

## Bush Economy and Tourism Development (draft)

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January 7, 1997, p. 1-28.

Bush smarts, that is the use of traditional knowledge and skills, can lead to a bush economy.

The **bush economy** is a way of life that does not depend on much cash...but does provide real incomes...for example, a caribou carcass has a real value of \$200-\$300.00 ...it replaces that cost of other store-bought meats.

Those relying on the bush economy full time can live comfortably with real cash of less than half that of the wage earner who buys all his or her food.

But with the investment that is needed for bush life, a person could earn all their cash needs by participating in the business of hospitality and bush-camp tourism.

Binder, 1997, p.2

“Trading services is a trade relationship” (Binder, 1997, p.3).

**Cash economy** “Succeeding in high school, college, or university programs, and/ or training on-the-job programs gives northerners the job skills to obtain wage employment. Trading my job skills for a cash pay cheque means that I get money to buy food and things for me and my family.” (Inuvialuit beneficiary, 2003)

The **mixed economy** is getting “incomes and subsistence from a number of sources including wage work and hunting and trapping activity that brings in food and/ or incomes from the bush” (Binder, 1997, p.4).

## ***Bush Economy and Tourism Development***

**Building on Who We Are and  
What We Have**

While the previous Departments of Renewable Resources and ED&T both did support the traditional or bush economy, there was little coordination between the two.

Now that we are amalgamated, it is a necessity as well as a sensible thing to do.

Where we can be effective is as facilitators and in accessing funding. If there is no will among the key stakeholders, there is nothing we can do.

It is the Operator, Outfitters, the claims groups and their community-based organizations that are the main actors in the play.



## *What is the Bush Economy ?*

- ◆ Hunting, Trapping, Fishing, Berries and Fuelwood Gathering
- ◆ Non-cash Incomes With Much "Real Value"
- ◆ A Culture With Self-Reliance Values Which Our Youth Need to Learn
- ◆ A Way Of Life With Appeal to Visitors

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The bush economy is a way of life that does not depend so much on cash ... but does provide real incomes ... for example, a caribou carcass has a real value of \$200-300 -- it replaces that cost of other store-bought meats.

Those relying on the bush economy full time can live comfortably with real cash of less than half that of the wage earner who buys all his or her food.

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## *Cash Economy / Bush Economy*

- |                                      |                                            |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| • Work creates cash which buys food  | ✓ Work brings food from resources          |
| • Trading without relationships      | ✓ Trading services is a trade relationship |
| • Specialized jobs and being managed | ✓ General self-sufficiency skills          |
| • Formal education                   | ✓ Learning by doing                        |
| • Group learning                     | ✓ Individual learning                      |

I think it is important to look at the bush economy and consider how it is so much a part of our shared culture, our common heritage.

When you find someone who does not do well in the technical-based and southern lifestyle of the town, you will usually find someone who will probably succeed in the bush.

Those used to be dirty words when I went to school in the 70's but we have to recognize that our juvenile delinquency problems often stem from kids who might succeed in the bush if they got more exposure to it and got to learn the pride of being a productive bush economist.



## *The Mixed Economy*

- ◆ “Wage and income-based activity is combined with informal, subsistence activity in order to meet family and community needs.”
- ◆ “The most desirable waged jobs are local, flexible or seasonal and build on or complement the skill and knowledge base used in subsistence activities.”

Alternatives Journal

The “mixed” economy is getting incomes and subsistence from a number of sources including wage work and hunting and trapping activity that brings in food and/or incomes from the bush.

The small business is common, with broad-based skills, centered on what the family does. It is self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

It is a whole way of life and tends to be built around an outdoors life-style, more focused on the environment.

It means fixing your own machinery and networking with friends, relatives and neighbors to cooperatively do things and manage resources collectively. Often it means those with jobs share their equipment with relatives who do not have wage jobs.



## *Sustainable Communities*

- ◆ *Identity* - knowing culture and history
- ◆ *Ethics* - what is important and why
- ◆ *Place* - home and shared destiny with others

“Economic ‘development’ that undermines cultural identity, that compromises values, or fails to preserve environment is not sustainable or healthy.”

