Canadian provinces/territories, **N.W.T.** attracts the fewest number of non-resident tourists

#### 5.1.2. - Travel Mode

- in **1986**, **71%** of visitors to **N.W.T.** travelled by **air**, an increase of 3% from 1982. Correspondingly, road travel to **N.W.T.** decreased from 32% in 1982 to 29% in 1986
- as the most road accessible region in N. W. T., **Big River** exhibits a greater occurrence of road travel than does **N.W.T.** as a whole
- in 1986, air travel represented 66% of the non-resident travel market to Big River with rubber tire representing 34%.
- 1987 estimates show that of approximately 11,700 road travelers into the region, 1,200 travelled into Big River via the Liard Highway and 10,500 visits entered via the Mackenzie Highway.
- historically, bus tours into the region have been on the decrease. In 1980-81 it was reported that a total of 11 bus trips were scheduled into the area, decreasing to 2 in 1982 and 1983, with 5 trips in 1984, 2 trips in 1985 and none in 1986

#### 5.1.3- Trip Purpose

- as a whole, **N.W.T.** attracts almost equal number of business visitation (40%) as (55%) pleasure travel
- Big River is the most popular region within **N.W.T.** for pleasure travel, exhibiting a healthier business to pleasure visitation ratio with 60% of visitation to the region traveling for the purpose of pleasure/vacation and 30% traveling on business (the remainder is VFR)
- activities participated in during pleasure/vacation trips are similar in nature for both **N.W.T.** and Big River, and involve sightseeing, fishing, canoeing, hiking and generally experiencing the northern environment

#### 5.1.4- Visitor Origin

- Table 5.1 shows the breakdown of visitor origin for **N.W.T.** and Big River. Alberta residents comprise the majority of visitation to **N.W.T.** as a whole and to the Big River region specifically.
- **Albertans** account for 57% of the rubber tire market to Big River, followed by British Colombians at 16% and Ontario and Saskatchewan both at 6%
- **Albertans** also account for the majority of air travel at 39%, followed by **Ontarians** at 22%, and British Colombians at 9%. Visitors from the United States represent 9% of the fly-in market
- in 1982, overseas visitation to both the Yukon and **N.W.T.** totaled 9,032 person visits. West Germany accounted for 42.4% of the total number of overseas visitation, with Switzerland following at 11.3%.

#### 5.1.5- Length of Stay

- **N.W.T.** and Big River exhibit the same average length of stay at 10.1 nights.
- for Big River, those visitors staying in campgrounds averaged a length of stay of 5.7 nights, while those people staying with friends and relatives averaged 10.5 nights, and those staying in commercial accommodation averaged 9 nights

#### 5.1.6- Party Size

- **N.W.T.** and Big River exhibit similar average party size with **N.W.T.** at 1.76 persons and Big River at 1.8 persons

#### 5.1.7- Expenditures

- of the total air **traveller** expenditures of the **N.W.T.** \$36,416,900 (1982), the Big River Zone accounted for \$18,103,400 or 49.7%. This represents an average per person expenditure of \$938.00.
- of the total road **traveller** expenditures of the **N.W.T.** \$2,696,000 (1982), the Big River Zone accounted for \$2,180,000 (80%). This represents an average per person expenditure of \$218.00



#### 5.1.8- Visitor Demographics

- 42% of visitors traveling to Big River are 40 years of age or older with an average age of 36.6 years
- by occupation, the professional segment comprises the majority of visitation to Big River at 37%
- 35% of visitors to Big River exhibit a household income of \$40,000+ per year with the average household income at \$34,500 per year

#### 5.3 Resident Market<sup>1)</sup>

- it is estimated that **N.W.T.** residents make 5.73 trips annually within **N.W.T.** with an average of one overnight stay per trip with a population of 44,000 residents in N. W. T., annual trip demand of 250,000 results
- with a regional population of 11,000 in Big River and utilizing the above estimate, gives approximately 63,000 trips within (and outside of) the Big River zone
- this figure has been derived from Yukon resident travel trends within the Yukon and provides an indication of resident travel within **N.W.T.**

1) *As outlined in the Product Development Plan for the Northwest Territories' Tourism Industry by Derek Murray Consulting Association.*

