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***Mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism Study
- Interim Report***

Type of Study: Plans/strategies

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MACKENZIE HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
TOURISM STUDY

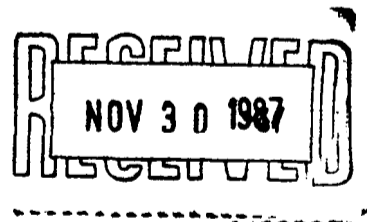
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to inventory and evaluate specific opportunities and constraints relating to the development of tourism within the highway corridor from the 60th Parallel to the Town of Hay River including the communities of Hay River and Enterprise and the Hay River Reserve. Feasible opportunities for private sector involvement in tourism development must be identified as well as a role for the Government of the Northwest Territories. This study includes conceptual plans for directing the development and management of tourism in the corridor.

The report is divided into five sections as follows:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Inventory and Assessment
- 3.0 Corridor Tourism Development Concept
- 4.0 Hay River Reserve Tourism Development Concept
- 5.0 Implementation

The corridor has a good variety and supply of attractions, facilities and services. In 1992, 10,000 motorists travel the corridor and 19,300 visitors entered the Fort Smith region by air. The corridor and the Fort Smith region are the most significant tourist destination areas in the Northwest Territories. The proximity of this area to markets, the paving of the Mackenzie Highway, and the opening of the Liard Highway connection between the Mackenzie and Alaska Highways leads us to believe that traffic will increase by up to 50% to 15,000 motorists by 1987. Further,



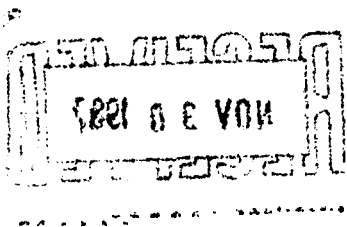
our discussions with airlines and tour operators suggest that air traffic will increase by up to 10% to 21,200 by the same date.

The concept plans for the corridor include recommendations for:

- 60th Parallel Information Centre,
Picnic Area and Campground;
- Alexandra Falls;
- Louise Falls;
- Escarpment Creek;
- Enterprise;
- Paradise Gardens;
- Hay River Visitor Information Centre;
- Hay River Campground;
- Hay River Reserve;
- Hay River Attractions; and
- Signage.

Cost estimates for implementation of capital improvements total \$1.4 million. However, the expenditure of \$1.0 million for development on the Hay River Reserve requires a detailed market and feasibility study prior to implementation. All capital improvements should be completed within a five-year period ending in 1988.

To implement the tourism development concept, the Government of the Northwest Territories should expend almost \$400,000 for capital improvements. Other government funds are required to assist community-based tourism development through the Big River Travel Association, the Dene Band on the Hay River Reserve and local businesses.



The benefits from tourism expansion and development in the corridor could amount to over \$5.6 million in expenditures in the local economy. This will create from 70 to 95 man-years of employment, including 50 to 70 man-years of new jobs.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Over the years, a few studies have been completed on the development of tourism along the Mackenzie and Hay River Highways from the 60th parallel to the Town of Hay River. In September 1966, W.M. Baker, a parks and recreation planner from Ontario submitted a report to the Territorial Government titled, "A Master Plan for the Development of Tourist and Recreation Potentials Along the Mackenzie and Yellowknife Highways". Baker's study was comprehensive taking into account the natural and land use capability, climate and the market for tourism. For the most part, the plan was not implemented. Much of the material and recommendations in that plan are still applicable today.

In 1982, the Government of Alberta supplied the services of D.J. Chambers of Alberta Recreation and Parks to assist in conducting an assessment of the Mackenzie Highway Territorial Park System. The resulting report includes detailed assessments of individual sites. Layout and facilities are described for each territorial park and picnic area along the highway. This is followed by observations, comments and recommendations combined with cost estimates for improvements. In some instances the recommendations from Mr. Chambers have been implemented. And although the assessment is quite valid, a more detailed assessment is required to recommend development and other improvements within the context of tourism and knowledge of the specific markets to be attracted and served.

In March of 1983, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism developed a terms of reference for the 'Northwest Territories Mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism Inventory Assessment and Destination Area Study". At the same time, Travel Alberta developed a terms of reference for the Mighty Peace Tourism Destination Area Study. The Land of the Mighty Peace, Zone 8, is located immediately south of the Northwest Territories border. Consultants submitted proposals combining the two studies. A joint committee of Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Travel Alberta and Land of the Mighty Peace Tourism Zone representatives selected I.D. Systems Ltd., in association with Pannell Kerr Forster Campbell Sharp to conduct the studies coincidentally.

1.2 Study Purpose

The purpose of the study is to inventory and evaluate specific opportunities and constraints relating to the development of tourism within the highway corridor from the 60th parallel to the Town of Hay River, including the communities of Hay River and Enterprise and the Hay River Reserve. Feasible opportunities for private sector involvement in tourism development must be identified as well as a role for the Government of the Northwest Territories in providing technical and financial support. The study will include an appropriate conceptual plan for directing the development and management of tourism in the Mackenzie Highway Corridor.

Specifically, the study must:

- assess highway corridor and community tourism development opportunities;
- describe the existing and potential markets;
- describe a tourism development concept;
- describe an implementation strategy;

assess the possible costs and benefits that could result if the development concept and management strategy were implemented; and, identify travel related employment and business opportunities for local residents, and strategies for strengthening local businesses.

1.3 Study Area

The study area includes the Mackenzie Highway/Hay River Highway Corridor from the Alberta/Northwest Territories border to the Town of Hay River as shown on Map 1. The highway between Enterprise and Hay River is officially named the Hay River Highway. At Enterprise, the Mackenzie Highway heads west to Fort Simpson. The study corridor includes those features and facilities easily walked to from the highway.

1.4 Study Process

The study process was divided into three phases:

- Stage I - Inventory and Assessment;
- Stage II - Development Concept; and
- Stage III - Implementation and Report Preparation.

Stage I includes identification of opportunities and constraints for tourism, an inventory and assessment of corridor resources, a profile of existing highway traffic and discussion with tour operators, government officials and other interested groups and individuals. Stage I concludes with the identification of visitor service requirements within the corridor.

Map #1 - Study Area

The development concept stage, Stage II, involves the preparation of a tourism development concept for the highway corridor and the communities of Hay River and Enterprise and the Hay River Reserve. Tourism themes are identified along with tourism roles for each community.

Stage III includes preparation of an implementation strategy, feasibility assessment of appropriate developments, preparation of a general marketing strategy, and a prediction of possible **economic** benefits.

The study process began in May 1983. In **June** and **July**, members of the consultant team **travelled** throughout the study area to inspect all attractions, facilities and services and meet with businessmen, attraction operators, government officials and members of the **Dene** Band on the Hay River Reserve. A list of contacts made during the study is contained in Appendix A. In August, two members of the consultant team **travelled** with Peter **Neugebauer**, Tourism and Parks Planner with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and members of the Steering Committee for the Mighty Peace Destination Area Study, along the Mackenzie Highway from the Town of **Grimshaw**, km 0 of the highway, to the Town of Hay River, km 588. The purpose of the field trip was to inspect attractions, facilities and services along the highway corridor and discuss development opportunities.

After submission of a report documenting the inventory assessment and development concepts, members of the consultant team met with a group of government officials, **Dene** Band members and local businessmen in Hay River on October 19, 1983.

The purpose of the meeting was to review report recommendations concerning tourism developments and discuss marketing and implementation strategies for tourism development. The final report documenting all three stages of the study process was submitted in March 1984.

1.5 Report Organization

The report is divided into five sections plus appendices. The following four sections of the report are:

Section Two: Inventory and Assessment

An inventory and assessment of attractions and events, accommodations and services, transportation services and facilities, activities, visitor characteristics and markets, **biophysical** overview, regional historic overview, local issues and concerns, and an assessment of tourism services and facilities requirements.

Section Three: Corridor Tourism Development Concept

Presentation of the development concept for the corridor including tourism themes and functions, community roles, physical and program development.

Section Four: Hay River Reserve Tourism Development Concept

Presentation of the development concept for the Hay River Reserve including tourism themes and functions, physical and program development and the feasibility of development.

Section Five: Implementation

Marketing and implementation strategies are presented along with the identification of roles for the **community**, private sector and government in implementing the tourism development concepts. Impacts of tourism development are also discussed.

SECTION TWO

INVENTORY **AND** ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

This section presents an inventory of facilities and services which have a bearing on tourist use of the corridor. Visitor characteristics and tourist markets are analyzed to **establish** the basis for development of facilities and services. Local issues and concerns about tourism development also are presented. An assessment of tourist facilities and services requirements concludes this section.

2.2 Attractions and Events

2.2.1 **Attractions**

The Mackenzie Highway (No. 1) corridor has a good variety of natural and man-made attractions. The major natural attractions include the Hay River Gorge, Louise Falls, Alexandra Falls and Great Slave Lake. The major man-made attractions include the communities of Hay River and Enterprise the Mackenzie Highway, the 60th parallel border crossing and the campgrounds and picnic sites within the corridor. These and other attractions are described below. All attractions are shown on Map 2. Attractions within the corridor from the 60th parallel to Hay River are shown on Map 2. Attractions in the Hay River area are shown on Map 3.

The Mackenzie Highway

The Mackenzie Highway is the only road access from the western provinces into the Northwest Territories. However, completion of

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the Liard Highway from Fort Nelson, B.C. to Fort Simpson in 1984 will nullify this distinction. Contrary to tourist information brochures and maps, the point at which the Mackenzie Highway crosses the 60th parallel, the border between Alberta and Northwest Territories, is km 471 (mile 292) along the Mackenzie Highway. A point in the Town of Grimshaw, Alberta is the official km 0 (mile 0) point for the Mackenzie Highway. The formal end point of the Mackenzie Highway is Fort Simpson, km 942 (mile 585). The extension of the highway to Wrigley should be completed in the near future (1 to 3 years). Construction of the highway from Hay River to Grimshaw occurred in 1948. Over the years, there have been a few changes in its alignment and some general upgrading. The Mackenzie Highway now turns west at Enterprise and the stretch north to Hay River is known as the Hay River Highway (No. 2). The highway has a well-maintained gravel surface with some sections paved. Due to the weather and traffic, the road is subject to severe potting and breakup. Highway crews usually mark rough spots with red flags at the side of the road.

The Mackenzie Highway, named after the great explorer, Alexander Mackenzie, parallels the Hay River to Enterprise. Within that short 82 km (51 mile) segment, from the Alberta/N.W.T. border to Enterprise, several spectacular attractions can be viewed. For those traveling the Mackenzie Highway from Grimshaw, this is one of the more interesting segments of the route.

60th Parallel Border Crossing km 471 (mile 292)

There are several attractions and services at this location. The border sign is very attractive and an excellent announcement for the modern explorer "arriving" or "embarking" on a trip into the north. It is the subject of many tourist photographs.

Approximately 20 metres east of the highway and just a few metres north of the border is a National Historic Sites and Monuments Board Cairn. The plaque on the cairn commemorates the crossing of the Great Slave Lake Railway into the Northwest Territories on August 29, 1964.

Also on the east side of the highway is the Visitors Information Centre; a Trapper's cabin has been constructed near the centre to serve as a point of interest. The cabin is only partially furnished. No plaque or sign exists to indicate why the cabin is there or what it represents.

To the north of the Visitors Information Centre is a campground and picnic area.

Grumbler Rapids km 504 (mile 313)

Grumbler Rapids marks the point where the Hay River begins to incise into its bed. July through September are the best months to view the rapids due to low water levels. Access to view the rapids is achieved using the old highway. The turnoff is at mile 311. However, the road is poorly maintained and subject to flooding due to beaver damming of Swede Creek. There are no tourist facilities or formal viewpoints near the rapids and no signage to the rapids from the Mackenzie Highway.

Alexandra Falls km 540 (mile 335)

Located on the Hay River, the viewpoint of the falls is just 20-25 metres east of the highway. This is the most spectacular attraction in the corridor. The river drops 33 m (109 ft.) to form Alexandra Falls. Besides the day-use site located at the viewpoint, the other day use sites are strung out along the top of the

river bank. The only sign is located at the south end of the viewpoint fence at the head of a trail down to the river's edge at the falls. The sign reads, "**Pass** at your Own **Risk**". The site lacks interpretive **signage**.

Louise Falls km 546 (mile 339)

Only a few minutes by car north of the Alexandra Falls viewpoint is Louise Falls Territorial Park with its campground and picnic trail. An unmarked trail from the picnic site parking lot leads to a series of viewpoints along the top of the river gorge. The viewpoint is somewhat distant from the 15 m (50 ft.) falls. This viewpoint also lacks interpretive **signage**. A few hundred metres along a trail running south of the main viewpoint is a set of stairs that reach about one-third of the way down the 25 m (80 ft.) embankment. Another 12 m (40 ft.) embankment must be descended to reach river's edge and the top of the falls.

A trail connects the Louise Falls viewpoint to the Alexandra Falls viewpoint, 5 km (3 miles) away.

Escarpment Creek km 548 (mile 340)

A trail connects Louise Falls to Escarpment Creek, another picnic site just off the Mackenzie Highway. The site has an excellent view of the Hay River gorge which extends for 8 km (5 miles) at a height of 52 m (170 ft.). A steep trail leads down from the picnic site to the river. Escarpment Creek is located approximately 200 m (650 ft.) south of the picnic area parking lot. The creek tumbles 14 m (45 ft.) over two falls into the Hay River.

There are only a few directional signs on the site.

Enterprise km 555 (mile 345)

There is a beautiful view of the Hay River and its gorge from the Highway running on the east edge of this community. There is no designated viewpoint or pull-off along the highway.

Paradise Gardens 568 km (mile 353)

The road from the Hay River Highway down into the gorge affords another view of the river. The campground and market garden area are located on an oxbow bend in the river.

Visitor Information Centre - Train Caboose km 588 (mile 365)

This red caboose doubles as a tourist attraction and an information centre operated by the Hay River Chamber of Commerce. However, due to the lack of signage, most tourists would not know why it is there. An old tugboat stands in a fenced area just south of the caboose. The presence of the caboose and boat invite a story to be told about their history and how they got to the present location.

The Town of Hay River

The history of the town's development is a story itself that should be told to tourists through interpretive signs and printed material. The town abounds with a variety of tourist attractions including:

- beach on the shore of Great Slave Lake;
- West Channel Fishing Village;
- Vale Island Waterfront and Harbour;
Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) plant;
- Inukshuk marker;

- Mackenzie Place: Northwest Territories tallest building at 17 stories;
- Northern Transportation Company Limited (NTCL) shipping facilities; and
- Diamond **Jennes** High School that is unique due to its purple colour.

Hay River Indian Reserve

The Reserve situated on the east bank of the Hay River is accessed by road during the summer via Highway No. 5. The old village area on the Reserve is steeped in history. The **Slavey** people had this area designated as a Reserve in 1974 as the Northwest Territories only Indian Reserve.