Susan Wisner - Alternatives

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Communities can be built around and focused on the mixed economy.

The communities that are growing and developing tend to do it because they build on a sustainable base.

Sustainable communities raise their children with a strong sense of identity - they know who they are and are proud of their culture and history.

Their residents have a way of doing things that is built on doing it right.

People know that they are part of a place and know they need to rely on others and they support each other.

Communities that are not well, that do not cooperate, are not sustainable and will not grow and prosper.

## *Tourism is About Culture*

- ◆ **Heritage Tourism** - Canada's International Marketing Program theme
- ◆ Heritage / Cultural Tourism is to proudly show others who we are and how we live
- ◆ Sharing our heritage and culture with others can and enrich our lives
- ◆ If we can feel proud of our lifestyles and our cultures we make good hosts

Heritage Tourism is all about sharing your culture with visitors.

It is about a sense of pride about where we come from.

I argue that we can put more people to work in Tourism and they will be able to generate a good part of their annual cash needs from tourism.

As traditional 8:30 - 5 jobs decline, the incomes from services, from Tourism, will become more and more important.



### *The Bush as an Attraction*

- ◆ Bush Camp visits can be an appealing holiday for a Tourist
- ◆ Checking the nets, cleaning a fish, telling stories -- these are tourism "products"
- ◆ Bush equipment is tourism equipment
- ◆ Hunters, trappers and their associations can all become "tour outfitters"

We have many natural tourism "products" that we do not package up and market and share with visitors.

What we need to do is use the existing people selling products, tours, and the people who bring them around in faster, bigger boats and in planes . . .

. . . and help the people with hunting and fishing facilities in the bush to become *tourism operators* with products -- that is, services and activities -- to sell.

If our people with cabins on lakes and river, hunting and fishing sites, if our HTC's and our RRC's and our tourism marketing and salespeople pulled in the right direction, together, we could easily employ another 200-300 people in the Delta and Beaufort for three to four months of the year.

We could get there in the space of three to five years.



## *Tourism Assets*

- ◆ Bush Camps, Whaling Camps, Lodges
- ◆ Visitor Info Centres, Parks, Campgrounds, Churches
- ◆ Delta, Pingos, Sport Hunts
- ◆ Drummers and Dancers, Singers
- ◆ Jamborees, Summer and Winter Games
- ◆ Arts and Crafts Fairs and Festivals

If we were to list all of our assets, we would find that we have more than enough to handle three times the volume of visitors we have now.

The real problem now is that we do not really deploy our assets effectively.

While we are still famous for our hospitality, some visitors are going home disappointed because of the lack of products - of packages of things to do.

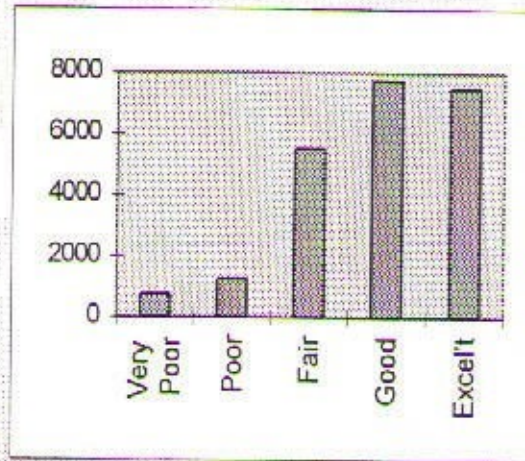
The communities do not support our tourism outfitters and operators enough. We seem to think they can do it on their own and that they are pocketing big profits for it. We should think of our outfitters as our agents who still rely on us for support. Even those of us not directly gaining incomes from Tourism do benefit indirectly in the long run.

Consider the crafts people and artists who sell to visitors.



## *Rating Culture as Attraction*

We asked  
over 22,000  
visitors  
how much  
enjoyed the  
NWT  
cultures



We overlook the fact that what we do and who we are, is something others want to learn about and experience.

