

TOURISM AROUND YELLOWKNIFE: A BRILLIANT DEVELOPMENT

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I. ABSTRACT

Tourism Around Yellowknife: a brilliant development

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Yellowknife, which began as a gold-mining town in the 1930s, developed into a modern city and the territorial capital. Yellowknife is a popular destination for tourism with yearly growing numbers that reflect aurora viewers, business travel, general touring and visiting friends and relatives. Consequently, tourism in the Yellowknife area is increasing in volume and is of growing economic significance. Municipal and territorial governments actively advance its expansion, with the City's 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy directed at infrastructure and service enhancement. While diamond tourism, as envisioned in 2004, did not progress, the Indigenous population in the territory is developing and executing community-based tourism plans. Utilizing Grounded Theory, this study demonstrates that governmental and stakeholder support proves dedication and commitment to the local tourism industry for years into the future. Yellowknife and its citizens take firm measures to attract increasing numbers of visitors in recognition of the value of tourism to their community.

Keywords: Yellowknife, Tourism, Government involvement, Aurora borealis, Diamond industry, Northwest Territories economy.

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III. TABLE OF CONTENTS

i. Abstract.....	ii
ii. Acknowledgements.....	iii
iii. Table of Contents.....	iv
iv. List of Figures and Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vi
1. Introduction.....	1
Objectives of the Study.....	2
Research Questions.....	5
2. Literature Review.....	8
3. Methods.....	23
Frameworks and Methodologies for Studying Tourism.....	25
Research Methods.....	31
Interviews and Analysis.....	34
Some Methodological Limitations.....	37
4. Yellowknife.....	46
Yellowknife History.....	50
Diamond Mining, Cutting and Polishing.....	61
Old Town.....	67
Yellowknife as an Urban Centre.....	68
5. Tourism.....	77
Thematic Analysis of Tourism in Yellowknife.....	87
Theme One: Developing Tourism Strategies.....	89
Theme Two: Support Systems for Tourism.....	97
Theme Three: Promoting Diamond Tourism.....	106
Theme Four: Developing Aurora Tourism.....	113
Theme Five: Indigenous Tourism.....	120
Theme Six: Existing Capacity for Tourism.....	131
6. Discussion and Conclusion.....	142

1 How do local government decision-makers at the territorial and municipal level position the tourist industry in relation to current urban and regional development plans?	142
2 What plans are being made to develop infrastructure and capacity in this area?	144
3 How are specialized niches such as Diamond Tourism and Indigenous Tourism being facilitated and advanced in the region?	148
Summary	150
Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research.....	159
Bibliography	161
Appendix A.....	187
Organizations as Stakeholders	187
Guides for Tourism and Economy	190
Representatives of Tourism Stakeholders Interviewed	193
TREB Permission	194
AEC Permission.....	195
ARI Permission	195
Organizations approached	197
Community Representatives Letter	198
Consent form.....	199
Individual Research Questions	202
Appendix B.....	204
Northwest Territories Tourism 2018/19 Marketing Budget.....	204

IV. LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

List of Figures

Figure 4-1: Map of Northwest Territories.....	47
Figure 4-2: Map of Yellowknife	48
Figure 4-3: Location of diamond mines in NWT	66
Figure 5-1: Northwest Territories visitor statistics	78
Figure 5-2: Northwest Territories visitor spending	83
Figure 5-3: Dempster Highway with link to southern provinces.....	99
Figure 5-4: Yellowknife Diamond Capital of North America	106
Figure 5-5: Aurora borealis	114
Figure 5-6: Aurora belt above North America.....	117
Figure 5-7: Aurora belt worldwide.....	117

List of Tables

Table 3-1: Interview questions and subjects.....	38
Table 4-1: Arrivals at Yellowknife Airport	71
Table 4-2: Gross Domestic Product, annual percent change	75
Table 4-3: GDP gain / loss	76
Table 5-1: Gross Domestic Product by industry	85
Table 5-2: Goals in the 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy.....	91
Table 5-3: Aurora viewing numbers by fiscal year	120
Table 5-4: Tourism accommodations in Yellowknife.....	136

1. INTRODUCTION

This study will demonstrate that tourism is growing in scope in the Northwest Territories,¹ as it is world-wide. It plays an increasing role in the economy of most countries, and with expanding mobility of people and spreading infrastructure, it gradually reaches into the most remote corners of the world.

Canada, as the second-largest country on earth, has large areas of pristine wilderness that are becoming of growing interest to international tourists, especially those who have already traveled extensively. In addition, some nations have a fascination for North American Indigenous cultures, which is now being addressed in the Northwest Territories with the advent of Indigenous tourism. Here, First-Nations, Inuit and Métis tourism providers work towards the education of non-Indigenous tourists for better understanding between peoples.

The added features of a city like Yellowknife, located in a remote, vast landscape makes it attractive to visit the Northwest Territories. With its well-established urban amenities, its natural beauty, the long, bright summer nights, its close proximity to nature and its unique positioning for viewing the aurora borealis in fall, winter and spring, Yellowknife is an attractive destination. Its colourful history as a gold-mining

¹ In names and official sources, Northwest Territories is interchangeably referred to with or without the definite article.

town also helps to grow its popularity as a vacation destination, as tourism statistics show.²

Objectives of the Study

The goals of this research are to evaluate the status of tourism in Yellowknife in the North Slave Region of Northwest Territories and to assess its importance for economic development. Three research questions were selected³ to examine specific tourism topics.

Why tourism around Yellowknife, the researcher was asked numerous times. The question is justified: what qualifies a post-graduate student from Canada's south to research in the far northwest? For this study, the researcher explored themes as they pertain to the tourism industry, northern history and economy. Her study complements existing literature in little-researched categories such as the latest NWT travel statistics, policies, and on-the-ground workings of the tourism industry in the Yellowknife area.

Regarding the question why researchers from the south would study the Canadian north – from the perspective of this researcher, it was undertaken because of her knowledge in tourism and Indigenous studies. She felt suitable for it because as an investigator from the south she brings a fresh perspective to these studies. Northern

² Cf. Chapter 5. Tourism

³ Cf. Research Questions

research is encouraged by among other the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) (2018), The Report of the Canadian Polar Research Commission Study,⁴ and by organizations granting funds for this research.⁵ There are no universities in the NWT and therefore a limited pool of qualified academics – themselves predominantly southerners – in the rest of the country to supervise such a project. It is therefore justified for non-northerners to engage in research in the Canadian territories. As increasingly more students from the territories acquire higher education, this will change.

In 1988, “The Shield of Achilles: The Report of the Canadian Polar Research Commission Study” (Symons and Burnet, 1988) was published. With the recommendation of creating a Canadian Polar Research Commission, it promotes “the development of polar knowledge,” including the realm of humanities and social sciences as important components (Symons and Burnet, 1988).

This thesis will suggest that the tourism industry is of growing importance to the Northwest Territories’ economy as a source of employment and thereby income for the population, as a result increasing tax income. There is rising interest among vacationers to make the Northwest Territories a destination for their travels, as well as increasing appeal to the local population to contribute to it. As the reports “Tourism 2015”⁶ and

⁴ Symons and Burnet (1988)

⁵ The Northern Scientific Training Program, the Shelagh Grant Fund for Northern Travel, and the Frost Research Fund (cf. Acknowledgements)

⁶ March 2010; prepared by NorthWays Consulting

“Aboriginal Tourism Engagement Strategy”⁷ lay out in plans well into the future, tourism is among the highest-ranking sources of revenue in the territory. Given this and related facts, the City of Yellowknife, after community consultation, passed the “Tourism Strategy for 2015-2019.”⁸ Its main Goals and eighteen prescribed Actions were designed as guidelines for growing the tourism sector over the next five years. This Strategy will be discussed in detail in Chapter Tourism.

From the perspective of the Municipal and Territorial governments, tourism is welcome as a renewable resource. As the territorial capital, Yellowknife is home to the Legislative Assembly, and, contributing to the economy, a significant percentage of the population work in either municipal or territorial government jobs or in resource extraction.⁹ Other economic opportunities are limited in the Northwest Territories due to the remoteness and scarcity of road connections to the more populated areas of the country.

Research was undertaken on site in Yellowknife to speak with policy-makers and stakeholders in the area, to examine their approach and understand what plans and strategies territorial and municipal government decision-makers apply to developing tourism infrastructure and capacity.¹⁰ This research is the foundation for this master’s thesis. A literature review of works relating to tourism in general, tourism in remote – especially northern – locations and tourism in the Northwest Territories also informs the

⁷ Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council July 2013

⁸ City of Yellowknife (2014b) “Tourism Development”

⁹ Cf. Diamond mining, cutting and polishing in chapter Yellowknife

¹⁰ Cf. chapter 3. Methods

study.¹¹ Statistics were drawn online from Statistics Canada; the Government of Northwest Territories' Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment;¹² Northwest Territories Tourism (Spectacular Northwest Territories);¹³ the City of Yellowknife;¹⁴ the City of Yellowknife's Tourism division;¹⁵ the Library of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories;¹⁶ and numerous other sources.

This research encountered some problems. In the summer of 2014, five days before the scheduled research trip, forest fires around Yellowknife became so intense that the air quality was seriously compromised, and flights were cancelled. The research on the ground had to be delayed to the next tourist season. These and other circumstances effected a delay to such an extent that much of the research material and some interviews had to be re-evaluated, validated and updated to newer figures.

Research Questions

In general, three overarching research questions directed this study:

- How do local government decision-makers at the territorial and municipal level position the tourist industry in relation to current urban and regional development plans?

¹¹ Cf. chapter 2. Literature Review

¹² Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018a)

¹³ Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018)

¹⁴ City of Yellowknife (2018a)

¹⁵ City of Yellowknife (2018c)

¹⁶ Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories (2018)

- What plans are being made to develop infrastructure and capacity in this area?
- How are specialized niches such as Diamond tourism and Indigenous tourism (in view of current trends in the tourism sector, e.g. cultural experience and eco travel) being facilitated and advanced in the region?

These questions will be examined in detail in Chapter 6 - Discussion.

Structure of the Argument

The thesis is organized in six main chapters. The Introduction, Chapter One, discloses the objectives of the study and gives insight into the appealing history and present of Yellowknife, which has significant influence on its tourism.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review studies works relevant to the topic. While many authors wrote volumes on tourism and Arctic tourism, not much academic literature exists on Yellowknife and very little on tourism in Yellowknife.

Chapter Three, on Methods, discusses step-by-step the approach taken to the research. The interviews are evaluated, and interview content is quoted throughout the paper as it applies to the topics. The chapter also considers methodologies that apply to tourism research.

Chapter Four explores the history of Yellowknife and identifies the main economic trends which serve to contextualize Yellowknife's tourist industry.

Chapter Five discusses Tourism and gives insight into aspects of the visitors' scene in Yellowknife and Northwest Territories as some information is only available for

the territory. Diamond tourism, aurora tourism and Indigenous tourism are explored in some detail since the research questions were chosen to study these categories closely. The chapter also examines the economy – tourism is a significant contributor to it.

Chapter Six constitutes the Discussion and Conclusion. This chapter rounds out the thesis as it is customary to reflect on a work of this scope at the end and assess one's study critically. The author illuminates and answers research questions. Limitations are discussed and opportunities for future research are offered.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines literary works on travel. Tourism in the Northwest Territories is generally under-researched because it is a relatively young economic activity largely concentrated on a few urban areas in the North. Much has been written on tourism, some of it on Arctic tourism but very little on tourism in the Yellowknife area. This is not surprising considering the remote location and the tourism numbers in the region compared to other destinations. Notwithstanding, tourism is a growing activity within the NWT economy. It was therefore deemed worthwhile and potentially beneficial to the industry by the researcher and her supervisor to explore tourism in Yellowknife and Northwest Territories further. The development of Indigenous Tourism is trailing behind main stream tourism; nevertheless, it is a valuable component of the travel scene in NWT. Since most travellers are non-Indigenous, as is this master's student,¹⁷ she considered herself nonetheless qualified to respectfully question Indigenous tourism providers and evaluate the results.

UN World Tourism Organization defines tourism (in 1994) as “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside of their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”¹⁸ Year after

¹⁷ Trent University, with its Indigenous Department, offers programs and courses in Indigenous education. With Elders' gatherings, author readings, workshops and numerous other Indigenous events, students are constantly exposed to the culture and spirit of Indigenous education. This student chose to listen and participate in courses and countless events. In addition, serious exchanges with Indigenous friends added to the expansion of her horizon.

¹⁸ Mike Crang in Gregory et al. (2009) p. 763

year, more people engage in such trips, and the amounts spent represent ever greater contributions to countries' GDP.

International tourism worldwide generated US\$ 1.3 trillion in export earnings in 2012 and is expected to grow in 2014 by 4 to 4.5%, in the Americas by 3 to 4%.¹⁹ Tourism is making a substantial contribution to the Northwest Territories economy. According to the 2010-2011 NWT Visitor Exit Survey Report,²⁰ visitors to the Territory spent \$97 million in the 2010/2011 season. Nevertheless, tourism should not be expected to become the only source for economic income in the communities, Hinch²¹ argues, but rather one element in a diversified range of options. In fact, tourism development should be adjusted to a volume that allows the individual communities to control and manage it effectively.

Given the statistics above, it is to be expected that scientists devote resources to researching the subject. Numerous scholars, many of them geographers, have applied themselves to the study of tourism. Among others, Hall and Page (2006) produced a geography textbook on tourism; Lew, Hall and Williams (2004); Ringer (1998); and Judd (2003) were editors to three comprehensive works written by a number of distinguished authors; Franklin (2003) declares tourism in his volume "a major cultural phenomenon;"²² and Volpé and Burton (2000) look at the travel industry from a Canadian perspective. Harrison (2003) examines the field through the eyes of a tourist. A number of authors devoted works to tourism, specifically to Arctic travels or

¹⁹ World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2018)

²⁰ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2013)

²¹ In Hall and Johnston (1995)

²² Franklin (2003). Back cover

Aboriginal tourism / Indigenous tourism. Notzke (1999) aligns Indigenous tourism in the Arctic with big-game hunting, wildlife viewing, ecotourism and cultural tourism.

The Canadian Arctic is gaining in popularity. Notzke (2006); Jacobsen (1994); Johnston, Twynam and Haider (1999); Hall and Johnston (1995);²³ and Johnston and Haider (1993) examine aspects of tourism in the north, while Hendersen and Vikander (2007) dedicate a chapter by Glen Hvenegaard and Morten Asfeldt to the Canadian North. More than perhaps in other areas, ecological concerns come into play in remote locations.

Sustainability, eco-travel and community-based enterprises in tourism are subjects of emerging interest. McIntyre and Hetherington (1993); Goodwin, Kent, Parker, and Walpole (1998); Hall and Lew (1998); McNeely (1995); Holden (2000); Mowforth and Munt (2003); Bushnell and Eagles (2007); and Steinicke and Neuburger (2012), among others, committed volumes or articles to these topics. Aboriginal tourism and how it affects, and is expected to affect, the Indigenous communities is the topic of works by Butler and Hinch (1996); McLaren (2003); Notzke (2006); Johnston and Haider (1993); and Kolås (2008), among others. Studies such as “The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in the Northwest Territories;”²⁴ “Aboriginal Tourism: Recommendations for a Strategic Action Plan;”²⁵ and “Aboriginal Tourism Engagement Strategy Final Report”²⁶ address specific segments of tourism in the Northwest Territories.

²³ In Johnston and Hall (1995)

²⁴ The North Group (2004)

²⁵ Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council (2013)

²⁶ NorthWays Consulting (2010)

In some instances, authors are trying to make forecasts for the future of the travel industry. For the Arctic tourists of “tomorrow,” Jacobsen (1994) predicts more “naturalness,” participation, [desire for] travel packages, high-touch and playful travel, freedom, independence, self-centredness, and individuality. He foresees reduced organized group travel, decreased concern with risk reduction, and less concern with traditional comfort.²⁷ Somewhat consistent with this are the findings of a study by Carpenter (2000), which show that aurora viewing has become popular in Canada’s north, as the steadily growing stream of particularly Japanese tourists who are visiting Yellowknife shows. Even though the aurora borealis, the northern lights, is visible from many points in northern Scandinavia, Iceland, Greenland, Siberia, Alaska and northern Canada,^{28 29} Yellowknife has become a fashionable destination for watching the northern lights due to its favourable climate with “very little rain.”³⁰ In its marketing campaigns, it has branded itself “Yellowknife, the Aurora Capital of the World.”³¹ According to the Northwest Territories Backgrounder, most Japanese visitors to the NWT book through a travel agent in Japan; however, an increasing number of Japanese are travelling independently, not as part of a group.³² This lends credibility to Jacobsen’s prognosis of 1994.

²⁷ Jacobsen (1994) Concluding Comments; no page number

²⁸ Hansen (2018)

²⁹ Cf. Figure 5-7: Aurora belt worldwide

³⁰ City of Yellowknife (2018d)

³¹ NWT Tourism (2016)

³² Northwest Territories Backgrounder (2017)

Corresponding to these predictions, some authors propose that more insight must be developed. Agarwal et al. (2000)³³ suggest that a better understanding should be gained of the influence the forces of globalization and commodification have on the geography of tourism production. Geographers have analysed tourism as production from a Fordist/post-Fordist perspective, whereby the Fordist model of economies of scale and standardized production was appropriate for tourism in the last century. The emerging demands for sophisticated customization and individualization of the tourist product, however, seem to be better served by the post-Fordist template of economies of scope and high levels of product differentiation.³⁴ Indeed, Agarwal (2002),³⁵ in her practical recommendations for several waning English seaside resorts, advised more flexible production methods and targeting diverse niche markets. She also points out an under-researched area worthy of more attention from tourist geographers: that of the fluctuations in consumer tastes and consumption preferences, which can exert dramatic influences on the geography of production. It seems to be in line with the interpretation of other scholars³⁶ when Franklin (2003) declares that “tourism *is* consumerism in a globalising modernity,” and also that “tourism is an embodied experience not simply a visual experience.”³⁷ This is especially applicable to destinations off the beaten path.

As increasing numbers of people are drawn to wilderness as established tourism destinations may experience saturation, and less accessible, lesser-used areas may be

³³ in Lew et al. (2004)

³⁴ Characterization of Fordist and post-Fordist models from Lew et al. (2004)

³⁵ In Lew et al. (2004)

³⁶ Johnston in Lew et al. (2004)

³⁷ Franklin (2003), p. 26; emphasis his

opened up and become popular. One example is the ribbon along the Dempster Highway in the north of the Northwest Territories (Hall and Johnson 1995). A component not to be examined in this study, but interesting as an overall tourism factor, is that cruising potential is expected to increase in the Arctic, with the cruise ships and their crews operating in alternating seasons between the Antarctic and the Arctic.³⁸

A section worthwhile to research is the field of Diamond Tourism. Unique if not exclusive to the Northwest Territories, it is a market segment that the stakeholders in the diamond industry intended to develop and capitalize on. The literature on the subject is scant and restricted to commissioned studies³⁹ or short, one-page journal articles. Then Lakehead University MA candidate, Jamie Noakes, examined the subject leading to her thesis in 2009, “Participants’ Views on Constraints and Opportunities in the Development of Diamond Tourism in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.”⁴⁰ Contrary to Kimberly and Cullinan, South Africa, where diamond tourism takes visitors into above-ground and underground mines, restrictions prohibit outsiders access to the mines in the Northwest Territories.⁴¹ It therefore seemed worthwhile to investigate the status of diamond tourism in person while in Yellowknife.⁴²

Of great interest are also Indigenous destinations. Among attractions that draw tourists are heritage villages or interpretive centres, and opportunities to purchase Native crafts, art, jewellery or clothing. Visiting Native communities and taking part in cultural

³⁸ Hall and Johnston (1995)

³⁹ The North Group (2004)

⁴⁰ Noakes (2009)

⁴¹ Noakes (2009)

⁴² Cf. Tourism – Theme Three: Promoting Diamond Tourism

performances, Powwows and traditional wilderness outings are further draws that entice tourists to seek Aboriginal destinations.⁴³ Hamley (1991), representing a view that is still valid after 27 years, explains it eloquently:

It is perhaps unfortunate to view indigenous peoples as a tourist attraction. Nonetheless, the varied languages, long traditions, and distinctive cultures of native groups are undeniably fascinating to visitors, and native communities are said to be very hospitable. Festivals, gatherings, dancing, and arts and crafts allow outsiders to gain insight and pleasure from the cultural heritage of the Dene, the Metis, and the Inuit; at the same time, tourist earnings help these peoples maintain and foster their distinctive lifestyles. Tourist development, if sensitively handled, can allow native groups to establish a more viable economic base, and can present visitors accustomed to museum culture with a more authentic brand.

In northern and polar tourism, a number of factors exist which hinder tourism development. Examples are the short tourist season of only a few summer months,⁴⁴ local preparedness for tourism, and the political climate.⁴⁵ Success, however, does not always lie in volume. Johnston⁴⁶ stresses that in some areas even small numbers of tourists that coexist rather than conflict with the local residents can be of benefit, especially if their visits help improve the local economy.

An increase in cultural tourism (Indigenous people and themes, including “cultural souvenirs”) and historic tourism (Arctic exploration and industrial development) is expected.⁴⁷ “Great care will have to be taken to ensure that the tourism

⁴³ Johnston and Hall in Hall and Johnston (1995)

⁴⁴ An extension of the traditional tourist months of June to September into April, May and October may take place, Hall and Johnston (1995) consider.

⁴⁵ Johnston in Hall and Johnston (1995)

⁴⁶ In Hall and Johnston (1995)

⁴⁷ Johnston and Hall in Hall and Johnston (1995)

product is appropriate to Indigenous values, that it reflects local community wishes in terms of number of visitors (if any) and type of tourism, and that aboriginal people themselves obtain the economic benefits that they desire. This may well be the major challenge in Arctic tourism in the next decades.”⁴⁸ This will likely require determining carrying-capacity of an area or a community, on various levels and by different criteria, before hordes of tourists are allowed to descend on it.

Aboriginal tourism is sometimes defined as “tourism owned by or involving Aboriginal peoples, [focusing on] the inter-related elements of heritage, history, values, land, lifestyle, customs and entertainment, as well as arts and crafts.”⁴⁹ Hinch and Butler (1996)⁵⁰ describe Indigenous tourism as “tourism activity in which Indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction.” In the 2010-2011 NWT Visitor Exit Survey Report, visitors rank “Unique or Different Cultural Groups” with 3.8 out of 5 in Importance of Considerations for Making Travel Decisions.⁵¹

Notzke (2006) suggests that if Indigenous people were to contribute to the tourism industry in Canada in proportion to the population segment they represent – that is approximately four percent – Aboriginal tourism would provide 30,000 to 40,000 jobs and would be the equivalent of a \$1.6 billion industry.

⁴⁸ Johnston and Hall in Hall and Johnston (1995) p. 298

⁴⁹ Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for British Columbia (2014), p. 3

⁵⁰ In Lew et al. (2004) p. 247

⁵¹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2013)

Hinch⁵² offers one of the reasons for increasing demand in Aboriginal tourism experiences: as society has become more hectic and complex, people choose tourist destinations that allow them to escape to simpler places and times. As a strategy for their cultural survival, many Indigenous communities are fostering this demand. Regarding the question of sustainability of Aboriginal tourism – indeed, sustainability of Indigenous cultures themselves, Hinch suggests that, according to advocates, Indigenous tourism development can be sustainable and may even be a catalyst to save or rejuvenate Indigenous communities. This viewpoint was confirmed in interviews with tourism representatives responsible for assistance with development of Indigenous tourism.⁵³ Besides providing income, Aboriginal tourist entertainment can motivate the local population to “embrace, and showcase, their own cultural identity that may be threatened in a changing world,” Ingles suggests (2002).⁵⁴ Opponents of this view include Waitt (1999)⁵⁵ who argues that, if Indigenous tourism is practiced as it is in Australia, it is presented from a “publicly constructed view of aboriginality that is inferior to non-aboriginal culture and, therefore, unsustainable.” Johnston (2000)⁵⁶ goes so far as declaring that tourism, besides representing a pronounced form of consumerism, is “also a flagship for the lifestyle of consumer society. As such, it can rapidly accelerate the cycles of cultural loss, poverty, and environmental degradation caused by any existing market integration.” While at the time this was written (2000),

⁵² In Lew et al. (2004)

⁵³ E.g. ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer (RTO)

⁵⁴ In Lew et al. (2004) p. 247

⁵⁵ In Lew et al. (2004) p. 247

⁵⁶ In Lew et al. (2004) p. 247

Indigenous people were “seldom privileged as power-holders in emerging tourism economies, or in the broader social-political economy in which they exist,”⁵⁷ a shift has taken place recently towards devolution of power, which transfers control and rights increasingly from the federal and territorial governments to Indigenous organizations and entities.⁵⁸

One benefit of Aboriginal tourism is the prospect for Indigenous people to stay close to the land and teach the visitors about its values (Hinch 2004)⁵⁹ explains. To achieve this effectually, local residents must become knowledgeable and skilled about tourism in order to become effective partners and reap the benefits of the industry. Hinch⁶⁰ raises the question whether Aboriginal values are compatible with those in the “business of tourism.” Aboriginal cultures, as traditional views suggest, hold communal values over those of an individualistic nature,⁶¹ which seems to be in contradiction to those held by the tourism industry. Newer tendencies show that Aboriginal people exhibit greater acceptance toward alternative business models, and that there is increased support for the destination community by the tourism industry.⁶² Mutual respect for each other’s philosophies must be practiced if collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous players in the tourism industry is destined to succeed.

A concern regarding tourism is the appropriation and representation of Aboriginal culture by outsiders, which reinforces the need for Aboriginal control of

⁵⁷ Johnston (2000) in Lew et al. (2004) p. 247

⁵⁸ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018f)

⁵⁹ In Hall and Johnston (1995)

⁶⁰ In Hall and Johnston (1995)

⁶¹ Hinch in Lew et al. (2004)

⁶² Hinch in Hall and Johnston (1995)

tourism in the communities. In Alaska, Johnston (2000)⁶³ informs, an Indigenous corporation took over management of the tourism industry after decades during which non-Aboriginal guides were leading cultural and traditional activities. As McLaren (2003) relates, “millions of tourists routinely experience their entire vacation through the lens of counterfeit culture.”⁶⁴ On the other hand, a drawback to the cultural expression for tourists is that “authentic” depictions do not allow the members of these societies “to become a respected and integral part of the world.”⁶⁵ They become virtually frozen in time.