The old village area on the Reserve is the original site of the Hay River community. During the early decades of the 20th century, Roman Catholic and Anglican churches were built in the village and still stand today in good condition.

Good access and frontage onto the river and Great Slave Lake present several opportunities for the development of tourist and recreation facilities and services.

2.2.2 **Events**

Events attracting people from the local communities and the region are concentrated in the Town of Hay River. The events include:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Month</u>
Ookpik Carnival	Cultural & Sport	March
Fishing Derby	Sport	May
Canada Day Celebrations and Royal Canadian Legion Raft Races	Cultural & Sport	July
Fall Fair and World Championship Fiddling and Jigging Contest	Cultural & Sport	September
Great Slave Lake Sailboat Race	Sport	September

There also are annual dog races, cross-country skiing races, curling **bonspiels**, and **fastball** tournaments. The fiddling and jigging contest and the sailboat race attract some contestants from outside the region. Certainly, these events will provide activities for tourists traveling into Hay River.

The Community of Enterprise also has a Canada Day event with Cultural and Sports activities. This event serves the local residents.

2.3 Accommodations and Services

Maps 4 and 5 illustrate the locations of accommodations and services in the corridor and the Town of Hay River.

2.3.1 **Campgrounds and Picnic Areas**

Table 1 presents the inventory of campgrounds and picnic areas in the corridor. There are three Territorial Parks campgrounds, one private campground and five picnic areas within the corridor. Three of the picnic areas are located in conjunction with campgrounds and the other two have been developed to serve visitors to

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Table 1
Inventory of Campgrounds and Picnic Areas
Mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism Study

Name and Location	No. of Camping Sites	No. of Day-Use Sites	Other	Season	Campground Occupancy	Camping Fees	Amenities and Services
60th Parallel Campground and Picnic Area km 471	12	8	-	Mid-May to Labour Day Weekend	N A	\$5/night	- kitchen shelters - drinking water - dumping station - canoe/boat access to Hay River - pit toilets - picnic tables
Alexandra Falls Picnic Area km 540	4	-	-	-	-	-	- scenic lookout of falls - picnic shelter - picnic tables - pit toilets - trails
Louise Falls Campground and Picnic Area km 546	8	0	-	Mid-May to Labour Day	N A	\$5/night	- scenic lookout of falls - trails - picnic/kitchen shelter - drinking water - picnic tables - pit toilets
Escarpment Creek Picnic Area km 548	-	8	-	-	-	-	- scenic viewpoint and trails - kitchen shelter
Paradise Gardens Campground (Private) km 568	9 w/power 6 without power 15 sites	-	-	Mid-May to end of September	N A	\$7/night serviced \$5/night not serviced	- garden produce for sale - shower - drinking water - dumping station - picnic tables & shelter - canoe/boat access

Table 1 (Cont' d.)
Inventory of Campgrounds and Picnic Areas

Mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism Study

Name and Location	No. of Camp ing Sites	No. of Day-Use Sites	Other	Season	Campground Occupancy	Camping Fees	Amenities and Services
Hay River Tourist Information Centre Picnic Area km 588			Open Area				stoves no tables canoe/boat access
Great Slave Lake Beach Area Vale Island			Open Area				- picnic tables - picnic shelter - pit toilets - beach canoe/boat access
Hay River Campground Vale Island	21			Mid-May to Labour Day Weekend	N/A	\$5/night - close to beach without power \$6/night with power	- showers - playground - games room - kitchen shelter - pit toilets

scenic lookouts" near the highway. There are 66 campsites in total, with 51 of them being within territorial parks and the other 15 being offered by a private operator. The management and operation of the campground in Hay River Territorial Park is contracted to Hay River Lions Club.

There are 30 sites in the picnic areas of the five Territorial Parks in the corridor. The Hay River Tourist Information Centre and Great Slave Lake Beach picnic areas are open areas without particular site designations.

Generally, the appearance, maintenance condition and quality of facilities in all campgrounds and picnic areas is good. Most of them do require some minor repairs and improvements to make them more suitable for tourist traffic and use. **Signage** - interpretive and directional - is lacking at most locations. There are also several dangerous or unstable situations that need immediate attention. Recommendations concerning signage and repairing and upgrading existing campgrounds and picnic areas are presented in Section 3.0.

Good statistics on campground use are not available. However through discussions with campground personnel, it was found that all sites approach 100% occupancy on most weekends throughout the season. High occupancy rates are experienced on weekdays during July and August due primarily to higher numbers of tourists from the south.

The operator of Paradise Gardens indicated a large percentage of visitors come from the U.S. and Europe. Many of them rent motor-homes in Calgary or Edmonton and travel across western Canada. These travelers are primarily young and middle aged couples, usually without children. Occupancies are never too high because of the open field available for overflow visitors.

The attendant at the Hay River campground indicated that 75% of the visitors are from outside the Northwest Territories. Many travel by motorhome and plan to cover large areas of the Territories on their trip. There are plans to add a mini-golf course, and to show films and slides in the games room.

The Territorial campgrounds are open from mid-May to the end of the first weekend in September, and the private campground remains open until the end of September. Most sites have firewood, stoves or fire rings, picnic tables, picnic shelters and toilets. Drinking water is available at most sites. A daily fee of \$5.00 is also charged for use of the campgrounds with a good level of services and facilities (60th Parallel and Louise Falls).

2.3.2 Fixed Roof Accommodations

Table 2 presents an inventory of fixed roof accommodations available in the corridor. There are up to 204 units available to accommodate up to 438 people. The accommodations in the study area are of adequate quality and are comparable to what would be found in most parts of northern Alberta. Room rates are at the same level as in northern Alberta, which are considered to be somewhat high. Occupancies are very high during the summer, ranging from 80% to 100%, but drop very sharply during the winter period. With the current development of the Norman Wells pipeline and activity related to the highway paving, the industrial market has increased this year. On an annual basis, tourism represents about 25% - 30% of the total business, with the remaining 70% - 75% comprised of government and business travelers. Bus tours generally provide from 6 to 10 bus loads of tourists per season, and these visitors are usually housed in the larger full service operations such as

Table 2
Inventory of Fixed Roof Accommodations
Mackenzie Highway Corridor Tourism Study

Name and Location	No. of Units	Season	Rates	Features and Services	Comments
Motel Camino Enterprise	14 units to accommodate 43 people	Year-Round	\$40 double \$27 single	- private corridors - bath/shower facilities - cocktail lounge - restaurants - service station - general store	
Hay River Hotel Hay River	30 units to accommodate 45 people in summer 17 units in winter	Year-Round	\$42 double \$32 single	- baths - room phones and TV's - bar - restaurant	- located in "old town" by harbour facilities
Caribou Motor Inn Hay River	29 units to accommodate 90 people	Year-Round	\$40 single \$45 double \$50 twin Kitchenettes \$42 single \$52 double	- room phones, radios and TV's - cocktail lounge - restaurant	- located in new town
Mackenzie Place Hay River	Up to 64 units available	Year-Round	\$45/day \$300/week	- cooking facilities in each unit - TV is optional	- Apartment/Hotel furnished suites to rent by day, week or month

Table 2 (Cont'd.)
Inventory of Fixed Roof Accommodations
Mackinac Highway Corridor Tourism Study

Name and Location	No. of Units	Season	Rates	Features and Services	Comments
Migrator Motel Hay River	24 units to accommodate 48 people	Year-Round	\$42 single \$52 double \$48 husband and wife \$70 4 persons \$60 family Kitchenettes from \$48 single \$58 double	- TV, phones	- located in new town
Ptarmigan Motel Hay River	43 units to accommodate 84 people	Year-Round	\$59 single \$74 double	- TV, phones, radio - cocktail lounge - bar - coffee shop - dining room - banquet room	located in new town

Source: Official Explorers Guide 83 and personal contact with hotel managers

the Ptarmigan Inn. According to local business persons, there seems to be an increasing number of American tourists over the past few years.

In comparison with reports about the level of quality of accommodation in other parts of the N.W.T., it would appear that the fixed roof accommodation within the study area is generally of much better calibre. The prices, service and product quality all seemed to be fairly good with few exceptions and would be attractive to tourists requiring lodging.

2.3.3 Food and Beverage Services

The food service outlets in the study area appeared to be adequate although limited in number. In particular, the Steak House in Enterprise and the restaurant at the Ptarmigan Inn in Hay River are popular dining spots for tourists. The Steak House offers homemade baked goods in addition to its attention to service and providing good, quality meals at reasonable prices. The Ptarmigan Inn also has banquet facilities and offers good quality food. There are several other dining spots in Hay River such as Back Eddy, Pizza Patio, Caribou Restaurant which offer good food and service.

2.4 ^{*}Transportation Services and Facilities

Transportation services and facilities include:

- highways and roads;
airlines;
vehicle rentals;
- boat rentals;
- fuel and service;
- tours; and
information centres.

2.4.1 Highways and Roads

The Mackenzie Highway from the 60th parallel to Enterprise and the Hay River Highway from Enterprise to Hay River are all-weather gravel roads with some paved sections. Over the past decade the alignment of the road and its base have been improved. In 1983, 15 km of the road were paved starting at the 60th parallel where the paved highway from Alberta enters Northwest Territories. Paving of the highway through to Enterprise will be completed in 1985.

2.4.2 Airlines

Pacific Western Airlines offers daily jet passenger and cargo service into Hay River from Edmonton via Fort Smith on a scheduled route and also has charter service available.

Air Providence Ltd. offers scheduled and charter services within the region using a Piper Lance aircraft. Destinations in the area include Hay River, Pine Point, Fort Smith and Fort Providence.

Several charter air services are available into Hay River. Carter Air Services and Hay River Air Services are based in Hay River.

2.4.3 Bus Service

Canadian Coachways System

There is daily bus service between Edmonton and Hay River via Peace River. Connections for Fort Providence, Rae, Edzo and Yellowknife can be made at Enterprise.

N.W.T. Coachlines (1979) Ltd.

This bus service offers three trips per week from Enterprise and Hay River north to other communities and daily trips between Hay River, Pine Point and Fort Smith.

John's Cartage and Rental Services

This charter bus service offers a sightseeing tour of Hay River. Tours are not scheduled and rates are based on custom tour programs.

2.4.4 **Vehicle Rentals**

There are three vehicle rental agencies in Hay River with trucks and cars available. These include Tilden Rent-A-Car Service, Avis Rent-A-Car, and John's Cartage and Rental Services Ltd.

2.4.5 **Boat Rentals**

There are three rental operations offering boats, motors, canoes and camping gear. These include Hay River Sports and Hobby Ltd., R.A.M. Enterprises Ltd. and John's Cartage and Rental Services.

2.4.6 **Fuel and Services**

Hay River service stations have diesel fuel, propane, regular and unleaded gasoline, vehicle service and repairs for travelers requiring refueling. Enterprise has a service station with gas and diesel fuels available.

2.4.7 **Tours**

There are a few tours operating which include a stop in Hay River on their itineraries. 'Holidays by Majestic" (Edmonton based) and 'Evergreen Tours" (Vancouver based) are two of these companies. These companies primarily offer **motorcoach** tours combined with other modes of transportation. 'Horizon Tours" flies groups to Hay River via **Yellowknife**.

2.4.8 **Information Centres**

There are two information **centres** within the study area, one at the 60th Parallel **Alberta/N.W.T. Border** and one in Hay River. The 60th Parallel **Information Centre** is open from May to September. In association with the **centre** is a small campground and picnic area. The Hay River **Information Centre** has been set up this year in an old railway caboose on the south entrance to town. Renovations are being planned to make the caboose more functional as an information **centre**.

2.5 **Activities**

A number of activities of interest to tourists are facilitated in the corridor. These include:

- canoeing;
- hiking;
- cross-country skiing;
- snowmobiling
- swimming;
- boating and sailing;
- fishing and hunting; and
- golf.

2.5.1 Canoeing

Canoeing on the Hay River can be exciting and challenging for most intermediate canoeists. Information sheets and booklets available to canoeists present two trip segments between the 60th parallel and the Town of Hay River. The two segments are split by the Hay River Gorge in which Alexandra and Louise Falls are located. There are five good access points. The information sheets available from the Travel Arctic Information Centre in Yellowknife provides considerable detail for canoeists. Dangerous areas such as the falls are well marked.

2.5.2 Hiking and Cross-Country Skiing

An informal hiking trail exists between Escarpment Creek and Alexandra Falls. There are several unmarked trails in and around the Town of Hay River and the Hay River Reserve. These trails may be suitable for hiking and cross-country skiing. The snow covered ice on the Hay River serves cross-country skiers during the winter.

2.5.3 Swimming

Swimming and beach activities are popular on the beaches of Great Slave Lake. Although the waters of the lake are cold, people do find it comfortable for a short swim in July and August. Since most of the beach along the lakeshore is covered with driftwood, beach parties with campfires are popular.

2.5.4 Fishing and Hunting

Hay River is a major staging point for fishermen. Besides the commercial fishing industry located in Hay River, angling is good in the Hay and Kakisa Rivers although poor in comparison to areas

just 100 km away from the Town. Hay River serves as a **gateway** for fishermen to fly to lodges in the area. Five fishing lodges operate in the Hay River area including:

Brabant Lodges (51 km west of Hay River);
Deegahni Lake Camp (200 km southwest of Hay River);
Nonacho Lake Fishing Camp (346 km east of Hay River);
Rutledge Lake Lodge (274 km east of Hay River); and
Thubun Lake Lodge (227 km northeast of Hay River).

Those visiting the area's lodges **angle** for arctic grayling, walleye, northern pike, whitefish and lake trout.

Other lodges operate in the Great Slave Lake area with access by air primarily from **Yellowknife**.

Arctic grayling, walleye, lake trout, northern pike and whitefish are the main catch for fishermen. Moose, caribou, migratory birds and waterfowl can be hunted in the vicinity of Hay River.

2.5.5 **Camping and Picnicking**

Camping and picnicking are the most popular tourist activities in the study area. The sites and facilities are discussed in Section 2.3.

2.5.6 **Boating and Sailing**

Great Slave Lake and the lower reaches of the Hay River provide excellent opportunities for power boating and sailing. However the harbour and waterfront facilities for recreational boaters are sparse. There are several access points for boat launching but none of them are properly signed and developed.

2.5.7 Golf

The Elk's Club is developing a 9-hole golf course with sand greens on a site south of Hay River, just east of the Mackenzie Highway.

2.6 Tourist Characteristics and Markets

2.6.1 Visitors to the Northwest Territories - 1982

An exit survey was conducted by Underwood McLellan of Yellowknife, N.W.T. during the months of June, July, August and September of 1982. Both air travelers and motorists were surveyed, including visitors departing from the Hay River airport and travelers heading south on the Mackenzie Highway who were interviewed at Enterprise.

The following summary of results for the Fort Smith region provides some background in determining visitor characteristics pertinent to the Mackenzie Highway Corridor Study.