We polled travellers visiting Inuvik Region and rated their feeling that cultures were a reason to come and visit.

Many felt that it was important.



<i>What Tourists Enjoy Doing</i>	
<b>Best Liked Aspect</b>	<b>%</b>
◆ Nature, the Scenery	50
◆ Friendly People	22
◆ Fishing	9
◆ Specific Event, Festival, Attraction or Site	9

We also asked how they rated other things in the NWT and they seemed to like a lot of what we had to offer...

We have much to offer. Aside from the mosquitoes, we do have a lot of assets that visitors like.

But we need to be more conscious about keeping nature clean -- I think we can accept that responsibility and do more about it.

Some further awareness of the importance of hospitality and training in hospitality would be good.

We need to set dates for our major events if we are going to benefit from them ... the Music Festivals and Jamborees have to become events and attractions that the Hamlets and the Bands, and other groups take on as a commitment beyond individual volunteerism. If we could put those dates in the Explorer's Guide, we might get a lot more visitors and be able to build them into truly first-class events.



<i>Asset Requirements</i>	
<b>Bush Camp</b>	<b>Tourist Camp</b>
◆ Camp, Cabin, Tent	◆ Camp, Cabin, Tent
◆ Boat, Motor, Skidoo	◆ Boat, Motor, Skidoo
◆ Right to Use Area	◆ License to Use Area
◆ Room for Visitors	◆ Room for Visitors
◆ Harvesting Equipment	◆ Harvesting Equipment
◆ Knowledge of Area	◆ Knowledge of Area
◆ Good Relations with Neighbors	◆ Hospitality/Service
	◆ License/Insurance

Everything we need for delivery of a heritage tourism product, is the same basic things we need to live in the bush.

The additional licensing and insurance requirements are not a difficulty.... except we have to note that we need to set high standards of excellence ... a clean camp, no gut piles near the cabin, good garbage disposal, clean outhouse and so forth. This is not really much more than an industrious camp owner would want for himself and his or her family.

An additional sleeping cabin would be helpful but we could use that for visiting family as well.

As for hospitality, this is something we do and are in the North and all we need is a little training in how to polish it up a bit .... some awareness of the average visitors needs and attitudes.



### *Enhanced Camp Setup*

- ◆ Wind and Solar Power Generation - long term cost-savings
- ◆ Additional Basic Log Cabin and Tent Frame(s) for Visitors
- ◆ Higher Quality Kitchen and Privy Setup - for Health Code
- ◆ Mapped and Marked Walking/Traveling Trails

There are a few extras that would really make the average camp a more appealing place to visit.

Solar and Wind power generation do make a big difference when it comes to saving hauling fuel to generate power or light or to burn for power or light. It also makes it much easier to power your bush radio or telephone and radio. A \$5,000 setup, with batteries for power storage, can mean not needing ~~any more~~ t all.

It is always nice to have your own cabin or tent to sleep in when you are visiting someone for a few days.

The kitchen and privy areas should be well set up, easy to keep clean and not "in a disgusting condition" ... as the Health Act states!

It is lots easier if you mark a few walking and traveling trails and have a few maps handy, so visitors can amuse themselves without worrying about getting lost. It makes it easier for you, too.



## *Assets and Finance*

- ◆ We need to look more at services and hospitality than at hard assets
- ◆ Some equity and debt financing from friends and relatives may be needed
- ◆ Claims groups need to actively support the activity and program side of Tourism
- ◆ The elements exist overall but we have not organized them into a Tourism system

There has been much demand for more boats and motors but there has not been the according increase in seats, in beds, in tourism products, in activities.

When we support operators, we should be supporting the ones who are already active in the bush.

I sympathize with the guy in the bush who is unaware of the potential and does not know how to plug into the system, of marketing and selling the tour experience products...

we need to be working more closely with Hunter and Trapper organizations and getting them a lot more involved with product development and as booking agents and middlemen.