It seems that there is a delicate balance to be upheld, and some compromises need to be made. Giving these presenters of their culture the opportunity to show that, outside of the tourism events (like enactors of historic events or lifestyles in white society), they are members of modern society, should enable them to practise their customs with pride and involve their communities’ youth while remaining present-day citizens.

In addition to selling products and services such as transportation, accommodation and food, packaged in adventure or rest and relaxation, tourism sells cultures, beaches, mountains, and people. Often, however, tourist businesses sell what they do not own,⁶⁶ as in the examples above. Resources are often acquired free of charge or at prices that don’t reflect their true value, McLaren argues. Sometimes assets are

⁶³ In Lew et al. (2004)

⁶⁴ P. 46

⁶⁵ Hinch in Lew et al. (2004) p. 251

⁶⁶ McLaren (2003)

“annexed,” she explains, as in the case of hotels that promote adjacent properties such as parks or beaches as part of their amenities.

As Kostopoulou (2013) relates, a new wave of imaginative tourists that do not fit into the mainstream cultural tourism pattern seeks creative industries, cultural organizations and venues, and recreational facilities in urban spaces that create a dynamic urban culture. This type of tourist is attracted by vibrant creative spaces based on both heritage and on contemporary culture. Füller and Michel (2014), however, observed in Berlin’s District of Kreuzberg that “tourists were blamed, in particular, for the recent wave of gentrification in the district,”⁶⁷ which led to the development of anti-tourism critique. They also point out that the phenomenon of urban tourism remains largely underexplored, both in tourism research and in urban studies (2014).⁶⁸ Judd (2003) concurs, stating that “until very recently the study of urban tourism has generally been neglected.” (2014) Valls et al. (2014)⁶⁹ point out that integrated strategic planning that deals with sustainability, governance, and customer management are the keys to attaining city competitiveness. They emphasize further⁷⁰ that cities can position themselves to create competitive advantages in attracting tourists “by building efficient urbes,⁷¹ infrastructure and facilities, fostering activities, providing training and engaging in promotion and support activities.”⁷² As companies do, they state further, cities will

⁶⁷ P. 1304

⁶⁸ Citing Ashworth and Page (2011)

⁶⁹ Citing Paskaleva-Shapira (2007)

⁷⁰ Citing Vegara & De las Rivas (2005)

⁷¹ Presumably Urban Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

⁷² P. 191

increasingly be compelled “to grasp the context within which they operate. This requires new working methods and approaches to city and regional planning.”⁷³

Judd (2003) in *The Infrastructure of Play: Building the Tourist City* examines the undertakings of several cities⁷⁴ to revive their centres and make them attractive to visitors. He⁷⁵ identified three categories of tourist cities: resort cities, tourist-historic cities, and converted cities that had to “carve out a tourist space amidst an otherwise hostile environment for tourists.”⁷⁶ Judd (2003) lists a variety of venues and facilities⁷⁷ cities can incorporate and stage that attract tourists.

The community approach to tourism, as Notzke (2006) argues, is no simple concept, nor is it easily achieved. Communities – and cities are also communities – as she points out, are not always big, happy families, and development affects different members of society in different ways. The objective for community-based tourism is to provide communities practicing it with a measure of self-determination, particularly economically. The government of the Northwest Territories saw its role (in 1983) as consultant in the planning stages and provider of financial backing in the developmental stage.⁷⁸ Currently it provides a range of services⁷⁹ such as funding, licensing and education for tourism providers.

⁷³ Citing Vegara & De las Rivas (2005) p. 179

⁷⁴ St. Louis, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Denver, Mexico City, and San Diego(-Tijuana) in the U.S.; Montreal and Vancouver in Canada; and Birmingham, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Lisbon in Europe

⁷⁵ And, as stated, Fainstein

⁷⁶ P. 5

⁷⁷ Besides hotels and restaurants: sports facilities, convention centres, museums, theatre and concert halls, recreation and retail establishments, waterfront districts, performing arts facilities and events, etc. (pp. 64-65)

⁷⁸ Government of the Northwest Territories cited in Notzke (2006)

⁷⁹ Cf. Tourism - Theme Two: Support Systems for Tourism

At the same time as the Northwest Territories is undergoing a devolution of power in its political structure, local control of tourism is expected to develop to a greater degree, that is decision-making must be shared between the levels of government and the communities.⁸⁰

The tourism industry is of great importance to the Northwest Territories as a source of jobs for the population and thereby income. Tourism is among the highest-ranking resources of revenue in the Territory, and the reports “Tourism 2015” and “Aboriginal Tourism Engagement Strategy” lay out plans well into the future. There is growing interest among vacationers to make the Northwest Territories a destination for their travels, as well as increasing appeal to the local population to engage in it.

Even though many authors have devoted themselves to the study of tourism, fewer to research on tourism in polar regions, hardly any academic works could be located on tourism around Yellowknife. Two master’s theses were devised, one titled “Participants' Views on Constraints and Opportunities in the Development of Diamond Tourism in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories” (Jamie L. Noakes, 2009), the other “An Ethnography of Japanese Ecotourism in the Northwest Territories: a case study of Yellowknife” (Brook R.J. Carpenter, 2000).

Several books by Yellowknife authors like *Yellowknife: Diamond in the Rough* (Donna & Peter Huffam, 2003), *Yellowknife: How a City Grew* (Erik Watt, 1990) and the classic *Yellowknife* (Ray Price, 1967), in print only some thirty years after the

⁸⁰ Hinch in Hall and Johnston (1995)

settlement developed, gave valuable insight from a ground level perspective. They were written from a resident's viewpoint and did not address tourism topics specifically. Nevertheless, they were helpful in providing insight into especially the history of Yellowknife and were consulted for these chapters.

Many authors have covered aspects of tourism and examined the habits of travelers. Among them are countless geographers. Tourism, with origin, destination and a distance to cover between the two *is* Geography, as Steinicke⁸¹ explains. The range of topics include among other statistics, economic considerations, Indigenous perspectives (through the eyes of non-Indigenous authors), community-based tourism and predictions for future travel. Some of the more relevant literature, especially the works pertaining to the north, is older than a decade, some dating back to the late twentieth century. One of the reasons for this is the remoteness of the study area. More current analyses would be beneficial to contemporary research and the travel industry. It can be hoped that this present work will enhance the knowledge about the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife and tourism in this region.

⁸¹ Professor Ernst Steinicke, University of Innsbruck, personal conversation, October 2018

3. METHODS

In this chapter, the components of conducting this research are explained. The discussion demonstrates which methods were used when the researcher traveled to the site of study and conducted interviews with authorities in the tourism industry. It explains how data were coded, analysed and summarised.

To conduct research for the thesis, permits had to be obtained from three different sources.⁸² As a requirement of the Aurora Research Institute, letters had to be written to five community representatives⁸³ to announce the researcher's intentions and ask if they had any objections (there were none). The Trent Research Ethics Board was very thorough in its questioning and approved the Consent Form⁸⁴ the researcher designed. For interviews with Indigenous tourism providers, an application had to be made with the Aboriginal Education Council at Trent.

In the past, anthropologists and other researchers often showed little or no concern for the individual and the group when conducting research among Aboriginal populations.⁸⁵ People were objectified and their circumstances described through the lens of Western observers, with no consideration given to the long-standing traditions, the culture, the integrity of the community or the emotional state of the examined. Linda

⁸² See Appendix A "AEC Permission," "ARI Permission," "TREB Permission" All applications were approved.

⁸³ Yellowknife Dene First Nations, Northwest Territories Métis Nation, North Slave Métis Alliance, Wek'èezhì Renewable Resource Board, City of Yellowknife See Appendix A "Organizations approached"

⁸⁴ See Appendix A "Consent Form"

⁸⁵ Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009).

Tuhiwahi Smith,⁸⁶ an Aboriginal scholar, states⁸⁷ “the word itself, ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.” Increasingly, Indigenous people object to this treatment, as is eloquently expressed in the poem “Something there is” by Barbara Nicholson.⁸⁸

As Hinch⁸⁹ emphasizes, mutual respect for each other’s philosophies must be applied if collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous players in the tourism industry is meant to succeed. This also goes for interviewers conducting studies. In light of this, this researcher strived genuinely for objectivity. She made a promise to the Aboriginal Education Council at Trent University not to ask questions of a sensitive nature. Nevertheless, several Indigenous conversation partners, of their own accord, had the need to talk about Residential School issues. Such revelations were considered confidential and not included in the thesis.

Two visits were undertaken to the region to engage in discussions with northern tourism specialists and to get a first-hand impression of the landscape. Many positive contacts with Yellowknifers were made, both with non-Indigenous and Indigenous residents. With consideration to the education received by the Indigenous department of Trent University, and mindful of the historical relationship between Indigenous and

⁸⁶ “Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou, Māori) is a scholar of education and critic of persistent colonialism in academic teaching and research” (Global Social Theory, 2018).

⁸⁷ In Hay (2010) p. 43, from her book, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*

⁸⁸ In Hay (2010) p. 43: “Something there is that doesn’t like an anthropologist. You go to a university and get a bit of paper that says you are qualified. Does it also say that you have unlimited rights to invade my space?...”

⁸⁹ Hinch in Hall and Johnston (1995)

settler populations, any encounters with Indigenous people were conducted with sincere respect for the conversation partners. The researcher appreciated deeply the information that was freely given.

In preparation for the interviews, the researcher developed a list with twenty questions, sectioned by the categories Economy; Status / Development; Facilities / Amenities; Aboriginal Issues; and Public Relations / Marketing.⁹⁰

Frameworks and Methodologies for Studying Tourism

This sub-chapter examines various concepts pertaining specifically to tourism research. It discusses how opinions vary among experts whether this field is suitable for selecting a paradigm and how its subject material should be explored. The discussions around philosophical issues are sometimes extensive, as Johnston (1986) points out.

Library research for this study was conducted from an interdisciplinary perspective, based on qualitative and quantitative data. Before the site visit, a review on the topic of tourism was undertaken in general terms. Tourism literature does not specifically concentrate on this area; it is only a very small segment of Canadian and especially world tourism. The underlying concept of the research is Grounded Theory. This approach develops a theory from the findings – derived primarily through

⁹⁰ See Appendix A “Individual research questions”

qualitative research techniques – that is relevant to the study. This will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

A reliance upon induction in content analysis, according to Berg (2001), is necessary to best impart the insights of the actors in the field of inquiry. As a strategy, Phillimore and Goodson (2004) suggest, qualitative research “can generate theory out of research, should place emphasis on understanding the world from the perspective of its participants, and should view social life as being the result of interaction and interpretations.”⁹¹ Inductive categories allow to “ground,” or link, these categories to the source data, Berg (2001) informs further.

Inductive research approach is thus associated with Grounded Theory, but it should not be executed to the exclusion of deduction, as Berg (2001) recommends. Citing Glaser and Strauss (1967),⁹² the creators of grounded theory, he explains it thus:

To generate theory [...] we suggest as the best approach an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research. Then one can be relatively sure that the theory will fit the work. And since categories are discovered by examination of the data, laymen involved in the area to which the theory applies will usually be able to understand it, while sociologists who work in other areas will recognize an understandable theory linked with the data of the given area.⁹³

However, Strauss (1987)⁹⁴ suggests a considerable misconception surrounding the advance of grounded theory. According to this, grounded theory is a completely

⁹¹ P. 4

⁹² PP. 2-3

⁹³ As quoted in Berg (2001) p. 246

⁹⁴ P. 55, as quoted in Berg (2001)

inductive process that, without verifying the findings, “somehow molds the data to the theory rather than the reverse.”⁹⁵

In practice, qualitative research is seldom a purely deductive or purely inductive undertaking. In tourism research, Phillimore and Goodson (2004) point out, there is a perpetual need for statistics for trends in market and migration, income generation, and so on.

A discipline, Johnston (1986)⁹⁶ argues, must acquire a philosophy regarding how and why it should explore its subject material. In some disciplines, he explains, these questions are irrelevant while in others the debate on philosophical issues is far-reaching. Hollinshead (2004) quotes from Guba’s *The Paradigm Dialog: (1990)*⁹⁷ “A paradigm is simply seen to be the basic belief systems which drive disciplined inquiry.”

Nowhere in science can all-encompassing consensus be found about perspectives, methodologies, epistemologies, paradigms, and ontologies in research of a specific field. Guba (1990)⁹⁸ agrees with the judgement of Rorty (1979) that no single set of independent criteria exists for all social science, and every social scientist must find the most appropriate paradigm within which to work. It appears therefore that it is largely up to the researcher to align with certain beliefs and adopt an approach to his or her studies.

⁹⁵ Berg (2001) p. 245

⁹⁶ P. 2

⁹⁷ P. 9, 18

⁹⁸ Cited by Hollinshead (2004) p. 75

Tribe in Tribe et al. (2015) takes the viewpoint that tourism is a field of study rather than a discipline. Considering this, deciding on a paradigm is perhaps not suitable. Nevertheless, the experts' viewpoints vary. Hollinshead (2004)⁹⁹ brings in Guba's *The Paradigm Dialog* (1990), in which four paradigms suitable for tourism research are briefly contemplated: Positivism, Post-positivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism.

Hollinshead (2004) quotes Guba (1990) in explaining positivism as 'realist' or 'naïve realist.' Barnes (2009) aligns positivism with the concept that "only scientific knowledge is authentic knowledge"¹⁰⁰ whereby several different strains are distinguished. Observation, verification or falsification, and faith in the unity of the method¹⁰¹ are some of the criteria that correspond to the study of tourism. Phillimore and Goodson (2004),¹⁰² however, point out that attitudes about what constitutes valid and reliable knowledge, research and evidence have changed as social research has developed. Regardless, since the positivist conception of science is constructed around empirical hypotheses, as Johnston (1986)¹⁰³ portrays, it goes contrary to an application that applies a Grounded Theory approach.

In contrast, post-positivism is considered 'critical-realist' (Hollinshead, 2004). As Trochim (2006) argues, a critical realist believes that there is a reality separate from our thinking that science can study. The critical realist does not accept man's ability to

⁹⁹ "A Primer in Ontological Craft. The Creative Capture of People and Places Through Qualitative Research." In *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* P. 74

¹⁰⁰ P. 558

¹⁰¹ P. 558

¹⁰² P. 6

¹⁰³ P. 14

know reality for certain. It appears difficult to make a connection between this set of beliefs and the study of tourism.

Critical Theory, according to Guba (1990) in Hollinshead (2004), represents 'ideologically oriented standpoints.' Johnston (1986) speaks of it as a large body of connected material originating from the "Frankfurt School," represented by five scholars at the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt before World War I, and after 1950 the work of Jürgen Habermas. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016) states:

It follows from Horkheimer's definition that a critical theory is adequate only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation.

Considered from this perspective, Critical Theory appears to have legitimacy as a tourism research paradigm.

Finally, Constructivism is described by Guba (1990) in Hollinshead (2004) as "a dialectic outlook on the world's multiple realities." The article "Constructivism" by The Sydney School of Education and Social Work (2017) describes it as a learning theory from psychology which clarifies how humans develop knowledge and learn. The theory suggests that people's experiences influence how knowledge and meaning is constructed, the piece explains further. This definition seems to have a broad application, far beyond tourism research.

Besides these four potential paradigms, Tribe in Tribe et al. (2015) introduces a different approach. His view is that paradigms apply more to “mature” sciences and that “tourism is too young to have created one.”¹⁰⁴ Instead, he suggests the term ‘tourism knowledge system’ and analyses the constellation of this world view, this ideology. The components of it are competitiveness, deregulation, efficiency, free markets, profit, consumerism, capitalism, globalization, individualism, and growth. The summary of these cumulative qualities, Tribe in Tribe et al. (2015) proposes, is neoliberalism.

Neo-liberalism can be considered in several ways, as Glassman (2009) proposes. It could be seen as a set of theoretical propositions, as a variety of actual practices and as an expression of specific social interests. Tribe in Tribe et al. (2015) suggests, “tourism studies is not governed by a restrictive paradigm at the field level, but that at a societal level neoliberalism may be viewed as a restricting paradigm.”¹⁰⁵ He further reflects that “tourism research is undertaken within this overarching ideology and generally takes as natural the values implicit in the neoliberal programme. It rarely gives this a second thought. Second, tourism itself is mainly driven by the forces of the neoliberal programme and its hard core elements. [...] neoliberalism represents the model or pattern that is used to create the tourism world.”¹⁰⁶

While the researcher understands that the tourism industry operates under neoliberal ideologies, she cannot speak to tourism research in this context. The research

¹⁰⁴ P. 31

¹⁰⁵ P. 28

¹⁰⁶ P. 33

for this study was conducted setting out on a fact-finding mission based on Grounded Theory, with the quest for a “bottom-up” understanding, driven by the advice of experts and actors in the local tourism industry who recommended other specialists in the field. This resulted in a varied and comprehensive body of interview material, as well as a first-hand knowledge of the landscape. Statistics and the content of government documents rounded out the research.

Research Methods

The findings for this study were produced using a mixed-methods approach with library research, descriptive statistics, field work in Yellowknife, interviews with stakeholders in the tourist industry, informal conversations with local residents and shop keepers, and subsequent data analysis. Research sources for this thesis included books, journals and periodicals; online material and statistics from NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI); and other government sources from the NWT Legislative Assembly Library.

The two field trips to Yellowknife in May/June (ten days) and September/October (three weeks) of 2015 involved 18 in-person interviews, library research, exploring the city, its restaurants, tourist facilities, and events, and spending time with locals. Access to a car during the second field trip provided opportunity for extended familiarization with the city. There was occasion to visit the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre (the Yellowknife museum), the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre,

where the researcher was invited to the annual general meeting, also galleries and shops that cater to tourists, and the farmers market. She attended various events that tourists enjoy, such as a film festival, a literary festival and two concerts. There was also opportunity to speak informally with shop keepers and locals. Research at the Legislative Assembly Library enabled her to obtain historic hard-copy material likely not available elsewhere.

This fieldwork supplements the secondary library and archival research on the way tourism is being presented as a growing opportunity for the Northwest Territories. It brings perspective to assessing its importance in relation to changing resource development landscapes, Yellowknife's role as a service and administrative centre, and broader regional development plans.

The initial interview participants were recruited before the research visit. They were municipal, regional, and territorial decision-makers and representatives of agencies which interact, collaborate with, or regulate the tourism sectors. Also interviewed were tourism stakeholders including those representing Indigenous tourism; spokespersons of the Northwest Territories Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI); Northwest Territories Tourism; the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council of the Northwest Territories; and others. These include individuals from the ranks of government decision makers in various capacities, including the Mayor of Yellowknife, tour operators, owners of lodgings, transportation providers, the director of the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre, the co-owner of a travel

agency, the director of the NWT Mining Heritage Group, and an artist (an Inuk stone carver).

Interviews involved stakeholders in the tourism industry, therefore the providers of infrastructure and services. No tourists were questioned for this study, except in casual conversation when encountered in informal settings such as the bed and breakfast accommodation. True to the essence of Grounded Theory, the more the researcher spoke with representatives of the industry, the more other questions evolved, and interviews became semi-structured, unstructured, or narrative.

The research participants filled out an informed-consent form.¹⁰⁷ Interview partners readily suggested other people involved in tourism to interview. In the end, 18 professionals in their field had added their voice. They were involved in a series of interviews in Yellowknife of between 30 minutes and about three hours each. The questions that guided the interviews are listed in Appendix A, 'Individual Research Questions.'

Sources of the interview participants' organizations were the Internet and subsequently suitable individuals involved in the tourism industry, utilizing the "snowball method." This method was chosen as "snowball sampling relies on and partakes in the *dynamics of natural and organic social networks*."¹⁰⁸ Many of the interviewees advised to speak with specific other individuals active in tourism, and,

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix A, 'Consent form'

¹⁰⁸ Noy (2008); italics his

following up on their advice, the interviewer arranged to meet with them. In this particular research, the snowball interviewing method was a fitting tool for the fact that snowball sampling utilizes natural social networks.¹⁰⁹ Many of these actors are meeting regularly on various boards and in different capacities throughout the year – tourism in the Northwest Territories is a small world.

For the use of names and identifying information in the thesis report, subjects were given the opportunity to provide written consent to the use of their name, or withhold consent, in which case name and identifying information has not been used in the final report. Some participants who withheld consent to use their name gave instructions regarding which label to use for their interviews. Some interviewees shared confidential information, which is valuable for clarification in an overall context but was not used or only used in very general terms and without identifying the informant.

Interviews and Analysis

This section examines the interview table, the final result of transcribing, coding and constant comparison. Several themes appeared in more than one interview, which indicates a certain significance in the tourism industry. These themes were explored in greater detail and cross-referenced with statistics and information from official, e.g. government sources.

¹⁰⁹ Noy (2008)

The interviews were meticulously transcribed, word for word where sound quality of the recordings allowed, facts were examined and as much as possible verified against credible online sources. The transcripts were sent to the interviewees for final consent. Some interviewees edited their transcript, and some shared additional information of new developments or changes in legislature. Unfortunately, some did not reply, in which case the interviews were excluded from the thesis.

Initial analysis on site and recommendations by the people already interviewed determined what to look for in subsequent interviews. Comparative Analysis (“relating data to ideas, then ideas to other ideas”)¹¹⁰ was in part performed on site. At this field trip, however, there was very limited time to conduct analyses as the researcher took advantage of the availability of willing interview partners. With the site of the field work 3000 km from the researcher’s home base, the constant-comparative (or zig-zag) method had to be altered insofar as the researcher could not “go out to the field to gather information, into the office to analyse the data, back to the field to gather more information, into the office, and so forth.”¹¹¹ The zig-zag analysis was conducted during the phase of transcribing and then open coding (recording the data with sight on major categories within the information).¹¹² ¹¹³ Interviews fed subsequent interviews in building an image of the tourism scene in Yellowknife, and confirmation was sought going back to earlier interviews.

¹¹⁰ Grounded Theory Institute (2014)

¹¹¹ Creswell, 2007, p. 12

¹¹² Creswell, 2007

¹¹³ Cf. Table 3-1

During transcribing, the material was examined for substantive subject matter, common themes or themes of special interest, and passages were highlighted. With the use of a spread sheet¹¹⁴ that listed the questions on the y axis and the interview participants across the x axis, the topics from the interviews were recorded. Topics not covered in the original questions of the list were recorded below.

Table 3-1, below, is the result of the interviews after transcribing and coding. It is the model for the thesis. This table is a simplified version; the original encompasses 10 pages of 8 ½ inches by 11 inches and contains also keywords and “branches,” lesser important features, characterizing the individual interview partners’ professional background. Recorded in the table are the specific transcripts where the topic can be found.

The questions in this version, in order to accommodate the diagram on these pages, are abbreviated to illustrate the process. Some of the questions were found not practical on site and therefore omitted, or the answers could be more efficiently found online. The complete questions can be viewed in Appendix A under Individual Research Questions.

Examining the table, it becomes apparent that not all the questions prepared at university in Ontario, conceived before the research trip, were reflecting the reality in this remote area of Canada. In adaptation to this, the interviews became increasingly

¹¹⁴ Cf. Table 3-1

semi-structured and sometimes unstructured or narrative. In many cases the themes emerged from information the interview partners gave in conversation within the interview.

The next step was substantive coding. “Coding is the core process in classic grounded theory methodology,” states Holden (2010). “It is through coding that the conceptual abstraction of data and its reintegration as theory takes place.”¹¹⁵ In the case of this thesis, coding was undertaken once interviewees had responded to the questions. From their answers emerged categories, which identified the major themes of concern (see Table 3-1). These themes serve as the basis for the analysis presented in Chapter Five, Tourism.

Finally, it was essential to bring the most up-to-date data into the thesis. Focussed online searches were conducted for the most current information and statistics. Data collected at an earlier stage of the research were revised when they were out-of-date or no longer applicable.

Some Methodological Limitations

One of several disadvantages with a table such as Table 3-1¹¹⁶ is that each mark represents one mention of the topic per interviewee, while in reality there may be (and

¹¹⁵ With constant comparing of indicators, eventually the process results in no new properties or dimensions emerging from continued coding and comparison; the indicators have achieved theoretical saturation. (Holden, 2010)

¹¹⁶ below

are in several cases) multiple references. The table also does not reflect the length of each interview – the longer, potentially the more references. Further, the topics can be mentioned in passing or discussed at length in the individual conversations. With semi-structured interviews, not all partners are asked the same questions. Finally, the expertise of the interviewees plays a role. With widespread competencies as displayed among the people questioned, individual themes play a central role in one case while in others they are rather insignificant.

It should be noted that in some cases of controversial issues, information or opinions were given to the interviewer in strict confidence. They cannot be reflected here without revealing the identity of the interviewee as everyone holds a distinct position within the NWT tourism industry. Interviewees did not contradict or disagree with each other on any topic.

Interviewees → Questions ↓	B.D.	T. SD.	C. B.	D. E.	M. H.	N. N.	W. H.	B. T.	I. R.	A. L.	T. T.	I. H.
Economy												
What is the importance of tourism in the NWT?		x		x	x	x						
How do you in the NWT rate tourism's importance vis-à-vis changing resource development?		x										
Who are the stakeholders / financiers; how committed are they for the long duration?		x	x			x				x		

Does your community benefit from activities of Aboriginal tourism?	x		x									
What is the position of the Indigenous population in your region in tourism matters?	x											
Is the population being consulted before decisions are made that have effects on your community?	x											
Themes outside of list												
Diamond tourism, diamond industry		x	x	x		x	x			x		
Product / packaging / packages			x							x		
Skills / education for tourism			x		x					x		
Jobs			x									
Collaborating / partnership		x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
Competition			x			x						
Forest fires			x		x					x		
Ethnic issues			x			x						
Advertising, marketing, added-value			x	x	x	x				x	x	
Features of Yellowknife/area, facilities, restaurants	x				x	x	x				x	x
Integration of First Nations people					x	x		x				
Image / brand						x						
Campaigns						x						
Gold mining							x					
Suggested improvements							x					x
Hunting, fishing								x		x		
Aurora viewing									x	x	x	x
Licensing										x		
Corporate, health tourism										x		x
Funding / Budget		x	x		x		x			x		

Table 3-1: Interview questions and subjects. Source: the author.

In analysing the interview responses and contextualizing them with written materials and documents, it became clear that three main clusters of interest and concern had emerged within the Yellowknife community regarding tourism and its importance.