Number of Visitors

- . The number of visitors arriving by air totalled 19,300, representing 64.7% of the total 29,800 visitors arriving by air to the Northwest Territories.

- . The number of motorists traveling in the Fort Smith region totalled 10,000, which represents 71.4% of the total 14,000 visitors traveling by car in the Northwest Territories.

- . The total of the two above mentioned categories is 29,300, or 66.6% of the estimated 44,000 people visiting the Northwest Territories during the summer of 1982.

Expenditures

- The visitors traveling by air in the Fort Smith region spent \$18,103,400 or 49.7% of the \$36,416,900 total expenditures made by air travelers in the Northwest Territories. This represents an average of \$938 per individual traveling by air.
- The motorists in the Fort Smith region spent \$2,180,000 or 80.8% of the \$2,696,000 total expenditures made by all road travelers in the Northwest Territories. This represents an average of \$218 per individual motorist.

Place of Residence

Albertans represented almost half (49%) of the visitors surveyed in the Fort Smith region. Visitors from British Columbia totalled 14%, Ontario residents 12%, Saskatchewan and Manitoba at 5% and 4% respectively, and Quebec and Maritime travelers at 2% each.

Canadians accounted for 89% of the total visitors to the Fort Smith region, followed by U.S. travelers at 9% and the remainder from outside Canada and the U.S. at 2%.

Trip Purpose

It was determined that 66% of the non-resident visitors surveyed in the Fort Smith region were on vacation and 34% were on business.

Trip Activities

Visiting friends and relatives, sightseeing, fishing and to a lesser extent, attending special events, seemed to be the main

activities for vacation travelers. Other secondary activities for those taking vacation trips in the Fort **Smith** region included canoeing, boating, camping and a limited amount of hiking and backpacking.

Business travelers also indicated their preferences for activities, albeit secondary in priority to their primary trip reason. These activities included sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives and fishing.

Trip Length and Type of Accommodation

The Fort Smith, Inuvik and **Baffin** regions were included in this analysis.

Thirteen percent (13%) of the visitors staying in campgrounds spent just one night. A further 25% spent 2 nights, 32% spent 3-5 nights, 17% spent 6-10 nights and 8% spent 11-15 nights. The remaining 5% of the camping visitors spent 16 or more nights. The average number of camping nights, not necessarily at one particular campground, is 5.7.

Four percent (4%) of the visitors staying with friends and relatives spent just one night. A further 9% spent 2 nights, 27% spent 3-5 nights, 35% spent 6-10 nights, and 11% spent 16 or more nights with friends and relatives. The average length of stay in this category is 10.5 nights.

In the fixed roof **commercial accommodation** category, 18% spent just one night, 15% spent 2 nights, 22% spent 3-5 nights, 25% spent 6-10 nights and 9% spent 11-15 nights. The remaining 11% spent 16 or more nights. The average length of stay in this category is 9 nights.

Previous Trips to the Northwest Territories

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the visitors in the Fort Smith region had made previous trips to the Northwest Territories, and the other 49% had not. The average number of previous trips by those indicating the affirmative was 6.

Reasons and Inducement to Visit N.W.T.

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the visitors in the Fort Smith region were prompted to come by friends and relatives residing in the N.W.T. A further 27% were on business, and 25% were attracted out of personal interest. Four percent (4%) were visiting based on advertisements, travel brochures and written articles they had read.

Occupation

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the Fort Smith region visitors were professional people. A further 16% were in the managerial category, 10% were retired, skilled and technical workers accounted for 8% each, and 6% were in the sales and service industry.

Aae

Thirty-four. percent (34%) of the visitors in the Fort Smith region were in the 25-39 year age group, 24% in the 40-54 age group and 19% were over 55. The average was 36.6 years of age.

Party Size

The average party size of all visitors to the N.W.T. during the summer was 3.1 persons. The predominant party was two people.

Income

Twenty-two percent (22%) of this region's visitors were in the \$20,000 - \$29,999 household income bracket, another 22% were in the \$30,000-\$39,999 bracket. Fifteen percent (15%) earned \$40,000-\$49,999 and 20% earned \$50,000 or more. Twenty-one percent (21%) earned less than \$20,000 per year. The **average** household income per visitor was \$34,500.

2.6.2 1982 Traveller Survey

A **traveller** survey was conducted at the 60th Parallel Visitors Information Centre via a questionnaire which is made available to tourists to complete. The survey results are somewhat biased since only those people visiting the **centre** and who chose to fill out the questionnaire are represented in the survey results. However, the results do provide some information about resident and non-resident tourists in the region. The following summary of results are taken from the 1982 Traveller Survey which had 416 respondents.

Previous Visits

Seventy percent (70%) indicated it was their first visit to the Northwest Territories, 14% had visited once before and 16% had visited more than once before.

Trip Purpose

Thirty-two percent (32%) were visiting to experience the wilderness; 31.5% were camping; 27.6% wished to do some fishing; 22.4% were visiting parks; 21.9% were visiting friends and relatives; 13.7% wanted to purchase northern crafts and 8.7% intended to canoe.

Communities Visited

Hay River ranked the highest of all communities visited, at 60.8%. Enterprise was well down the list at 14.9%.

Place of Residence

Albertans ranked the highest in terms of numbers of visitors at 37.7%, followed by U.S. visitors at 20.7%, B.C. residents at 12.5%, Ontario and Quebec visitors together at 9.4%, Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents together at 8.9%, foreign visitors at 4.8%, N.W.T. residents at 2.2% and Maritimers at 1.0%.

Party Size

Parties of 2 people were most prevalent, (43.5%), followed by groups of 4 (15.6%), groups of 3 (13.9%) and single visitors (8.4%). The remaining 18.4% were parties of 5 or larger.

Trip Information

A fairly high proportion (61.5%) of the respondents indicated they had not obtained information on the N.W.T. before starting on their trip.

The sources utilized for trip information included friends and relatives (23.4%), sending written requests for information from the government (19.9%), newspapers and magazines (18.4%), travel agencies (11.3%), motor associations (8.2%), travel shows (5.1%), and radio/television (3.1%).

Information Centres Visited

Although the survey was conducted at the 60th Parallel Visitors Information Centre where respondents would have obtained most of their information, many of them stopped at other centres in the Territories. Many visited the information centres in Yellowknife (36.5%), followed by the Hay River Visitor Information Centre (24.8%) and Fort Smith Information Centre (11.5%).

Eighty-one percent (81%) indicated the information supplied at the information centres was adequate for their needs. Fourteen point seven percent (14.7%) had no response to the question on information adequacy leaving only 4.3% indicating that the information was not adequate.

Date of Entry

The month of July received the most visitors (38.2%) followed by August (23.6%), then June (16.3%). The shoulder season months of September (3.6%) and May (6.5%) indicated significantly less visitation than the summer months, emphasizing the importance of the summer season for tourism in the N.W.T.

Length of Stay

The number of days spent in the N.W.T. covered a broad range from one night to over 30. Approximately 74% spent between 1-10 days with a fairly even distribution for each consecutive trip length up to 10 days. A further 10.4% spent 11-15 days and the remaining 15.8% spent more than two weeks in the N.W.T.

Accommodation

A majority of people (60.6%) spent one or more nights at

campgrounds compared to 14.0% at hotels, 17.6% at motels, 3.2% at lodges and 40.7% at other **accommodations** such as private homes.

Most visitors (78.0%) were satisfied with their **accommodation**. Of those not satisfied, most complained about campground conditions.

Plans to Return

A total of 68.5% indicated they would like to return to the N.W.T. Of these respondents, 43.9% said they would do so within 1-2 years, 42.8% were uncertain when they would return and 4.2% said within 3-5 years. This is a good opportunity for marketing follow-up to enhance the chances of a return trip in the near future.

From the 13.5% indicating they would not return to the N.W.T., 31.6% commented that distance was the reason for not returning, 17.1% planned to travel to other places and 14.6% listed road conditions as being a deterrent.

Highlights and Disappointments

The wildlife, scenery and fishing received overwhelmingly high positive comments (63.4%), followed by the people and hospitality (31.2%), the communities, museums and parks (22.6%) and the trip experience (14.4%).

The blackflies and mosquitoes were the main complaint (19.2%), followed closely by the condition of the roads (18.9%), accommodation (13.7%) and disappointment with the wildlife, scenery and fishing (10.1%).

2.6.3 Markets

Based on the information sources made available for analysis as well as our interviews with operators, **government** officials and individuals involved with the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories, some general observations can be drawn about the tourism market for the corridor study area which may be of assistance in tourism planning and development.

- o The summer season is by far the most important to the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories. About 80% of the visitation takes place during the months of **June, July** and August. Although it may be theoretically logical to try to promote the winter season, the reality is that tourists are generally not attracted to head north during the winter season. Efforts to promote the shoulder seasons would seem to be more practical although these times of the year are certainly not without their added difficulties, such as inclement weather conditions, road conditions and the unavailability of traditional tourist facilities (i.e. campgrounds).
- o At least half or more of the visitors in both surveys had not visited the Northwest Territories previously, indicating the availability of a very large market which had not experienced being in the true north. Greater advantage could be taken of building the "last frontier" image as an enticement to make a trip north.
- o The Alberta market is the largest source of visitors, representing almost half of all travelers to the Northwest Territories. British Columbia and Ontario residents comprise about another 25% of the Canadian visitors. Promotional efforts should be concentrated on these target markets.

- o Approximately two-thirds of the visitors are on vacation and the other one-third are on business. However, expenditures for both these markets are about equal. Facilities and amenities should be developed to service both markets. The number of visitors arriving by air in the region is the highest in the entire Northwest Territories, therefore special consideration should be made to ensure the airports are well serviced and information is readily available for arriving travelers.

- o Visitors to the Northwest Territories are generally well educated, have relatively high incomes and the majority are in the 25-54 age group. About three-quarters of these visitors spend one to ten days on their trip into the Territories, with an average trip length somewhere close to six days. Approximately two-thirds of the visitors were traveling in parties of two to three people.

- o Based on 1982 guest book entry statistics and 1982 N.W.T. travel surveys, approximately 73% of the visiting motorists entering at the Alberta/N.W.T. border crossing stopped at the 60th Parallel Visitor Information Centre. Considering about two-thirds of the visitors had not obtained information about the Northwest Territories previous to their trip, it is imperative that up-to-date information is made available for the corridor and other parts of the Territories as well as an appealing, attractive atmosphere to make visitors feel welcome.

- o The campgrounds, day use areas and lookout spots in the study area serve a vital function to the tourists entering the Northwest Territories, many of them for the first time. The maintenance and upkeep of these facilities is very important and

can help create a positive image of what the north has to offer. Crossing the 60th parallel for many travelers is an important crossing of the "edge" to points farther north. This should be built up to be a major event for tourists driving into the Northwest Territories.

Suggestions and recommendations are made in greater detail elsewhere in this document, in respect to interpretation, signage, facility upgrading, etc.

The visitors staying at campgrounds outnumbered those staying in commercial accommodations. The availability of showers was the most frequent response in regard to suggested new **campground** services. The shower facilities in the Hay River campground will likely become very popular and heavily used. Consideration should be made for similar facilities elsewhere in the corridor, such as the 60th Parallel Visitor Information Centre and perhaps at Louise Falls.

- o Fishing at lodges outside the study area is one of the prime attractions for many visitors. The adventure of the northern experience is a big attraction in itself. It is important for people to receive good service and facilities **enroute** to help make the trip memorable.

- o The facilitation of activities is important in attracting visitors to remain longer in the region before continuing on their way. The ease and availability of services such as boat rentals and short tours, either with a guide or self-guided are important features to consider. The activities can encompass everything from hiking, auto touring, canoeing and fishing to interpretive trails, historical features, and industrial tours. One of the key elements in generating interest in each of these

activities is the research and preparation of accurate information which can be provided to visitors to familiarize them with the choices available.

- o The community of Hay River plays an important role as a service centre within the corridor, providing information, food, lodging, fuel and other essential services. Hay River's role should not be under-estimated in terms of its gateway functions to visitors who may be continuing farther north by air travel.
- o Almost 70% of the visitors indicated they would like to return to the Territories. This is important not only for attracting these visitors to come again but also in creating positive images and attitudes which may influence their friends and relatives to make a trek into the northern frontier of Canada.
- o There is also good tourist potential for promoting circle tours. The completion of the Liard Highway between Fort Nelson, British Columbia and Fort Simpson will allow rubber tired traffic to enter the Territories on the Mackenzie Highway and travel through the Fort Smith region connecting to the Alaska Highway at Fort Nelson. Tourists traveling the Alaska Highway also may choose to detour north through the region and travel through along the Mackenzie Highway into Alberta rather than traveling through British Columbia.

2.7 Biophysical Overview

The Mackenzie Highway in the Northwest Territories crosses land with only limited relief. The Hay River Lowlands extend north from Alberta, while the Slave Lowlands rise gently from Great Slave Lake. Where the two physiographic zones meet near Enterprise there is an elevation change of about 60 m (200 ft.) in a few kilometres.

Between the border and Grumbler Rapids, the land along the highway has limited relief and the river valley is shallow. Geologically, the **surficial** materials are **lacustrine** deposits laid down in lakes adjacent to the ice front at the end of the last Ice Age. Beneath the **lacustrine** deposits are glacial tills laid down during at least three periods of glaciation over the past one million years. Much of the till was derived from the underlying Cretaceous bedrock, which consists of shale, siltstone and sandstone of marine origin.

Grumbler Rapids marks the point where the Hay River begins cutting down through the escarpment. Downstream, the river valley gradually deepens until it is about 20 - 30 m (65 - 100 ft.) deep above Alexandra Falls. At that point, the river drops 33 m (108 ft.). Six kilometres downstream of Alexandra Falls the river plunges a further 15 m (50 ft.) over Louise Falls. For the next 25 km, the river flows through a deep largely inaccessible gorge; the gorge walls are steep and consist primarily of the exposed bedrock. Numerous fossils may be found at various levels, with good exposures occurring near both sets of falls.

The Mackenzie Highway is located at a variable distance from the river. In most locations views of the gorge are screened by roadside trees. Good views of both falls and the gorge are available at the picnic and camping areas located at Alexandra Falls, Louise Falls, and Escarpment Creek.

The falls areas would be good locations for development of geological interpretation displays. Depositional sequences and processes could be easily illustrated in the gorge. Explanations could also be provided for creation of mineral and hydrocarbon deposits within the various strata.

North of Enterprise the river valley gradually **becomes** shallower. Near Enterprise the valley is about 65 m (210 ft.) deep, gradually reducing to about 30 m (100 **ft.**)**over** the next 15 km (9 miles).

The river begins to meander near Paradise Gardens, and the valley is less than 15 m (50 ft.) deep from the Highway 5 bridge to Great Slave Lake.

Downstream from Enterprise the highway runs close to the outside of the meanders. Thus, the river is only occasionally in view. A very well developed meander can be visited at Paradise Gardens. This meander is approximately 1 km (.6 mile) across the neck and nearly 5 km (3 miles) around the bend.