We need to challenge the claims and other aboriginal organizations to actively support the development of a Heritage Tourism System that provides incomes for those that need them the most...

the ones with the skills we need the most...

the hunters and trappers who live in and around every community of the NWT.



## *Finance and Operations*

- ◆ How to assist with business planning, logistics and access to funds
- ◆ How to insure bush assets
- ◆ How to reduce the burden and cost of reporting
- ◆ How to enable flexible, seasonal debt financing

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There are some issues that we need to look closer at and see how we can resolve them or at least simplify them.

It takes some work to establish an outfitter business.

It takes time to get land permits and access and licensing.

It is too often felt that that is something we at RWED do alone ... while it is really the communities that decide who should get licensed.

Licensing is most often co-managed and it means cooperation if we are going to simplify.



### *Camp Visit - Sample Itinerary*

Day 1 - Arrival, Welcome, Orientation  
around by foot and canoe

Day 2 - AM free; Boat trip in PM; check nets  
in evening, clean and prepare fish

Day 3 - AM Walking trip by trail/map, pick  
berries; PM free; stories in evening

Day 4 - short activity; departure

To provide some structured activity to a guest does not take a great deal of time but it requires planning and preparation and having some backup plans for the rainy days.

Some free time is usually wanted so there should be that. If the visitors has a map of the area and can take a canoe or walk a trail, they can and usually do want some time to do something relatively safe, easy and relaxing on their own.

Some traditional camp life is okay, checking the nets and cleaning a fish, maybe two...but this should be clearly optional.

A few photo albums, maps, books and so forth are good to have around.

It does require attention and hospitality but you do not normally have to baby your visitors. They should know what is expected though and that is the key thing... what were they paying for.



### *Youth and Elders as "Guides"*

- ◆ Our old and young folks can and should all be part of the Bush Tour business
- ◆ On-land programs can teach bush skills and "hospitality" skills and ability
- ◆ HTC's/RRC's and Elders and Education Councils are key players in Tourism
- ◆ Pride comes from being valued and being part of the Tourism Industry

Our Hunters and Trappers, our bush economists, our youth and elders, could all become proud participants and owners of a flourishing Tourism Industry.

But we don't seem to see that:

- we make it hard to get licenses for activities and for health inspections
- we put up roadblocks with our government and land claims bureaucracies
- we sometimes leave visitors feeling unsure they are welcome
- we do not cooperate.

Our schools on-land programs could become a part of tourism as well as being a part of school



### *HTC Support*

- ◆ Agents for Sports Hunts and Outfitting
- ◆ Preferential Land Access and Processing
- ◆ Licenses, Insurance and Bookkeeping
- ◆ Quality Assurance and Security
- ◆ Bulk Discount Buying and Outfitting
- ◆ Cooperative Marketing Support

There are some very critical things the HTCS themselves, in each community and collectively, can do to support their members and to promote Tourism and member incomes.



### *Partner / Broker*

- ◆ Agency - take the commerce out of the hospitality
- ◆ Partner - not an employee but a cooperator
- ◆ Contractor - relieve the bush operator of the paper burden
- ◆ Specialty - focusing on what one does best
- ◆ Flexibility - able to adapt to changing needs

Some outfitters really do prefer to just focus on the work of being a host in the bush... they do not want the paperwork and hassle of licensing and insurance and access permits and reporting... they would prefer to just contract.

And the nicest part of this, is that they can be freed up of having to make the commercial deal with the client... they deal with an operator who brings the people. Then they can have a more host-guest relationship that is not as commercial.

Gifting could be the means of tipping good service without insult... especially if the guest knows how this should be done.

This system also gives more flexibility.



## *Linking School and Community*

- ◆ High School "Career Technology Studies" are career-related, e.g.:
  - Tourism / Hospitality module
  - "Enterprise" module
- ◆ On-land, heritage and science programs at all grade levels
- ◆ Summer Elder/ Youth Camps on culture/ environment
- ◆ Student Summer Jobs in GNWT and businesses
- ◆ "Productive Project Choices" options for Income Support

1 of 4 students does not finish school - they get "bored".