These three clusters or themes were:

1. Collaborating and partnership
2. Funding and Budget
3. Product, packaging and packages¹¹⁷

Most people interviewed agreed that collaboration and partnership are important in tourism, although the application of the terms varied. For the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce,¹¹⁸ this means collaborating and partnering with Northwest Territories Tourism and help with participation in the Chamber's trade shows. "We try to work in cooperation as best we can with other communities," noted the Mayor of Yellowknife. Support was addressed by the President of the Yellowknife Historical Society. "The Chamber of Mines is the lobby group for the big mining companies, which pay the Chamber. They represent the mines, and they support our endeavour [of a mining museum] and give us hope, certainly, but limited." Partnership is also required for building tourism from the ground up in the outlying communities. This takes the form of a community getting behind tourism, someone assuming the administrative, business and marketing role, and "letting the community members do what they do best," the North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer explained.

¹¹⁷ Pointed out also by interviewees not mentioned by name

¹¹⁸ Interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife. All interviews in this segment took place in May 2015.

Cooperation at some level is also the mandate of the NWT Conference Bureau. Before its formation, there was no coordination of convention and meeting services in Yellowknife, as the former Vice President, Northern Frontiers Visitors Association elaborates.¹¹⁹ With a limited number of hotel rooms, bottle necks can develop if there is no communication between the hospitality providers. The NWT Conference Bureau now coordinates events throughout the territory, and other organizations lend a helping hand when one is needed to avoid shortfalls.

On the reverse side, there was or is a lack of communication between players in the tourism scene. The “City of Yellowknife 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy” lists as a deficit that “stakeholders and operators are not communicating with each other as well as they could.” The Mayor of Yellowknife confirms this: “I think there is a need for better coordination amongst all the levels of government to say, resources are finite, how will we best spend our money to get the biggest bang for our buck.”

Emphasized repeatedly by interviewees was funding or budget. Governments and organizations cannot deliver infrastructure and services without proper financial backing. The former Northern Frontier Visitors Centre was financed in part with funding from the federal government, which Industry, Tourism and Investment and ENR¹²⁰ matched to a great part, related the Executive Director. “That helped us to level our building, and we did some upgrades,” she remembered. Unfortunately, the structure

¹¹⁹ There were also no arrangements made between restaurant facilities during the time when many businesses close over the Christmas holidays, which left many tourists in town without food service.

¹²⁰ Environment and Natural Resources

eventually became unsalvageable and had to be permanently closed. With the demise of the Northern Frontier Visitor Centre, GNWT financial support subsided, which left a gap in tourism funding.¹²¹

A request by the City of Yellowknife to the GNWT¹²² to amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to enable an accommodation levy, if passed, would make funds available for tourism. The Mayor of Yellowknife confirms that the hotel tax is an ideal approach to fund for example a destination marketing organisation. “Ultimately, that would be the way to finance something like that,” he said.

NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment offers a range of comprehensive funding programs.¹²³ The North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer¹²⁴ explained: “Our flagship funding program would be the Tourism Diversification and Marketing Program, a program that basically pays out large sums of money, with the purpose of helping the industry diversify and create new products. The Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment confirms this: “The NWT government has some progressive funding programs in tourism; a popular one is the Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program where people can apply once a year for e.g. infrastructure development.”

¹²¹ Cf. chapter Tourism, Infrastructure, iii. Visitors Centre / Information / Spectacular NWT

¹²² Government of Northwest Territories

¹²³ <http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/services>

¹²⁴ ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO], interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Inability to receive funding was an impediment for the planned Mining Museum, according to the President of the Yellowknife Historical Society. “This whole area [the future site of the museum] including the mine was put under environmental review, and we couldn’t get any money from Heritage Canada, the Territorial Government, or any big companies. They won’t fund anything that’s under environmental review,” he explains. Fortunately, funds could be secured for the installation of solar panels on the roof of the building. Obtaining funding is perhaps the most challenging task, suffused in “red tape,” when trying to finance an enterprise.

Tourism cannot thrive without product, some of which comes in packages. As the Executive Director of NWT Tourism explained, this is the mandate of government and the private sector. “Personally, I think it [the product] just needs to be packaged the right way,” the North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer stated. “My approach in working with the communities at this point is to look at the scheduled flights that are already coming in and put a package together that can accommodate these scheduled flights.”¹²⁵ To compensate for the declining fishing market, the Tourism Development Officer suggested that “there might be corporate retreats or executive businesses that send up several employees for a business incentive package or promotion.”

Product and packaging must be tailored to the different preferences of the consumers, she elaborates. “The German market would be a very plausible market for

¹²⁵ The outlying communities have fewer scheduled in-bound and out-bound flights than Yellowknife; this is where the package has to be adjusted around them.

all the communities, and it would be packaged along with other things, so we would work with the communities to say, this package will include [Indigenous] storytelling and filleting and gill-net fishing. It wouldn't look like the fishing lodge package that's marketed to the US – different components in packages.”

Into the category “product” for tourism falls also the City of Yellowknife itself and all it has to offer. The features, facilities and attractions of Yellowknife were mentioned by several interviewees, especially the Mayor.

In variation, the three themes discussed here are also among the topics in the PowerPoint presentation Destination Marketing Strategy for the City of Yellowknife.¹²⁶ They are addressed as “Sufficient and sustainable budget,” “Packaged tours and activities,” and “Partnerships with stakeholders.”

Parallel to these three issues that emerged from the interviews, there are six themes that are of overarching importance for tourism development in the area and should therefore be explored here. They also appear in one form or another in the Research Questions. Developing, supporting and promoting divisions of the travel industry, such as diamond and aurora tourism, as well as the progress of Indigenous tourism, will be examined in Chapter Tourism. An assessment of the impact of the existing capacity on tourism with several sub-themes will round out the analysis.

¹²⁶ Destination Marketing Strategy for the City of Yellowknife (2016)

4. YELLOWKNIFE

Based upon information gathered from library research and interviews, this Chapter describes the background and setting of Yellowknife and illustrates why the area is well suited as a destination for vacationers and business travelers. The history suggests a very suitable setting for an unusual holiday destination.

YK, as the locals call it, or Sòmbak'è¹²⁷ – “where the money is,”¹²⁸ as the Tłı̄chǫ̀¹²⁹ describe it, are names for the city that began with the discovery of gold.¹³⁰ For more than 60 years, as local composer Robin Beaumont expressed, Yellowknife has been “a city where the gold is paved with streets.”¹³¹ It is situated at Latitude 62°27'N and Longitude 114°26'W at an elevation of 206 m above sea level.¹³² The distance between Yellowknife and the Arctic Circle is approximately 457 km.¹³³

¹²⁷ Alternate spelling Somba K'e

¹²⁸ In 2016, a name change was proposed for Yellowknife but not achieved. The Yellowknives Dene of the region proposed their original name, T'satsǫt'ine, for themselves as well as for the city. Edgenorth (2018).

¹²⁹ The Dene Band living northwest of Yellowknife

¹³⁰ This name is reflected locally in Somba K'e Civic Plaza, a gathering space in front of City Hall, and in numerous business names

¹³¹ Watt (2000)

¹³² ClimaTemps.com (2017).

¹³³ Dateandtime.info (2018). Note on website: The latitude of the Arctic Circle depends on the tilt of the Earth's axis which changes with time

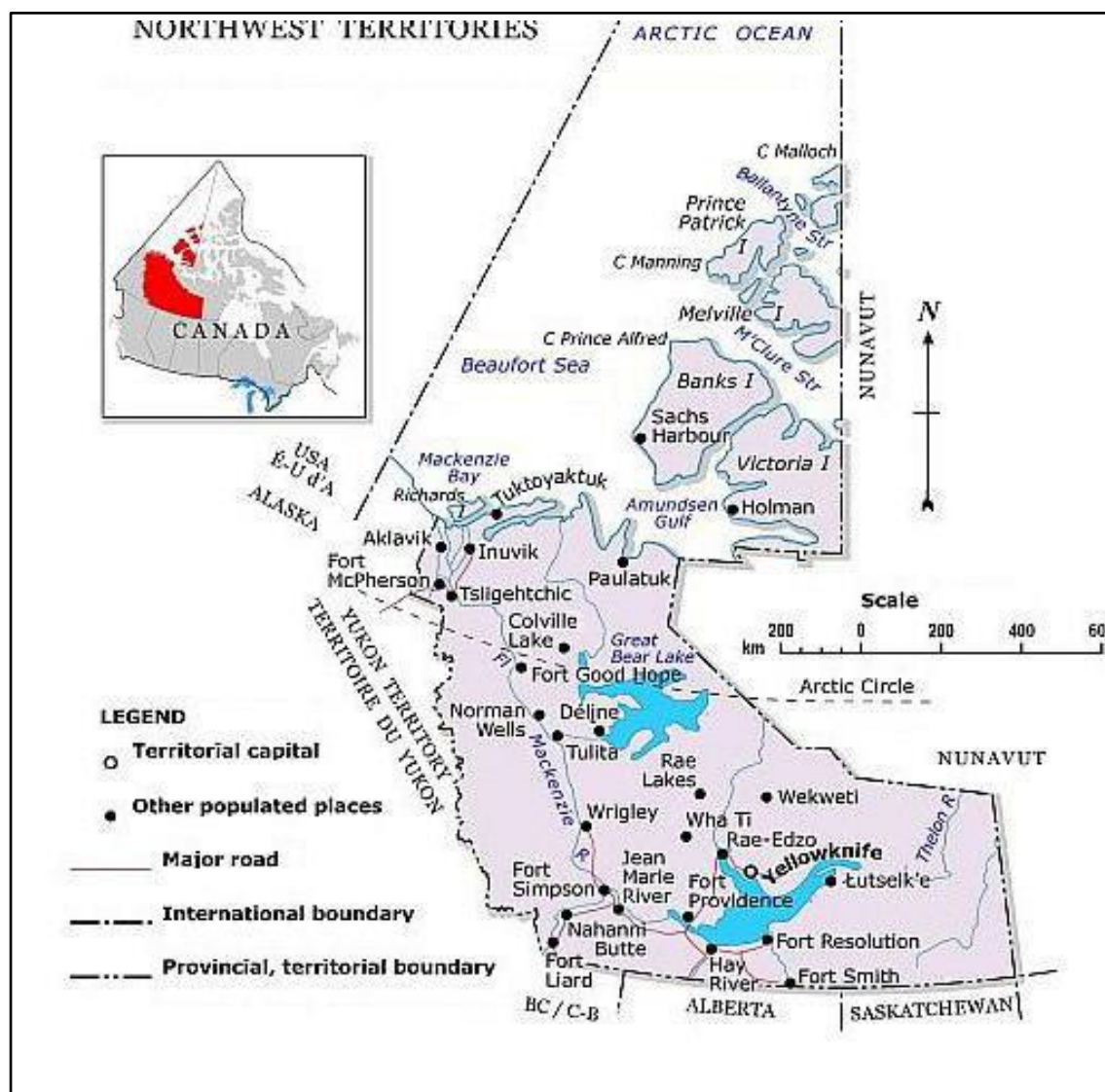


Figure 4-1: Map of Northwest Territories. (Source: Retrieved from: <http://www.yellowmaps.com/maps/img/CA/political/nwtmap.jpg>.)

Figure 4-1 shows the location of the City in the North Slave Region on the east shore of the north arm of the Great Slave Lake, on the Canadian Shield, approximately 1,513 km north of Edmonton, Alberta.¹³⁴ It is apparent that approach through the road

¹³⁴ Watt (2000)

network is circuitous with the Great Slave Lake to the south, but access by air is convenient.¹³⁵

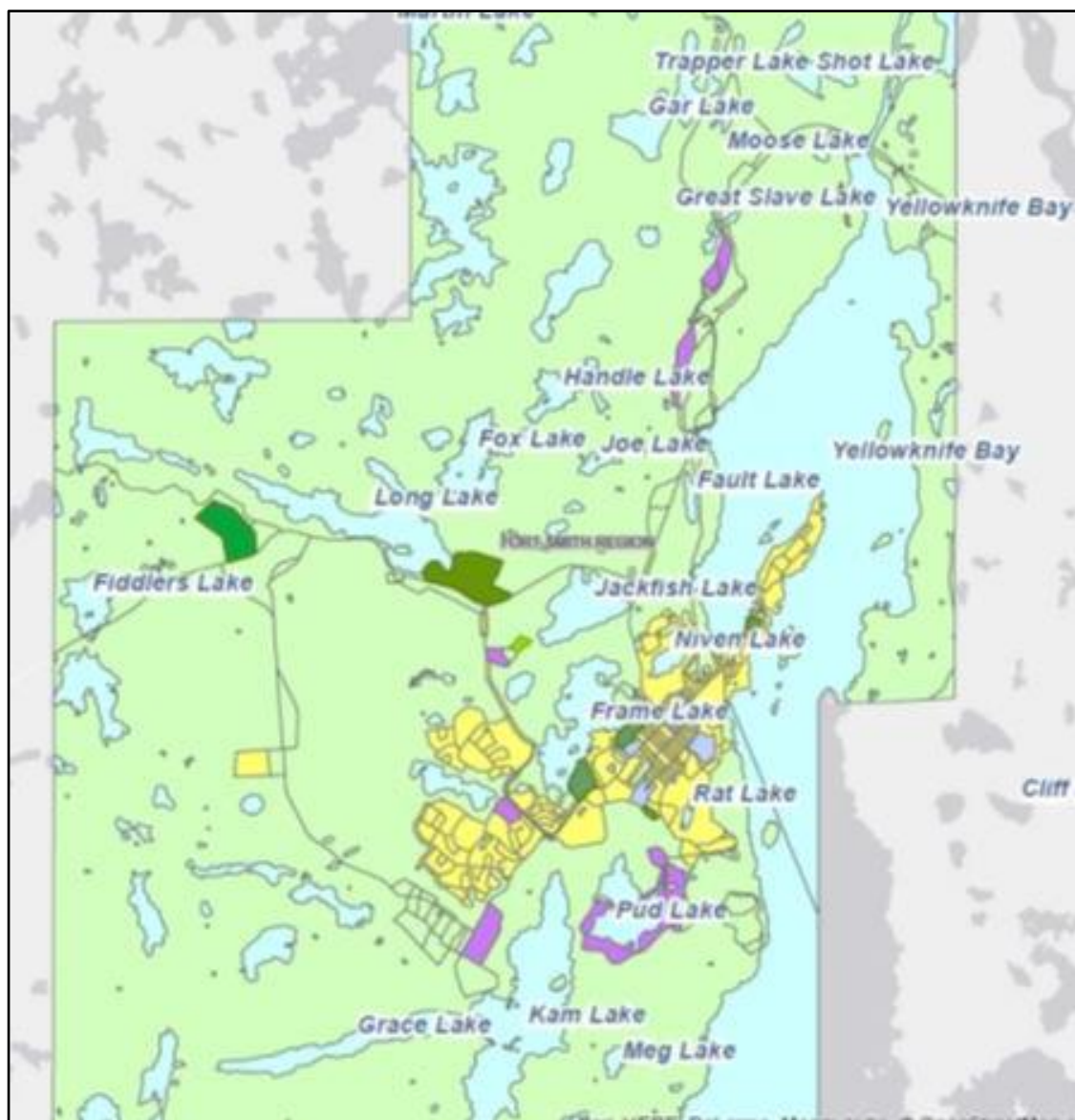


Figure 4-2: Map of Yellowknife. (Source: extracted from NTS 1:250 000 85J- Yellowknife, Retrieved from: [http://ftp.geogratis.gc.ca/pub/nrcan_rncan/raster/canmatrix2/250k/images/.](http://ftp.geogratis.gc.ca/pub/nrcan_rncan/raster/canmatrix2/250k/images/))

¹³⁵ Cf. Theme Six: Existing Capacity for Tourism – Transportation

Figure 4-2 depicts Yellowknife and its immediate surroundings. The city grew from simple beginnings at Yellowknife Bay, now “Old Town,” to include the current, modern site, where development began in 1945.

Within the boundaries and the vicinity of the city are several smaller lakes, such as Frame Lake, Kam Lake, Jackfish Lake, Range Lake, and Rat Lake.¹³⁶ The rocks on the Frame Lake Trail are more than 2.6 billion years old and both volcanic and plutonic igneous rocks. The volcanic rocks shaped about 2,700 million years ago during the Archean Eon time. These volcanic rocks in the Yellowknife area, the Kam Formation, held the former Con and Giant gold mines. The plutonic rocks were formed about 100 million years after the volcanic rocks and are also Archean.¹³⁷ The city is built on the Yellowknife Supergroup, volcanic rocks from 2.3 billion years ago.¹³⁸

Initially, Northwest Territories does not appear inviting for living or for vacations:¹³⁹ temperatures through much of the year are lower than in southern regions, daylight times are long in summer and short in winter, and the area is only sparsely populated. At closer examination, however, one will learn that the people who have lived there for centuries and those who chose to make it their home more recently are

¹³⁶ Huffam (2003)

¹³⁷ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Government of Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs (2017)

¹³⁸ Walt Humphries (Prospector, mineral exploration consultant, President of the NWT Mining Heritage Society, newspaper columnist, artist), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife; also, Helmstaedt H. and W. A. Padgham (1986)

¹³⁹ The perception that Polar Regions are hostile to human habitation developed because early European explorers approached them with inadequate equipment. This notion ignores how well Indigenous peoples are adapted to the environment (Hall and Johnston, 1995)

adapted to the conditions and are generously sharing the beauty of their territory and their city with visitors.

Indeed, except for cold, long winters that are also affected by the extent of dark hours, the temperatures are moderate to pleasant. Compensating for the dreary winters is the regular occurrence of the aurora borealis, which draws countless tourists to Yellowknife. The average high temperature in July is 21.1 degrees Celsius, while the average low in January is -30.9. In Yellowknife, packages of warm outdoor clothing are available for rent.¹⁴⁰

Yellowknife¹⁴¹ has less than one quarter (23% / 164 mm) the annual rainfall Toronto¹⁴² has, (709 mm) which, combined with the long daylight hours between May and August, makes it a favourable summer destination for visitors. The scarcity of precipitation and therefore cloud cover, in addition to the panorama of the northern lights, make Yellowknife an attractive fall, winter and early spring destination.

Yellowknife History

In Canada's history, areas were generally settled to provide the basis for homesteading. The newcomers removed trees and brush, erected dwellings, planted crops and raised livestock. This is not how Yellowknife came into being. Canadian

¹⁴⁰ My Backyard Tours (2017)

¹⁴¹ The Weather Network (2018) Station: Yellowknife A, NT

¹⁴² The Weather Network (2018) Station: Toronto, ON

capital cities do not usually have such a colourful past as Yellowknife, nor have they developed out of wilderness in such a brief time.

The Northwest Territories was originally home to Indigenous and Inuit peoples who were adapted to the conditions in the North and lived from the land. In the mid-18th century, Métis from the south – mixed French Canadian and Cree – traversed north to initiate the fur trade with the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories. This was the first foray of what was to develop into a distinct cultural group, the Northern Métis.¹⁴³

When Europeans advanced into the area, Treaties #8 and #11 were negotiated, whereby Treaty #11, in effect in 1921, covered the Yellowknife area of today. The start of production of oil resources at Norman Wells¹⁴⁴ hastened negotiation with the Indigenous population of the last of the numbered treaties.¹⁴⁵

This is how Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada^{146 147} describes it:

Treaty No. 11. The last of the numbered treaties covers most of the Mackenzie District. The land in the area was deemed unsuitable for agriculture, so the federal government was reluctant to conclude treaties. Immediately following the discovery of oil at Fort Norman in 1920, however, the government moved to begin treaty negotiations.

¹⁴³ Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (2017)

¹⁴⁴ Silke (2009)

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Yellowknife History

¹⁴⁶ Government of Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs (2017)

¹⁴⁷ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has been split in August 2017 into two new departments (Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations; and Northern Affairs Canada). The respective websites are in the process of restructuring, and certain links are not available.

Treaty No. 11 involved the exchange of land ownership rights¹⁴⁸ for fiscal value and some amenities and hunting rights.¹⁴⁹ It was established between 1921 and 1922 with King George V's representatives and a number of First Nation band governments in the Northwest Territories as co-signers,¹⁵⁰ Various promises on behalf of the King are outlined, "that His Indian people may know and be assured of what allowances they are to expect and receive from His Majesty's bounty and benevolence."¹⁵¹ However, it is not clear from the wording how much was given in true negotiations between equal partners or decided on by the Crown.

The Dehcho Process,¹⁵² negotiations ongoing since 1999, "have faced the challenge of bridging the gap between Canada's position, that it acquired ownership of Dene¹⁵³ lands in the Treaties, and the Dene version of the Treaties, which holds that the treaties were peace and friendship agreements in which the Dene did not surrender any

¹⁴⁸ Treaty No. 11 (June 27, 1921) and Adhesion (July 17, 1922) (2018). "...the said Commissioner has proceeded to negotiate a treaty with the Slave, Dogrib, Loucheux, Hare and other Indians inhabiting the district hereinafter defined and described, which has been agreed upon and concluded by the respective bands at the dates mentioned hereunder, the said Indians do hereby cede, release, surrender and yield up to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, for His Majesty the King and His Successors forever, all their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever to the lands included within the following limits..."

¹⁴⁹ Dehcho First Nations (2018) Treaty 11

¹⁵⁰ The Slave, Dogrib, Loucheux, Hare and other Indigenous tribes, inhabitants of the territory

¹⁵¹ Treaty No. 11 (June 27, 1921) and Adhesion (July 17, 1922) (2018). As rights are listed "...the right to pursue their usual vocations of hunting, trapping and fishing throughout the tract surrendered..." Further, reflecting "the satisfaction of His Majesty with the behaviour and good conduct of His Indian subjects, and in extinguishment of all their past claims hereinabove mentioned, He hereby, through his Commissioner, agrees to give to each Chief a present of thirty-two dollars in cash, to each Headman, twenty-two dollars, and to every other Indian of whatever age of the families represented, at the time and place of payment, twelve dollars." [One dollar in 1921 represents approximately \$14 in 2018.] Every year thereafter, amounts less than that of the first year are promised.

¹⁵² Backgrounder Dehcho Process (2015); excerpt: "The Dehcho First Nations (DFN) have been in negotiations since late 1990s. A number of Agreements between Canada and DFN have been completed and guided the Dehcho Process negotiations." Agenda among other "Keeping Treaty Rights for the Future of Our Children."

¹⁵³ Formerly known as Dogrib

of their land.”¹⁵⁴ The fact that these negotiations have been continuing for almost two decades is proof that the legal situation is intricate. Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, states “It has long been felt that all the promises made during these treaty negotiations have not been kept. This dissatisfaction led, in part, to the present day land claim process.”¹⁵⁵ As one of the results of the shift in perception, Aboriginal communities now have impact benefit agreements with the mining companies.¹⁵⁶

The first to mine minerals in the Northwest Territories were the Indigenous people. The copper they extracted at the Arctic Coast was used for tools, for weapons and for trade.¹⁵⁷ These Dene people became known as Yellowknives, which is believed to be derived from the colour of their tools.¹⁵⁸ Yellowknife Bay and the town, later city, of Yellowknife was named for them.¹⁵⁹

After gold was found in California in the mid-19th century, the prospectors followed rumours of riches and moved north into Canada’s Yukon Territory and Alaska.¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ The Klondike gold rush 1897-1898 started mineral exploration in the north, and when Gilbert LaBine discovered radium and silver at Great Bear Lake in

¹⁵⁴ Dehcho First Nations (2018) “DFN Reaffirm Commitment to Treaties and Negotiations”

¹⁵⁵ Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (2018a)

¹⁵⁶ Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, interviewed May 2015

¹⁵⁷ Silke (2009)

¹⁵⁸ Gillespie, Beryl C. (2015)

¹⁵⁹ Watt (2000)

¹⁶⁰ Price (1967)

¹⁶¹ Information drawn from “Yellowknife,” written by Yellowknifer Ray Price for Canada’s Centennial celebration (1967), has the advantage that many of the events at the time of publication lay only some three decades in the past, and some of the actors who were instrumental in forming the city were still living in it.

1930, the first true mineral rush into the NWT began.¹⁶² It advanced the development of the Yukon Territory and “solidified the public’s image of the North as more than a barren wasteland.”¹⁶³

In 1914, gold finds were reported in Yellowknife Bay, Price (1967) relays, after samples of gold-bearing quartz from that area were taken in 1905. The 1914 finds were from a vein too narrow to stake any claims, he relates further. When in 1932 US President Hoover stopped using the gold standard¹⁶⁴ and in 1934 set the price of gold at \$35 per ounce, the stage was set for renewed exploration, investment and creation of mines.¹⁶⁵ In the same year, gold was discovered on the north shore of Lake Athabasca, Saskatchewan. The mining of this find led to the opening up of the Northwest Territories.¹⁶⁶

As rumours began about mineral finds in the Yellowknife area in the 1930s, men began migrating south from the Great Bear Lake sites.¹⁶⁷ Two prospectors, Herb Dixon and Johnny Baker, detected high-grade gold in the Yellowknife River in 1933, Silke (2009) tells further. An upswing in the price of gold that year caused great interest, and by 1936 several hundred claims had been staked on Great Slave Lake around Yellowknife Bay. A settlement was started.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² Silke (2009)

¹⁶³ Gates (2009)

¹⁶⁴ Whereby a currency has a value directly linked to gold, Lioudis (2018)

¹⁶⁵ Price (1967)

¹⁶⁶ Price (1967)

¹⁶⁷ Silke (2009), Price (1967)

¹⁶⁸ Silke (2009), Price (1967)

Prior to this, interest was awakened when oil was discovered in the area of Fort Norman, NWT, and a flurry of activity ensued in 1920 with a new rush to the north.¹⁶⁹ Aircraft – two Junkers from WWI – were used for transportation on a trial basis but could not successfully be employed, Price (1967) relates. With the discovery of pitchblende and silver at Great Bear Lake in the early 1930s,¹⁷⁰ airplanes were found to be useful means for carrying equipment, supplies and sometimes people. “The age-long silence of the North was to be broken by the drone of the airplane and the putter of stream craft,” as Charles Camsell, a Canadian geologist and former Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, describes it in a 1933 article.¹⁷¹ Subsequently, bush flying played an important role in the development of Yellowknife.¹⁷² When gold was discovered in the 1930s in Yellowknife Bay, through tenacity and a determination to make a living during the Great Depression – indeed, to grow rich – Yellowknife became populated by settlers.