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**TABLE 5-1**  
**NON-RESIDENT VISITATION CHARACTERISTICS**

	<b>N.W.T.</b>	<b>Big River</b>	
<b>1) Existing Visitation</b>			
1982	<b>43,000</b>	<b>29,300</b>	
<b>1984</b>	<b>41,800</b>	<b>22,000</b>	
<b>1986</b>	<b>52,000</b>	<b>32,500</b>	
<b>2) Travel Mode</b>			
1982	Air - 68%    Road - 32%	Air - 66%	Road - 34%
1984	Air - 69%    Road - 31%	Air - 64%	Road - 36%
1986	Air - 71%    Road - 29%	Air - 66%	Road - 34%
<b>3) Trip Purpose</b>			
Business	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	
Vacation	55%	60%	
VFR	5%	<b>10%</b>	
<b>4) Visitor Origin 1984</b>		<u><b>Air</b></u>	<u><b>Road</b></u>
Alberta	<b>41%</b>	39%	52%
Ontario	19	22%	6%
<b>BC</b>	12	12%	16%
Sask	3	3%	6%
Man	5	8%	2%
Que	3	1%	1%
<b>Maritimes</b>	3	4%	--
Yukon	3	1%	2%
Us.	9	9%	--
Overseas	2	--	--
<b>5) Length of Avg. Stay</b>	10.1 nights	10.1 nights	
<b>6) Party Size Average</b>	1.76	<b>1.8</b>	
<b>7) Expenditures 1982</b>			
Air Travelers	\$36,416,900	\$18,103,400	
Road Travelers	\$2,696,000	\$2,180,000	

5.4 Trends in N. W.T. Travel Market<sup>1)</sup>

- Increased business travel, less vacation travel

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Business	30%	50%	40%
Vacation	75%	50%	55%

- Downward trend in length of stay

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1984</u>
3-5 Nights	28%	23%
6-10 Nights	30%	20%

- Less spending by visitors

increase of travel parties spending \$250 or less.  
decrease other categories (except for \$5-10,000)

## 5.5 Trends Analysis Global Market

- consumption of consumer goods and services including leisure attractions will be increasingly focused on the adult aged 35+ who has the greatest discretionary income and in the case of retired persons, who also has the greatest amount of leisure time
- changing patterns of work and more women in the workplace will mean that activities oriented to day touring and mini-vacations centered on weekends will become more in demand
- an increasingly sophisticated traveller will be demanding a unique yet high quality tourism product with a high degree of service through the experience
- this sophistication will also lead to the growth of specialty travel-tour markets, such as outdoor/adventure exclusions

1) Briar International Business Resources, Strategic Marketing Plan for N. W. T., April 1986.

- growth in the ‘packaged’ tour market will see an increase not only in new and unusual experiences for the **traveller**, but also in innovative product programming and promotional strategies

### 5.6 Travel on the Alaska Highway

Although it is known that the **Liard** Highway presently attracts only 10% of the total Big River road travel market, by analyzing existing rubber tire visitation traveling on the Alaska Highway between British Columbia and the Yukon, the level of potential "pull through" traffic which the **Liard** Corridor may be able to attract can be assessed.

The following Alaska Highway road travel data has been supplied by Mr. John Hudson, the Director of Public Works Canada in the Yukon for the year of 1985. While the Public Works department provides a pessimistic level, mid-level, and optimistic factor for each month of the year (which is then multiplied by an average daily two way traffic factor), the pessimistic level is utilized here to provide a conservative estimate. Table 5.2 outlines the monthly traffic counts for the summer of 1985 and the estimated number of travelers. The point at which Public Works counts traffic on the Alaska Highway between B. C. and the Yukon is in Fireside, British Columbia.