A variety of man-made features are found along Highway 2. The government of the Northwest Territories owns large gravel pits that are adjacent to the highway several **kilometres** north of Enterprise. They are located in a meander, close to the river. Another group of gravel pits is located just downstream of Paradise Gardens, on the top of the valley wall. A small sawmill is located between the highway and the river north of the gravel pits. Estate housing and a golf course/cross-country skiing area are located on river terraces upstream of the Highway 5 bridge. Between that bridge and the town there are a number of private homes, as well as a base for the forestry operations of Indian and Northern Affairs. A closeup view of forestry operations, especially fire suppression activities, would be of interest to many tourists. This summer's open house drew many local visitors, and outsiders would certainly be interested in less elaborate (i.e. photos, static displays, knowledgeable guides) productions throughout the summer.

The delta of the Hay River is the centre of the town, as it provides protected harbor areas, as well as good, level building

sites. The lakeshore itself has stretches of sand beach. **Back-**shore areas are covered with grass, shrubs, and mixed aspen/pine forests, depending on elevation. Most of the river shoreline is occupied by private facilities, especially for the Northern Transportation Company Ltd. (NTCL).

Typical forest cover for this part of Canada is boreal forest. The species composition varies, depending on the disturbance history of an area, and the local moisture regime. In most areas, aspen is the first species to colonize an area. It can tolerate a range of soil moisture conditions but does not do well on very wet or dry sites. In wet locations black spruce are the most common tree. Dry conditions favor jack pine. In areas that are well drained but have plentiful water supplies, such as stream banks, balsam poplar may supplant aspen.

As the stand age increases, aspen is typically replaced by white spruce. This process is slow, and it will likely take more than a century to replace a mature stand of spruce following its destruction in this area. White spruce may also replace pine but it is unlikely to replace black spruce.

Depressional areas are usually boggy. Decay of plant material in these wet areas is slow, and peat gradually fills the low areas. As peat accumulates, soil conditions remain wet and usually become acidic. Peat also acts as a good insulator, keeping temperatures low in the root zone. Insulation may be so effective that some bogs stay frozen at depth throughout the year. Permafrost is occasionally encountered along the highway corridor between Alberta and Hay River. Black spruce are one of the few tree species that can grow in such cool, wet, acidic conditions. **As** a result, there are large areas in the study area that support black spruce.

For the first few kilometres north of the border, forests along the highway are reasonably dense. However, within a short distance tree cover beside the highway becomes sparse. **This** change in vegetation can be interpreted for tourists.

North from Grumbler Rapids to Enterprise there are substantial areas of bog west of the highway. Much of this land is poorly drained because it slopes only gently to the river. Land east of the road is better drained because of its proximity to the river, so bog development has been limited there. Drainage across the escarpment is fairly good, so large bogs have not developed there. There are numerous and extensive bog areas on the Slave Lowland, but only a few of them are close to the Hay River Highway.

There are a number of areas of patterned ground south of the Slave Lowlands. These comprise polygons of approximately regular size and shape created when frost action raises portions of the ground surface relative to nearby locations. Patterned ground is common in the Northwest Territories, but it is rarely encountered in more southerly areas. **Two** large areas are found just west of the highway in the vicinity of the railway switch point of Alexandra Falls. Another area is located just north of Enterprise. Because so few travelers will be familiar with this type of feature an interpretive display/trail could be of interest to tourists. There also are a few natural meadows within the corridor that can be identified and interpreted for tourists.

There are substantial fish and wildlife resources in this part of northern Canada. However, the Mackenzie Highway corridor is not well-supplied with obvious populations. This is a result of both cultural and biophysical conditions. The most important cultural factor is traffic and related human activity, which discourages most large mammals from frequenting the vicinity of the highway. Studies have shown that large ungulates usually avoid main roads by at least 0.75 km (.45 miles).

The effects of avoidance reactions are compounded by the fact that the **biophysical** characteristics of the area are such that most of this area provides relatively poor habitat for big game. The major big game species in the southern Northwest Territories are moose, woodland caribou and wood bison. Because of the generally flat nature of the countryside, most of this area has relatively low capability to support ungulates. However, the **escarpment** and river valley do offer topographic relief which will provide important shelter to game animals. Explanations of the importance of **various** factors in wildlife habitat could be provided to visitors through interpretive programs and information. Such displays would improve visitors appreciation of the local environment.

There are bears in the highway corridor, but they are rarely seen by travelers under natural conditions. Black bears are highly visible where food is available. In places where food can be obtained, these animals may present serious safety problems. Unless food is readily available these animals normally avoid settled areas. Garbage management will be necessary at **campgrounds** and picnic areas to prevent bears becoming habituated to people, and therefore **dangerous**.

In addition to these highly visible and recognizable species, numerous smaller birds and mammals will be found in the highway corridor. These animals are not greatly disturbed by moderate levels of human activity. Songbirds and small mammals such as mice, shrews, and voles are widely distributed. Among the more visible small mammals are snowshoe hares and red squirrels. Upland game birds such as ruffed grouse and spruce grouse are also found here. These animals will provide food for a number of predators, such as small weasels and lynx. Hawks and owls will also prey on the smaller birds and mammals.

Fishing in the Hay River is generally good, especially at the mouths of tributary streams. The major **sportfish** in the Hay River are pike and pickerel. One factor that will influence future utilization of the resource is the barrier to fish movements presented by the falls in the Hay River Gorge. **Stream-dwelling** species found below the falls in a relatively accessible stretch of the river are vulnerable to over-fishing. Generally, the fishing capability of the study area is considered at the saturation point and no further exploitation can be justified.

2.8 Human History

2.8.1 Regional Overview

As is the case with most of northern Canada, our understanding of the prehistoric record of the area between and surrounding the **communities** of Cameron Hills and Hay River is limited. In the centuries after the glaciers retreated, early man moved into the area in search of the game that roamed there. Where these people came from and exactly when they came remains unknown. **How** they related to the native tribes who inhabited the region when the first Europeans arrived is equally mysterious at present.

We have much greater knowledge of the regional indigenous people as they were when Europeans first contacted them in the eighteenth century. There were several tribes that lived and hunted in Canada's north, but the main local tribes were all of the Athapascan language group. Most were Slavey Indians, who ranged near the southwest end of Great Slave Lake. Like other Athapascan inhabitants of the northern boreal forest, these people lived in a resource-rich but harsh land. This was reflected in their tribal lifestyle.

Both the land and the climate could be unforgiving, and a few of the resources required for survival were not constantly plentiful. Most game and fish were available only seasonally, **while** the wild plants which provided sustenance were limited in number. Horticulture was prohibited by the climate. Moreover, the big game hunted by the **Slaveys** were non-herd animals - woodland caribou and moose - and even a successful hunt would not necessarily satisfy the needs of a large group of people, unlike the bison hunts on the southern plains. Consequently, the tribe was loosely organized and divided into several independent, semi-leaderless bands, each of which united across a certain territory. These smaller groups were suited to hunting in the forest, since they could be sustained by a limited kill and could be directed more effectively in the difficult task. According to one authority, the **Slaveys** depended on fish for nearly half of their diet. For fishing, they used the resources at their disposal - willow bark, wood, bones, antlers, and **babiche** - to make nets, hooks, and lines. They also hunted smaller game, often using snares. The natural resources of the boreal forest also provided them with clothing, shelter, utensils, and tools. This simple way of life is believed to have supported some 1,250 people in the Northwest Territories prior to European contact.

The coming of Europeans to this region was a direct result of the fur trade and its expansion west of Hudson Bay. Spurred by the desire to acquire more and finer furs, the traders and explorers of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies pushed farther and farther into the western and northern regions of the continent. Samuel Hearne of the H.B.C. crossed the east end of Great Slave Lake in 1771-2, while semi-independent trader Peter Pond reached Embarras Portage just south of Lake Athabasca in 1778. Pond's trip in particular generated great interest among the trading concerns on Hudson Bay and at Montreal. It was not until the next decade, however, that this interest resulted in further trade exploration

and expansion. In 1789 Alexander Mackenzie made a voyage from Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca down the Mackenzie River system to the Arctic Ocean. His trip helped to incorporate the Great Slave Lake region into the growing fur trade network in the north west. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries fur trade posts had been established around the lake, though many proved impermanent. By 1804 the North West Company had set up a permanent post which they called Fort Simpson at the junction of the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers. Before long, the Nor'westers confirmed their control of the trade of the north by constructing other establishments along or near Great Slave Lake, such as Fort Resolution, Fort Providence, Fort Enterprise and, in 1815, Hay River.

These were difficult years for the North West Company, for although the richness of the resources in the Athabasca District was undeniable and the Hudson's Bay Company had proved incapable of mounting an effective trade challenge, the costs of maintaining and supplying these distant posts were enormous. These costs were even more onerous in view of the competition that the Nor'westers faced elsewhere throughout their extended trade empire. Mackenzie's successful journey to the Pacific Ocean in 1793 had not changed the customary transportation and communications lines of the fur trade, which ran east from Athabasca for more than 2,000 miles to the St. Lawrence River. By 1815 a reduction of posts seemed probable, yet the Hay River establishment was not marked for closure.

Little else is readily known about the fur trade of the Hay River area. Undoubtedly the region and its inhabitants were affected by the intense rivalry between the Nor'westers and their Bayside counterparts and by the changes which their amalgamation of 1821 wrought. Certainly the transfer of Rupert's Land from the British government to Canada in 1870 and the consequent opening of the west to settlement and railways was also felt in the far north as free

traders (independents) entered the region in unprecedented numbers and competed seriously for the local fur trade.

Isolation, however, protected the Hudson's Bay Company's interest in the north much longer than at its more southern and accessible post locations, where settlement and competition had intervened much earlier and more decisively. It was not until well into the twentieth century that non-fur trade development began in earnest. Prior to this the only constant presence in the region apart from the fur traders and the natives was that of the Anglican Church missionaries. Their presence dated from 1842 when Bishop Bompas of Athabasca sent a school teacher to Hay River as part of an overall plan to establish the Church of England in the north. In that year a school and mission were opened under the direction of J.T. Marsh and, despite the overwhelming presence of the Roman Catholic Church in northern Canada, the position and influence of the Anglican Church were maintained at both Fort Simpson and Hay River. The success of the Hay River mission was such that by 1912 a new school was being planned. Agnes Cameron, who visited the area early in the twentieth century, claimed that the mission at Hay River was by far the most attractive English Church Mission in the whole north. The settlement, according to her account, was still an isolated wilderness community where mail was delivered once a year and where the population was very small and largely composed of the local Slaveys (and a few Dogribs) whose children attended the mission school. By growing some vegetables and catching large quantities of local whitefish, the community managed to alleviate some of the distressing hardships of years gone by.

The isolation of the territory between the Alberta border and Hay River did not end until after the Second World War. In the 1890s, independent fur traders were active in the area and prospectors passing through en route to the Klondike found ore rich in lead and zinc near their camp at Pine Point. Gold, however, held more

attraction and they ignored their find. As well, the discovery of oil at Norman Wells in the far north during the early part of this century promised to involve Hay River in an elaborate transportation scheme to move oil to southern markets, but ultimately another route was selected. It was not until gold was discovered near **Yellowknife** in 1936 that the isolation of the region ended. Improved transportation to the north became imperative if its resources were to be developed, and by 1939 a cat train trail had been cleared from northern Alberta to Hay River. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, this trail was upgraded in stature until it became an all-weather gravel highway. By 1961 it had reached **Yellowknife**.

In 1957 the area just east of Hay River, around the Nyarling River, became the subject of intense scientific study, for there was discovered an apparently pure-bred herd of wood bison. This was a discovery of major biological significance, since it had long been believed that the wood bison sub-species had been eradicated through federal government actions taken in the 1920's which saw thousands of plains bison transferred to Wood Buffalo National Park, where they quickly interbred with the few remaining wood bison. Thus, the Nyarling River herd assumed great importance. Animals from the herd were captured, and have served as the foundation stock from which the wood bison sub-species is being re-established throughout its historical northern habitat.

In 1965 the Northwest Territories' first railway was completed. It had been constructed to facilitate the opening of the lead and zinc mines of Pine Point. These tracks brought all of the Territories much closer to both its markets and source of supply. Hay River thus became an important link in the communications network that bound the north to the rest of the country.

With a completed railway, a major highway, and a **prosperous** mining area nearby, the Hay River district was no longer an isolated fur trade community. **As** the service **centre** for the Pine Point mines and a critical element of the northern transportation system, the Town of Hay **River** has developed into a thriving modern **community**. Since 1945 it has served as the base for all commercial fishing operations on Great Slave Lake and a barge and shipping base for Mackenzie River traffic as well. Residents of the town and surrounding area now enjoy all the amenities of a modern urban community.

2.8.2 The Town of **Hay River**

The following history of Hay River is a revised version of the history section on the **N.W.T.** Data Sheet for Hay River.

Situated in the homeland of the Slavey people, the original site of Hay River is where the Dene Village stands on the east side of the Hay River. Hay River appeared on maps as early as 1854 but Anglican missionaries reached Hay River as early as 1842. In that same year a school and mission were opened. It was not until 1869 that a Roman Catholic Mission under Father Gascon was established. Later in 1875 the post was abandoned.

The RCMP opened a detachment at Hay River in 1925 and the **community** grew to include a hospital. It remained essentially a trading post on the east bank of the river until 1939, when some settlement started on Vale Island on the west side of the main channel of the river. In the same year a cat trail was cleared from northern Alberta to Hay River. By 1948 the trail was upgraded to an all weather gravel highway. In the late '40s a new townsite was laid out on the West Channel and the community became an important transportation/communications centre. The community also became

the centre of the Great Slave Lake commercial fishery, and a small settlement was laid out especially for fishermen and their facilities near the mouth of the West Channel.

In both 1951 and 1963, there were serious floods on Vale Island, requiring the evacuation of virtually the entire population. During the 1963 flood, the Federal Government declared Vale Island a disaster area and took steps to establish a new **townsite** on the mainland to the south. Despite financial assistance and encouragement for families to relocate in the new **townsite**, several families have remained on Vale Island. The island is zoned for commercial and industrial development and shipping facilities and other heavy industries continue to develop on the island. The Vale Island community is now referred to as Hay River's "Old Town". In 1964, Hay River's economy was further stimulated by the completion of a CNR rail link, the Great Slave Lake Railway, between Hay River and Roma, Alberta.

During the late '60s and early '70s, Hay River underwent something of an economic "boom" with oil and gas exploration activity supply and the anticipated construction of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. The Northern Transportation Company Limited moved its main base to Hay River during this period. In 1974 the Slavey population requested the creation of a reserve, the only one in the N.W.T., in order to protect their traditional lifestyle and lands. Activity in the area declined after 1975, when it became apparent that the pipeline would not be built in the near future. Hay River remains one of the few N.W.T. communities which is largely dependent on private enterprise.