Early accommodations were haphazardly set-up tents and log cabins.¹⁷³ The seasons were short, and the main focus was exploration and later work in the mines. As more gold was staked, more people came to the area, and the town of Yellowknife started. “In the early days there were some buildings, bunk houses, recreation hall, cooking hall,” explained Walt Humphries.¹⁷⁴ “Up the hill, there are 26 houses where the

¹⁶⁹ Price (1967)

¹⁷⁰ Silke (2009), Price (1967)

¹⁷¹ C. Camsell (1933)

¹⁷² Price (1967)

¹⁷³ Price (1967)

¹⁷⁴ Walt Humphries (Prospector, mineral exploration consultant, President of the Yellowknife Heritage Society, newspaper columnist, artist), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

married people and the children lived. People had to leave the houses when the steam plant that heated them closed. The settlement is built to the topography, meaning there is no blasted rock up there. Around town¹⁷⁵ there is blasted rock everywhere.”

Con Mine was the first gold mine to go into production in 1938, and the first gold was poured at the Con Mine in September of that year.¹⁷⁶ Negus Mine and several smaller mines followed with production in 1939, before the immediate needs of World War II dictated a halt to most projects and shut companies down.¹⁷⁷

Between 1937 and 1938, the settlement increased in stability, and by 1938 it had turned into a boom town.¹⁷⁸ With the unorganized expansion of dwellings on solid rock came problems with sanitation. By 1939, Yellowknife’s predicament had become unbearable. Waste of any kind was not contained nor collected; sewage drained into the lake, the only source of drinking water.¹⁷⁹ Then as now, Yellowknife’s rhythm is influenced by the lake’s freeze-up and break-up, and it was only by happenstance that during the warm season no major outbreak of typhoid had taken place. The problem of water and sanitation at some point found its solution, and together with it came the creation of a local Council, which made a difference in the length of time in which local decisions were made.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ “New Town,” the younger part of Yellowknife, the current city

¹⁷⁶ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018a)

¹⁷⁷ Silke (2009)

¹⁷⁸ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018)

¹⁷⁹ Price (1967), Watt (1990)

¹⁸⁰ Price (1967), Silke (2009)

With the prospectors and miners came entrepreneurial-minded individuals who saw opportunities for commerce. As Price (1967) describes, some people filled the need for transportation by water and by air, others set up stores, built rooming houses, hotels, and eating and drinking establishments. Bootleggers, prostitutes¹⁸¹ and gamblers shared in the wealth; “they came to mine the miners.”¹⁸² The early residents of Yellowknife were resourceful and colourful personalities.

At first, governing was conducted in Ottawa, and local law enforcement in 1937 constituted of a policeman and a lawyer.¹⁸³ That year, a doctor was brought in, and the first white woman arrived.¹⁸⁴ In 1938, Yellowknife was incorporated as a village, with a five-man council.¹⁸⁵ A school board was nominated, and a teacher was established to teach in the one-room log school.¹⁸⁶ Permanent buildings were erected; a drug store, general stores, a bakery, laundries and a bank that was open at all hours¹⁸⁷ moved into Yellowknife.

In 1939, when World War II broke out, the miners were needed at the front, and resources that fueled the mines were no longer available.¹⁸⁸ Only one mine was operating, and Yellowknife, lacking the manpower and the assets, came to the brink of collapse. When geological investigation of the Giant Mine property in 1944 uncovered

¹⁸¹ In the early years, prostitution and gambling were not illegal, as Price (1967) relates

¹⁸² Silke (2005)

¹⁸³ Price (1967)

¹⁸⁴ Price (1967)

¹⁸⁵ Watt (1990)

¹⁸⁶ Watt (1990)

¹⁸⁷ Watt (1990)

¹⁸⁸ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018); Watt (1990)

an enormous gold bearing deposit underneath Baker Creek,¹⁸⁹ it was just in time when after the end of the war in 1945 the men came home. After the start of production, the area experienced a new boom.¹⁹⁰ “Federal powers that oversaw administration of the northern regions understood that development of the north hinged upon the harvesting of its resources. They invested huge capital into the modernization of communities and infrastructure,” as Silke (2009) describes it.

With the needs created by the returning soldiers in 1945, surveying and development began on a new town location for Yellowknife, away from the waterfront as the hastily assembled community around Yellowknife Bay became seriously overcrowded. Giant Mine started gold production in 1948, and Giant Mine and Discovery Mine were leading in the field. The new town site up the hill was for years known as “Blunderville,”^{191 192} and even today is still referred to as “uptown,” even though it has all the characteristics of “downtown.” The present-day, modern Yellowknife was the result. As the Yellowknife Historical Society relates, “Governance grew from an Ottawa-controlled administrative district in 1939 to a fully-elected municipality in 1953.”¹⁹³

The first few years Yellowknife was accessible only by water and bush plane, by dog team or on foot. “Initially there was no connection of Gant Mine and Con Mine to

¹⁸⁹ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018a)

¹⁹⁰ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018); Watt (1990)

¹⁹¹ For the fact that the “chaos and confusion” (Price, 1967, p. 207) in which it was left was blamed on Ottawa and the Northwest Territories Council

¹⁹² Watt (1990); Price (1967)

¹⁹³ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018)

the town; there was no road. You could either walk over the outcrops or take a boat, or in winter cross the ice,” described Walt Humphries.¹⁹⁴ The freight came from Alberta through the Slave River system via barge.¹⁹⁵ Passengers and mail were transported year-round via airlines from Edmonton.¹⁹⁶ In the winter, freight was delivered by “cat train,” which used a caterpillar as its engine,¹⁹⁷ and ice road trucks.¹⁹⁸ In 1960, as the need for reliable transportation grew, a winter road was established. Byers Transport provided a lifeline by trucking across a merciless land, creating ice roads across frozen rivers, lakes and muskeg, clearing paths through the snow by plows mounted on the front of the trucks.¹⁹⁹

Parallel to it, air transportation developed, and a young entrepreneur established himself in the freight business. Pilot Max Ward financed the first DeHavilland Otter craft used in the Northwest, competing with his endeavour against two charter companies servicing Yellowknife’s needs.²⁰⁰ His investment proved far-sighted. Wardair expanded and operated successfully from 1953 until the company was sold to Canadian Airlines in 1989.²⁰¹ Honouring the “Bush Pilots of Canada,”²⁰² the Pilot Monument was erected, and dedicated in 1967, on top of “The Rock,” a large rocky hill in Old Town.²⁰³

¹⁹⁴ Walt Humphries (Prospector, mineral exploration consultant, President of the NWT Mining Heritage Society, newspaper columnist, artist), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

¹⁹⁵ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018b); Price (1967)

¹⁹⁶ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018b)

¹⁹⁷ Price (1967)

¹⁹⁸ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018b)

¹⁹⁹ Price (1967); Byers Transport History (2018)

²⁰⁰ Price (1967)

²⁰¹ Sawyer (2006)

²⁰² Plaque on the Pilot Monument in Yellowknife. Thomas (2018)

²⁰³ ESR (2017)

In 1965 and 1966, a commission, whose mandate it was “to consider the political development of the Northwest Territories and to advise the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources via a report,”²⁰⁴ held hearings in many northern communities. It solicited the opinions of both northern and southern Canadians on “the shape and structure of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the location of the capital, and whether the Mackenzie District should be divided from the Keewatin and Franklin districts (now Nunavut).”²⁰⁵

In 1967, Yellowknife was declared Capital of the Northwest Territories, upon recommendation of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories (Carrothers Commission). Over mere decades, Yellowknife had developed from a basic bush camp to facilitate mining and miners into a metropolis that joined the ranks of Canadian capital cities.

On the market, a continual rise in the price of gold during the 1970s gave Yellowknife’s gold mines new life. While Con Mine began major expansion programs, Giant Mine developed its open pits.²⁰⁶ In 1970 Yellowknife was pronounced a city,²⁰⁷ which continued as a regional hub for mining activity even beyond the end of gold mining.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ NWT Archives (1966)

²⁰⁵ Sabin (2012)

²⁰⁶ Silke (2009)

²⁰⁷ YK Insiders Guide (2017)

²⁰⁸ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018b)

One by one, the old gold mines around Yellowknife seized production. Giant Mine was the last to close in 2004.²⁰⁹ Simultaneously, the mining of diamonds 300 km northeast of the city has been very successful.²¹⁰ As Yellowknife Historian Ryan Silke (2009) says, “The Northwest Territory is large and still full of geological potential. Only the surface has been scratched.”

Yellowknife owes its existence to the discovery and mining of gold. It is therefore inextricably entwined with the city. “Over eighty years after the discovery of gold,” the Yellowknife Historical Society remarks, “Yellowknife’s future still shines bright thanks to the treasures beneath our feet.”²¹¹

Diamond Mining, Cutting and Polishing

Another important economic activity for Yellowknife has been diamond mining. Even though diamonds are not mined in Yellowknife, its economy benefits from jobs, transportation and merchandise provided. As an integral part of NWT’s economy, the NWT diamond industry provides Northwest Territory residents with opportunities for training and employment. NWT residents have hiring preference, and with ongoing training opportunities, workers can advance quickly in the company. Wages paid are high, and numerous other benefits are part of an income package.

²⁰⁹ “Giant Mine suddenly shut down in 1999.” Yellowknife Historical Society (2017)

²¹⁰ Silke (2009); cf. also chapter Diamond mining, cutting and polishing

²¹¹ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018b)

Diamonds are currently mined in four locations in the Northwest Territories. The first site was discovered in 1991 by two geologists, Chuck Fipke and Stewart Blusson, and the EKATI Diamond Mine produced Canada's first commercial diamonds in 1998.²¹² As the Industry, Tourism and Investment website suggests, “The discovery of diamonds in 1991 had created the largest staking rush in Canadian history.²¹³ [...] by 2004, claim posts were placed in the ground at every quarter mile to surround more than 28 million hectares (70 million acres) in the NWT and Nunavut.”

Today there are three producing mines in the Northwest Territories.²¹⁴ According to the Director of Diamond Secondary Industry²¹⁵:

From a black-and-white perspective, resources have a beginning and an end point. The estimated life span of Diavik is until 2023, Ekati approximately till 2021; Snap Lake,²¹⁶ the newest, has a while yet, and (De Beers’) Gahcho Kue²¹⁷ will open next year. Aboriginal communities have impact-benefit agreements with the producers. Hopefully exploration will create continued opportunities, and only a certain segment of our Territory has been explored; it’s a huge landmass and only 40,000 people. With more infrastructure, there will be more opportunities for exploration. Environmental responsibility and labour codes are strong in Canada. NWT government is currently working on a transportation strategy.

²¹² Geology.com (2018)

²¹³ Government of Northwest Territories (2018c)

²¹⁴ cf. Figure 4-3

²¹⁵ Tracy St. Denis (Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

²¹⁶ Closed in 2015. CBC North (2015a)

²¹⁷ Opened in 2016; estimated base operating life of 11 years. Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018i)

Snap Lake Mine, which started operation in 2008,²¹⁸ closed in December 2015 for an indefinite period.²¹⁹ On the shore of Lac de Gras, 300 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife, is Diavik Diamond Mine, which began operation in 2003 and since 2012 mines fully underground. Diavik has produced approximately 91 million carats as of 2014.²²⁰

In operation since 1998, the Ekati Diamond Mine, located 310 kilometres north of Yellowknife, is Canada's first open-pit and underground diamond mine. With the Jay Pipe expansion, a pit approximately 7 km northeast of the Ekati's Misery pit scheduled to begin production in 2021, Ekati's mine life could be prolonged into the 2030s.²²¹

Gahcho Kué Mine, located 280 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife and operational since September 2016, has total expected resources of approximately 49 million carats and, based on an average annual production of 4.5 million carats, an estimated base operating life of 11 years.²²²

Currently Canada is the third largest diamond producer by value in the world after Botswana and Russia, in large part due to the success of the NWT diamond industry.²²³ In 2004, there were four cutting and polishing facilities in Yellowknife: Laurelton Diamonds Inc. (owned by Tiffany); Sirius Diamonds NWT Ltd.; Arslanian

²¹⁸ DeBeers Group of Companies (2018)

²¹⁹ DeBeers via CBC North (2015a)

²²⁰ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018i)

²²¹ CBC North (2016b)

²²² Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018i)

²²³ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018g)

Cutting Works NWT Ltd.; and Canada Dene Diamonds, none of which allow touring of the facilities.²²⁴

Several years ago, Deepak International received approved diamond manufacturer status from the territorial government. The company bought an old factory but never opened it.²²⁵ The territorial government has since terminated its monitoring, certification and trademark licensing agreements with the company.²²⁶

In 2016, New York-based Almod Diamonds Limited has been approved as a new diamond manufacturer in the Northwest Territory. The company plans to open a diamond polishing and manufacturing factory in Yellowknife “in as little as three months;”²²⁷ however, in October 2017 it was announced that opening was delayed.²²⁸

The release of the Diamond Policy Framework in 1999 (updated in 2010) obligates the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) to support the industry in its pursuit to authenticate NWT diamonds mined, cut and polished in the Northwest Territories.²²⁹ Various GNWT departmental-funding programs assist the secondary industry of the NWT in establishing and prospering. The GNWT also instituted

²²⁴ The North Group (2004)

²²⁵ CBC North (2016b)

²²⁶ MyYellowknifeNow (2016a)

²²⁷ MyYellowknifeNow (2016b)

²²⁸ CBC North (2017c)

²²⁹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018s) What is the GNWT’s involvement in the NWT secondary (cutting and polishing) diamond industry?

arrangements with the two operating mines to provide access to 10 percent of their production (on a five-week cycle basis) to Approved NWT Diamond Manufacturers.²³⁰

NWT diamonds cut and polished by Approved NWT Diamond Manufacturers receive the Government Certified Canadian Diamond™ guarantee, promising producers and customers that mandatory monitoring and reporting warrants that their diamond is mined, cut and polished in the NWT in a responsible and ethical manner.²³¹

Figure 4-3 shows the location of the four active diamond mines in the Northwest Territories. Many employees commute regularly from Yellowknife to the sites²³², approximately 300 km to the northeast.

²³⁰ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018s) What is the GNWT's involvement in the NWT secondary (cutting and polishing) diamond industry?

²³¹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018g)

²³² Marked by diamonds

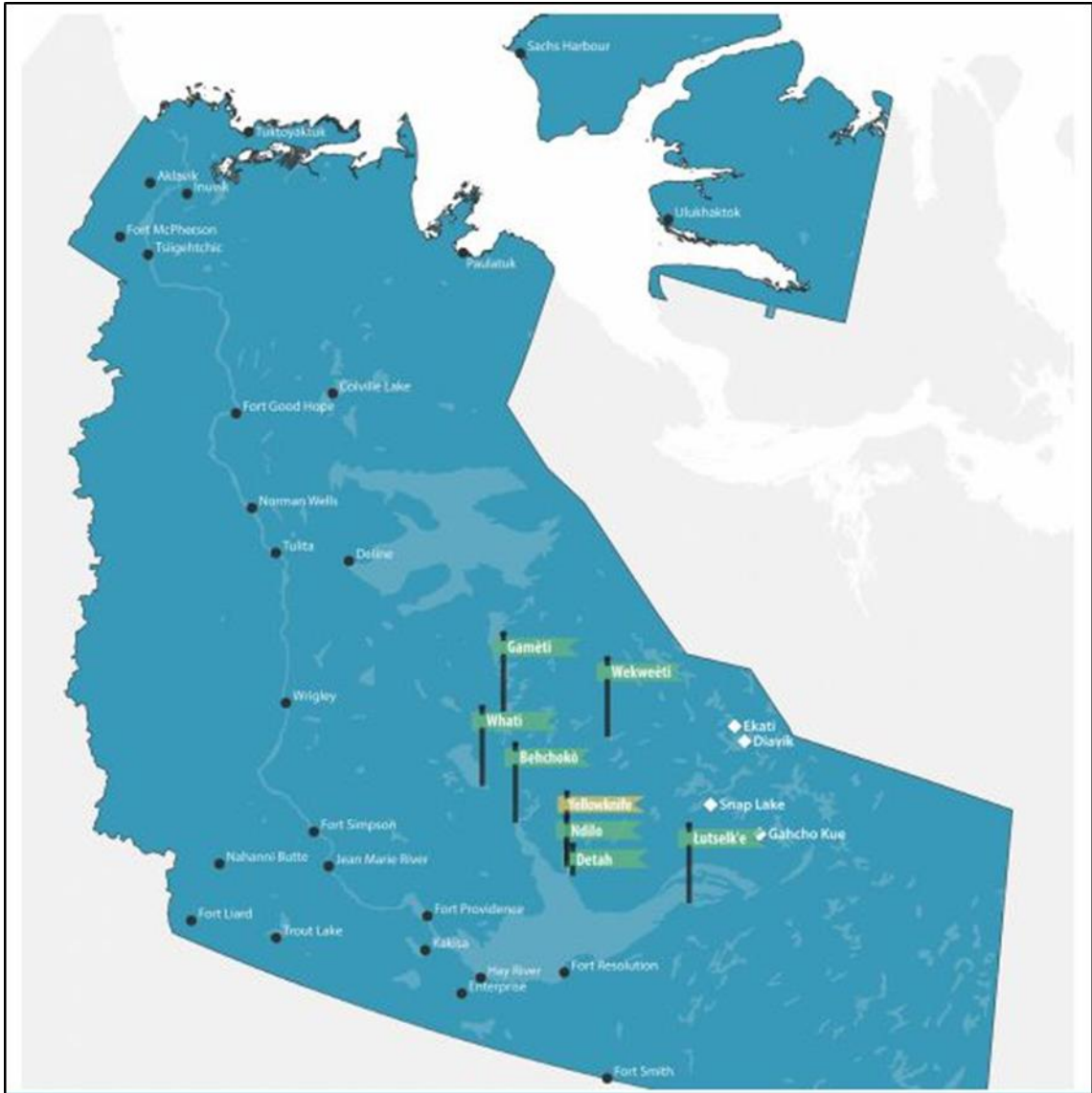


Figure 4-3: Location of diamond mines in NWT. (Source: Communities and Diamonds.)

Old Town

What is known as Old Town is the original settlement of prospectors, miners and the supporting infrastructure at the beginning of the gold finds in the 1930s. It consisted of buildings on the “mainland rock” and on Latham Island and Joliffe Island.²³³ (Not until the end of the 1970s, houseboats began to appear around Yellowknife Bay.)²³⁴ Before “New Town” was conceived, this was Yellowknife.

Rising unsanitary conditions on the Rock, due to overcrowding in these quarters and no provisions to combat the waste problem, hastened the creation of New Town, for which surveying began in 1945.²³⁵ In 1949, the sewer in the new settlement was ready to use and with it water closets and running water.²³⁶ Yellowknife could spread out into more modern housing.

Today Old Town is a reminder of the past and a tourist attraction. It goes back to the days of the Great Depression and brought people to the area full of character and determination, with varied skills and backgrounds, in search of income. They were often strong-willed, and battles were fought against government in Ottawa and locally.²³⁷

²³³ Price (1967)

²³⁴ Rendell (2014)

²³⁵ Yellowknife Historical Society (2018a)

²³⁶ Price (1967)

²³⁷ One example is, as Walt Humphries, a long-time Yellowknife resident (interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife) recalled: “The government tried to pass a rule one time, trying to dictate what colours to paint the buildings in all of Yellowknife, a colour code. As soon as Old Town people heard that, they went and bought the most ungodly colours of paint they could find and painted their houses. What gives one group the right to tell people what to paint their houses?”

Yellowknife's Old Town, as the Old Town Heritage Walking Tour of Yellowknife Northwest Territories²³⁸ demonstrates, seems worth preserving, for the local population as much as for tourism.

A new wave of imaginative tourists that do not fit into the mainstream cultural tourism pattern, Kostopoulou writes in 2013, seeks creative industries, cultural organizations and venues, and recreational facilities that produce a dynamic urban culture. This type of tourist is drawn to vibrant creative spaces based on both heritage and on contemporary culture. Yellowknife with its unique history of Old Town rooted in gold mining, and its tremendously creative Indigenous population would fulfill this desire.

To borrow an example from the diamonds industry, “the romantic history of diamonds and historical buildings and stories are important elements in luring people to a destination, along with readily available diamond-related tours and other activities.”²³⁹

Yellowknife as an Urban Centre

The modern-day Yellowknife is also the air transportation hub of the territory, and with 45% of its population,²⁴⁰ it is by far the most populated community. The territorial capital since 1967, it is the seat of the Legislative Assembly, which is a major

²³⁸ Old Town Heritage Walking Tour of Yellowknife Northwest Territories, City of Yellowknife Heritage Committee, 2005; YK Insiders Guide. 2017. “YK Hood by Hood: Old Town.”

²³⁹ De Beers quoted in The North Group (2004), p. 6

²⁴⁰ Statistics Canada (2016c)

employer. Yellowknife is the only city in the Northwest Territories. Larger towns are Inuvik (2016 population 3,140), Hay River (2,728), and Fort Smith (2,031).²⁴¹ Contrary to other Canadian capital cities, Yellowknife is a relatively young city. Only 1,000 people lived there in 1940, and in 1961, before the government administration moved to Yellowknife, the population had developed to 3,141 persons. By 1971, the number of residents was 5,867.²⁴²

In 2016, Yellowknife had 20,960 residents (10,625 male and 10,335 female).²⁴³ The Statistics Canada 2016 census²⁴⁴ lists 2,415 First Nations people, 1,260 Métis and 580 Inuk living in Yellowknife. 3,155 people identified as visible minority population, with high shares of Filipino (1,060), Black (610), and South Asian (460) inhabitants. The population density per square kilometre is 1,056.2, and the land area is 17.88 square kilometres.²⁴⁵

Yellowknife is not only a political centre and a provider of medical services that are not available in smaller municipalities but also a transportation hub which accommodates commercial, corporate and general aviation. Air Canada Jazz, Air North, Canadian North, First Air, Northwestern Air Lease, and West Jet provide regularly

²⁴¹ Statistics Canada (2016a)

²⁴² City of Yellowknife (2006)

²⁴³ Yellowknife Statistical Profile (2016). It is unclear why the total number of residents deviates from other official numbers.

²⁴⁴ Statistics Canada (2016b).

²⁴⁵ Statistics Canada (2016b)

scheduled air service from and to destinations in southern Canada.²⁴⁶ The 2018/19

Marketing Plan of Northwest Territories Tourism, SWOT Analysis,²⁴⁷ states:

Increasing international flights from NWT target markets are coming into Calgary and Edmonton, where five airlines provide direct gateway connections into NWT, plus additional direct flights from Vancouver in peak Aurora season.

In addition, Air North (since February 2014)²⁴⁸ and First Air offer direct flights to and from Ottawa in under five hours.²⁴⁹ In the Territory, Air North, Air Tindi, Buffalo Airways, Canadian North, First Air, Northwestern Air Lease, Northwright Air, and Summit Air deliver regularly scheduled air service, bridging the distance between the communities.^{250 251}

The City of Yellowknife 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy Background Report²⁵²

lists flights between Yellowknife and:

- Calgary (2 carriers)
- Edmonton (4 carriers)
- Ottawa (1 carrier)
- Whitehorse (1 carrier)
- Various NWT communities (6 carriers).

Table 4-1 shows the arrivals at Yellowknife Airport in two seasons.

²⁴⁶ GNWT Transportation (2017)

²⁴⁷ Northwest Territories Tourism Marketing Plan 2018/19 (2018) p. 17

²⁴⁸ Air North News (2013)

²⁴⁹ Google Flights (2017)

²⁵⁰ GNWT Transportation (2017)

²⁵¹ Under 'Yellowknife Airlines,' worldweb.com Travel (2017) lists also charter airlines Wannecke Air Services Ltd., Adlair Aviation, Old Town Float Base, and Aero Arctic Helicopters.

²⁵² City of Yellowknife (2014) Yellowknife Tourism Profile (p. 23)

The percentages reflect the share of the country in the overall annual visitor numbers. They are of limited value only as there is a gap between 2011 and 2015, and the last two-year span is incomplete (YTD). Regardless, they show that China's visitor numbers increased dramatically after 2011, whereas those from Japan declined between two consecutive seasons (2015-16 vs. 2016-17). Canada's numbers are consistently on the rise, as are those from the US, which experienced a surge between 2011 and 2015. Interest by South Korean and UK citizens are on the rise, while that of Germany is waning. These figures are closely related to marketing spending and are adjusted accordingly in the following budget cycle.

	2010-11	2015-16	%	2016-17 YTD	%
Japan	5048	10814	12.4%	6815	6.9%
China	84	5035	5.8%	5087	5.2%
South Korea	123	2424	2.8%	1831	1.9%
Australia	118	800	0.9%	544	0.6%
Germany	239	292	0.3%	84	0.1%
UK	80	135	0.2%	236	0.2%
Mexico	54	33	0.0%	138	0.1%
Norway	88	12	0.0%	113	0.1%
France	52	61	0.1%	95	0.1%
New Zealand	61	11	0.0%	77	0.1%
Other	969	845	1.0%	656	0.7%
Subtotal	6916	20464	23.5%	15676	15.9%
Canada	56650	63183	72.7%	76403	77.5%
US	2520	3289	3.8%	6448	6.5%
Total	66086	86936	100.0%	98527	100.0%

Table 4-1: Arrivals at Yellowknife Airport. Source: NWT Tourism

The Yellowknife Airport creates over 1,000 direct and 2,000 indirect jobs.²⁵³ Traffic at the airport has increased by almost 15% over the past five years and will continue to grow.