**TABLE 5.2**  
**ALASKA HIGHWAY TWO WAY TRAFFIC**  
**FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA TO THE YUKON**  
**May To September 1985**

Month	Cars/Day	Cars/Month	Estimated number of Travelers (at 1.76 persons/car)
May	280	8,680	15,277
June	392	11,760	20,698
July	490	14,700	25,872
August	434	13,020	22,915
September	314	9,420	16,579
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>57,580</b>	<b>101,341</b>

With a total two way count of 57,580 cars per month passing through Fireside on the Alaska Highway from May to September, and utilizing a per car estimate of 1.76 persons, **traveller** volume totals over 100,000. Although the attraction of any number

of these travelers to Big River is a long term prospect, it does indicate that the potential exists to draw from this source. For instance, if the **Liard** corridor is able to attract, for example 5% of these travelers, it would represent an influx of 5,000 visitors into the area.

### 5.7 Market Potential For Arctic Destinations

Looking at geographic market origins in global sense, the potential visitation for Arctic destinations can be estimated. Table 5.3 outlines the overall potential for outdoors/culture trips to all destinations within the Canadian tourism market by Canadian and American markets as well as the overseas markets of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan. This data is further broken down to estimate the potential visitation to Arctic specific destinations originating from the broad geographic markets. This information has been derived from Tourism Canada pleasure travel studies based on each of the market areas, and in the case of the overseas markets is able to provide data pertaining specifically to the Northwest Territories.

The Table shows that Canada has outdoors/Arctic visitation potential of 9,472 trips, and that the U.S. has an outdoors/Arctic visitation potential of 31,700 trips. Overseas potential for the Northwest Territories specifically shows France with a potential outdoors market of 66,509 trips, Germany with total outdoors potential of 47,300 trips, the United Kingdom with outdoors potential of 13,200 trips and Japan with 18,300 trips.

This information reflects, obviously not what **N.W.T.** is presently attracting, but the potential market for the Arctic and/or **N.W.T.** as an “outdoors” destination. Although the outdoor category is just one type of tourism product, it shows the type of interest which exists in the global marketplace for such a product. A good example of the growth in interest towards “outdoor” destinations is **Kluane** National park which has generated a 17.1 increase in its visitation within the last year (72,000 visitors in 1986 vs. 86,000 visitors in 1987). **Kluane** offers the same park services and amenities as **Nahanni** National park and therefore would appear to attract the same markets - **Nahanni** should expect to see this level of visitation with the potential for consistent additional growth.

## 5.8 Profile of Existing Travel Markets

Upon analyzing existing visitation in Big River, it can be seen that visitation is divided among three distinct travel markets including the bus tour market, the private rubber tire market, and the fly-in market. Table 5.4 outlines the characteristics of each of these markets.

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**TABLE 5.3**  
**SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL OUTDOOR/CULTURE MARKET FOR ALL**  
**CANADIAN DESTINATIONS BY GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN**

Market Origin Trips to All	Overall Potential for Outdoor/Culture Trips to All Canadian Destinations	Potential for Arctic Destinations
Canada  Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.7% Of population are 'outdoors' in travelnature • 947,200</li> <li>• 14.8M trips In province • 3.8% long distance • 9.2% 'outdoors' • 562,400 to 1.4 M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.5 to 1% of outdoors trips • 9,472</li> <li>• assume as for Canada • 5,600 (to 13,600)</li> </ul>
U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.65 M 'outdoors' trips to Canada</li> <li>• Potential for 4.9 M</li> <li>• 2.3 M touring trips to Canada</li> <li>• Potential for 6.35 M</li> <li>• 1.0 M cruise trips to Canada</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2% of outdoors • 98,000</li> <li>• assume less than outdoors at 0.5% • 31,700</li> <li>• 4% of cruise trips • 40,000</li> </ul>
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target travel population of 2,68 M</li> <li>• Outdoors and subcultures • 604,300</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23% for Nfld/Labrador • 139,100 to 66,509 (11% for N. W.T.)</li> </ul>
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target travel population of 4.3 M</li> <li>• Outdoors and nature • 516,000</li> <li>• Outdoors and sports • 430,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (15% Nfld/Labrador) • 77,400 to 25,800 (N.W.T.)</li> <li>• (27% Nfld/Labrador) • 94,600 to 21,500 (N. W. T.)</li> </ul>
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target travel population of 2.0 M</li> <li>• Culture and nature • 240,000</li> <li>• Sports • 220,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (15% Nfld/Labrador) • 28,800 to 16,800 (N. W. T.)</li> <li>• 17,600 Nfld/Labrador to 13,200 (N. W. T.)</li> </ul>
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target travel population 4.7 M</li> <li>• Culture and Nature • 612,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12,600 Nfld/Lab. to 18,300 (N.W.T.)</li> </ul>