There is no secondary source providing a history of the Hay River Band. A detailed study of its history would likely prove interesting and provide an information base for historical interpretation of the area.

2.9 Local Attitudes, Issues and Ideas

The following discussion of attitudes, issues and concerns regarding tourism development in the corridor and the communities within it is based on our observations during field trips, discussions with people in the area directly or indirectly involved in the tourism industry, and review of previous studies and evaluation, and other secondary sources.

The discussion is divided into three subsections as follows:

- development;
- operation; and
- promotions and advertising

2.9.1 Development

There is a general concern about the quality of facilities, services and experiences available in the corridor. The main concern is about the highway. The gravel and broken pavement highway between the 60th parallel and the Town of Hay River is hard on vehicles and equipment. Most tourists do not want to travel the highway with trailers in tow. They also experience truck drivers hogging the road almost in a game of "chicken". Tourists venturing into the Territories along the Mackenzie Highway do not have basic information and services such as signs indicating the distance travelled along the highway, or highway pull-offs to view spectacular scenery.

Picnic areas and campground facilities in the corridor need improvements. Better organization, fences, more equipment, showers, trails, interpretive signage, better access, landscaping and general upgrading are some of the requested improvements.

The attractions such as Alexandra Falls, the dockyards in Hay River and the churches in the Hay River Reserve lack interpretive signage and facilities to educate and allow tourists to experience and understand these attractions.

Access and facilities to allow and promote use of the Hay River and Great Slave Lake are poor. More trails along the river and parking for those wanting to fish are required.

The "old town" on Vale Island needs an extensive clean-up to capitalize on its character which can be quite an attraction for tourists. Apart from the "old village" the history of the area's native and settled peoples is not interpreted. Many of the old buildings, especially those on the **Reserve**, have good potential providing an interpretive program is developed and the buildings are renovated and packaged properly.

Many people in the Town of Hay River believe that the community should have its own museum. Artifacts and photographs are presently being stored in garages and other buildings subject to flooding and fire hazards. Other items have been sent to other communities for storage.

2.9.2 **Maintenance and Operations**

Due to the quality of some facilities it is difficult to maintain them. Many facilities such as the viewpoints at Alexandra Falls suffer from overuse and consequent damage to natural vegetation and man-made structures.

The "old town" area in Hay River which tourists normally travel through on their way to the beach or campground is the biggest eyesore in the corridor. Many buildings and facilities that have long outlived their usefulness remain in place with no maintenance.

To the average tourist, there is a lack of organized activities available on demand such as boat tours, bus tours and adventure tours into the surrounding area. There also is a lack of equipment available for rental on demand such as boats and fishing equipment. However, businessmen say that there just are not enough people to justify the offering of these services. The feasibility of services and facilities would be higher if tourists were attracted to the north year-round or at least for a longer season.

There are also many concerns about the role of government in developing and promoting tourism. Some say that it should be left to the private sector while others want the government to provide more assistance in development and promotions.

2.9.3 **Advertising and Promotions**

Tourists, businessmen and government officials alike see that there is lack of coordination in the advertising and promotion of tourism attractions and activities along the corridor. A theme as a basis for marketing and development of the facilities and services is inherently missing.

Little marketing advantage is taken of the linkages that the Mackenzie Highway has with Alberta and British Columbia, the Liard Highway officially opening in 1984 and the connection to the Alaska Highway.

Within the corridor, it must be realized that the Town of Hay River is the main destination for the majority of rubber-tired traffic crossing the 60th parallel. Coupled with the paving of the highway over the next two to three years, there will be considerable growth in tourist traffic and efforts must be directed at capitalizing on this opportunity to promote and develop the tourism industry within the corridor. A cooperative promotion program between tourist

associations in the Territories, Alberta and British Columbia should be developed and implemented to maximize the potential tourist business generated from traffic along the length of the Mackenzie Highway and major highways connecting to it.

Something must be done to promote tour packages that offer lower air fares and accommodations. Many tourists, especially Americans, believe the fares and rates are exorbitant. Well designed tour packages could provide good value and quality experience that foreign tourists are looking for.

Existing promotions fail to make tourists aware of some of the discomforts associated with travel in the north. This is not to say that the negative aspects should be promoted but that tourists should be made aware in advance so they can prepare to cope with mosquitoes and bugs, gravel roads, cooler temperatures and higher prices.

The sale and display of native crafts is a good opportunity in the study area. There are a few establishments in Hay River which sell native crafts. However, they are not identified in tourist literature or on town maps.

Signage within the corridor needs improvement. Milestone markers and monuments that announce a tourist's arrival into the Territories and the great distance travelled along the Mackenzie Highway should be erected and promoted as part of the 'wilderness adventure'. The milestones and monuments serve to make tourists proud of their accomplishments.

2.10 Tourist Facilities and Services Requirements

2.10.1 Introduction

About 10,000 motorists visited the Fort Smith region in 1982 via the Mackenzie Highway; two-thirds of these were on vacation. A majority of visitors (60.5%) visited the Town of Hay River. With the paving of the Mackenzie and Hay River Highways to the Town of Hay River, the completion of the Liard Highway thereby creating an alternate connection or loop to the Alaska Highway, and the ever-increasing popularity of wilderness adventure tours to the north, vehicle traffic by tourists within the corridor study area can be expected to increase substantially over the next five years.

Due to the lack of trend data and previous data on the impact of paving a highway on tourism in the Northwest Territories, we can only make an educated guess at the increase in tourist traffic over the next five years.

The proximity of this area to markets, the paving of the Mackenzie Highway, and the opening of the Liard Highway connection between the Mackenzie and Alaska Highways leads us to believe that traffic will increase by up to 50% to 15,000 motorists by 1987. Further, our discussions with airlines and tour operators suggest that air traffic will increase by up to 10% to 21,200 by the same date.

Of course, the increased traffic will put stress on the existing services and facilities. The need for more services and facilities combined with the poor quality of some existing services and facilities will require considerable investment.

2.10.2 Information

The role of the visitor information **centre** at the 60th parallel cannot be overemphasized. The quality of the facility and its service must be increased substantially. The full line of information services presently available in **Yellowknife** should be **offered** at this location. Opportunities such as canoeing, tours in Hay River, fishing and hunting lodges, and attractions along the route should be promoted through counseling and information brochures.

Due to the increasing volume of tourist traffic expected over the next two or three years, an information and booking system should be developed for fixed roof accommodations and campgrounds. Occupancy levels of all campgrounds should be available in the 60th parallel information **centre** and posted on a sign close to the border. A telephone should be available in the information **centre** to allow visitors to book accommodation and tours free of charge.

The information **centre** at Hay River should function as a reception **centre** for tourists and as an interpretive **centre** for transportation in the region.

Tourists arriving at the airport do not have any information services other than information from the staff at the commercial services counters. Brochures and a telephone information/booking line to the Hay River tourist reception centre should be available.

Interpretive information is sadly lacking. It seems that man-made accomplishments such as the 'purple school' and "Mackenzie Place" are overemphasized. The natural history and attractions must be presented to the tourist in an interesting and exciting manner. The history of human settlement and exploration also needs to be presented.

Warning, precautionary and safety information needs improvement. Road conditions, mosquitoes and 'care of children at some of the dangerous natural attractions needs to be delicately treated but emphasized to ensure tourists are prepared to deal with the elements and the hazards. An example of this type of information is the "You are in Bear Country" brochure distributed to motorists entering the Rocky Mountain National Parks.

2.10.3 **Services and Activities**

The present services to motorists traveling from the border to the Town of Hay River appear to be adequate in number and quality although there is some concern about the cost of fuel. Some services such as the gas bar at Enterprise are being upgraded in anticipation of the increased vehicular traffic. Good demand presently exists for tours and equipment rentals but at present, this market is poorly serviced. Harbour tours, historic tours, natural history tours, fishing expeditions and boat rentals need to be provided in the Town of Hay River and from the Hay River Reserve.

At restaurants, it would seem appropriate that visitors traveling in the N.W.T. would be interested in trying dishes with a more authentic northern flair. The creation of unique dishes and recipes which is part of the culture and heritage of the area could become a significant attraction in itself if developed and tested to appeal to the market. Greater advantage could be taken of this opportunity by the food service operations in the corridor to offer something unique and, at least in a historical sense, indigenous to the area. Such specialty dishes might not necessarily become the mainstay of the operation but will serve as an attractor to create interest and add to the experience of being in the north.

Activities for tourists should be concentrated in the months from mid-May to mid-September. Although it would be nice to expand the tourist season and attract more tourists during the winter, the return on effort and investment is likely to be minimal.

2.10.4 Facilities

Due to the increased number of tourists expected with paving of the highway and promotion of linkages to destinations outside of the study area, there will be a need for more facilities. However, the quality and size of existing facilities including campgrounds, picnic areas, viewpoints, trails and fixed roof accommodations should be given first priority. Additional facilities will be required at tourist destination points including the Town of Hay River, Louise Falls and the 60th Parallel. The Hay River Reserve might be considered for development as a major tourist destination point. The Hay River Band has expressed interest in the development of a major tourist destination point.

On the basis of visitor projections contained in Section 2.10.1, campground and picnic site use in the corridor will increase significantly over the next few years. To accommodate this increase, each location should be made into a viable operation allowing for more efficient operation and a better level of service to the users. Hot water showers should be available at the larger developed campgrounds.

The viewpoints at Alexandra Falls and Louise Falls should be upgraded considerably to handle the increased traffic. Interpretive signs, trails and better access to the falls should be developed to a level which will handle the traffic, allow safe and reasonable

access to the falls and provide information to tourists about the falls and the natural and human history of the area.

Road access to Hay River and Great Slave Lake in the Town of Hay River needs better and more signage. Clean-up of areas along routes to these areas is also important.

The Hay River Reserve has good potential for the development of facilities for tourists. Some of the development ideas presented by the Dene Band include fixed roof accommodations, a campground and picnic area. Ancillary facilities and services such as a marina, historic tours, sale of native crafts and cultural interpretive programs would add to the possible success of these facilities. However, care must be taken to ensure compatibility of any development with the objectives of the Dene Band and economic development plans for the Reserve.

SECTION THREE

CORRIDOR **TOURISM** DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

3.1 Introduction

A tourism development concept for the corridor must capitalize on the opportunities presented by the resource base and its man-made facilities and services. Each component must be designed to fit as an integral piece in the overall concept for **development and marketing** of tourism in the corridor and throughout the Northwest Territories.

Following a discussion of an appropriate tourism theme and sub-themes, identification of primary and secondary marketing linkages and the basic overall development **concept**, concept plans for the development of major components will be presented. For each component, the following items will be addressed:

- function and sub-themes;
- existing situation;
- recommendations; and
- justification.

A discussion of signage and preliminary cost estimates complete this section.

3.2 Tourism Theme and Sub-Themes

In keeping with the "explore Canada's Arctic" promotion theme used in Travel Arctic marketing and to take advantage of the natural and man-made attractions in the corridor, the tourism development theme should focus on "exploration and adventure". The major sub-themes could include:

history of exploration and settlement;
natural history of the river and unique land forms and features;
Dene culture and settlement;
transportation;
nature viewing and interpretation;
hunting and fishing;
outdoor recreation; and
the fishing industry.

3.3 Primary and Secondary Linkages

The origins and destinations of visitors are major considerations in planning services, facilities, activities and marketing of the corridor. The linkages between points can be used to promote tourism activity within the corridor. Since most tourists are in fact traveling to other destinations outside the corridor, efforts should be concentrated on increasing the length of stay within the corridor by offering quality attractions, activities and services.

Primary linkages are those between any point or area within the corridor or connecting to any point or area immediately adjacent to the corridor. Secondary linkages are those between the corridor and indirectly connecting to other points or areas. Linkages can exist between any point, area or route.

Primary and secondary linkages to and within the study area include the following:

Primary Linkages

- Mackenzie and Hay River Highways between the 60th parallel and Great Slave Lake.
- Mackenzie Highway to Fort Simpson or Yellowknife.
- Highway 5 to Wood Buffalo National Park and Fort Simpson.
Highway 35 (Alberta) to High Level.

Secondary Linkages

- To Fort Nelson via the Mackenzie and **Liard** Highways connecting to the Alaska Highway.
- To Peace River and **Grimshaw** via the Mackenzie Highway to other southern destinations.
- To the **Ingraham** Trail via Highway 3 through **Yellowknife**.
To Pine Point and Fort Resolution via Highways 5 and 6.

A combination of primary and secondary linkages can be tied together to form travel loops. For example, the Mackenzie Highway, **Liard** Highway, Alaska Highway and Highways 49, 2 and 35 in Alberta form a loop connecting the communities of Enterprise, Fort Simpson, Fort Nelson, **Dawson** Creek, Peace River and High Level. This loop can be used as a basis for promoting travel throughout the area and through Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

3.4 Corridor Concept

Using the basic theme of "exploration and adventure", the development and marketing of tourism in the corridor and to other destinations in the Territories can be tied together. Each component in the corridor must tie in with the overall theme although an individual component may emphasize one of the aforementioned sub-themes. The tie-in should be through design of the facilities, design of signs, interpretive programs, promotional literature, tourist facilities and services, and trails.

The basic development concept must serve tourists traveling by vehicle between the 60th parallel and the Town of Hay River. Due to the highway paving, a greater percentage of the traffic will include mobile recreation vehicles, trailers and recreation vehicles in tow. The service and destination points within the corridor must be designed to handle larger volumes of tourists with

more sophisticated equipment and vehicles, yet maintain the image and atmosphere associated with the themes of 'exploration and adventure".

3.5 Concept Plans

Concept plans are presented for major components of the corridor including:

- 60th Parallel Visitor Information Centre, Picnic Area and Campground;
- Alexandra Falls;
- Louise Falls;
- Escarpment Creek;
- Enterprise;
- Paradise Gardens;
- Hay River Visitor Information Centre;
- Hay River Campground;
- Hay River Attractions; and
- Signage.

The development of facilities and services at Grumbler Rapids is not recommended due to the abundance of more accessible and significant natural attractions in the corridor. However, this site should be included in interpretive literature of physical features in the corridor.

3.5.1 **60th Parallel Information Centre, Picnic Area and Campground**

Function and Sub-Themes

The main function of this component is to greet tourists and

provide information to them about attractions and activities in the Northwest Territories. It serves to announce to tourists that they have 'arrived' to explore Canada's Arctic. Sub-themes at this location include: history of exploration and settlement portrayed and interpreted in the Trapper's Cabin and the cairn commemorating the building of the Great Slave Lake Railway; outdoor recreation is facilitated by the picnic area and boat launch, and overnight accommodation is facilitated by the campground.

Existing Situation

Map 6 is a plan view of the existing site. The campground needs some redesign and better maintenance is required.

The information centre is staffed under contract for general tourist information services. Dene arts and crafts are on display in the centre and an audio visual presentation shows the attractions along the Territorial highways. Tourists can obtain brochures on services, accommodations and attractions in the Territories. The trapper's cabin next to the information centre has some period furniture but it lacks ornaments, decoration and utensils to display the residence of an early trapper. Signage is also lacking to identify and interpret the cabin.