Besides air traffic, a network of roads traverses the NWT that enable visitors to discover the territory. Three highways, the Dempster Highway, Liard Trail and Mackenzie Highway, connect the NWT to the Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta. Crossing the Mackenzie River, the Deh Cho Bridge provides year-round access to motorists.²⁵⁴

Overall, Yellowknife has a great deal to offer the traveller and tourist, and tourism has become of increasing economic importance to the City and the Territory. Mayor Mark Heyck spoke to the brand his city wants to reflect:

“One of our main features and drawing points has been: you can go five minutes in any direction, and you are in the middle of wilderness. That town on the frontier, the idea of being so close to nature and wildlife is a big selling feature for us. The other part, I think – and it surprises a lot of people – is the number and quality of amenities we have you don’t expect to find. We call ourselves a city and we are by virtue a capital of 20,000 people, so it’s a relatively small community by southern Canadian standards, but the types of things that are available here and you can do and the facilities we have [...] such as large buildings that bigger cities have. This unique reflection is more than people expect.”²⁵⁵

Yellowknife’s new focus on tourism is part and parcel of a new era of economic development for the City. Being under the jurisdiction of the federal government was a

²⁵³ GNWT Transportation (2017)

²⁵⁴ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2014)

²⁵⁵ Mark Heyck (Mayor of the City of Yellowknife), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

thorn in the side of Yellowknifers since the settlement's beginning.²⁵⁶ In the 1930s and 1940s, the inhabitants of the "mainland rock," of Latham Island and Joliffe Island²⁵⁷ felt restrained without a local government. It took too long for rulings to be passed down, and the residents felt their issues were not sufficiently understood by the decision makers in distant Ottawa. The notion of prospectors and miners to be somewhat outside of society due to their unorthodox lifestyle resulted in discontent, sometimes rebellion and occasionally a disregard of the law.²⁵⁸ Contested issues were, among other, "the reluctance of the Government to supply a bridge and to change the liquor laws, [were] both sources of irritation to the population of Yellowknife and to the Trustee Board in particular."²⁵⁹

The Devolution of 2014 is therefore a monumental step for the Northwest Territories.²⁶⁰ The Northwest Territories Economic Opportunities Strategy describes Devolution – in its original a 403-page document²⁶¹ – thus:²⁶²

On April 1st 2014, legislative authority, programs, budgets, records and assets related to public land and resource management [was] devolved from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

A long-awaited transition, "Devolution" will mark an important step in the political and economic development of the NWT. It is a milestone that will have significant impacts on the NWT's economic environment.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Yellowknife History

²⁵⁷ Price (1967)

²⁵⁸ Price (1967) p. 134

²⁵⁹ Price (1967) p. 225

²⁶⁰ Cf. paragraph 2 below

²⁶¹ Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement (2013)

²⁶² Northwest Territories (2014). Economic Opportunities Strategy

For the first time, the NWT – like the provinces and Yukon Territory – will retain a share of the revenues collected from resource development on public land. (A portion of these revenues will also go to Aboriginal governments.)

With Devolution [comes] the ability to take control of decisions affecting the NWT economy. Authority over lands will provide the ability to plan and guide their use and development; resource revenues will allow the GNWT to generate and invest its own capital; and revenue sharing agreements with Aboriginal governments will open the doors for strong, viable and sustainable partnerships and investments.

Most importantly, Devolution will place decision making for NWT resource development in the hands of the GNWT. With its stronger and more immediate focus on the needs of our territory and its investors – and the ability to improve the coordination of project approvals and government “readiness” initiatives – this will set the stage for new employment and economic opportunities for all NWT residents.

This change in status will have far-reaching effects on the economic situation of the Northwest Territories. With decision making for its resource development in the hands of its own government, the Northwest Territories will collect a portion of the revenues from resource development on public land. This sets it on par with the provinces and Yukon Territory. The “2014-2019 Economic Development Strategy (2013)”²⁶³ predicts Devolution will create some additional positions in Yellowknife. Table 4-2 shows the development of Gross domestic product from 2011 to 2016. Overall, the economy in the Northwest Territories, after an upswing in 2014, experienced a modest growth in 2015 (based on an already healthy figure) and a minimal decline in 2015. Without being familiar with all events that influenced the

²⁶³ P. 4

NWT economy, no statements can be made about the reasons for the up- and down swings. Something can be deduced from Table 4-3, such as mine openings and closures.

Gross domestic product	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Annual percent change						
Northwest Territories	- 9.2	- 0.6	2.8	5.0	1.3	- 0.1

Table 4-2: Gross domestic product, Annual percent change. Source: Statistics Canada. Original title: “Gross domestic product by industry, chained (2007) dollars.”

Table 4-3 presents the development of the individual sectors from 2015 to 2016. Mine openings and closures have a noticeable impact on the economy of a territory with a population of approximately 44,500.²⁶⁴ In the non-residential building construction sector, a new hospital project added to the gain.

²⁶⁴ NWT Bureau of Statistics (2018)

Sector	GDP Gain / Loss between 2015 and 2016	Remarks
Northwest Territories GDP	- 0.1%	After a 1.3% gain in 2015
Other engineering construction	- 52%	After the completion of the Gahcho Kué diamond mine
Diamond mining	+ 5.7%	New-mine opening offset the impact of a mine closure late in 2015
Other metal ore mining	Fell to zero	After a tungsten mine closed
Conventional oil and gas extraction	- 4.3%	
Support activities for mining, oil and gas extraction	Declined notably	
Residential construction	+ 7.4%	
Non-residential building construction	Increased significantly	Result of a new hospital project
Air transportation, lessors of real estate, banking, and territorial public administration	Contributed to the growth	
Wholesale and retail trade	Declined (fell)	

Table 4-3: GDP Gain / Loss. Source: Statistics Canada (2017a).

5. TOURISM

This chapter represents the heart of the research. It identifies the key themes for tourism development, which were derived from interviews of local experts and analysis of key documents. When identifying and discussing these themes, significant challenges for Yellowknife become apparent. Questions are raised about the type of support the tourism industry finds in the city and the territory, and what role tourism plays in the area.

Worldwide, tourism is a significant economic sector. It has such importance that the United Nations has an agency, the World Tourism Organization, in place that is

responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. [It also] encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts, and is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development worldwide.²⁶⁵

Under the heading “Why tourism?” this agency (UNWTO) describes tourism as “one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world,” and states that “modern tourism is closely linked to development.”²⁶⁶ Similarly, the “2014-2019 Economic Development Strategy Background Report of the City of Yellowknife” also puts due emphasis on the development of tourism:

²⁶⁵ World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2018)

²⁶⁶ World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2018)

Of all the opportunities discussed by interview participants, tourism was referenced the most frequently. Stakeholder participants believe there are numerous natural amenities from which to build the tourism sector, including the Aurora Borealis, the long summer days and Great Slave Lake (tenth largest freshwater lake in the world). Tourism related to Aboriginal culture, and the city's festivals and events, are also seen as opportunities, along with business tourism, conventions and encouraging friends and family members of residents to visit Yellowknife.²⁶⁷

Figure 5-1 depicts visitor statistics in Northwest Territories from 2008/09 to 2016/17.

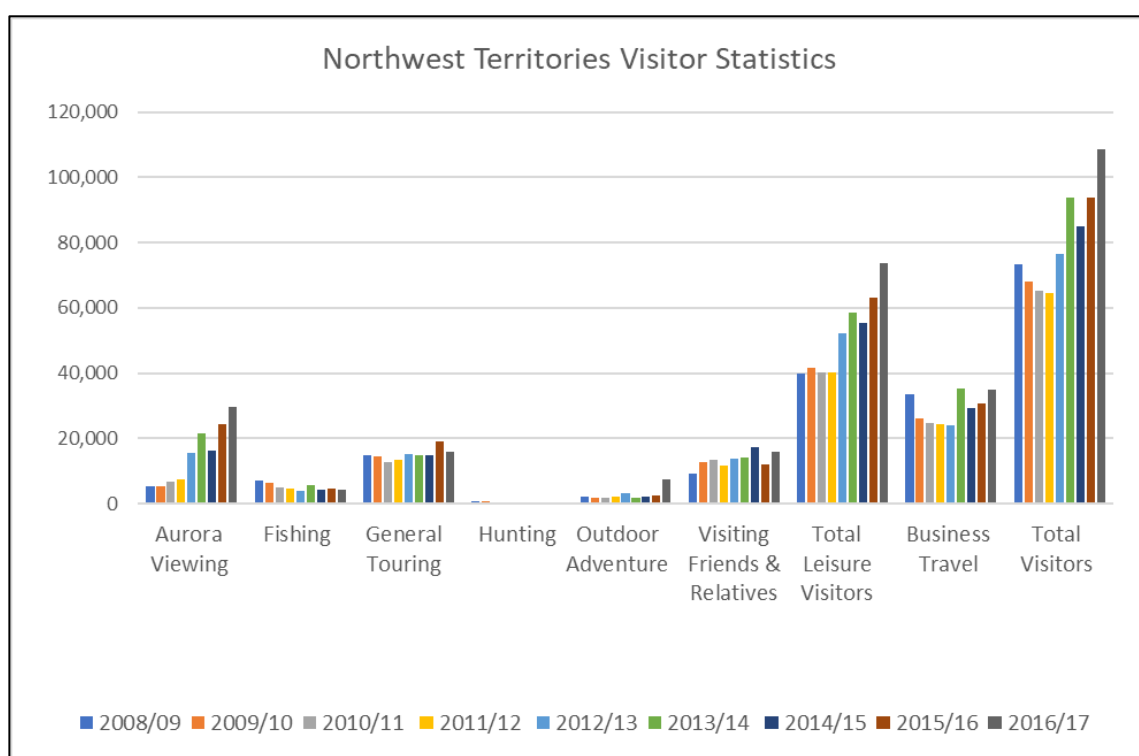


Figure 5-1: Source: Northwest Territories visitor statistics and Government of Northwest Territories. Source: Chart by author; figures combined by author from Northwest Territories Tourism Fact Sheet (2018) Northwest Territories Visitor Statistics (p. 7), and Government of Northwest Territories (2017).

²⁶⁷ City of Yellowknife (2013) p. 6

Over the past few years, Northwest Territories has shown growth in most individual visitor categories.²⁶⁸ Exceptions are Fishing with a 9% decline, General Touring (-17%), and Hunting (-6%) from the previous year.²⁶⁹ The times when Notzke (1999) associated Indigenous tourism in the Arctic with big-game hunting seem to be gone for the foreseeable future. The most robust growth between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons occurred in the Outdoor Adventure segment with 208% growth, followed by Visiting Friends & Relatives (+30%), and Aurora viewing (+23%).²⁷⁰

Northwest Territories Tourism lists in its “2018/19 Marketing Plan”²⁷¹ that a 3.9% increase in worldwide outbound trips has occurred (2016 growth). This breaks down into:

- Asia – 11% (with 18% growth in China; 11% in Republic of Korea)
- Europe – 2.5% (with 6% growth in U.K.; 4% in Germany)
- North America – 6% (with 7% growth in U.S.A.)
- South America – 1% (with 15% decline in Brazil)

²⁶⁸ Some methodology and data were revised in 2016-17. Government of Northwest Territories (2017)

²⁶⁹ Government of Northwest Territories (2017)

²⁷⁰ We should note that the number of hunters declined since the GNWT in 2010 imposed a hunting ban throughout the range of the Bathurst caribou due to deteriorating numbers. A decline can be detected in most categories in the 2014-15 season that can be attributed to forest fires in the summer that surrounded Yellowknife and affected air and land traffic and air quality in the city. Some businesses that focused on caribou hunting have shut down; others adapted with offering fishing and/or wildlife photography. The hope that aurora viewing or fishing would take the place of hunting in bringing revenue to the Northwest Territories is not realistic – it is just not comparable, said the North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer. “Where hunters would spend tens of thousands of dollars on a week-long trip, fishing might cost between two and three thousand on packages in our region.” “It is not going to happen, and those visitors will never spend equivalent monies to the hunter,” added the owner of Arctic Safaris (both interviewed individually by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife).

²⁷¹ NWT Tourism. 2018/19 Marketing Plan

The significance of this is that there are 3.9% more travelers than in the previous year that can be persuaded to visit a certain tourist spot.

The Visitor Exit Survey of Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2017)²⁷² breaks visitors to NWT into eight categories, whereby Fishing and Outdoor Adventure are divided into ‘guided’ and ‘independent.’ The fact that the numbers come from the Exit Survey indicates they were supplied by the tourists themselves. In most categories, one source country stands out against the rest. It is apparent that preferences vary between the nations. Japan is exceptionally strong among aurora viewers (74% of category total). Visitors from the United States are avid hunters (61%) and fishers (22% in the ‘Guided’ category); Canada naturally is leading or near the top in most categories (97% in the ‘Visiting Friends & Relatives’ group), while all other countries are in the single digits. Visitor numbers are closely related to the allocation of advertising budget, which varies between different nations at different times.

Over time, however, the numbers of tourists from specific origins have changed. Destination marketing therefore has concrete information which countries to target with its efforts. Asia clearly is showing the highest growth worldwide, which bodes well for Northwest Territories with its superior aurora viewing position paired with Asian residents’ inclination toward this pastime.²⁷³

²⁷² Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2013)

²⁷³ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2014); Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

In answer to the question, “What is the overall importance of tourism in the Northwest Territories respectively Yellowknife currently?” these responses were given by some of the interview partners:

Mark Heyck, Mayor of the City of Yellowknife:

I think we are at a bit of a turning point for tourism currently where it always had a part in the economy, but Yellowknife has been initially a mining town – mining and government, and it still is mining and government. But now, particularly with the diamond mines, because we have a much clearer idea of their life span, how long they are actually going to be producing GDP for this Territory and the City, and it’s not that far off. It’s not the gold mines that were around for sixty or seventy years; we have maybe 15 to 25 years left with those mines unless other discoveries are made. The Territorial Government deserves a lot of credit for this as well in the last several years in terms of their investments and marketing [of tourism] in the Territory. The Yukon came to this realization several years before we did, and it was partly because they came to the point where mining was always a big part of the economy there, and they came to the point where there were zero operating mines in the Yukon, so they had to take a hard look and say, ‘What’s going to support the local economy?’ and they settled on tourism. So they started making quite large investments into marketing the Territory, building up their tourism infrastructure. We’ve come to that same conclusion, I think, but a few years later, and certainly the statistics we’ve seen in the last two or three years in particular with the incredible growth in tourism is opening some people’s eyes to the fact that we need to be prepared to accommodate this growth in the market, and we also need to continue to invest to make sure that that growth is sustainable over time.

Tracy St. Denis, Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment:

From a general standpoint – it’s an opportunity where each of our 33 communities can be a participant, part of the tourism economy, especially with the increasing interest in Indigenous tourism. Tourism is an important part of Yellowknife economy, the GDP. Visitors from around the world are coming to the NWT. Tourism is one of our renewable resources. Countries like China have made Canada a favourite nation; more and more people are able to afford to travel.

Deneen Everett, Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber:

(Speaking predominantly for Yellowknife:) Huge, massive impacts. Twofold: Advertising and great response from Asian markets; Asians are coming to town, shopping and eating in town, supporting tourism operators and hotels. Growth is aimed for; no industry can stay stagnant. Yellowknife can offer a lot of things that the rest of Canada can't; cultural experience, Indigenous have amazing arts and crafts, can offer experiences that are unique to the North and typical for the NWT. Go out in the dogsled, view aurora, watch someone do the traditional hunting and fishing and learn how meals are cooked. I heard a lot of positive things from tourists. Tourism is one of the "import drivers"²⁷⁴ for the economy in the NWT; many businesses are tourism operators.

Tourism is viewed as important by virtually everyone. Revenue resulting from visitor spending and/or investment is typically expressed as part of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Jobs supported and/or taxes collected. An injection into the economy via investment capital, government spending or the like is called a "multiplier" that will result in a proportional increase in overall income at a national level.²⁷⁵ The theory is that increased spending will have "carry-through effects," which result in even greater aggregate spending over time. The multiplier itself is an effort to measure the scope of those carry-through effects. Tourism contributes to standard of living in host communities, and based on expected economic impact, governments make decisions about allotting economic resources and laying down economic policy.

Excluding intended investment into an area, tourists can be fitted into categories depending on their reasons for choosing a specific target for their visit. Yellowknife

²⁷⁴ Likely intended to mean Export drivers

²⁷⁵ Russell Turner, "Economic Impact of Tourism" (guest lecture, Trent University, Peterborough, ON, October 14th, 2011).

recognizes seven categories,²⁷⁶ whereby Aurora Viewing and Business Travel are the most popular reasons for visiting Yellowknife. Outdoor Adventure and General Touring are on the rise, while the smaller categories Visiting Friends & Relatives, Hunting and Fishing are stagnant or in decline.

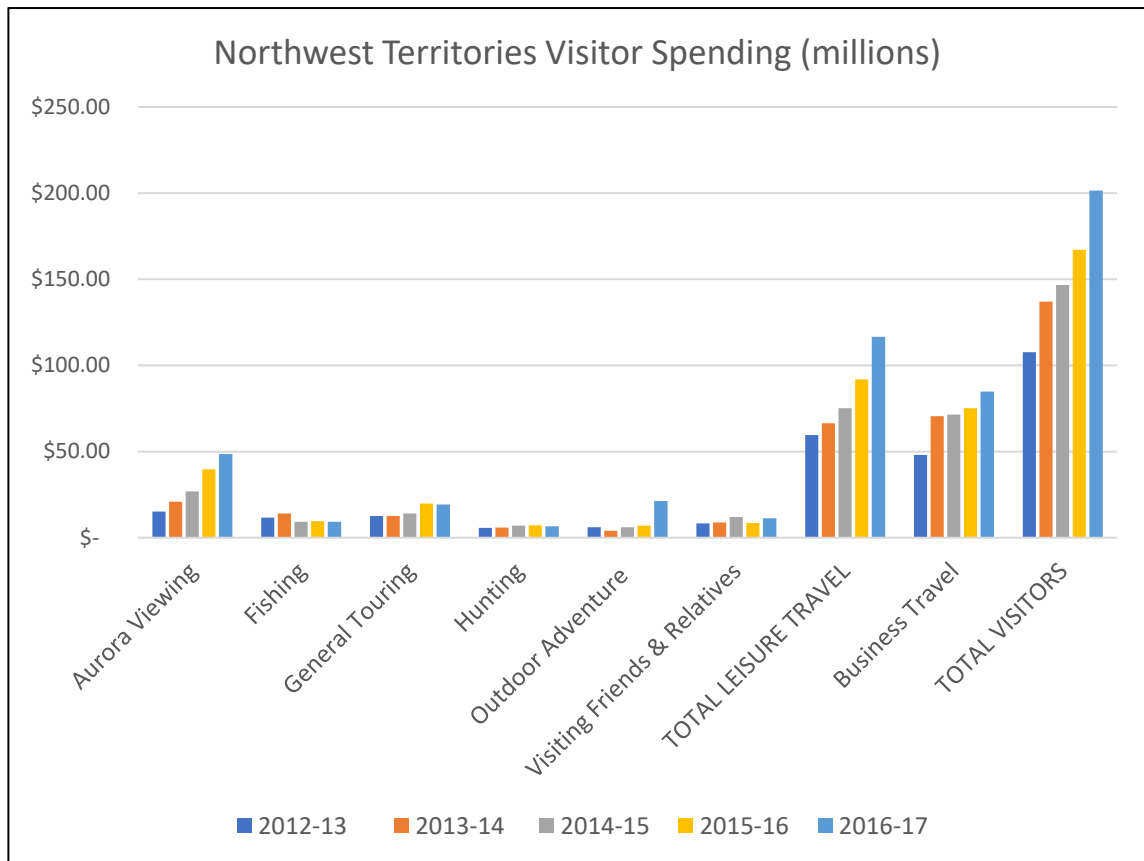


Figure 5-2: Northwest Territories visitor spending. (Source: Chart by author; figures retrieved from Government of Northwest Territories, 2017.)

²⁷⁶ cf. Figure 5-2

Figure 5-2 summarizes visitor spending by categories and years in Northwest Territories. As the chart shows, spending in the Northwest Territories has increased in almost all categories of travelers in the past years. The numbers for fishing and hunting tourists have stagnated. Hunting has experienced changes from the moratorium on the caribou hunt in 2009,²⁷⁷ and fishing is no longer generational, i.e. sons generally do not accompany their fathers on fishing trips any more. For reasons that are unclear, visitor spending as depicted in Figure 5-2, according to Government of Northwest Territories statistics, did not experience a decline in the 2014-15 season, contrary to visitor statistics in Figure 5-1. Likewise, not all tendencies go conform between the Visitor Statistics and the Visitor Spending charts.

Yellowknife has today, despite its remote location and the successive closure of all the gold mines, a robust economy. As the “YK Insiders Guide”²⁷⁸ makes known in its introduction, “Business sectors in the city include: mining and a host of mining-related activities such as logistical operations and transportation services; most government activity in the territory, and tourism and communications.”

The numbers for Gross Domestic Product by Industry for the Northwest Territories in 2016 (see Chapter 4) in Table 5-1 do not spell out Tourism separately. But Accommodation & food services, Retail trade, Information and cultural industries, Arts,

²⁷⁷ CBC North (2012) “Outfitters say caribou hunt ban put them out of business”

²⁷⁸ YK Insiders Guide (2017a)

entertainment & recreation are all sectors to which tourism has contributed, but they also include the portion of the local residents' spending.

Gross Domestic Product by Industry Northwest Territories, 2016 Millions of Chained²⁷⁹ (2007) Dollars in Basic Prices	2016
All industries	3,744.8
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	21.0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	938.6
Oil and gas extraction	255.5
Diamond mining	654.1
Support activities for oil and gas extraction	6.5
Support activities for mining	26.2
Utilities	48.5
Construction	367.6
Residential building construction	24.1
Non-residential building construction	105.1
Engineering construction	130.5
Repair construction	70.7
Other activities of the construction industry	43.9
Manufacturing	11.0
Wholesale trade	115.2
Retail trade	199.9
Transportation and warehousing	339.6
Information and cultural industries	83.9
Finance and insurance	115.6
Real estate and rental and leasing	319.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	83.6
Management of companies and enterprises	28.8

²⁷⁹ TeachMeFinance.com (2005): The chained-dollar measure is based on the average weights of goods and services in successive pairs of years. It is "chained" because the second year in each pair, with its weights, becomes the first year of the next pair. (Footnote added by the author.)

Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	66.9
Educational services	170.0
Health care and social assistance	247.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	7.0
Accommodation and food services	71.3
Other services (except public administration)	46.4
Public administration	593.4
Federal government public administration	132.1
Provincial and territorial public administration	332.5
Local, municipal and regional public administration	72.7
Aboriginal public administration	54.4

Table 5-1: Gross Domestic Product by Industry. Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2017.

Visitor Spending

Visitors to a tourist destination in a holiday frame-of-mind like to spend and leave a part of their earnings behind. As this money often comes from foreign countries, tourism is considered part of a nation's export.

What Tourists Like to Bring Home from Yellowknife

Yellowknife has many art galleries and gift shops that cater to the sophisticated and to the unpretentious traveller. Visitors can go to jewellery stores and the NWT Diamond Centre to buy a Government Certified Canadian Diamond™. The Spectacular Northwest Territories guide shows captivating arts and crafts items made by Indigenous

hands. These are truly distinctive in their appeal, and countless hours of work have gone into the preparation of the materials and the completion of each piece. Anyone seeking authentic Indigenous items, whether clothing, footwear or art to admire, should be willing to pay the price that goes with it.

Inuk stone carvers such as Ron and Derrald Taylor have displays at the Yellowknife Airport and in stores around town. Again, much work goes into the piece from preparation to finalizing. Painters like Antoine Mountain, who is known beyond the Northwest Territories, display their artwork in exhibits such as Northern Images and the Gallery of the Midnight Sun.

The “Northwest Territories Tourism Fact Sheet” describes “handmade traditional arts and crafts, such as moccasins, mukluks, moose hair tuftings, carvings and beadwork” as available to purchase throughout the territory.²⁸⁰

The term Comparative Advantage does not quite apply to Indigenous cultures, but what the cultures have to offer in customs and in handicraft is akin to it insofar as First Nations, Inuit and Métis members have something unique that is sought by the tourist trade.

Thematic Analysis of Tourism in Yellowknife

²⁸⁰ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2014)

Interviews and analysis of data and library materials pertaining to Yellowknife paint a picture of a City in motion.

Contemplating the topic of tourism in Yellowknife and coding the participants' interviews, several themes came to the forefront. To provide an environment for tourism, certain requirements must be met. First, municipal government must be in favour of making tourism an integral part of the local economy. It must actively welcome and enable the influx of visitors and help facilitate the infrastructure. Next, short- and long-term planning must follow, and the necessary budget has to be made available, and a labour force skilled in providing the various services must be created. Considerations must be given to what type of tourism the locality allows.

Three topics of close interest to the interviewees,²⁸¹ identified by the Grounded Theory analysis, were examined in Chapter Methods: Interviews and Analysis.²⁸² Simultaneously, several themes arose from the general scenery of tourism-related conversations. While the set of three are concepts of applications of a definable scale, the six discussed here address the broader landscape. The following section identified the most important themes derived. It explores the responses to questions posed by the researcher, and groups them according to theme and interest. Six general themes or categories of concern were identified.

²⁸¹ Collaborating and partnership; Funding and Budget; Product, packaging and packages

²⁸² Cf. there

This includes:

- Developing Tourism Strategies
- Support Systems for Tourism
- Promoting Diamond Tourism
- Developing Aurora Tourism
- Indigenous Tourism and
- Existing Capacity for Tourism.

We began with an overview of the context for development of the tourist segment and now turn to discuss some of the sectors and themes in more detail.

Theme One: Developing Tourism Strategies

Most interviewees and documentary materials recognized the importance of Yellowknife's comprehensive plan for tourist development. The City of Yellowknife also identifies tourism as an important development strategy in the introductory paragraph to its website, "Growing Tourism in Yellowknife." Whether intended or not, "Growing" of course can be interpreted here either as a verb or as an adjective; both is applicable. "Tourism is the third-largest industry," said the Director of Communications and Economic Development.²⁸³ "I think it's one of the pieces we need to build on." Not surprisingly, given this interest, Yellowknife has been active in seeking to promote itself as a travel destination in a number of ways. In 2014, it introduced the "2014-2019 Economic Development Strategy Background Report." In it, the City of Yellowknife

²⁸³ In 2015

asked stakeholders key questions about economic development opportunities, key challenges, the role of the City of Yellowknife, concrete steps proposed, and what Yellowknife should be known for in the next five to ten years. As tourism is the third largest contributor to the economy of the NWT, and the majority of stakeholders mentioned it as an opportunity for business growth in Yellowknife,²⁸⁴ the Strategy Objective²⁸⁵ is:

To develop a five-year Tourism Strategy for the City of Yellowknife that defines the City's role in tourism, identifies how the City can most effectively support the tourism industry, and outlines related responsibilities, actions and performance measures.

A comprehensive Plan was proposed, and in part implemented, with the “City of Yellowknife 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy,”²⁸⁶ which was designed to complement the “2014-2019 Economic Development Strategy.”²⁸⁷ As goals are listed Building a sustainable future; [Being] Stewards of our natural and built environment; Enhancing communications and community engagement; and Creating and sustaining meaningful relationships. In the Tourism Strategy, insight into tourism activity in Yellowknife is sought,²⁸⁸ such as Yellowknife's busiest tourism months (summer and late winter), use of the Visit Yellowknife website (“has plummeted”), and Yellowknife visitor spending on accommodation, excluding campgrounds (estimated at \$38 million in 2013). Municipal tourism development and delivery models are reviewed²⁸⁹ in Fairbanks,

²⁸⁴ P. 4

²⁸⁵ City of Yellowknife (2013) p. 137

²⁸⁶ City of Yellowknife (2014a) pp. 13-14; elaboration pp. 9-12

²⁸⁷ P. 1

²⁸⁸ P. 5

²⁸⁹ P. 6

Alaska (tourist accommodation tax provides a significant revenue stream); Whitehorse, Yukon (a clear division of responsibilities between the various organizations that deliver tourism); and Drumheller, Alberta (establishment of an independent, industry-led tourism organization). As deficits for Yellowknife are listed “a number of important tourism functions are not currently being filled, there is no dedicated tourism organization, and stakeholders and operators are not communicating with each other as well as they could.”²⁹⁰ As positives count “Best place to view the aurora; Proximity to nature and beautiful scenery; Great fishing/huge fish; Welcoming/friendly community; Old Town (history and character).”