Let us look at the schools and college as a place where careers start, especially using the Career Technology Studies Tourism module and the Entrepreneurial Skills module.

Let us start defining career-building summer jobs for those students who seem to be interested and promising.

Let us see how we can use people who need income support as facilitators and support people for our projects and programs

Let us acknowledge the bush smarts of our elders by involving them and while they share their experiences, we make them comfortable and also get them out of town -- they too want the free time of bush-time.



*Linking School and Community ...*

### *Sample - Caribou Hunt Program*

- ♦ 3 2-day hunt trips
- ♦ trainer and student
- ♦ two skidoos / sleds
- ♦ fund hard costs - gas, oil, per diem = \$375
- ♦ access to shelter
- ♦ "Training plan" for skill transfer
- ♦ program outline:
  - basic skidoo check
  - gear plan and list
  - firearms safety
  - hunt route plan
  - hunt, butcher, clean
  - meat cuts and uses
  - emergency plan
  - food distribution in the community

Here is a sample program outline for caribou hunting and butchering skills

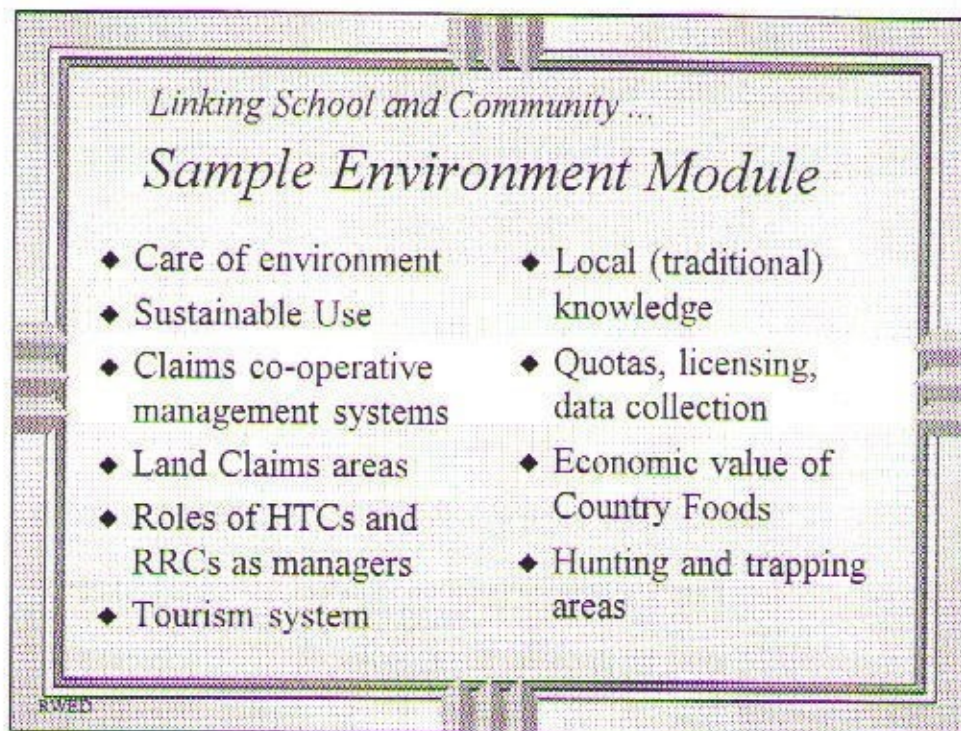
This would incorporate all the things a hunter needs to do to get ready and have all the necessary gear, to hunt and butcher, to plan for getting lost and so forth.

This kind of short program can be properly written up and become part of a credit program in the high school.

We know this is a major necessary skill all our children should know.

It is also part of the bush skill that can be interpreted for a visitor.





This is a sample module summary that lists the areas that would be covered in a more class-room set program

This would possibly be a part of a Tourism-focused interpretation program that would give the students the basic knowledge to describe our bush-based economy.

I can see a 2-week program at Whitefish Station that would occur during the whale hunts in July.

I can see another one at Tl'oondih Lodge in Spring, for Gwich'in students.