**TABLE 5.4**  
**TRAVEL TARGET MARKET FOR BIG RIVER**

Bus Tours	Characteristics
Bus Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing in size over the past 6 years.</li> <li>• It is estimated that 9 bus tours travel led to the Big River region during the summer of 1987, 4 of which travel led to see the Pope.</li> <li>• Generally looking for the "far north", wilderness and historical features offered by the Northwest Territories.</li> <li>• Generally an older market taking part in a circle tour of the region.</li> </ul>
Private Rubber-Tire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of road travel market originates from Alberta.</li> <li>• Total road travel expenditures (1982) in Big River was estimated at 81% of total N.W.T. expenditures by road travelers at \$2,180,000; an average of \$218 per person.</li> <li>• 60% of all travel is pleasure/vacation</li> <li>• With the Liard Highway presently three years old, it can be expected that the majority of road travel would still enter Big River from the Mackenzie Highway. In 1987 road travel on Liard Highway was approximately 1,200 visitors versus 10,500 visitors on the Mackenzie.</li> <li>• Strong service cores in Fort Providence and Hay River</li> <li>• Tourism information center on the 60th parallel on the Mackenzie Highway.</li> <li>• No service infrastructure along Liard Corridor.</li> <li>• Some level of servicing in Fort Liard.</li> <li>• No "entrance" image on the Liard Highway Corridor.</li> </ul>
Fly-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main focus of fly-in market are the adventure activities of canoeing, rafting, camping, etc., and some degree of fishing and/or hunting.</li> <li>• Existing fly-in to Nahanni in 1987 was 505 overnight travelers and 194 day use visitors.</li> <li>• This market also consists of some general interest in that aerial tours of Nahanni do take place.</li> <li>• Total fly-in visitation to the Big River region in 1986 was 21,500, 66% of total visitation.</li> <li>• 39% of the Big River air travel market originates in Alberta, with 22% coming from Ontario and 12% from B.C.</li> <li>• Total air travel expenditures (1982) in Big River was estimated to represent 50% of total N.W.T. expenditures by air travelers at \$18,103,400; an average of \$938 per person.</li> </ul>

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS OF TRAVEL ARCTIC AND TIA MARKETING STRATEGIES

### 6.1 Introduction

The following points summarize the main implications the **Travel Arctic** and **TIA** marketing strategy have in the development of the **Liard-Mackenzie** Highway Corridor tourism strategy.

- Each of the six tourism zones in N. W. T., as well as **N.W.T.** as a whole should reflect a similar and complimentary product and marketing position, with strategies aimed at the same consumer **group**, although in different geographic markets. Thus utilizing a “synergistic” approach rather than each zone acting as a fragmented portion of the whole.
- These studies indicate that in terms of sector positioning, **N.W.T.** offers the travelers an exotic wilderness adventure in a **circumpolar** destination which delivers to the visitor an adventure of a lifetime.
- While this position has been taken by **N.W.T.** and the each of the zones, it has been further broken down to represent distinctive product categories which includes:
  1. Adventure/Outdoors
    - a) non-consumptive - wildlife viewing, naturalist
    - b) consumptive - fishing, hunting
  2. Arts/Culture/Touring
    - a) outdoors oriented - wildlife viewing special interest
    - b) arts/culture/history - well known region, interesting cities and towns, very different experience, self guided.
- By developing these two product categories, each of the zones and **N.W.T.** as a whole is aiming to promote specific products to well defined market segments, with emphasis on the existing nature of unique resources within each zone to provide focus.
- **In** terms of geographic market priorities, the studies outlined the primary target markets for the Big River Zone (along with Northern Frontier and the Western Arctic) as western Canada provinces, the Midwestern and Central States and

California. Also highlighted were the secondary markets of Ontario, Texas and Arizona and the Northern and North Atlantic States, and the tertiary markets of Germany and Switzerland.