Recommendations

The basic objective for planning improvements on this site is to improve the quality of services and facilities. Map 7 illustrates a concept plan for development at the 60th parallel. The following developments are recommended:

1. The campsites along the road to the Hay River should be closed and the sites revegetated. These sites should be replaced by a campground loop of six sites in close

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- proximity to the covered cook shelter. The pit toilets serving the sites along the road should be relocated to the new campground loop.
2. The boat ramp should be rebuilt to avoid natural reclamation and to make it more suitable for canoe and boat launching.
 3. An area of approximately 50 m² at the entrance to the information centre should be covered and screened to serve as a picnic area for visitors.
 4. The picnic area west of the information centre should be upgraded by installing culvert type fireplaces and defining the edge of the picnic area with bollards or timbers.
 5. The trapper's cabin should be relocated to Enterprise (see Section 3.5.5)
 6. Signage off and on the site should be improved. At a minimum, a boating/canoeing information sign should be posted at the boat launch providing general information on the canoe route and portages to Hay River emphasizing the hazards posed by Alexandra and Louise Falls. Signs indicating the services and facilities and distance to the 60th parallel should be posted at least 400 m south and north of the 60th parallel.

justification

This site gives most visitors their first impression of the Northwest Territories. Therefore, it is important to provide good

quality services and facilities. Seventy-one percent or 10,000 of the total 14,000 visitors traveling by car into the Northwest Territories enter using the Mackenzie Highway. The 60th parallel visitor information **centre** is the first opportunity to promote sales of tourist services, facilities and accommodation in Big River Country and the Northwest Territories. The projected increase in tourist traffic over the next few years could see almost half of the total tourist traffic through the Territories passing by this point.

The campsites along the road provide a poor quality camping experience in comparison to sites near the river. The closure of some sites and the construction of a new loop near the river and closer to facilities would significantly improve the quality of the camping experience.

Canoeing along the Hay River is being promoted as an outdoor recreation activity in the corridor, but facilities need to be upgraded to allow good access and better information and route signage is required. The boat ramp needs to be regraded and **gravelled**. A sign at the launch would provide basic information for canoeists and boaters to have a safe and pleasant trip along the Hay River.

The covering and screening of an area attached to the information **centre** would provide protection from bugs and mosquitoes while eating. Also, this facility could be maintained and supervised by the people contracted to provide information services. For the more hardy outdoors people, the picnic area to the west of the information **centre** should be upgraded with culvert type fireplaces and the edges of the area defined with some sort of barrier to prevent vehicles from driving into the area.

The trapper's cabin is destined to rot at this site. It is impractical to furnish and maintain it at this site for interpretive purposes. This structure could be put to more practical use as a visitor information booth at Enterprise (see Section 2.5.6).

Presently, tourists driving the Mackenzie Highway are not aware of the services and facilities at the border until they actually reach that point on the highway. Signs indicating the services and facilities available posted at least 400 m north and south of the border would give sufficient warning to motorists to prepare for a turn-off.

3.5.2 Alexandra Falls

Function and Sub-Themes

Alexandra Falls is a spectacular natural attraction and serves as a nice place to have a picnic. Natural history of the river and unique **landforms** and features, and outdoor recreation are the **sub-themes** associated with the component.

Existing Situation

Map 8 is a plan view of the existing site. There are four day-use sites at this location. The main viewpoint is located at the north extreme of the area where three of the day-use sites are located. Directional **signage** on the site is poor and interpretive **signage** is non-existent. The existing site cannot sustain further use without loss of some trees and possible instability of the viewpoint area. An undeveloped trail leads down from the viewpoint area to the top of the falls.

Recommendations

The basic objective for planning improvements on this site is to ensure that the area will be able to handle at least twice the existing use and to provide a more meaningful experience in viewing the falls.

1. The main viewpoint area at the north end of the site should be upgraded by formalizing it with a viewing deck, trails and parking lot improvements as shown on Map 9. An interpretative sign of the falls explaining why the falls and the gorge came to be, a diagram of the underlying rock formation and the basis for the name of the falls should

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be erected on the viewing deck. There also should be a sign on the deck warning visitors of the danger inherent in proceeding down to the edge of the falls from the viewing deck. Drinking water should be supplied at this site.

2. A trail should be cut between the main parking area and the viewpoint along with clearings on the river side of the trail to provide a view of the river and the gorge.
3. The roadway and parking areas require grading, gravel and fencing.
4. On-site directional signage needs improvement. Entrance, picnic area and viewpoint signs need to be erected as shown on Map 9.

Justification

Although the true beauty of this site is captured merely in viewing the falls, the surroundings may be destroyed due to poor design and management combined with overuse. It is the most spectacular attraction in the study area corridor and is destined to be the most popular. To maximize its impact, better facilities and signage at a rehabilitated site are required.

The viewpoint deck and trail improvements are required to minimize impacts on site vegetation due to pedestrian traffic. Access down to the edge of the falls should not be encouraged by a formal trail due to the danger inherent in the 33 m drop from the top of the falls to the river. The warning sign on the deck will give parents notice to restrain or control their young children from proceeding down to the edge of the falls. This warning also should be contained in promotional literature.

The trail along the top of the bank will allow visitors to park in the main lot and walk to the viewpoint. Presently, due to the lack of a formally cut trail, several informal trails have emerged and visitor traffic is causing unnecessary destruction of vegetation.

3.5.3 Louise Falls

Function and Sub-Themes

The main function of this site is to provide overnight camping facilities coupled with a picnic area and a view of Louise Falls which is somewhat less spectacular than Alexandra Falls. Natural history of the river, unique **landforms** and features, and outdoor recreation are the sub-themes associated with this component.

Existing Situation

Map 10 is a plan view of the existing site. Eighteen campsites with good layout and services in the two loops of nine are located at this site. The number of campsites should be adequate to serve present and future use of this site. There are also 10 poorly defined day-use areas. The formal viewpoint and trails are poorly developed. The viewpoint is quite distant from the falls and invites people to walk the trail towards the falls and down the bank to view the falls as close as possible. Stairs have been constructed reaching down only one-third of the bank's descent and presents a dangerous descent for most people. There also is insufficient directional signage along the trails and roads. Interpretive signage is non-existent.

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Recommendations

To improve the view of the falls and provide a more pleasing area for picnicking are the main objectives for planning improvements on this site. Improvements to the site are needed in the picnic and viewpoint area. Recommendations for improvements are illustrated on Map 11 and are as follows:

1. A formal viewpoint area should be developed taking into account the inherent instability of the bank. A viewpoint deck should be constructed on skids and placed a minimum of 10 m from the top of the bank. As slumping occurs, the deck can be moved back to maintain the "necessary setback. The deck level should be at least 1 m above ground to ensure that the viewers have some view of the falls. There should be an interpretative sign about the falls mounted on the deck. The sign should provide information on the formation of the falls, the river gorge and the basis for its name.

Prior to proceeding to design and construction of improvements to the viewpoint, a detailed **geotechnical** investigation should be undertaken to establish a safe setback distance for any development and the feasibility of any remedial work to stabilize the bank. It would appear that most of the bank's instability is due to the pedestrian traffic which destroyed the natural vegetation cover which in turn caused a faster rate of erosion and made the bank more unstable.

2. Trails should be redeveloped as shown on Map 11 including a trail with gravel surface to the viewing deck; the trail along the top of the bank should be closed and

leave for map 11

revegetated; a new trail between the viewpoint and the descent point to the falls should be cut approximately 10 to 15 m from the top of bank; and a 2 m wide clearing should be cut along the trail between the campground and picnic area.

3. The picnic area should be expanded by **selective** clearing of the area towards the gorge to provide a view and an improved breezeway for insect control. Three more picnic tables should be provided in this area with two culvert type fireplaces.
4. Trail **signage** is required to direct visitors from the picnic area to the viewpoint and from the viewpoint to the descent down the bank to the river.
5. To make for a safer descent to the plateau above the river, the existing stairs down the river bank should be extended for the remaining two-thirds of the river bank. A sign should be posted at the stairs warning people of the risks associated with proceeding beyond this point.

justification

This is the second most spectacular natural attraction in the study area corridor. Due to the availability of overnight campsites, it may be as popular as Alexandra Falls. A new viewpoint with a deck as well as most trail improvements are required to reduce erosion and eventual slumping of the bank. Interpretive and directional **signage** also is required. Extension of stairs to the plateau is required to make for safer practical descent of the bank. Improvements to the picnic area are required to make the picnic area more attractive and to allow picnickers to capture a view of the gorge.

3.5.4 Escarpment Creek

Function and Sub-Themes

The two falls along the Escarpment Creek are another natural attraction in the corridor but on a smaller scale than Alexandra Falls and Louise Falls. Natural history of the watershed and escarpment, and outdoor recreation are the sub-themes associated with this site.

Existing Situation

Map 12 is a plan view of the existing site. Existing facilities at the picnic area need repair and upgrading. The picnic area needs better definition. The viewpoint lacks signage to interpret the view, the creek and escarpment. There is no apparent slumping problem which affects use of this site. The trailhead to Louise Falls and Alexandra Falls is not marked or developed. Trails are in poor underdeveloped condition, especially the trail down to the river.

Recommendations

The main objective for planning improvements on this site is to relocate the formal picnic area to an area with a view of the gorge. The concept plan for the site is presented on Map 13. Recommendations for improvements to the site are as follows:

1. The existing campground area should be redeveloped to become a mobile home and trailer parking area and the viewpoint of the gorge should be developed as the picnic area. The viewpoint area will require development of a formal parking lot, a minimum of two culvert type

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leave for map 13

fireplaces and five picnic tables, pit toilets and a rail fence at the edge of the gorge.

A sign interpreting the formation and size of the gorge should be erected at the viewpoint.

2. A directional sign is needed at the turn-off to the viewpoint identifying the road to the viewpoint and the road back to the highway. The trails to Louise Falls and Escarpment Creek should be identified with signs at their trailheads.
3. Where the exit road nears the highway, bollards need to be installed to prevent vehicles exiting onto the highway at this point rather than using the designated **exit/entrance**.

Justification

The view of the gorge is the most significant feature at this site. Visitors to this site prefer to picnic at the area with a view of the gorge. The viewpoint area is a good site for picnicking and the river breezes provide some form of insect control. A formal parking lot needs to be defined close to the viewpoint to prevent vehicles from entering the picnic area.

3.5.5 Enterprise

Function and Sub-Theme

The most important function of this community is to provide services to tourists at a major decision point in their trip. Natural history and transportation are two possible sub-themes.

Existing Situation

Accommodations, auto services and food services are available at this location. There is no **signage** along the highway from the border to this location to inform travelers that services are available in Enterprise. There are signs, indicating services available at the community's borders. There is no designated viewpoint or pull-off along the highway to view the Hay River Gorge although glimpses of the gorge are had by travelers on the highway. **Signage** at the Mackenzie Highway - Hay River Highway intersection is good.

Recommendations

1. Develop a pull-off and parking area on the east side of the highway as an extension to the old highway weigh scales pull-off, as illustrated on Map 14. Selective clearing at this site would provide a good view of the gorge and also a site for the trapper's cabin relocated from the 60th parallel. The trapper's cabin should be furnished as an information booth, possibly selling local native crafts to offset operating costs. An information board should provide information on attractions along the Mackenzie, Hay River and Liard Highways. Also, the view of the gorge should be explained on the information board or on a separate sign posted at the viewpoint.
2. Provide **signage** at points along the highway up to 100 km away that indicate services are available in Enterprise. The hours of operation for the service station should be posted on these signs and promoted in tourist information brochures.

leave for map 14

3. Implement an annual **community** clean-up and beautification program to maintain a clean and neat appearance of the properties along the highway.

Justification

This is a major service **centre** and decision point for tourists and other motorists. It is the only service **centre** between Indian Cabins in Alberta and the Town of Hay River.

Viewing of the Hay River Gorge while driving through the community and into a major intersection is dangerous.

3.5.6 **Paradise Gardens**

Function and Sub-Themes

The main function of this privately operated site is to provide overnight camping facilities in conjunction with trails, boat launching and day-use facilities. Natural history, agriculture in the north and outdoor recreation are the major sub-themes.

Existing Situation

Road access and signage to the site is good. The campground has powered sites to service mobile recreational vehicles. A poorly developed boat launch is located at the beginning of the river oxbow. Canoeists and boaters can leave the river approximately 3 km downstream and portage a trail over a short distance (300 - 400 m) to arrive back at the boat launch. Market gardens are cultivated at this location, a unique feature at such a northern latitude. However, the overall appearance of the site is poor and most facilities and buildings are not well maintained.

Recommendations

1. A general clean-up of the site is required.
2. Boat/canoe access points should be identified by signs visible from the road and the river.

Justification

There are a variety of recreation and interpretive opportunities available at this site, some of them very unique in the north. However, the site needs a major clean-up to make it more presentable to visitors. Once this is accomplished, consideration should be given to further developments such as additional **campsites**, picnic shelters and interpretive trails.

3.5.7 Hay River Visitor Information Centre

Function and Sub-Themes

The main function of this centre is to give information to visitors upon entering the Town of Hay River. Sub-themes include transportation and outdoor recreation.

Existing Situation

A red caboose doubles as a tourist attraction and an information centre operated by the Hay River Chamber of Commerce. There are sparse furnishings and only a few posters displayed in the caboose. Staff have not been trained to provide proper counseling to visitors. One person staffs the centre from May to September. Available information consists of a few brochures with little detail available about particular attractions in the town.

The Liard River riverboat (its history and how it got to this site has not been documented) is located in a fenced compound near the **centre**. There also is an old pile driver on this site (its history and how it got to this site has not been documented). A parking area, boat launch and picnic area also are available. The boat launch has not been properly maintained over the past number of years. The picnic area has barbecue stands but no picnic tables.

Recommendations

1. Develop the visitor information services into travel counseling providing booking and arrangement services to all visitors, for accommodations, tours, etc.
2. Provide picnic tables to complement the barbecue stands as shown on Map 15.
3. Provide identification **signage** at the **centre** and notification **signage** at least 2 km south of the **centre** on the Mackenzie Highway.
4. Provide interpretive **signage** for the caboose, the riverboat and the railway along with a general history of transportation in the area.

justification

This is the major greeting and information **centre** for visitors entering the town. It also is the first resting place and opportunity to stop for a picnic in the town. The various modes of transportation represented at or near the site present a good opportunity for interpretation of the transportation theme. This is only one of a few locations suitable for public boat/canoe access to the river.

map 15

3.5.8 Hay River Campground ,

Function and Sub-Theme

The main function of this site is to provide camping facilities for tourists reaching the Town of Hay River. Sub-themes include outdoor recreation, the fishing industry, transportation and the history of exploration and settlement.