The goals in the 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy are further broken down into actions, in Table 5-2.

Goal 1 - Enhance Yellowknife’s tourism management and partnership model

Action 1: Hire a Meetings and Marketing Coordinator (MMC)

Action 2: Pursue authority from the GNWT to levy a hotel (tourist accommodation) tax

Action 3: Maintain the role of Northern Frontier Visitors Association for the next contract term or until a DMO is established.²⁹¹

Action 4: Continue participating in the organizing committee for annual NWTT Conference & AGM and, for Yellowknife-based conferences, help organize/support an add-on, Yellowknife focused session

²⁹⁰ p. 9

²⁹¹ The Northern Frontier Visitors Centre closed in 2017 and the Northern Frontier Visitors Association contracts with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the City of Yellowknife were dissolved. City of Yellowknife (2017b)

Action 5: Continue City participation on the NFVA Board and NWTT Tourism Marketing Committee

Action 6: Seek City representation on the NWT Tourism Board of Directors

Action 7 (a): Involve First Nations in Actions 4 (Yellowknife focused sessions) and 14

Action 7 (b): Determine First Nations interest in incorporating an aspect of their culture as part of the NFVA space at the airport terminal building

Action 8: Establish a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)/Destination Management Organization (DMO)

Goal 2 – Increase destination awareness

Action 9: Support the growth of conference tourism

Action 10 (a): Create a destination marketing plan

Action 10 (b): Develop/implement targeted marketing campaigns

Action 10 (c): Create one, well-optimized tourism website

Action 10 (d): Establish a centralized, comprehensive online festivals/events calendar

Action 10 (e): Encourage the creation and promotion of tourism packages

Action 10 (f): Produce a 1-page, updated, colourful city map

Action 11: Allocate a share of the (proposed) hotel tax revenue to signature (multi-day) festivals

Action 12: Incorporate tourism into the City brand

Action 13: In partnership with the NFVA develop and deploy a summer mobile tourism kiosk

Goal 3: Improve community tourism infrastructure and services

Action 14: Help support and coordinate customer service training sessions in partnership with other levels of government (i.e., GNWT ITI and ECE)

Action 15: In partnership with downtown businesses, expand the City's existing annual Spring Clean-up initiative into a spring/summer monthly downtown clean-up program and expand the Adopt-a-Street Program

Action 16: Improve tourism directional signage at key downtown intersections

Action 17 (a): Continue and prioritize downtown revitalization including upkeep of previous revitalization activities

Action 17 (b): Complete Government Dock redevelopment to enhance visitor access to lake-based recreational activities

Action 18: Assess viability of building a convention facility.

Table 5-2 Goals in the 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy. Source: City of Yellowknife, 2014c, p. 51.

These Goals and Actions were introduced prior to the researcher's on-site visits, and several have been implemented at the time the interviews for this study were conducted in May 2015.

Another key area of concern was the need for co-ordinated support on the part of those making decisions on the art of tourism marketing options. An example is the Christmas season, where businesses in the North tend to shut down because the government shuts down. This, however, is detrimental for the tourism business. To avoid pitfalls in the future, one winter season the Destination Marketing Organization leveraged its relationship with local hotels, restaurants and the local visitors centre to address an in-destination hospitality problem. This was a foray into a peripheral area of hospitality because the repercussions from comments on social media by disappointed visitors needed to be circumvented to keep the marketing success of NWT Tourism intact. Building on this model of teamwork, in future years the involved parties can

collaborate and publish which businesses are open during the holidays. This is an example where stakeholders come together, parties with a common interest that collaborate for the common good (and that of the tourist).

Deneen Everett, Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber, spoke to this topic. “About 40% of Yellowknifers are government employees; when government shuts down, locals aren’t here to shop and support tourism operators.”²⁹² No tourism policies addressing this were in place at the time of the interview for this thesis, only informal collaboration between the YK chamber and NWT Tourism for different initiatives. YK Chamber plays only a small part in tourism. It is not furthering tourism but primarily supporting its members and only indirectly impacting and facilitating tourism, for example by providing networking opportunities through Chamber events. One planned campaign is to facilitate tourism during the holiday season, also pursuing people to stay an extra day (after conferences) and explore the city, explained the Executive Director.²⁹³

Furthermore, a consistent piece of discussion concerning the need for coordinated strategies and development of tourism in Yellowknife was the recognition of the role of different levels of governance, and different agencies and actors and stakeholders. The Report on the WTO²⁹⁴ Survey on the Implementation of the Global

²⁹² Deneen Everett (Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

²⁹³ Deneen Everett (Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

²⁹⁴ World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2018)

Code of Ethics for Tourism²⁹⁵ defines the term “stakeholders in tourism development” as including the following players:

- National governments;
- Local governments with specific competence in tourism matters;
- Tourism establishments and tourism enterprises, including their associations;
- Institutions engaged in financing tourism projects;
- Tourism employees, tourism professionals and tourism consultants;
- Trade unions of tourism employees;
- Tourism education and training centers;
- Travellers, including business travellers, and visitors to tourism destinations, sites and attractions;
- Local populations and host communities at tourism destinations through their representatives;
- Other juridical and natural persons having stakes in tourism development including non-governmental organizations specializing in tourism and directly involved in tourism projects and the supply of tourism services.

Using this framing of the term, the interviews and data collection phase of research suggest that stakeholders in the most important tourism industry in the City of Yellowknife are:

Industry Stakeholders

- GNWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (HQ and Regional);
- Northern Frontier Visitors Association;
- Past and Present Presidents and Executive Directors of the Yellowknife and NWT Chamber of Commerce;
- Conseil de développement économique des TNO (CDÉTNO);
- Hoteliers;
- NWT Tourism;

²⁹⁵ Activities of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (2005)

- Others as identified by City of Yellowknife.

Community Stakeholders

- Defined as the general public, as well as key groups in the community identified by the City of Yellowknife.

All of these will need to be included in any future development of tourism strategy and economic development plans for the City of Yellowknife. To some extent there has already been important development in this area. “Tourism 2015,”²⁹⁶ the planning tool for NWT Tourism, has its own set of partners. Some of them can also be found among the stakeholders at the city level. In the smaller communities, for example, the Senior Administrative Officers (SAOs), for the bands, are key. Amy Lizotte, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer,²⁹⁷ explained that this is because “in the Tłı̨chǫ Region there are also Economic Development Officers within ITI located in all the communities, and they are key to engage because they are the front-line people engaging within the community and supporting the business development.”

Overall, the need for strategic development of tourism capacity through concerted planning on the part of the City and its stakeholders comprised a key theme of this analysis.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Tourism 2015 New Directions for a Spectacular Future (2015)

²⁹⁷ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

²⁹⁸ As Mayor Heyck remarked, “We are seeing a remarkable growth in the number of tourists, and the existing companies and infrastructure probably won’t be able to accommodate that growth for much longer without either growing itself or seeing new players coming along.” (Interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife)

Finally, the tourist's requirements beyond accommodation and sustenance must be taken into consideration. The more the basic needs, as presented in a Maslow's pyramid modified for tourism,²⁹⁹ are met at a tourist destination, the more successful it is as a desirable location to visit and re-visit. In one form or another, Yellowknife can fulfill most needs of a tourist, as the tourism pyramid presents: For the basic, psychological need, it offers escape from routine, relaxation, and external excitement. The safety need is met for a concern for own health, and a concern for other's safety. Social need is addressed by giving love and affection, initiate and maintain relationships, and to experience group membership. Self-actualization can be found in fulfilling a dream, understanding self more, and experiencing inner peace & harmony.³⁰⁰

Situated at a higher level is the need for support systems for tourism, and development of funding sources. This is the second theme to which we now turn.

Theme Two: Support Systems for Tourism

It was not just strategies but foundations for funding which were highlighted by research sources as critical to tourism in Yellowknife. Indeed, the PowerPoint presentation Destination Marketing Strategy for the City of Yellowknife³⁰¹ identifies "Critical Success Factors – What is needed to succeed?" It lists Sufficient and

²⁹⁹ BINUS University (2007) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs & Travel Motivation

³⁰⁰ BINUS University (2007) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs & Travel Motivation

³⁰¹ Destination Marketing Strategy for the City of Yellowknife (2016)

sustainable budget; Positive visitor experience; Online presence; Packaged tours and activities; Strong, compelling brand; Partnerships with stakeholders; and Support from residents and City Council.

While the most important piece is a sufficient and sustainable budget, on the agenda is also the addressing of challenges, such as a lack of basic components of tourism infrastructure, for example a poor-quality access highway and a lack of camping and RV facilities, to attract additional visitors and tourism-related businesses. Budget and funding for other types of initiatives that have an impact on tourism is also essential. For example, an important segment of product development in the territory is travel with recreational vehicles (RVs). In collaboration with the NWT Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), efforts are made to increase the utilization of RVs in the summer. RV routes up the Dempster Highway from Yellowknife into South Slave are being promoted. Figure 5-3 shows the Dempster Highway's connection to the provinces to the south via Yukon Territory.



Figure 5-3: Dempster Highway with link to Yukon and the provinces south of NWT. Source: The Dempster Highway (2018).

If Yellowknife is located off the main route, promoting linkages can be used as a starting point. Tourism in Yellowknife is closely related to tourism in the Northwest

Territories. The capital is the flight gateway for many other destinations.³⁰² When asked, “How do you see Yellowknife’s role as a service and administration centre in regard to tourism?”, Mayor Heyck replied:

I think we are the hub. As far as tourism infrastructure goes, we have far and away the most of it of any community in the NWT. We are a very convenient jumping-off point for a number of other destinations, whether north or east or west. Our connections with air transport, in particular with southern Canada, are excellent. We now have direct flights from Whitehorse to Yellowknife to Ottawa. We hope that they are getting the amount of traffic to keep that sustainable. There are flights that are direct from Calgary, from Edmonton. There is a number of things people can do on day trips or overnight excursions.

Indeed, Cathie Bolstad, Executive Director of Northwest Territories Tourism,³⁰³ described her organization’s mandate such:

It takes big ideas, big time and big money to develop. Sometimes big money takes multiple partners who have competing priorities; getting them on the same page takes time.

Presentations to Rotary, to the annual meeting of the NWT Chamber of Commerce, to City and Town Councils throughout the regions are designed to promote the value of tourism to their community, the Executive Director explained further.³⁰⁴ The recently created NWT Conference Bureau³⁰⁵ is a hub that coordinates conventions and helps avoid bottlenecks in accommodation.

³⁰² Cf. Yellowknife as an Urban Centre

³⁰³ Interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁰⁴ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁰⁵ An organization within NWT Tourism. Spectacular Northwest Territories (2016b)

“Everything is just ad hoc. When there are two conventions at the same time, then there is no hotel space. If there is a flight cancellation on top of that, then [people] are certainly looking for rooms,” said Ian Henderson, Vice President of Northern Frontier Visitors Association and owner of Arden Avenue Bed & Breakfast, in 2015.³⁰⁶ The work of the NWT Conference Bureau, created shortly before this interview, can definitely alleviate much of that.

Budget of course is at the core of any marketing/advertising activity, and budget is finite, related the Executive Director, NWT Tourism.³⁰⁷ A pursuit for activities where the dollar can be stretched is constantly underway. This is where content marketing may come in, which is the creation of videos or blogs in the form of authentic story-focused content for sharing on social media. It is intended to stimulate interest in a brand but does not explicitly promote or “sell.” The Mayor of Yellowknife, Mark Heyck, told of such an initiative:

After cut-backs by the federal government on its investments in tourism, the Canadian Tourism Commission had to become very creative in how they expend the dollars that remain for them. We had a group of bloggers and photographers come up to the NWT; I think it was the winter before [2013/14]. I think it was two people from Brazil, one from Mexico, one from Australia. The bloggers have followings of up to two-and-a-half million people, and so they toured [...] around this region and other regions, and they posted their photos on Instagram and wrote about their experiences here. It was a very cost-effective way to spread the word about what you can see in a place like Yellowknife.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Ian Henderson (Proprietor, Arden Avenue Bed & Breakfast, Arctic Executive Limousine, former Vice President, Northern Frontiers Visitors Association), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁰⁷ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁰⁸ Mark Heyck (Mayor of the City of Yellowknife), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Funding the tourism marketing currently are many agencies and organizations from all levels of government and the private sector. The plan “Tourism 2015 New Directions for a spectacular future”³⁰⁹ lists these potential developing and funding partners:

Private Sector Partners Involved in Planning, Delivery, and/or Funding

- NWT Tourism
- Tourism industry
- Key wholesalers and travel trade in European, Asia-Pacific and North American Markets

Public Sector Funding and Development Partners Outside of NWT Agencies

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- CanNor
- Canadian Heritage
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Aboriginal Business Canada
- Canadian Tourism Commission
- Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council
- Statistics Canada Yukon Tourism Education Council
- Parks Canada
- Provincial governments

NWT Organizations

- Aboriginal governments
- Community governments
- Chambers of Commerce

³⁰⁹ Northwest Territories Canada and Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2011) p. 10

GNWT Departments

- Department of Transportation
- Department of Municipal and Community Affairs
- Department of Education Culture and Employment

Work still needs to be done to tap the resources and expertise of many of these agencies. Indeed, as the Executive Director of NWT Tourism pointed out, “The budget is limited, it is finite; it must be spent where the biggest return is to be expected. Every year the countries that are the best prospects for in-bound tourism into NWT get marketing funds allocated; others get dropped.”³¹⁰

Finally, because tourism is a major issue for Yellowknife – and not just for hotels, restaurants and tour operators but for everyone who lives here, and because tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the Yellowknife economy supporting hundreds of local jobs and scores of local businesses – the Government of the Northwest Territories is being asked to allow tax-based towns and cities to collect a levy on the daily cost of visitor accommodations in order to continue to grow tourism in NWT communities. As Action 2 of the Strategy indicates, for several years the implementation of an Accommodation Levy was considered in Yellowknife. On October 31, 2016 the City of Yellowknife, Office of the Mayor submitted a request that the Government of the Northwest Territories make legislative amendments that would allow, among other,

³¹⁰ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

the implementation of a levy on lodging.³¹¹ The requested changes would ensure that the City is able to “adapt to present-day realities and challenges,” as the document notes.

Overall, it is increasingly clear that in the future, support for tourism must come from diverse directions. Investment into infrastructure to help grow tourism must be met with the commitment by the community to be a tourist destination and offer more than attractive vistas. Considering the cost to fly to remote locations to experience authentic culture, the expectation is for certain levels of service and comfort and a full itinerary. As the Executive Director of NWT Tourism explained, if the infrastructure over and above the product is not developed, the venture will fail.³¹² The City of Yellowknife Resources website makes known:

70,000 visitors came to our city in 2016 and spent over \$90 million. That makes tourism one of the fastest growing sectors of our Yellowknife economy. To continue to grow tourism the City of Yellowknife is asking the territorial government for authority to collect a levy on short term accommodation. The money collected will be used to market Yellowknife as a major tourism destination.³¹³

According to the Accommodation Levy Brochure, proceeds resulting from the levy would be used to

help communities to fund tourism marketing in order to develop and expand their local tourism industry. In Yellowknife, this will develop and expand our local economy and local tourism industry without an extra

³¹¹ City of Yellowknife Office of the Mayor (2016)

³¹² Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³¹³ City of Yellowknife (2017a)

cost to Yellowknife taxpayers – putting money back into our community through tourism employee wages, local purchases and taxes.³¹⁴

In the March 15, 2018 Legislative Assembly Sitting, to the question by the Member for Kam Lake about the progress, the reply was “...we are still on track with that. [...] if there are no major glitches, then this will continue as provided, and so it will be brought forward in the May session.” The next scheduled sitting is Thursday, May 24, 2018.^{315 316}

One benefit would also be the hiring of a destination marketing organization (DMO) specifically for Yellowknife, which would be financed by the collection of an Accommodation Levy. In 2014, a submission was put forth to City Council on developing a DMO but not approved, while Council worked hard not to increase taxes. When infrastructure needs to be replaced, Council has to make difficult choices and weigh projects.³¹⁷

Under DMO Decision Points and Choices, the document “Yellowknife Accommodation Levy & Destination Marketing Organization: Decision Points & Choices” explains the advantages:

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have evolved over the last 100 or more years based on two overlapping sets of interests. One is the interest of governments in economic development and the creation of sustainable employment opportunities. The other is the interest of private

³¹⁴ City of Yellowknife (2018b)

³¹⁵ Hansard Archives, 18th Assembly, 3rd Session, Thursday, March 15, 2018, p. 3897

³¹⁶ As of October 26, 2018, “Bill 18 [a Bill to amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act] is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted.” October 31: Bill 18 has its third reading. Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories (2018a) Hansard (Debates)

³¹⁷ Name withheld by agreement (Director of Communications and Economic Development in 2015), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

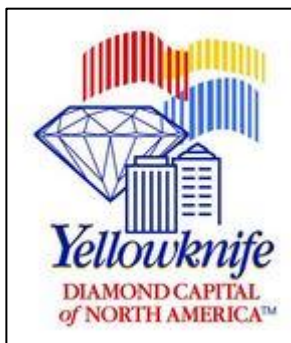
sector businesses in banding together to promote individual business growth and the creation of wealth through tourism infrastructure development, providing access to tourism attractions, entertainment and recreational activities.³¹⁸

As the Executive Director of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce noted:

The YK Chamber has supported the City of Yellowknife's request for an amendment to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, which would allow the City of Yellowknife to implement an accommodation levy where the funds collected would be used to fund tourism initiatives, primarily the creation of a destination marketing organization.³¹⁹

Theme Three: Promoting Diamond Tourism

Many sources indicated the importance of Diamond mining and diamond tourism to the Yellowknife brand. As an integral part of the economy, the NWT Diamond Industry has a long history in the Northwest Territories, since it produced Canada's first commercial diamonds in 1998.³²⁰



In 1999, the City of Yellowknife officially registered the trademark Yellowknife – Diamond Capital of North America™ (cf. Figure 5-4) to distinguish itself within the national and international diamond industry.³²¹

Figure 5-4: Yellowknife Diamond Capital of North America. Source: City of Yellowknife (2014).

³¹⁸ Outcrop (2018)

³¹⁹ Deneen Everett, Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, in a follow-up email to the interview Aug. 22, 2017

³²⁰ Geology.com (2018)

³²¹ City of Yellowknife (2014f)

In 2004, a document “The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in the Northwest Territories” was published.³²² In it, the authors pronounce that they “are confident that there is potential to develop diamond tourism in the Northwest Territories,”³²³ and that “the allure of diamonds could sway an undecided visitor to choose the NWT over a destination with similar product.”³²⁴ The definition of diamond tourism in “The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in the Northwest Territories” is:

The economic activity that occurs when diamond products, services, heritage and promotion are linked with travel markets. At its core are tourist product offerings and services that either take place in facilities which promote and interpret one or more components of the diamond industry, or involve companies dealing specifically with diamonds or diamond-related products.³²⁵

Diamond tourism initiatives in Canada should move forward as part of the development of a National Diamond Strategy,³²⁶ the authors recommend. In an Ipsos Reid Citizen Survey in 2004,³²⁷ 28% of the Yellowknife population mentioned they would want the city to place more emphasis on tourism. Furthermore, of the diamond- and tourism-related businesses in the Northwest Territories, the majority was encouraging of developing diamond tourism.³²⁸ In May 2017, 97% of Yellowknifers surveyed were in favour of marketing their city as a year-round tourism destination.³²⁹

³²² The North Group (2004)

³²³ P. 2

³²⁴ P. 2

³²⁵ The North Group (2004), p. 4

³²⁶ National Diamond Strategy (2004) Action Plan. p. 4

³²⁷ Ipsos-Reid Corporation (2004)

³²⁸ The North Group (2004)

³²⁹ City of Yellowknife (2017d)

A few suggestions made in stakeholder interviews are to establish a Diamond Tourism Working Group; to exhibit a traveling display around the Northwest Territories; to stimulate interest in diamonds to encourage longer stays and increased expenditures; to create side trips with a diamond theme to local communities; and to launch campaigns in key airports in Canada.³³⁰ Another point is made in connection with the Kimberley mine in South Africa: “The local visitor centre needs to create an atmosphere of excitement about diamonds.”³³¹ Other suggestions are that diamond jewellery should be promoted with hunting outfitters and diamond experiences should be packaged with shorter fishing trips, sightseeing, rock hounding and hiking. A “diamond experience pavilion” that does “not need to be large or elaborate”³³² is being suggested, which meanwhile has been constructed in the form of the NWT Diamond Centre.³³³ Unfortunately, it is not easy to find as it is away from the city centre and obstructed by buildings around it.³³⁴

In 2004, at the time of the study,³³⁵ there were four cutting and polishing facilities in Yellowknife: Laurelton Diamonds Inc. (owned by Tiffany); Sirius Diamonds NWT Ltd.; Arslanian Cutting Works NWT Ltd.; and Canada Dene Diamonds, none of which allowed touring of the facilities. Deepak International bought an old factory but

³³⁰ The North Group (2004), p. 4

³³¹ The North Group (2004), p. 7

³³² The North Group (2004), p. 12

³³³ NWT Diamond Centre (2018)

³³⁴ The cutting and polishing demonstration, set for a specific time, was already well underway when the researcher arrived a few minutes *early*.

³³⁵ The North Group (2004)

never opened it.³³⁶ The territorial government has since terminated its monitoring, certification and trademark licensing agreements with the company.³³⁷

In 2016, New York-based Almod Diamonds Limited was approved as a new diamond manufacturer in the Northwest Territories. The opening of a diamond polishing and manufacturing factory in Yellowknife was, however, in October 2017 still delayed.³³⁸ Almod Diamonds president Albert Gad said, “the company expects to take advantage of aurora tourism by giving visitors the opportunity to see diamonds being manufactured and then make a jewelry purchase.”³³⁹

Five (in 2004) jewellery retailers sold certified Canadian diamonds in Yellowknife. These are usually sold with a certificate of authenticity that is issued by the manufacturer and/or the GNWT.³⁴⁰ The Gallery of the Midnight Sun is the only retailer with on-site polishing, the 2004 study tells. It also sells loose and set Canadian diamonds.³⁴¹

The study “The Perfect Setting” recognizes that “people will not travel just to see diamonds,”³⁴² therefore the destination motivators aurora borealis, hunting, fishing, general touring and outdoor adventure need to be focused on marketing efforts. In addition to this, however, the appeal of diamonds and their availability at source may

³³⁶ CBC North (2016b)

³³⁷ MyYellowknifeNow (2016a)

³³⁸ MyYellowknifeNow (2016a)

³³⁹ CBC North (2016b)

³⁴⁰ The North Group (2004)

³⁴¹ The North Group (2004)

³⁴² The North Group (2004), p. 6

sway some tourists to select the Northwest Territories over other destinations for their vacation. Origin of the diamonds will be essential to NWT diamond tourism.³⁴³ The existence of “conflict” or “blood” diamonds from questionable sources³⁴⁴ and the knowledge about their reality entices people to seek ethically produced, certified gemstones.³⁴⁵

Some other considerations in the document are that diamond mining could be linked with gold mining, under the motto “from a golden past to a brilliant future.” A number of tourism products and providers are listed that could be associated with diamonds, among them galleries, adventure and wilderness travel, aurora viewing, golfing, and restaurants. Major purchasers of diamonds and diamond jewellery are professionals between 40 and 60 years who are financially comfortable, some of the world’s diamond centres relate, which interviews for the study confirm.³⁴⁶ The highest potential for diamond purchases bring the business travelers attending meetings and conventions, the aurora viewers, and the hunters. The superb quality and reputation of Canadian diamonds, together with the low value of the Canadian dollar, should make NWT diamonds attractive to acquire.

To develop diamond tourism, the study states, would “require cooperation and collaboration of primary stakeholders in offering activities and/or services linked to

³⁴³ The North Group (2004)

³⁴⁴ National Geographic, March 2002, “Diamonds: The real story.”

³⁴⁵ Even though, some people are indifferent, believes Walt Humphries, mineral exploration consultant. “Most people look at dollars; they don’t care if it’s a blood diamond or not. I was utterly amazed when I did a little research on gems,” he said. (Interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.)

³⁴⁶ The North Group (2004)

diamonds, and in promoting a consistent message to potential visitors.”³⁴⁷ As stakeholders have suggested “the organizations or authorities with the mandate to promote tourism locally, jewellers and/or retailers, manufacturers, the mines, the GNWT, and the City of Yellowknife, [as well as] tour operators offering diamond related experiences.”³⁴⁸

The Action Plan for the National Diamond Strategy³⁴⁹ recommends:

Where a strong business case can be made for diamond tourism opportunities, it is recommended that a co-operative marketing effort of those opportunities be undertaken by the governments, the tourism sector and the diamond industry to raise the awareness and interest of the public, both domestically and internationally.

The study “A Perfect Setting” continues with “A glimpse of the Diamond Centre of North America ten years from now,”³⁵⁰ an elaborate description of features and initiatives.

“Diamond Tourism” did not develop as envisioned in 2004. This will be examined in Chapter 6, Discussion and Conclusion, Research question 3, “How are specialized niches such as Diamond tourism and Indigenous tourism being facilitated and advanced in the region?”

³⁴⁷ The North Group (2004) p. 17

³⁴⁸ The North Group (2004) p. 17

³⁴⁹ Action Plan for the National Diamond Strategy (2004) p. 4

³⁵⁰ The North Group (2004) p. 22

Agarwal³⁵¹ advised taking the fluctuations in consumer tastes and consumption preferences into consideration, as well as (in practical recommendations for several waning English seaside resorts) targeting diverse niche markets. It is conceivable that these recommendations apply, beyond seaside resorts in decline, to any tourist destination that would benefit from diversification. If the City of Yellowknife, together with the GNWT, so desired, “The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in the Northwest Territories” could provide a blueprint to revive the plan for diamond tourism in the Northwest Territories.