A joint Delta Camp has happened from time to time.

This kind of program is not only something we support as a cultural activity but can also be a place where youth learn marketable skills.



### *An Action Plan*

- ◆ Joint planning meeting
- ◆ Establish a Workplan and budget
- ◆ Identify Funding Sources
- ◆ Fund / Hire Program Development Officer
- ◆ Design interpretation and bush skills programs
- ◆ Identify students and tourism-based summer jobs
- ◆ Action / Review / Improve

What can we do as a Region to make things happen on the bigger scale in the Region?

- the stakeholders could cooperate to bring a tourism focus to our mandate areas
- we could look at how we could cooperate to create businesses and help people earn incomes
- we could show our people what tourism means and how to “interpret” the Region, the people and so forth
- we could start steering our students towards where the careers are that fit with lifestyle while providing incomes
- we could start defining a strategic direction upon which we can build programs and projects that can be improved, changed and revised over time as funding sources change and demand changes



### *Funding Sources - Potential*

- ◆ ECE - Income Support - 25,000
  - Cultural Programs - 10,000
- ◆ RWED - Comm Init's - 30,000
  - BDF Product Dev't - 10,000
- ◆ HTC's/RRC's - in-kind - 10,000
- ◆ Justice Diversions - 10,000
- ◆ Pathways/DEAs - 20,000

If we were to build a strategy and start partnering our funding, I am convinced we could find enough to build an effective program over 3-5 years.

These are guesstimates of potential funding programs and amounts ... 115,000 just from Inuvik itself.

If we show success in the first year, we can probably get that amount of annual funding through partnering. We could make real progress in gearing up for heritage tourism.

If we can keep 5 or more students a year from dropping out, we will save that money in other costs later... while getting some current benefit from them staying in school and participating.



### *Future Benefits From Tourism*

Benefits	Now	1998	2000
Jobs - PY's	22	36	75
Salaries	\$ 600,000	1 M	2 M
Spending	\$ 2.2 M	3.8 M	7.6 M

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This is the future if we take a Community Development approach to our common situation.

Where we now have the equivalent of 22 Full-time jobs, we could easily triple that in a few years.

This means some 275-300 people earning part of their annual incomes from the hospitality business, for the business of interpreting our lifestyles and our countryside to travellers.

This cannot be done by the Department of RWED simply dialing it in and spending lots of money to make it happen. It will mean cooperation among our mandates and programs and it will mean coordinating our projects.

This will not mean any veering from anyone's agenda of self-government, to public government or regional autonomy but could make all options more achievable.



### *Sustainable Tourism Principles*

- ◆ Input and Control by Community residents
- ◆ Quality employment for local residents
- ◆ Strong local linkages; reduced leakage out
- ◆ Broad-based local distribution of benefits
- ◆ Long term commitments and benefits
- ◆ Local support and harmony with visitors
- ◆ Clear guidelines for impact assessment and benefits review