Existing Situation

Map 16 is a plan view of the existing site. There are 21 campsites, some with power. Occupancy is extremely high during some periods. Trails allow ready access to the beach, although directional signage is poor. A good range of facilities is provided including showers, games room, kitchen shelter, playground and a small concession combined with the campground office.

There are only a few signs indicating how to get to the campground from the Hay River Visitor Information Centre. The maintenance of business and storage yards on Vale Island enroute to the site is extremely poor.

The proximity of the fishing village, shipyards, harbour and lake and the location on Vale Island provide a good variety of interpretation opportunities.

Recommendations

The main objective in planning improvements for this site is to expand the campground and provide better facilities for activities on the beach.

1. Expand the campground **by 10 to 15 sites using the cul-de-sac** designed for this purpose off the main road into the campground (see Map 16). One-third of the campsites should have power.
2. Develop an interpretive program for campers which includes interpretation of the fishing and shipping industries, the history of the Hay River settlement and Great Slave Lake. This would be operated in conjunction with the campground operation.
3. Redevelop the picnic and beach area according to the concept plan illustrated on Map 17. This would include closure and reclamation of the road, the provision of picnic tables and fireplaces, clearing of most driftwood on a regular basis, development of a parking lot and construction of a toilet and change house.
4. Provide directional signage to the site at major intersections through town.

justification

Hay River is and will be increasingly popular as a destination for campers in the Northwest Territories. The expansion of the campground is required to accommodate part of the peak demand during June, July and August. The interpretive program will promote a

map 17

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better understanding of the town, **economic** activities in the region and the difficulties associated with setting and developing a community in the north.

3.5.9 Hay River Attractions

Function and Sub-Theme

The attractions in the town address all the sub-themes for tourism development. The town serves as a major tourist destination and service centre along the Mackenzie Highway and in the Fort Smith region.

Existing Situation

Attractions in the town include:

- beach on the shore of Great Slave Lake;
- West Channel Fishing Village;
- Vale Island Waterfront and Harbour;
- Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) plant;
- Inukshuk marker;
- Mackenzie Place: Northwest Territories' tallest building at 17 stories;
- Northern Transportation Company Limited (NTCL) shipping facilities; and
- Diamond Jenness High School that stands out due to its purple colour.

The history of the town is another attraction in itself (see Section 2.8.2). The events such as the Fall Fair and World Championship Fiddling and Jigging Contest already attract many people from other communities in the north.

Generally, the attractions are underdeveloped. They lack signage, interpretive material and many suffer from poor upkeep and maintenance such as the West Channel Fishing Village and the Vale Island Waterfront and **Harbour**. Access to the waterfront also is a major problem.

Only a few **motorcoach** tours travel to Hay River. There is a tour bus service operating in the town, but it is not scheduled and is generally only available to groups. There is insufficient demand for this service to be operated on a regularly scheduled basis. Fly-drive tours are non-existent mainly due to the high cost of flying to Hay River and renting a vehicle. Boat tours are not available due again to the lack of demand although some tours are provided by boat operators on an ad-hoc basis. Tours of the **harbour** facilities are available on a **pre-arranged** group basis only.

The Town of Hay River serves as an arrival and dispersal point for sport and trophy fisherman traveling to lodges in the region.

Recommendations

The main objective for recommendations to capitalize on Hay River attractions to promote tourism is to package and coordinate them. The existing attractions are of a good quality but are not presented to the tourist in a package and most tourists are left wanting of more information. Therefore, the recommendations for capitalizing on these attractions are:

1. Develop a tour counseling service for tourists available through the visitor information centre at the entrance to town. The tour counselor would determine the interests

of the visitors and serve to coordinate and arrange all tours and services for them such as a walking tour of the downtown core, a boat tour of the harbour, a tour of Vale Island waterfront and shipyards, a tour of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board plant and so on. The **Chamber** may wish to organize this service so that the visitor would pay for services at the **centre** and the Chamber retain a percentage of the service costs to subsidize the wages of the tour counselor.

2. The **Chamber** and the Big River Travel Association should conduct the necessary research to develop tour packages (resource books) and train guides who would work on a part-time basis to conduct tours referred to in recommendation 1.
3. The Chamber in cooperation with the Big River Travel Association should organize a clean-up of Vale Island to improve its appearance. This would be a volunteer campaign occurring over a few weekends which would require the cooperation of property owners on Vale Island and donation of equipment and supplies such as garbage bags, waste hauling trucks, bulldozers and minor equipment.
4. Develop a written tour on attractions in Hay River for distribution through the visitor information centre. This tour package could be as simple as photocopied sheets with half-page write-ups or commentary on each attraction and the history of the town based on factual research.

justification

There are good quality attractions, events and activities for visitors to the Town of Hay River but they are not attractively packaged or presented for the tourist. It is not financially feasible to package each tour or attraction separately and schedule a tour service on a regular basis. A tour counseling service would organize tours on an ad-hoc basis using part-time tour guides so that the price to the visitor can be kept to a minimum. It should be recognized that the town is a major destination for most tourists traveling the Mackenzie Highway and these services can be developed for a small initial investment and operated at little or no cost to the Chamber. The packaging of tours and the provision of tour counseling services is in keeping with the market strategies adopted by Travel Arctic.

A clean-up of Vale Island would include removing abandoned and run-down buildings, trucks and fixtures no longer in use, waste material dumped in the area, and pick-up and disposal of abandoned vehicles and machinery. Presently, this area gives a very negative impression of the community to the average visitor.

A written tour package could be prepared by local historians and those interested in developing tourism in the town. At first, the material can be photocopied and when funds become available, a more elaborate publication could be produced.

There is good potential to develop the motorcoach tour traffic into the Town of Hay River and along the Mackenzie Highway corridor due to the paving of the highway, the completion of the Liard Highway connection between the Alaska and Mackenzie Highways, and the

relatively short distance to arrive in a major **community** after crossing the 60th parallel.

3.5.10 **Signage**

Function and Sub-Themes

To provide interpretive information and direction to attractions, services and accommodations.

Existing Situation

Signage for all attractions, services and accommodations, both for interpretive information and direction is poor. Highway **signage** is insufficient to inform tourists about the availability and distance to facilities and services.

Recommendations

1. Prepare and implement a comprehensive **signage** program along the highway, within the Town of Hay River and to the Hay River Reserve. This program should be coordinated with **signage** programs for all highways and parks in the Northwest Territories.

 2. Implement the recommendations on **signage** for the attractions in this section of the report, in particular for:
 - the Town of Hay River;
 - Alexandra Falls;
 - Louise Falls;
-

- Enterprise;
 - Escarpment Creek; and
- the 60th Parallel crossing.

3. Big River Tourist Association and Travel Arctic should develop an emblem or logo combined with an overall theme for **signage** to be used on all road signs along the entire length of Mackenzie Highway. This should be done in conjunction with Land of the Mighty Peace Tourist Association in Alberta and Travel Alberta. **Joint** promotion activities such as the production of a quality Mackenzie Highway brochure also should be pursued.
4. Erect mileage markers at major attractions along the Mackenzie Highway at the 60th parallel, Enterprise and the Town of Hay River.

justification

A comprehensive **signage** program would coordinate tourist information **signage** throughout the Territories. justification for **signage** recommendations at particular attractions is contained in their respective sections. An emblem or logo for the entire length of the Mackenzie Highway will promote a complete and interrelated series of attractions. Mileage markers would serve as a measure for a tourist's progress along the highway into the north.

3.6 Preliminary Cost Estimates

Preliminary cost estimates for recommended capital improvements for each site in the study corridor are presented on the following pages. These costs can be summarized as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Preliminary Capital Cost Estimate</u>
60th Parallel	\$85,800
Alexandra Falls	44,400
Louise Falls	61,200
Escarpment Creek	31,800
Enterprise	35,400
Hay River Visitor Information Centre	8,200
Hay River Picnic Area	45,600
Hay River Attractions	<u>81,600</u>
TOTAL	\$394,000

Recognizing that some capital expenditures will not result in a net increase in operating costs for a particular site, it is assumed that operating costs will increase by ten cents for every dollar spent on capital improvements in the corridor. Therefore, the impact on operating costs is assumed to be approximately \$39,400.

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COST ESTIMATE

Note: This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study

Location: 60th Parallel Map 6

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
<u>Six new campsites with loop road</u>	6	ea	\$ 6,000	\$ 36,000
<u>Enclosed picnic area</u>	50	m ²	\$350	17,500
<u>Campsite closures, pit privy -</u>				
<u>relocations and boat ramp</u>				
<u>improvements</u>				4,000
<u>Picnic area improvements</u>				4,000
<u>Signage</u>				2,000
<u>Professional Fees</u>				8,000
<u>Sub-total</u>				71,500
<u>20% Contingency</u>				14,300
<u>TOTAL</u>				\$ 85,800

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COST ESTIMATE

Note: This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study

Location: Louise Falls - Map 11

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Boardwalk and Viewing Deck	150	m ²	\$100	\$ 15,000
Trail Development and Clearing				10,000
Stair Extension	20	lin.m.	\$100	2,000
Picnic Area, Tables and culvert fireplaces		-		5,000
Revegetation of Old Trail				1,500
Geotechnical Investigation				10,000
Signage				1,500
Professional Fees				6,000
Sub-total				51,000
20% Contingency				10,200
TOTAL				\$ 61,200

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Note: This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study

Location: Escarpment Creek - Map 13

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Existing picnic area redevelopment				\$ 5,000
Development of viewpoint parking lot				5,000
Picnic tables, culvert type fireplaces, rail fence				3,500
Site improvements and clearing				2,000
Pit privies				2,000
Signage				3,000
Exit Road Restriction				2,000
Professional Fees				4,000
Sub-total				\$ 26,500
20% Contingency				5,300
T O T &			\$	31,800

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COST ESTIMATE

Note: This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study

Location: Enterprise - Map 14

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	TY	UNI	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Pull-off/parking area for information centre and viewpoint	-	-		\$ 15,00-0
Relocation of trapper's cabin from 60th parallel	-	-		1,000
Furnishing and finishing of trapper's cabin	-	-		2,000
Selective clearing	-	-		2,000
Signage - road, information board and interpretive	-	-		5,000
Professional Fees	-	-		4,500
Sub-total	-	-		29,500
20% Contingency	-	-		5,900
TOTAL	-	-		\$ 35,400

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COST ESTIMATE

Note: This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study ---

Location: Hay River Picnic Area - Map 17

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNI	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Road closure and reclamation				\$ 10,000
Toilet and change house				1 10,000
Parking lot				1 5,000
Picnic tables and culvert type				
fireplaces				1 3,000
Beach' clearing - partial				2,000
Signage to picnic area and				
campground				2,000
Professional Fees				6,000
Sub-total				38,000
20% Contingency				7,600
TOTAL				\$ 45,600
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COST ESTIMATE

Note: This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study

Location: Hay River Attractions

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Town tour packages research and development				\$ 10,000
Clean-up promotion and campaign for Vale Island				5,000
Hay River Attractions Write-up				3,000
Motorcoach tour marketing package development for Town of Hay River and Mackenzie Liard and Alaska Highway Loop				50,000
Sub-total				68,000
20% Contingency				13,600
TOTAL				\$ 81,600

SECTION FOUR

HAY RIVER RESERVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

4.1 Introduction

A tourism development concept for the Hay River Reserve must capitalize on the opportunities presented by its history, its people and its resources. The inventory and assessment of resources and attractions in the study area identified the Hay River Reserve as presenting several opportunities for the development of tourist facilities and services.

A description of the existing situation on the Reserve in terms of tourist facilities and services will be followed by a discussion of tourism sub-themes for development and interpretive programs, and recommendations for development and their justification.

4.2 Existing Situation

The Reserve is situated on the east bank of the Hay River and is accessed by road via Highway 5. The old village area on the Reserve is steeped in history. The Slavey people had this area designated as a Reserve in 1974 as the Northwest Territories only Indian Reserve.

The old village area on the Reserve is the original site of the Hay River community. During the early decades of the 20th century, Roman Catholic and Anglican churches were built in the village and still stand today in good condition.

There is good all weather road access to the developed areas of the Reserve via Highway 5. The Hay River borders the Reserve to the west and Great Slave Lake borders the Reserve to the north.

Most of the Reserve is well treed with muskeg areas in its eastern portions. The **original** community of Hay River is located in the northwest corner of the Reserve. This area is shown on Map 18.

There are no existing facilities and services designed for tourists on the Reserve. Some Band members provide guide services for fishermen and hunters but no formal service is offered or advertised.

Bus service to the Town of Hay River operated by the Band is provided for Band members, principally children attending school in town.

4.3 Function and Sub-Themes

The Dene Band is interested in developing tourist facilities and services on its Reserve. Provided detailed feasibility studies are undertaken there is potential for developing the following:

- fixed roof accommodation and campground facilities.
- presentation of the history of settlement and exploration through using the historic buildings on the Reserve and the history of the Slavey people;
access to Hay River and Great Slave Lake;
- guide services for hunting and fishing.

map 18

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Therefore, sub-themes for tourism development **interpretive programs** on the Reserve include:

- the native people and their lifestyle;
- history of exploration and settlement;
natural history of the river;
- history of Catholic and Anglican missions;
- nature viewing and interpretation; and
- hunting and fishing.

Based on a few meetings with Band representatives, the Band is interested in pursuing tourist oriented development as part of an overall economic development plan for the Hay River Reserve. Of course, the planning of such development **must** be sensitive to their overall needs and culture.

4.4 Recommendations for Development

It should be noted that these recommendations for development are very preliminary based on only eight or nine days of analysis, planning and design. At best, the concept plan should be viewed as one possible scenario. To consider the investment of many hundreds of thousands of dollars, a more detailed and comprehensive market assessment and planning study should be undertaken.

The concept plan for development of this portion of the Reserve is illustrated on Map 19.

The construction of fixed roof accommodations on the Reserve is recommended to provide a unique alternative to those available in the Town of Hay River. Ultimately, a sufficient number of units should be constructed to accommodate more than 40 people. A building block concept is recommended to test the market as the

map 19

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complex grows and also to train native people to operate and maintain the units. The design should be "rusti " similar to the log cabin style of houses constructed on the Reserve. Initially, a central lodge with four to six units should be constructed (approximately 100 to 175 m²) with showers, games room, **meeting** room with fireplace, eating room, kitchen, and other services provided for guests only. This building should be designed for additions to expand the size and range of services and facilities. The site plan should allow for the building of six or more units near the lodge. Eventually, enough units can be developed to accommodate a tour bus load of tourists.

In addition to the fixed roof accommodations, picnic areas, trails, a playground and facilities for boating should be developed as an integral part of the outdoor resort complex.

The accommodations should be moderately priced to attract families and groups. Emphasis should be placed on the quality and cleanliness of accommodations along with good **programs**. Interpretive programs presenting the Indian culture and settlement in the north would be of interest to visitors.

The historic buildings and sites on the Reserve should be researched in order to develop an interpretive program for them and so that appropriate signage also can be erected.