Yellowknife did establish itself as the Aurora Capital of the World, which connects to diamonds as they share attributes such as natural, beautiful, sparkling and mythical. It appears that the GNWT anticipated that the secondary industry of cutting, polishing and designing jewellery and the conception of the Polar Bear Trademark³⁵² would stimulate job creation in the wake of mining diamonds. The cutting and polishing industry, however, faced strong competition from for example India and Vietnam and did not develop as expected.³⁵³

Regardless – “I believe we are just at the beginning of some really amazing opportunities,” stated the Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, in regard to the tourism industry overall. “Our

³⁵¹ (2002) In Lew et al. (2004)

³⁵² The Polar Bear Trademark, in the midst of controversy, currently seems not to be active. (Edge, 2015)

³⁵³ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

government is very supportive. People in the industry are very passionate about tourism.”³⁵⁴

Theme Four: Developing Aurora Tourism

As aurora tourism gains in popularity in Yellowknife, aurora viewing takes on increasing importance and brings with it offshoot products and the necessity for expanded infrastructure, which in turn benefits the economy.

In economic theory, a country exports goods and services in which it has a comparative advantage and imports goods and services in which it has a comparative disadvantage.³⁵⁵ Ohio University in one of its online graduate program lectures states, “In modern society, comparative advantage items are more likely goods rather than services. However, some nations do possess a comparative advantage in services.”³⁵⁶

Several components are taken into consideration when measuring a country’s favourable position in tourism. In the example Yellowknife, it is applicable that “both natural environment and cultural and historical heritage are significant in explaining comparative advantages in tourism.”³⁵⁷ Therefore the location directly under the aurora

³⁵⁴ Tracy St. Denis (Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁵⁵ Tourism is a component of export

³⁵⁶ Ohio University, Online graduate degree programs (2018) “The Law of Comparative Advantages in International Trade.”

³⁵⁷ Algieri et al. (2016) p. 248

belt, enhanced by the many cloudless nights, represents a comparative advantage for Yellowknife in tourism. In addition, it is a resource that is free of cost to explore.

The aurora is an occurrence that can be seen in both the northern and southern polar region. The shimmering colours that create a regularly occurring light show in the sky have fascinated humans since ancient times. Figure 5-5 depicts the spectacle as seen from Yellowknife.



Figure 5-5: Yellowknife, a superb location for viewing the aurora borealis. Source: Yellowknife Online. 2018e.

These shimmering, vivacious lights occur at both poles. In the North, they are called aurora borealis or northern lights, in the South, aurora australis or southern lights. Indigenous peoples spun myths around them, for instance Inuit believed they could see

the spirits of their ancestors dancing in the flaming aurora. In northern European mythology, it was thought that Norse gods built the aurora as a fire bridge to the sky.³⁵⁸ In 2016/17, aurora viewers were 27% of total visitors to the Northwest Territories and contributed close to \$50 million to the NWT economy.³⁵⁹ Together with North American visitors (Canadians and Americans, in this order), three Asian countries are in the top five. Most Aurora travellers come from Japan, after that come tourists from southern Canada, the United States, South Korea, China, the United Kingdom and Australia.³⁶⁰ These figures will be further discussed below.

One reason for selecting Yellowknife over other destinations is the marketing activity by Northwest Territories Tourism, which works strategically to use its advertising budget to the greatest advantage.³⁶¹ In the Northwest Territories, predominantly in the area around Yellowknife, the northern lights can best be seen between September and April, for an average of 200 nights per year – “nearly every night of the late summer, autumn, winter and early spring.”³⁶²

³⁵⁸ EarthSky Communications Inc. (2018)

³⁵⁹ Government of Northwest Territories (2018a)

³⁶⁰ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2014)

³⁶¹ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁶² Spectacular Northwest Territories (2016a)

Several reasons why Yellowknife is the preferred location for aurora viewing, as listed by Spectacular Northwest Territories³⁶³ are:

- Perfect geographical position directly under the aurora belt
- Semi-arid, arctic climate with many clear winter nights
- Dark skies without “light pollution”
- Rather flat landscape that enables unobstructed observation
- Northern lights visible from late August until early April³⁶⁴

Indeed, as Lui and Anger in *Planetary and Space Science*³⁶⁵ explain:

One of the most striking and persistent features in high latitude regions [...] is a fairly uniform belt of diffuse auroral emission extending along the auroral oval. Indications are that this region follows, contributes to, and may in a sense actually define the auroral oval during quiet times. The diffuse belt is sharply defined at its equatorward edge, which is located at an invariant latitude of about 65° in the midnight sector during relatively low magnetic activity [...]. The poleward edge of the region is not as sharply defined but is typically at about 68°.³⁶⁶

Being situated within the aurora belt means the aurora is visible to a much greater extent than in other Canadian municipalities – indeed around the world (cf. Figure 5-7).³⁶⁷ Figure 5-6 shows Yellowknife’s position within the belt.

³⁶³ Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018b)

³⁶⁴ Translated from German by the author, from Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018b)

³⁶⁵ Volume 21, Issue 5, May 1973, Pages 799-802

³⁶⁶ Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018b)

³⁶⁷ An exception is Iceland (cf. Figure 5-7), which has been increasingly promoting aurora tourism. Regardless, despite an approximately 33 percent increase in tourism numbers over 15 years (2000 to 2015), only 600,000 more tourists visited Iceland in 2015 than in 2000.

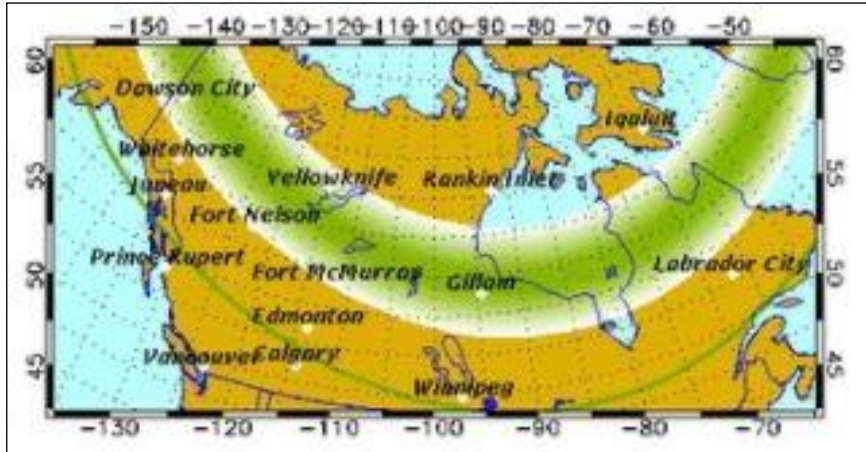


Figure 5-6: Aurora belt above North America. Source: University of Alaska Fairbanks, Geophysical Institute.³⁶⁸

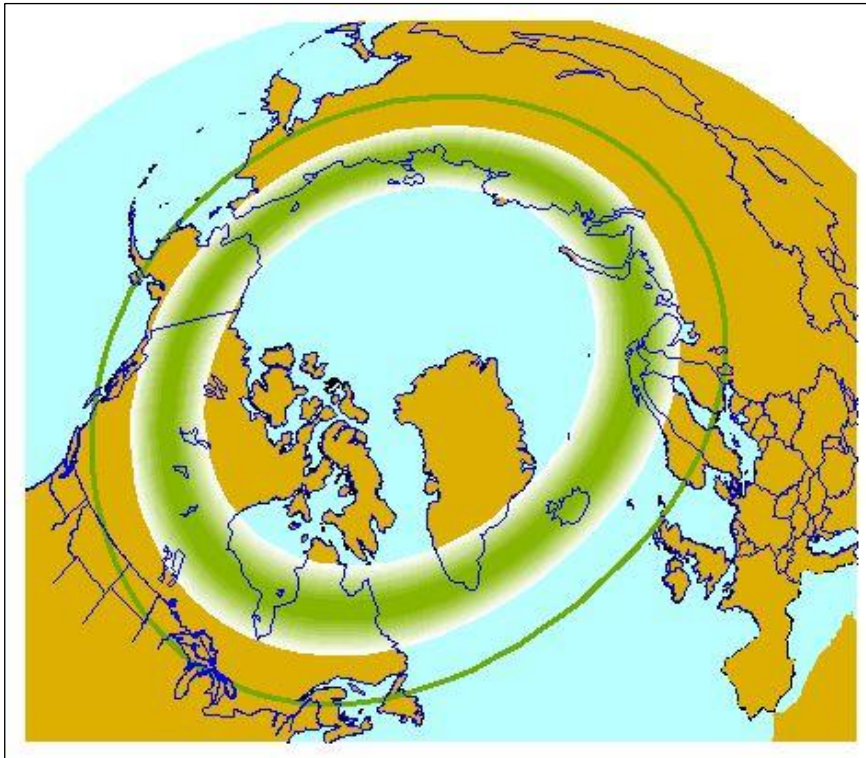


Figure 5-7: Aurora belt worldwide. Source: University of Alaska Fairbanks, Geophysical Institute.

³⁶⁸ University of Alaska Fairbanks. Geophysical Institute (2016a)

Considering this, it is not surprising that travelers from many corners of the world congregate in Yellowknife to observe the celestial phenomenon. The top five countries in the 2010-2011 NWT Visitor Exit Survey³⁶⁹ traveling to the Northwest Territories for aurora viewing were Japan (74% of category); Canada (17%); United States (4%); Korea (2%); and China (1%).

Overall, Japanese visitors dominate aurora tourists. Carpenter (2000) believes to have found reasons, obtained through interviews, surveys, and observations made, for the fascination the Japanese have for the aurora. He believes that the Shinto religion, the most influential aspect of Japanese culture, is at the root of this. Carpenter believes that the aurora has literally become a *kami*,³⁷⁰ a natural phenomenon with religious status, in the beliefs of Japanese for its extraordinary, mysterious quality.

Indeed, compared to Destination Canada's other markets, Canada's North attracted a significant number of visitors. Japanese affinity for the North, according to Destination Canada's research, is not surprising: natural attractions and the northern lights rate at the top on the wish list of Japanese tourists to Canada (each at 45% of long-distance travellers).³⁷¹

Over the years, aurora viewing visitors increased steadily. A decrease occurred in the 2014/15 season, as Figure 5-2 and the territorial figures show.³⁷² This was

³⁶⁹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2013)

³⁷⁰ Among many other, one explanation for *kami* is "natural phenomena (wind, rain, thunder)", which would include the aurora. (the japan times, 2010)

³⁷¹ Destination Canada (2018)

³⁷² Cf. Table 4-2

instigated by forest fires around Yellowknife that caused poor air quality and cancelled flights.³⁷³ “We are curious to see the [visitor] numbers because in 2014 we had the forest fires,” Cathie Bolstad, CEO, Northwest Territories Tourism observed.³⁷⁴ “The research on visitation comes from the GNWT. Visitation numbers from GNWT are issued in a rear-view mirror lens.”³⁷⁵

Overall, Aurora viewing visitors are a growing sector in NWT tourism, as Table 5-3 shows. Interviews and documentary sources confirm this. The northern lights are a natural attraction that can be seen exceptionally well from the Yellowknife area during fall, winter and early spring.³⁷⁶ The 2014/15 numbers show a decline in the territory, even though anecdotally overall visiting experienced a surge in the Yellowknife area (North Slave Region) after the summer season with the forest fires.³⁷⁷

³⁷³ On-site research for this thesis had to be postponed into the next tourist season for this reason.

³⁷⁴ In 2015, the year of the interview, Cathie Bolstad was Executive Director of NWT Tourism. Now her title is CEO.

³⁷⁵ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

³⁷⁶ Cf. also Chapter 4 Yellowknife

³⁷⁷ “From August to end of February, we [at the visitors centre] were up by 6,000 visitors from the previous year.” Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitors Centre, interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Aurora Viewing per Fiscal Year Visitors	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
North Slave Region	5,400	6,800	7,305	15,493	21,191 ³⁷⁸	n/a	n/a	n/a
Visitors NWT	n/a	n/a	n/a	15,700	21,700	16,400	24,300	29,800

Table 5-3: Aurora viewing numbers by fiscal year. Source: NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment (2015). North Slave Region – Tourism Indicators³⁷⁹

Theme Five: Indigenous Tourism³⁸⁰

An important theme identified by interviewees and documentary sources was the significance of Indigenous tourism.³⁸¹ Stakeholders and interview partners across the board engaged in one way or another with this essential topic. Indigenous tourism experiences development and growth in the territory as it provides a viable form of community-based enterprises. Some well-established businesses by Indigenous proprietors in the Yellowknife area are the forerunners, and GNWT ITI³⁸² offers the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program to promote Indigenous tourism.

³⁷⁸ Newest numbers available as of November 2018

³⁷⁹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2015); Government of Northwest Territories (2017)

³⁸⁰ Until recently, “Aboriginal tourism” was the term used in Northwest Territories for tourism offered by First Nations, Inuit and Métis providers. Most recently, a shift has taken place, and the word “Indigenous,” in line with southern Canadian customs, has been adopted. However, “Aboriginal Tourism” is still found throughout the literature and Internet websites.

³⁸¹ Cf. Research question 3: How are Specialized Niches Such as Diamond Tourism and Indigenous Tourism Being Facilitated and Advanced in the Region?

³⁸² Government of Northwest Territories, Industry, Tourism and Investment

The Government of the Northwest Territories “recognizes the growing demand for tourism products based in authentic Aboriginal culture – and that such an industry will have significant economic, community development and cultural value.”³⁸³ It speaks about Indigenous Tourism in the following description:

Traditional ways remain strong in the North amongst all Aboriginal groups willing to share their culture, stories and ways of life. There are opportunities to experience the stories and traditions of the Aboriginal peoples, including festivals like the Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik.

An Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council has been formed in the Northwest Territories to advance and develop Indigenous Tourism.³⁸⁴

Evolution of Indigenous Tourism in Canada

Over approximately the last 20 years, initiatives have been introduced to support authentic Indigenous cultural products and experiences and to counter centuries of appropriation of Indigenous symbols and arts and crafts by non-Indigenous Canadians.³⁸⁵ There has always been demand among tourists visiting Canada to learn (more) about Indigenous heritage, driven by the strong interest of Europeans in particular. Nonetheless, until recently there has been no focused effort to define and support Indigenous cultural tourism.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ <http://www.itl.gov.nt.ca/en/aboriginal-tourism>

³⁸⁴ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2014)

³⁸⁵ Cf. also McLaren (2003)

³⁸⁶ Henry and Hood, BC Campus (2018)

At this point an apparent misconception shall be refuted. McLaren (2003) declares that a drawback to the cultural expression for tourists is that “authentic” depictions do not allow the members of these societies “to become a respected and integral part of the world.”³⁸⁷ They become virtually frozen in time. Not taken into consideration with this viewpoint is that Indigenous participants in “authentic” depictions have lives outside these venues. They are members of the community at large with all its amenities and concerns; they are among other occasional teachers,³⁸⁸ former politicians,³⁸⁹ dog breeders,³⁹⁰ and they are skilled as business people with all of business’ demands. The presenters of Indigenous culture (e.g. the drummers) usually also have jobs; Indigenous tourism in NWT for the presenters is not a full-time occupation, therefore becoming “virtually frozen in time” is not a peril.

Souvenir shops often carried inexpensive replicas of authentic Indigenous arts and crafts made overseas; some still do to this day. Indigenous exhibits and displays for tourism attractions and museums were developed by sometimes well-meaning, sometimes callous non-Native people without consulting with local communities. Even today, we see the Canadian Prairie Indigenous headdress being widely worn, (mis)representing First Nations across Canada.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ Hinch in Lew et al. (2004) p. 251

³⁸⁸ Bobby Drygeese of B. Dene Adventures; Derrald Taylor of Frozen Rock Studio

³⁸⁹ Don Morin of Aurora Village

³⁹⁰ Grant Beck of Beck's Kennels

³⁹¹ Henry and Hood, BC Campus (2018)

Considerable exploitation of Indigenous peoples has taken place over the history of tourism. Land has been expropriated, economic activity stifled by outside interests, and cultural manifestations (such as arts and crafts) have been appropriated³⁹² by outsiders.

In 2007 therefore, the United Nations created the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People,³⁹³ addressing these concerns. This represents a significant achievement in international recognition of fundamental rights, including, but not limited to, self-determination, land use, and natural resources rights. It set a benchmark for the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world (United Nations, 2007).³⁹⁴

In the Northwest Territories, the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council, websites like Indigenous Canada and documents such as “Building the Aboriginal Tourism Product, Development of a Northwest Territories Aboriginal Tourism Sector” (October 2010) and “Aboriginal Tourism: Recommendations for a Strategic Action Plan”³⁹⁵ are designed to promote Indigenous tourism and give support to providers of it.³⁹⁶

³⁹² The act of taking something for one’s own use, usually without the owner’s permission.

³⁹³ United Nations (2008)

³⁹⁴ Henry and Hood, BC Campus (2018)

³⁹⁵ Aboriginal Tourism: Recommendations for a Strategic Action Plan. Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council (July 2013)

³⁹⁶ The University of Northern British Columbia offers a definition of Indigenous Tourism: Indigenous Tourism can be defined as a tourism activity in which Indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction. Aboriginal (cultural) tourism describes *all tourism businesses that are owned or operated by First Nations people, Métis, and Inuit people that incorporates an Aboriginal cultural experience in a manner that is*

The explanation continues: “A tourist visiting an Aboriginal cultural tourism site may experience cultural tourism by looking at a fish wheel and learning about the historical and modern-day significance of salmon to the local people. Interpretation is an important aspect of providing the visitor with a broad understanding of the local culture.”³⁹⁷

Indeed, UNBC suggests that

Indigenous tourism is one of the fastest growing sections of the tourism industry and Indigenous tourism can, if done well, provide opportunities to promote greater cultural understanding while increasing Indigenous peoples’ capacity and economy...³⁹⁸

Today, several successful Indigenous operators are catering to tourists in the vicinity of Yellowknife, such as Aurora Village, Beck’s Kennels, and B. Dene Adventures. Some others are located in outlying, fly-in areas. In a relatively small community like Yellowknife, word broadcasts, and the name of one professionally conducted business received respect and praise in several interviews.³⁹⁹ His business is used as an example of one established on a community-based tourism plan, something to be promoted to other communities.⁴⁰⁰

appropriate, respectful, and true to the Aboriginal culture being presented (Italics theirs). (ATC, 2000). (University of Northern British Columbia, 2018)

³⁹⁷ University of Northern British Columbia (2018)

³⁹⁸ University of Northern British Columbia (2018)

³⁹⁹ B. Dene Adventures, referred to by Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]); Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁰⁰ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Even though Indigenous people were given hardly any regard in the history and development of Yellowknife,⁴⁰¹ when asked how integrated the First Nations population in Yellowknife is, Mayor Heyck responded:

“I would say they are a considerable part of the community, certainly in the tourism sector. There are a number of tour operators that are owned by First Nations business people. We are seeing a remarkable growth in the number of tourists, and the existing companies and infrastructure probably won’t be able to accommodate that growth for much longer without either growing itself or seeing new players coming along.”⁴⁰²

Yellowknife has existing infrastructure, and start-up help is locally available.⁴⁰³

For private businesses to get started in very small, remote communities, however, “huge challenges”⁴⁰⁴ and hurdles exist. It is the role of the Tourism Development Officer (RTO), ITI Tourism, in the respective region to work with communities and get community-based tourism plans established. Amy Lizotte, North Slave⁴⁰⁵ Regional Tourism Development Officer, explained the process.⁴⁰⁶ ITI’s funding programs help them implement that plan, which does not necessarily have to be a community-based tourism plan. “We are putting the onus on the communities themselves to identify their community-based tourism vision, and that includes their culture, their language, their history, their people, their stories,” related the North Slave RTO.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰¹ Price (1967)

⁴⁰² Mark Heyck (Mayor of the City of Yellowknife), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁰³ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018j)

⁴⁰⁴ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁰⁵ Which includes Yellowknife

⁴⁰⁶ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁰⁷ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Band councils or community-based development corporations are encouraged to take an overarching approach. Someone has to take on the administrative business marketing side and “let the community members do what they do best, which is fishing and sewing and storytelling and all those beautiful things people want to come and see, hand games, tournaments; there is all kinds of things that are already happening in the community,” said the Regional Tourism Development Officer.⁴⁰⁸

Action 7 of the City of Yellowknife 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy Background Report⁴⁰⁹ advocates,

“Engage local First Nations in tourism. Many visitors, especially international visitors, are very interested in learning about First-Nations culture. [...] As a starting point for enhancing First-Nations involvement in tourism, invite representatives of Dettah and N’dilo First Nations to attend the Yellowknife-focused tourism sessions (see Action 4) and participate in customer service training sessions (see Action 14) [etc.]”

“Tourism supports families, tradition, culture – all these things that are so important to communities and people up here in the North, our way of life,” the North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer noted, “and it just promotes their way of life.”⁴¹⁰

Indeed, Indigenous communities are often close-knit. The Drygeese family had to consult with their community and Elders before launching their company, B. Dene

⁴⁰⁸ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁰⁹ City of Yellowknife (2014b) p. 23

⁴¹⁰ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Adventures.⁴¹¹ Especially smaller communities are not always ready to host visitors for a tourism experience.⁴¹² “Some Indigenous communities want to provide tourism, others do not,” said Barry Taylor, who operates a tourist lodge in the Barrens.⁴¹³ He believes that in some cases a hindrance might be “shyness or a feeling of inferiority [on the part of the community population]. Mentorship would help to develop Indigenous tourism.”

As the marketing agency, NWT Tourism wants to see more Indigenous, more community-based product like Délı̄ne,⁴¹⁴ like B. Dene Adventures that is market-ready and travel-trade ready, according to the Executive Director.⁴¹⁵ “It is the government’s mandate to develop if there is a vacuum, with our agency identifying opportunities and partnerships.”⁴¹⁶

The Executive Director of NWT Tourism observed that a board member from a tiny, remote community has an unsophisticated fish camp at a ferry crossing, where people stopped to see what she was doing. When the suggestion was made that she should upgrade and do demonstrations about how fish camps still provide for northern families, she responded that she would never consider doing that:

⁴¹¹ Bobby Drygeese (Owner, B. Dene Adventures), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴¹² Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴¹³ Barry Taylor (Owner, Arctic Safaris), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴¹⁴ A community on the western shore of Great Bear Lake

⁴¹⁵ At the time of the interview in 2015

⁴¹⁶ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Everything in the world changes when money changes hands. I'd have to do it on *their* time, *their* schedule, and it's no longer the family fish camp. It'll never be a business for me.⁴¹⁷

Even though an example of an economically successful fish market enterprise for tourists exists across the river, she prefers to keep her fish camp authentically Indigenous and manageable, albeit less attractive for tourists. She further believes she would give up control if and when commercialism dictated the venture. Cathie Bolstad, Executive Director of NWT Tourism, observed that tourists are eager to experience the Indigenous culture, but many are not ready for what is really authentic, like the rudimentary fish camp.

While the data suggest that some discreet hand-holding of the visitors will have to take place by the tour operator, education provided by some experienced Indigenous tourism providers is absolutely valuable. There is opportunity for growth in the NWT, explained the Executive Director, Northwest Territories Tourism, but it will take time.⁴¹⁸

During the field work in Yellowknife, there was talk of examples of tourism operators in places who did not appear at pre-appointed times and left the tourists dependent on them stranded. This is anecdotal, but the fact that these tales exist is detrimental for (Indigenous) tourism. One interview partner who wants to remain anonymous also talked of unreliable employees who regularly did not come to work.

⁴¹⁷ Fish camp operator as related by Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴¹⁸ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

This makes it difficult to conduct a business where guests pay for the services, and the services are inadequate or fall short of expectation.⁴¹⁹

A barrier to developing tourism in a community is sometimes a shortage of accommodation, and a deficiency or absence of restaurants,⁴²⁰ although there may be a co-op store with very high-priced food, explained the RTO for North Slave Region.⁴²¹ She works in partnership with the economic development corporation to move forward with all tourism projects. “It is also the people on the ground and the potential operators that are key for the communities,” she elaborates.

For accommodation shortage, there may be a solution in a model that was developed in the Italian Alps. The *Albergo Diffuso* ("scattered hotel") provides rooms, decorated in an authentic local style, that are distributed in different buildings throughout the town but overseen by one manager. A traditional breakfast might be served at a local café, community hall or in the kitchen of one of the houses. It is a type of “B & B village.”⁴²²

Representatives in economic matters are the for-profit economic development arms of the bands. They are Denesoline Corporation in Lutsel K'e First Nation;

⁴¹⁹ Interview with former Indigenous tourism provider, September 2015, Yellowknife.

⁴²⁰ Rather than expecting food at the destination, an alternative could perhaps be to fly groceries in with the group of travelers

⁴²¹ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴²² The New York Times (2010).

Yellowknives Dene First Nation has Det'on Cho Corporation, and Tł̨ch̨ has the Tł̨ch̨ Investment Corporation.

The answer for overcoming some obstacles, believes Amy Lizotte,⁴²³ is “packaging the right way.” Especially with scheduled flights in place, this can be taken as a foundation. “All the communities in the Tł̨ch̨ Region are definitely interested,” related the RTO. It may be a rustic, an authentic experience, with tourists staying in people’s houses and eating with them, and organized activities during the day. ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development is letting the bands take the lead to outline their vision and creating the tourism development plan.

Another aspect of readiness for tourism is carrying capacity.⁴²⁴ It is an overwhelming experience for a small northern community when cruise ships come in and the passengers with all their expectations disembark.⁴²⁵ It is further troubling when these tourists want to buy genuine Indigenous articles but are not willing to pay the price for e.g. a pair of beautiful beaded moccasins.⁴²⁶ A learning process will be necessary to satisfy all parties involved. Overall, however, the communication partners were optimistic.

⁴²³ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴²⁴ This is not “carrying capacity” in the strictest sense as tourists leave the area again, but a constant over-capacity can have a detrimental effect on the community population and create a strain on its resources.

⁴²⁵ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018c)

⁴²⁶ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Theme Six: Existing Capacity for Tourism

Intertwined in the responses of all interviewees and scattered throughout the documentary data sources were assessments of the impact of existing capacity on tourism. Interviewees and documents identified key areas of concern. These are discussed individually, below. Some key areas of concern include education for tourist operators and hospitality personnel, the regulatory framework for tourist operators, recreational facilities, accommodation and retail landscapes, local transportation and visitor information. We will explore these sub-themes on a case-by-case basis, in this section, beginning with education for tourist operators.