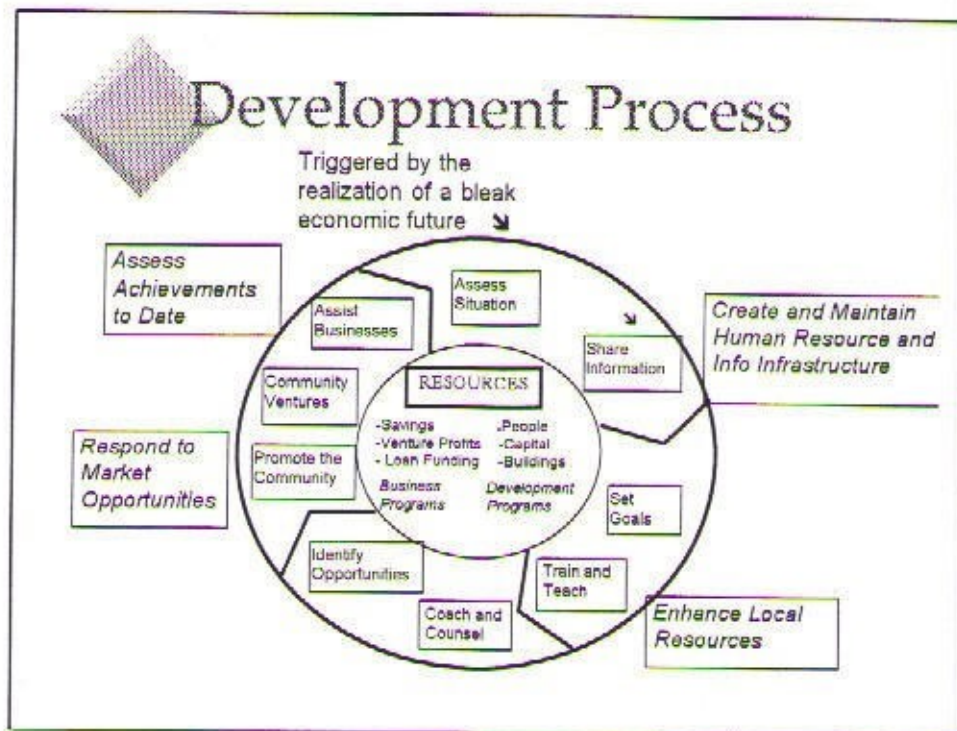
A sustainable Tourism industry will only exist to the degree the communities make it happen.

We need to work to overcome the mistaken suspicion that outsiders have been milking us and our resources and get local residents grappling with the hard tasks that come with community development.

We have to see that benefits accrue to those who do the work.

We need to get the commitment too, from HTC's and from Bands, Hamlets and other bodies.... that they want to have this kind of economy and that they will foster a climate of hospitality.





The development of our Region is the Sustainable Development Process for Community Development... done on a broad scale but based on the communities.

It means sharing a vision of the future, taking collective responsibility and taking collective action.

It means coming up with an overall action plan.

I think it means we need an action plan for each of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Regions.

Inuvik as a hub could be the combined area with a more central-service plan that supports the communities and their efforts.



### *What Next Steps*

- ◆ Support and action from HTC's / DEAs
- ◆ IRC support and commitment
- ◆ Hire part-time Development Officer
- ◆ Flesh out broad scope of 3-year plan
- ◆ Develop programs and projects
- ◆ Implement via community organizations

It is important that this plan acknowledge and build in all the other related and supportive projects, programs and groups and agencies.

There are roles for Ingamo Hall, for the Native Women's Training Centre, Inuvialuit Education Foundation, Manpower and ECE, the schools and Education Authorities, the Elders and Hunters and Trappers ...

... we need to identify a working function for all groups within this broad strategy.... we need to get the support and in-kind funding that comes when we have volunteer effort and group participation.

If we can find the right person to act as our Joint Officer or Manager, the right kind of do-er, if we provide our ongoing support ourselves, we can make some real mileage in the next three years. It will take commitment



### *Right Now ... We Can ...*

- ◆ Plan a Spring Hunt Program for Students ...
- ◆ Plan an Elders and Youth Whaling Camp...
- ◆ Plan a Series of Interpretive Programs for the Visitor Centre ...
- ◆ Identify Students for Visitor Centre Jobs ...
- ◆ Develop Summer Bush Camps as Tourism "Products"...
- ◆ Get Involved in the Winter Tourism Conference - Easter '97 - Inuvik

This is all fine but we need to start focusing on doing things now... and we can start doing some useful things. But they will take all the next few months to plan and access funding and identify participants and resource people.

We do not ask people to volunteer full time but you should look for ways you can support and assist.

Hard costs should be covered... for instance Gas & Oil and Bullets for Hunts... but do you need to charge for your skidoo?

We need your support and commitment in making tourism happen.

The Community Corporations and the HTC's have a strong leadership role to play in this .

....

I challenge you and ask you to challenge us to facilitate.



## *Heritage / Cultural Tourism - Our Future ...?*

*Is It Who We Are...? Can We  
Make it Happen ...?*

RWED Partnering  
Strategy



RWED