The aforementioned recommendations for development will result in several benefits for tourism in the area and the Slavey people. It will provide alternative accommodations to those available in the Town of Hay River and Enterprise. The development will capitalize on the human and physical resources on the Reserve and employ

several Band members in construction and operation of the facilities.

4.5 Development Feasibility

The basic assumptions associated with this very cursory assessment of development feasibility are as follows:

1. The fixed-roof accommodations and campground would be operated for a 110 day season from the May long-weekend through the September long weekend. An occupancy rate of 60% would be achieved in the fifth year of operation.
2. The development would be in keeping with the Band's economic development plans.
3. The Band would procure or develop management skills for the efficient design, construction, operation, maintenance and marketing of the development.

Preliminary estimates for capital costs are shown on the following page. Preliminary estimates for operating revenues and expenses (1984 dollars) in the fifth year of operation are as follows:

Revenues

Fixed-roof accommodation	\$ 59,400
110 days x 12 units x 60%	
occupancy x \$75/day	
Campground	7,900
- 110 days x 20 units x 60%	
occupancy x \$6/night	

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COST ESTIMATE

Note:.. This is only a preliminary cost estimate based on the concept plan and development recommendations

Sheet 1 of 1

Date: March 1984

Project: Mackenzie Highway Corridor

Tourism Study

Location: Hay River Reserve - Map 19

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	UNIT PRIC	TOTAL
Furnished fixed-roof accommodation	12		\$30,000	\$ 360,000
Campground development	20		\$6,000	120,000
Dock, day-use area and beach development				20,000
Sanitary dumping station				3,000
Buildings-day-use, campground, store	200	m ²	\$400	80,000
Road	1.3	km	\$80,000	104,000
Signage				5,000
Other site improvements & services				100,000
Planning and Design Fees				100,000
Sub-total				892,000
20% Contingency				178,400
	+	+	-	+
	TOTAL	I	 	
				\$1,070,400

Other components - boat rentals,	15,000
guiding, food and camping	
supplies (net), programs and	
day-use fees.	
TOTAL REVENUES	<u>\$ 82,300</u>

Expenses

Fixed roof accommodation	\$ 26,700
- 45% of total revenue	
Labour, supplies and materials	40,000
for all other components	
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$ 66,700</u>

NET OPERATING PROFIT	
BEFORE INTEREST ON	
CAPITAL EXPENSES	<u>\$ 15,700</u>

Capital costs total over \$1 million. The net operating profits before interest on capital expenses totals only \$15,700. This would be totally inadequate to finance the capital required for this scale of development. However, the Band may be able to utilize grants and other programs available to them to develop all or part of the resort. Employment programs could subsidize wages and also make the project more feasible.

In conclusion, it appears that a project of this magnitude on the Reserve would be marginal at best. A scaled down version may prove to be feasible or government assistance may aid the Band in undertaking the development and its operation. In any case, further market assessment, planning and design studies must be done prior to implementation.

4.6 Impact on the Band and Local Economy

As a result of the tourism development and operation on the Reserve, there is good potential for short and long-term social and economic benefits to accrue to the Band members. Up to ten Band members could be employed on a seasonal basis to operate the accommodations and related services. The Band could employ a construction crew for two or three years to build the facilities. The resources of the Reserve would be utilized to benefit the Band and its culture would be promoted as an integral part of the operation. On the other hand, there may be many negative social impacts caused by such a development. Band members may find it difficult to adjust their lifestyle and work habits to requirements for the construction and operation of the facilities. The operation may serve to alter traditional lifestyles in a way not acceptable to the Band.

A significant proportion of the construction and operating expenses would be injected into the local economy. The impact multiplier may be as high as 2.0 times the expenditures made in the local area. If the entire development was undertaken, the impact due to construction could amount to over \$2 million in the local economy. Annual operating costs could impact the local economy by over \$100,000.

SECTION FIVE

IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to present the implementation components relating the development of tourism in the highway corridor from the 60th parallel to the Town of Hay River including the Hay River Reserve. The following components of implementation are discussed in this section:

- marketing strategies;
- roles of the community, private sector and native people;
- roles of governments;
- priorities and timing; and
- impacts.

All implementation components have been developed in congruence with the general objectives and policies for economic development and tourism in the Northwest Territories.

5.2 Marketing Strategies

The marketing of the Mackenzie and Hay River Highways corridor should be coordinated with broader marketing strategies prepared for the Alaska, Mackenzie and Liard Highways loop and for the entire Southern Arctic Tourism Destination Zone. The Town of Hay River together with the Hay River Reserve has good potential for one of the main destinations within the highways loop. The community of Enterprise could become a major service centre within the loop. The attractions of Alexandra Falls, Louise Falls, Great

Slave Lake and the activities within the Town of Hay River present one of the most attractive segments of the highways loop to the visitor. A number of products can be developed to assist in the promotion of this highway loop including:

- a highway guide incorporating interpretation aspects relating to attractions
- an interrelated theme for **signage** and design of facilities
- joint-promotion efforts by Territorial and Provincial tourism departments and the local tourist associations;
- the coordination of events and activities within the communities to maximize their impact and attractiveness to tourists.

The design of **signage** and facilities on the three highways should reflect the character and opportunities available on each one. **Joint** promotion efforts would concentrate on promoting family, group and **motorcoach** traffic to travel the Liard and Mackenzie Highway as an attractive alternative to travel only along the Alaska Highway to and from the Yukon and Alaska. Local tourist associations in British Columbia, Alberta and the Northwest Territories are already organizing a cooperative promotion program for the highways loop which will include the production and distribution of promotional literature. Promotional brochures such as the "Highway Holidays" brochure need to recognize that the Mackenzie Highway does not begin in the Northwest Territories. The **kilometerage** should be indicated for attractions along the Mackenzie Highway based on **Grimshaw** as kilometre 0, not the 60th Parallel. Other cooperative ventures in the preparation of brochures and pamphlets could include the revision, update and joint publication of maps and route descriptions for canoeists and

boaters for the Hay River from its headwaters in Alberta to its outlet into Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories.

In the Town of Hay River, emphasis should be placed on packaging services or making them more accessible. In the concept plan section, travel counseling and booking services were recommended. This service provided by the Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Big River Travel Association would serve to promote local businesses including hotels, tour operators, souvenir stores and restaurants, and regional businesses such as the fishing lodges.

5.3 Roles of the Community, Private Sector and Native People

5.3.1 Role of the Community

The residents of the community can spearhead the development of tourism in their area. Before promoting further development, emphasis should be placed on developing the level of service, the attitude or hospitality to tourists and the general appearance of their communities. The areas fronting onto highways and facilities in the Town of Hay River and Enterprise need to be improved by removing abandoned vehicles and buildings, signs causing a cluttered view and litter. A Community Beautification program providing prizes and awards for commercial and non-commercial properties as an incentive for property owners to clean up their appearance should be developed and operated on an annual basis by the Hay River Chamber of Commerce and the Big River Travel Association.

The Big River Tourist Association should also work with Economic Development and Tourism to educate residents about tourism hospitality.

Residents of the zone are the best ambassadors for tourism development. Word of mouth is the best way to promote tourism.

Residents may wish to take advantage of the Government's "Visit a Northerner" program.

5.3.2 Role of the Private Sector

It's the private sector's responsibility to take initiatives to develop private businesses serving tourists. The Government of the Northwest Territories has several grants and incentives to assist such ventures. Within the study area, the opportunities presented to the private sector will likely make existing businesses more viable rather than create many new ones. The projected increase in tourism activity will result in a greater demand for quality accommodations and services. Only if this increase in tourism activity is combined with a resurgence in general economic activity within the region will there be a need for more accommodations, restaurants and related tourist service facilities. However, most accommodation and restaurant facilities can be improved in quality to attract and more adequately serve southern tourists and tour operators.

The private businesses directly and indirectly benefiting from tourism in the zone should become members of the Big River Travel Association. Through the association, the private sector can coordinate its efforts to promote and develop tourist attractions and opportunities. An example of such an effort would be cooperation between regional lodge operators and hotels and restaurants in the Town of Hay River to offer packages to lodge patrons which include an overnight stay in the town with a banquet or event planned especially for the hunters and fishermen. Another example of a cooperative effort amongst members of the association would be working to develop a variety of community tour packages.

These could include guided and self-guided packages on foot and by boat, bus, all-terrain vehicle and automobile. The packages would be marketed through visitor information centres and general Travel Arctic promotional efforts directed at southern tourists and tour operators. These can be developed with assistance **from** the Government of the Northwest Territories through their 'Community Tour Packagingⁿ' program. For the larger more comprehensive tours including all communities, the Hay River Reserve and the major attractions in the corridor, the Government's 'Multi-Community Package Tour Developmentⁿ' program could be used to develop and market them to southern tour operators.

Local contractors and trades can benefit from the construction and operation of territorial parks by bidding on all contracts for construction, operation and maintenance of the parks.

The private sector, through the Big River Tourism Association, can work with other tourist associations in the Territories, British Columbia and Alberta to promote the area as a major tourist destination zone. Many opportunities for this type of cooperation have been identified in previous sections of this report

5.3.3 **Role of the Native People**

The Dene Band has a lot to offer to the tourist and tourist industry in the area. Their unique culture and lifestyle interests many southern tourists. However; there are few opportunities developed for these tourists to observe and learn about the native people.

The Dene Band should be an active member in the Big River Travel Association. The Band should discuss opportunities to integrate Dene customs and lifestyles into the operation of tourist

facilities and attractions in the Town of Hay **River**. Interpretive Tours of the original location of the town on the east bank of the Hay River should be organized in cooperation with the local hotels.

The Hay River Reserve has good potential for tourism development. Its location relative to the town and the lake, its environment and history make this site quite attractive. However, before proceeding with any development, a detailed development and **feasibility** study should be undertaken in conjunction with a review of the Band's economic development plans.

5.4 Roles of Governments

Supporting "community-based tourism" is the main role of the Government of the Northwest Territories. However, within the corridor, the government has another **major** role to play in the development of territorial parks including the 60th Parallel, Alexandra Falls, Louise Falls and Escarpment Creek. To maximize the positive economic impacts on the local residents, local contracting for development, operation and maintenance of these sites should be favoured.

The Government of the Northwest Territories can also provide financial support and assistance to local businesses and the Big River Travel Association' 'according to adopted "Business Development" and "Tourism" policies for tour packages, promotional literature, marketing, expansion of plant, further studies and research, and training and employment programs.

A major step the Government of the Northwest Territories must take is recognition of the significance of the study area and the Fort Smith region for tourism. Approximately two-thirds of all visitors to the Northwest Territories travel to the Fort Smith region. It is the gateway region of the north. Using these criteria alone, expenditures for tourism development should be given a high priority and a large proportion of the department's budget should be expended in this region.

Another major role of the Government of the Northwest Territories is to assist the local tourist association in working with other jurisdictions in British Columbia and Alberta. Financial support for joint promotion of the **Mackenzie-Liard-Alaska** Highways loop should be a major field of endeavour.

The federal government has a major role to play in capital funding and employment programs. The development of the Hay River Reserve may be a major focus of the federal government in this area. However, assistance in harbour redevelopment and highway construction are also high priorities. The local government also has a major role to play in tourism. The planning and design of communities must consider tourism in the design of its parks, development regulations and road systems. Local governments should also support the local Chamber of Commerce and act as a catalyst in community programs such as community clean-up and beautification. Priorities for maintenance of communities should also take into account the importance of maintaining tourism travel corridors and attractions.

5.5 Priorities and Timing

Priorities for tourism development should be based on tourism

benefits received for the investment of resources (time, money, materials, etc.). On this basis, the priorities for tourism development in the study area should be as follows:

- 1) Changes in operations and maintenance which result in an increase in the level of service to tourists or create a better tourist environment such as clean-up **programs**, better maintenance of campgrounds, better tourist information services, development and operation of local tours, etc.;
- 2) capital improvements to the most popular attractions and facilities including Alexandra Falls, Louise Falls, 60th Parallel and Enterprise;
- 3) further studies and planning required prior to capital investment or implementation such as research for interpretive programs and tours, a market and development feasibility study for tourism development on the Hay River Reserve and coordination of promotional efforts amongst travel associations and **governments**;
- 4) capital improvements to less popular attractions including Escarpment Creek, Hay River Picnic Area, Hay River Visitor Information Centre and other Hay River attractions; and
- 5) improvements which can be considered "frills" but nonetheless important to tourism such as signage of all attractions in the Town of Hay River and tourist information services at the airport.

The projects recommended in the concept plan section of this report should be implemented within five years. Based on the aforementioned priorities and a five year **time frame**, the timing of development should be as follows:

	<u>Beginning In</u>
1. Town services development, joint promotions, etc.	1984
2. Alexandra Falls, Louise Falls, 60th Parallel and Enterprise	1984
3. Further studies and planning	1984
4. Escarpment Creek, Hay River Picnic Area, Hay River Visitor Information Centre and other Hay River attractions	1985 & 1986

Implementation of the above program will require a minimum investment of \$400,000. Approximately 90% of this expenditure should be made by the Government of the Northwest Territories for improvements to Territorial Parks.

5.6 Impacts

The following impacts are anticipated due to the implementation of the development concept:

1. Assuming a 50% increase in visitors by road to 15,000 and a 10% increase in visitors by air to

21,200 by 1987, the resulting increases in visitor expenditures in 1982 dollars will be \$1.1 million and \$1.8 million respectively. The total impact on the local economy will be an injection of \$4.3 to 7.3 million (based on a multiplier* ranging from 1.5 to 2.5). In addition to this amount an expenditure of \$400,000 on capital improvements will add another \$700,000 to the local economy. In total, economic impact could range from \$4.9 to 8.3 million by 1987. This will create from 70 to 95 man-years of employment. These will not necessarily be new jobs since much of the expenditure can be absorbed by existing business by making employees more productive and more profitable. After accounting for absorption into the existing economy, approximately 50 to 70 man-years of new jobs will be created.

2. **Environmental** impacts due to development will be minimized by expanding or redeveloping existing attractions rather than developing new locations. In fact, implementation of some recommendations will reduce environmental impacts by protecting sites from further degradation. However, due to the anticipated increases in tourist traffic, special care and attention must be given to operations and maintenance activities to reduce or mitigate environmental impacts.

* Our research through secondary sources did not find an economic multiplier applicable to the tourism industry in the N.W.T. Therefore we have used a multiplier range commonly used in tourism impact studies in southern Canada.

3. Tourism development and the resulting increase in visitors to communities and the Hay River Reserve may threaten the unique cultures and lifestyles of the northern people. These impacts can be mitigated by incorporating culture and lifestyle into the packaging of tours, activities and events.
4. Increased tourist traffic could also threaten archeological resources, especially on the Hay River Reserve. Sufficient protection must be provided for these resources by proceeding with archaeological digs, securing sites, collecting artifacts in a scientific manner and presenting tourists with the history of the community, culture and northern lifestyles.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF CONTACTS

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