Education

In tourism, perhaps more than in some other service industries, well-trained staff and personnel is the key to a successful outcome. In today's world of social media, where opinions and comments are broadcast and magnified, a vast number of people can be influenced, both positively and negatively.⁴²⁷ With a relatively small population, Yellowknife is facing several challenges. As Millier Dickinson Blais in association with Impact Economics points out:

Yellowknife has high participation and employment rates and low unemployment rates. The result is very little 'slack' in the workforce. New and expanding businesses are challenged to find the workers they need. Those who aren't working may have limited literacy and numeracy skills, preventing them from entering the workforce. Industries outside the mining sector such as tourism and retail cannot compete with mining

⁴²⁷ An example is the website www.tripadvisor.ca

sector salaries and face high levels of turnover. The labour force challenges faced by businesses in Yellowknife are exacerbated by national and international competition for talent and by the growing trend of a fly-in/fly-out rather than resident labour force.⁴²⁸

It seems that a concerted effort must be made, while attracting tourists, to also attract hospitality professionals, if necessary from outside NWT. A well trained, reliable workforce is absolutely essential to the success of tourism. Wages offered must be comparable to those industry-wide, and incentives have to be built in to create a pull factor and also for retention.⁴²⁹ Especially employees who arrive in NWT already fully trained and/or with additional languages are deserving of adequate wages. Perhaps the cruise ship industry can be examined for its recruiting practices, or establishments in cyclical tourism environments⁴³⁰ where demands on personnel are high during the season and free time is limited.

Focus IV in the “Tourism 2020” (2016) guide is listed as Skills Development to achieve “a sustainable, professional, skilled, and trained workforce.” Tourism development must begin with “an assessment of the Northwest Territory’s current and future labour market needs and challenges, and identification of goals, actions, timelines and resources,” describes the guide.

The Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment’s Tourism Training Fund (TTF) “is designed to fund short-term training opportunities for tourism workers to gain

⁴²⁸ City of Yellowknife (2013) 2014-2019 Economic Development Strategy Background Report

⁴²⁹ While “industries such as tourism and retail cannot compete with mining sector salaries,” see above, it must be considered that many people do not desire to work in the mines.

⁴³⁰ E.g. winter or summer resorts

new skills or to upgrade skills and assist tourism operators in the NWT to support and encourage a well-trained tourism labour force.”

There is also the matter of foreign languages. With the rising numbers from the Asian tourism market, demand for speakers of these languages is real. In 2015, Yellowknife won an exemption from a ban for hiring temporary foreign workers.⁴³¹ “It means a great deal because Yellowknife is getting a lot of Asian tourists,” explained Grant Beck, who relies on foreign workers as translators for his dog sledding business. “Most of the agencies in China speak only Chinese,” he noted. “They demand Chinese workers, and if there are none available, communication is slow and very difficult.”⁴³²

Tourism education in Northwest Territories is not very well developed as no university or college is offering tourism programs. The awareness is there that improvement is indicated.

Licensing

Anyone offering guided commercial tourism activities in the Northwest Territories is considered a tourism operator under the Tourism Act and requires a Tourism Operator Licence. This Licence must be renewed annually. The Tourism Act and Tourism Regulations are the legislation that oversee the licensing of tourism operators in the NWT. A 21-page manual guides the applicant through the process.⁴³³

⁴³¹CBC North (2015b)

⁴³² CBC North (2015b)

⁴³³ Government of Northwest Territories (2018b)

Amy Lizotte, Tourism Development Officer with ITI Tourism, North Slave Region, has issuing licences as part of her mandate. She works with all the operators in her capacities to license them,⁴³⁴ as do the other RTOs in their regions. On behalf of ITI, they deliver programs and services to tourism operators as Regional Tourism Officers, and they are responsible for enforcing the Tourism Act and Regulations.

The Tłıchǫ government offers its own programming, an on-the-land program⁴³⁵ with certification in all kinds of outdoor activities: firearms, wilderness first-aid, boat safety, small-engine repair, and bear safety.

Unlicensed operators do not feel obliged to follow safety rules, nor do they have proper insurance for their activities, putting tourists at risk, according to CBC North.⁴³⁶ Operators following the rules pay large sums for licensing and insurance, and they demand more controls and fines for unlicensed ones, the article states.

Licensing is necessary as it contributes to the safety and wellbeing of the visitors and adds to an enjoyable holiday.

Infrastructure

That infrastructure is needed to aspire to a successful tourist destination is an established fact. An example is the 2023 Canada Winter Games, for which Yellowknife

⁴³⁴ Amy Lizotte (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴³⁵ Tłıchǫ Government (2017) Tłıchǫ ımbè Program

⁴³⁶ CBC North (2018a)

considered to bid. The cost was estimated at just over \$50 million, including \$11.3 million for an athletes' village. An aquatic pool would also be necessary for the synchronised-swimming events. The main obstacles recognized were the number of hotel rooms needed, as well as an estimated 4,500 volunteers. At least 1,000 volunteers, it was projected, were needed from outside the city and housed during the event. Yellowknife City Council voted not to proceed with a bid.

The Canada Winter Games would have been beneficial for tourism and would put Northwest Territories on the map as a desirable destination, the Executive Director of Northwest Territories Tourism explained.⁴³⁷ Despite that, since some of the infrastructure was not in place, it was not feasible to continue with the bidding process.

Accommodations and Restaurants

A variety of types of accommodation are available in Yellowknife, as Table 5-4 illustrates, such as hotels, motels, bed & breakfast and three campgrounds. In addition, there are air B&B establishments and the option to “house-sit” for absent owners.

⁴³⁷ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

Tourism Accommodation Properties & Units in Yellowknife

Accommodation Type	Total Properties	Total Units (Rooms)
Bed and Breakfast (estimates; units for 7 properties unknown)	27	69
Campground	1	104
Condo/Suites	1	1
Hotel ⁴³⁸ (estimates; units for 2 properties unknown)	12	837
Motel/Inn	2	63
TOTAL	43	1,074
TOTAL (without campground)	42	970

Table 5-4: Tourism Accommodations in Yellowknife. Source: City of Yellowknife 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy Background Report.

The Northwest Territories Tourism Fact Sheet⁴³⁹ announces, “Over 80 hotels, motels and bed and breakfast type accommodations are located throughout the NWT.” With fluctuating visitor numbers due to a strong influx during aurora viewing season, it can happen that during that period sometimes there is a shortage of beds in the community.⁴⁴⁰ “We get overflow from the hotels,” said Ian Henderson, owner of Arden

⁴³⁸ Since the publication of this report, the Chateau Nova Hotel Yellowknife with “141 spacious rooms and suites” opened. Chateau Nova (2018)

⁴³⁹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2014)

⁴⁴⁰ CBC North (2017a)

Avenue Bed & Breakfast. “We also service the airlines; if flights are cancelled, we get the hotel overflow as well.”

Eating out is of course essential to tourism. Yellowknife offers restaurants for every taste and pocketbook. The Northwest Territories Tourism Fact Sheet lets it be known that “there are plenty of restaurants across the territory providing delicious northern specialties such as moose stew, fresh whitefish, and bannock.” On its “Foodies”⁴⁴¹ page, the City of Yellowknife displays some delectable fare.

Transportation

Arriving at their holiday destination, tourists want mobility. Yellowknife offers several ways to navigate the city or reach outlying areas. Besides Yellowknife, there are five designated airports within reach.⁴⁴² Three charter airlines take visitors to remote locations.⁴⁴³ For tourism, film work, research and exploration, five helicopter services transport passengers and freight.⁴⁴⁴

Road transportation includes two motor coach operations, a limousine service, airport transfers, and a meet-and-greet service.⁴⁴⁵ Yellowknife has three taxi companies, one of which offers 24-hour service.⁴⁴⁶ In the category of public transit, Yellowknife

⁴⁴¹ City of Yellowknife (2014e)

⁴⁴² worldweb.com Travel (2017)

⁴⁴³ worldweb.com Travel (2017)

⁴⁴⁴ worldweb.com Travel (2017)

⁴⁴⁵ worldweb.com Travel (2017)

⁴⁴⁶ worldweb.com Travel (2017)

City Transit operates three bus routes.⁴⁴⁷ A range of vehicle rental firms offer independent transportation.⁴⁴⁸

Finally, Yellowknife centre, including Old Town, is confined enough for navigation on foot. Many hotels are within walking distance of most points of interest, and for activities such as aurora viewing, organized transportation is made available.

Visitors Centre / Information / Spectacular NWT

A vital component of tourism is information, whether in the form of marketing and advertising or on site for guiding tourists on their visit. In the last few years, several electronic applications (apps) were designed which visitors can operate on their cell phones and tablets. For the French-speaking market, CDÉTNO (Conseil de développement économique des Territoire du Nord-Ouest), “a non-profit organization that promotes, stimulates and supports economic development and employability of Francophones and Francophiles of Northwest Territories,” developed a bilingual app, BaladoDiscovery Old Yellowknife, “for a self-guided tour of 33 points of interest, presented in photos and sounds.” The application also works offline after downloading.

The Old Town Soundwalk App is another self-guided tour that digitally guides through this part of Yellowknife. During the walk the historical significance of the buildings in the area is addressed, and actual Old Town residents relate stories from the

⁴⁴⁷ worldweb.com Travel (2017)

⁴⁴⁸ worldweb.com Travel (2017)

past. Visitors can also set out on their own on walking tours or employ one of the resident tour guides who offer a wealth of local information and lore.

A focal point for tourists until 2017 was the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre on the shores of a pond near Frame Lake, which provided information from knowledgeable staff, a crafts and souvenir section and an educational trail with artifacts. Before the 2014 opening of the NWT Diamond Centre, it also housed diamond exhibits. Due to structural problems,⁴⁴⁹ the Northern Frontier Visitor Centre terminated operation, and the Northern Frontier Visitors Association requested to dissolve its contracts with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the City of Yellowknife,⁴⁵⁰ which both provided operating funds to help pay for visitor services. These contracts, however, did not sufficiently cover the servicing costs of the steadily increasing number of visitors to Yellowknife. Since the closure of the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre (NFVC), the City of Yellowknife has opened a temporary Visitors Centre inside City Hall. The City and the Government of NWT are discussing the ongoing and future delivery of visitor services in Yellowknife.⁴⁵¹ ⁴⁵² It is currently unclear whether the city will be expected to operate the visitors centre permanently. A council vote⁴⁵³ at the end of March will determine the next six months.

⁴⁴⁹ The building was built partially in the lake, which had an effect every spring with frost-heaving. Tracy Therrien (Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitor Centre), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁵⁰ City of Yellowknife (2017b)

⁴⁵¹ Yellowknife Online (2018d)

⁴⁵² The City of Yellowknife stated on August 15, 2017: “Currently the City of Yellowknife has a temporary location to offer visitor services in the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.”

⁴⁵³ CBC North (2018)

Outcomes for the NFVC have surpassed anything that could have been expected, said Tracy Therrien, Executive Director, in 2015.⁴⁵⁴ From retail and boardroom rentals that are increasing every year, to being number one on TripAdvisor, expectations are surely being met, and being asked by the government to conduct a training seminar for all the visitors centres in the Northwest Territories is the highest compliment one can receive.⁴⁵⁵ This scenario shows that visitors to an area need a focal point where they can direct their questions to get advice.

Relationships with organizations⁴⁵⁶ interfacing with the NFVC were “exceptional,” reported the Executive Director.⁴⁵⁷ When asked about where to place the NFVC on the scale of planning / marketing / advertising, etc., she replied that it is “the end result of marketing. It is not our job to increase tourism; we take care of [the tourists] when they arrive. They can come here as often as they wish,”⁴⁵⁸ continued the Executive Director. Information material from the North Slave communities Behchokò and Lutsel K'e is available, and from all the Regions of the Northwest Territories if provided. As part of support to the local tourism operator members, the NFVC provides space where they can display their brochures, explained the Executive Director of the

⁴⁵⁴ Tracy Therrien (Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitor Centre), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁵⁵ Tracy Therrien (Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitor Centre), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁵⁶ Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment; the City of Yellowknife; NWT Tourism

⁴⁵⁷ Tracy Therrien (Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitor Centre), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁵⁸ “In the statistics, they are treated as repeat visitors, so our numbers don’t get confused.” Tracy Therrien (Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitor Centre), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

NFVC. It can be hoped for the tourists landing in Yellowknife that this vibrant, vital centre can be reinstated some time soon.

Another source of information is Spectacular Northwest Territories,⁴⁵⁹ the very active Destination Marketing Organization of Northwest Territories Tourism that operates on behalf of the whole territory. On the website, information on all aspects of NWT tourism, including Yellowknife operators can be found, and a hardcopy of the Northwest Territories Explorer Guide can be requested.⁴⁶⁰ Spectacular Northwest Territories maintains a mailing list and sends comprehensive information letters by email. It contains a wealth of material designed to entice people to consider the Northwest Territories as an upcoming vacation destination, informed the Executive Director, Northwest Territories Tourism.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018c)

⁴⁶⁰ Yellowknife Online (2018d)

⁴⁶¹ Cathie Bolstad (Executive Director / CEO, NWT Tourism), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Northwest Territories Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) lays emphasis on tourism development. On its website,⁴⁶² 54 service programs are listed in detail, twelve are directed at Tourism.⁴⁶³ This strongly suggests that the GNWT⁴⁶⁴ is not only in support of tourism, it takes active steps to advance it. We explored the themes that have been prioritized by both government and private sector interests in Chapter Five. In this Chapter we discuss their relevance with regard to the research questions posed by this thesis.

1 How do local government decision-makers at the territorial and municipal level position the tourist industry in relation to current urban and regional development plans?

Interviewing government decision makers, tourism providers and speaking with Yellowknife residents during two fact-gathering visits, it became apparent that this city does not just pay lip service to tourism but is committed to it. It has a unique advantage – that of being best positioned in the aurora belt;⁴⁶⁵ it has long, light summer days and negligible rain fall, and a vibrant Indigenous culture – all attributes that are attractive to vacation seekers.

⁴⁶² Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018j)

⁴⁶³ The programs are available to all of the Northwest Territories. They are the Community Tourism Coordinator Program; Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution Program; Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program; Campgrounds; Tourism Business Mentorship Program; Tourism Operator Licencing; Tourism Product Development Tools; Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program; Tourism Safety Planning; Tourism Training Fund Program; Tourism Training Resources; and Youth Mentorship for Tourism Program.

⁴⁶⁴ Government of Northwest Territories

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. Tourism - Theme Four: Developing Aurora Tourism

In September 2016, a new hotel opened its doors in the city. (Even though this is a corporate enterprise, the City had to issue permits for buildings of this nature to be erected within city limits.) The Chateau Nova Yellowknife is a full-service, state-of-the-art hospitality resource with 141 rooms and suites, and conference and meeting rooms.⁴⁶⁶ In light of the growing popularity of the Northwest Territories as a destination for business travel, the conference and meeting rooms are welcome and much-needed additions to the facilities already existing in the city.

Complementing these, a recent addition is the Northwest Territories Conference Bureau.⁴⁶⁷ Its mandate is to provide assistance to organizations in planning to host a meeting or conference in the Northwest Territories. It strives to accommodate any size delegation, and for groups of over 100 people, it has connections to a network of volunteers that add services, in both English and French, like information desks, attendee welcoming, and hospitality services.

At the level of the territorial government, in February 2014, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) announced a \$2.8 million contribution “to support tourism development in the Northwest Territories,”⁴⁶⁸ including just over \$1.4 million for tourism projects supported by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), and \$1.4 million in funding for NWT Tourism. ITI’s tourism projects will include “research, the development of a visitor exit survey,

⁴⁶⁶ In addition WiFi, a restaurant and lounge, and amenities like steam room, sauna, and fitness centre. Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018e)

⁴⁶⁷ Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018f)

⁴⁶⁸ Government of Northwest Territories (2014) Economic Opportunities Strategy

community tourism development, and training activities.” An emphasis will be placed on five communities with emerging tourism opportunities: Lutselk’e, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Délı̄ne and Tuktoyaktuk, which demonstrate “vision in pursuing tourism for economic development, the well-being of their residents, and cultural vibrancy.”⁴⁶⁹

In addition, Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment is offering many programs and services aimed at tourism, several specifically in aid of Indigenous tourism.

These examples of governmental support show dedication and commitment to the local tourism industry for years into the future.

2 What plans are being made to develop infrastructure and capacity in this area?

In June 2014, the City of Yellowknife introduced the “2015-2019 Tourism Strategy.”⁴⁷⁰ Among the 18 proposed, Actions 1 through 8 are directed at enhancing Yellowknife’s tourism management and partnership model. Some key points, in condensed form, are:

- Hire a Meeting and Marketing Coordinator
- Pursue authority from GNWT to levy a hotel (tourist accommodation) tax
- Maintain the role of Northern Frontier Visitor Association for the next contract term or until a DMO is established

⁴⁶⁹ Government of Northwest Territories (2014) Economic Opportunities Strategy

⁴⁷⁰ City of Yellowknife (2014a)

- Continue participating in the organizing committee for annual NWTT [Northwest Territories Tourism] Conference & AGM. For Yellowknife-based conferences, help organize / support an add-on Yellowknife-focused session
- Continue City participation on the NFVA Board and NWTT Tourism Marketing Committee
- Establish a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) / Destination Management Organization (DMO).

Several Actions have been accomplished in the first year, which speaks to the dedication of the stakeholders.⁴⁷¹ In the case of the Meeting and Marketing Coordinator, the jurisdictional boundaries are not clear. With the establishment of the Northwest Territories Conference Bureau in 2014,⁴⁷² is a Meeting and Marketing Coordinator for the City still needed? Would his/her role be different from that of the Conference Bureau representative? A submission was put forth to City Council in 2014 on developing a DMO but not approved.

Yellowknife had with the Northern Frontier⁴⁷³ Visitors Centre an information focal point for visitors with increasing drop-in numbers. The visitors centre's governing body, the not-for-profit Northern Frontier Visitors Association, received funding in 2014⁴⁷⁴ primarily from merchandise sales, from the Government of Northwest Territories,⁴⁷⁵ and CanNor.⁴⁷⁶ The role of Northern Frontier Visitor Association was

⁴⁷¹ Having completed the individual Actions was indicated in an interview with City staff; details were not disclosed.

⁴⁷² Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2017).

⁴⁷³ The name is likely derived from the division of the Northwest Territories in 1983 into six tourism regions. Northern Frontier was the region around Yellowknife, Hamley (1991) reveals.

⁴⁷⁴ Recordings of Northern Frontier Visitors Association, 2015 Annual General Meeting, Thursday, May 20th, 2015

⁴⁷⁵ Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment

⁴⁷⁶ Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

maintained until after closure of the visitors centre in mid-May 2017. The Association voted in October of that year to disband.⁴⁷⁷ The tourism information centre is currently positioned in City Hall until permanent quarters are found and jurisdiction⁴⁷⁸ has been established.

The City of Yellowknife is currently seeking a change to the territorial Cities, Towns and Villages Act, which would allow the City of Yellowknife to implement an accommodation levy from over-night stays. The monies collected would be used to fund tourism initiatives, primarily the creation of a destination marketing organization.⁴⁷⁹ This measure is necessary especially after closure of the Visitors Centre. The City of Yellowknife urgently needs this source of income after the GNWT⁴⁸⁰ has cut its tourism support, i.e. funding that was provided to the Northern Frontier Visitors Association.⁴⁸¹

As stated above, the funds would be used to appoint a destination marketing organization (DMO), an institution for tourism marketing. This would be no substitute for the loss of the information centre as this provides visitors with information about a destination once they have arrived. In many communities, however, as explained by the City of Yellowknife website's FAQ section, the information centre is operated by the DMO.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ CBC North (2017b)

⁴⁷⁸ Between City and Territory

⁴⁷⁹ Deneen Everett, Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, in a follow-up email to the interview Aug. 22, 2017. Cf. also Chapter Tourism in Yellowknife

⁴⁸⁰ Government of Northwest Territories

⁴⁸¹ Hansard Archives, 18th Assembly, 3rd Session, Thursday, March 15, 2018, p. 3897

⁴⁸² City of Yellowknife (2017c)

The same website asks the question how important tourism is in Yellowknife's economy.

Tourism contributes to the local economy \$250,000 a day, or over \$90 million a year and even more when purchases from local suppliers and such are added. Many businesses, which employ hundreds of people in Yellowknife, depend on tourism. An Accommodation Levy used to market Yellowknife as a tourism destination, will help to [...] strengthening the local economy.⁴⁸³

It is apparent from these efforts that Yellowknife, its government and its citizens recognize the value of tourism to their community and take measures to keep the momentum to attract increasing numbers of visitors.

On the importance of tourism in the economy overall, Hinch⁴⁸⁴ cautions that tourism should not be slated to become the only source for economic income in a community but rather one element in a diversified range of options. Tourism development should also be held at a volume that allows the individual communities to control and manage it effectively. Yellowknife has not reached its tourism capacity, as the recent opening of the Hotel Chateau Nova⁴⁸⁵ demonstrates, and it is economically well diversified with acting as a hub for mining activity in NWT, as well as providing employment at two levels of government.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ City of Yellowknife (2017c)

⁴⁸⁴ In Hall and Johnston (1995)

⁴⁸⁵ Chateau Nova (2018)

⁴⁸⁶ Municipal and territorial

3 How are specialized niches such as Diamond Tourism and Indigenous Tourism being facilitated and advanced in the region?

In view of current trends in the tourism sector, e.g. cultural experience and eco travel, it is indicated to examine how Yellowknife and the North Slave Region facilitate especially Indigenous tourism and whether there are indications of diamond tourism being endorsed.

In 2004, the City of Yellowknife commissioned the study “The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in the Northwest Territories.”⁴⁸⁷ It promotes a type of tourism that includes the element of diamonds. For various reasons – the mines not accepting visitors, the secondary industry of cutting and polishing atrophying, and no concerted, collaborative efforts made to promote diamond tourism, it never gained traction. As the National Diamond Strategy states:⁴⁸⁸

Current Canadian mines and diamond cutting/polishing facilities are not amenable to large-scale tourism development. Factors such as remote locations, poor weather conditions, and the difficulty in retrofitting operations to deal with security, workplace disruptions and workplace safety are significant barriers. However, future developments in the diamond industry could potentially incorporate tourism aspects with proper planning and incentives.

Today in 2018, diamond tourism is no longer a topic of discussion.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁷ The North Group (2004)

⁴⁸⁸ National Diamond Strategy (2004) p. 13

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. Theme Three Promoting Diamond Tourism

Indigenous tourism, on the other hand, is developing well. A fair portion of the \$1.4 million in funding by CanNor earmarked for NWT Tourism,⁴⁹⁰ with an emphasis on communities with emerging tourism opportunities,⁴⁹¹ will most likely go towards the development of Indigenous community-based tourism.

The Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment employs a Tourism Development Officer for (among other) the North Slave Region.⁴⁹² The RTO⁴⁹³ talked of the tourism development programs brought into the communities, the initiatives taken by the Indigenous population and the evolving of community-based tourism plans. Economic development corporations exist in several communities in the North Slave Region; Lutsel K'e First Nation has Denesoline Corporation,⁴⁹⁴ Yellowknives Dene First Nation has Det'on Cho Corporation,⁴⁹⁵ and Tłıchǫ has Tłıchǫ Investment Corporation.⁴⁹⁶ Tourism is a desirable alternative to the two-weeks-in, two-weeks-out rhythm of work in the diamond mines, which is disruptive for family and community life. A tourism infrastructure is therefore being developed in several communities.

In the area of Yellowknife, several successful Indigenous operators are catering to tourists, such as Aurora Village, Beck's Kennels, and B. Dene Adventures. Some are located in outlying, fly-in areas.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. 1 How do local government decision-makers at the territorial and municipal level position the tourist industry in relation to current urban and regional development plans?

⁴⁹¹ Lutselk'e, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Deline and Tuktoyaktuk

⁴⁹² In which Yellowknife is located

⁴⁹³ (ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁴⁹⁴ Denesoline Corporation (2018)

⁴⁹⁵ Det'on Cho Corporation (2018)

⁴⁹⁶ Tłıchǫ Government (2017)

Websites like Indigenous Canada⁴⁹⁷ and documents such as “Building the Aboriginal Tourism Product, Development of a Northwest Territories Aboriginal Tourism Sector”⁴⁹⁸ and “Aboriginal Tourism: Recommendations for a Strategic Action Plan (Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council)”⁴⁹⁹ are designed to promote Indigenous tourism.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people approach tourism development with quiet determination that signals to the world that they are ready and willing to be participants in the tourism scene.

Summary

This study was designed to bring insights into the travel industry in the Yellowknife area. Tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy that is growing in importance. As a renewable resource it is valuable in a territory where the GDP is top-heavy with resource extraction and public administration.⁵⁰⁰ This work demonstrates that support by stakeholders and both levels of government results in dedication and commitment to the local tourism industry for years into the future. It also shows that Yellowknife and its citizens recognise the value of tourism to their community by taking targeted measures to attract increasing numbers of visitors.

⁴⁹⁷ Indigenous Canada (2018)

⁴⁹⁸ October 2010

⁴⁹⁹ July 2013

⁵⁰⁰ C.f. Table 5-1

During the research phase, the question of this work's merit arose – what makes it a worthy contribution to the works already in existence? Even though Carpenter (2000) and Noakes (2009) in the last two decades researched specialized niches of tourism in Yellowknife, no contemporary study on the status of tourism overall around Yellowknife could be found. This researcher endeavoured to make a contribution that would in part fill this gap. In particular the field of Indigenous tourism that has experienced growth in recent years was explored. In addition, the study examined the impact of tourism on the economy of Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. The aurora borealis, even though written about at length, has hardly been connected with tourism. With an ideal position under the aurora belt and favourable climate, Yellowknife is well suited for aurora tourism, a fact that was included in the research for this thesis.

Tourism's significance in the world economy is rising. Worldwide it generated US\$ 1.3 trillion in export income in 2012, and numbers for 2016 show US\$ 1.4 trillion in tourism earnings.⁵⁰¹ Tourism is making a substantial contribution to the Northwest Territories economy. Visitors spent \$97 million in the territory in the 2010-2011 tourist season.⁵⁰² It is therefore worthwhile and of significance to illuminate how this northern region conducts tourism and to ask the questions, what makes it a working model and what makes the region a suitable destination?

⁵⁰¹ The World Bank (2018)

⁵⁰² Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2013), 2010-2011 NWT Visitor Exit Survey Report

At first, the Northwest Territories, due to its remoteness, does not seem to be a particularly desirable destination for travel. Upon closer examination, however, a different impression arises. Due to its position directly beneath the aurora belt and many cloudless nights throughout the year, Yellowknife is ideally situated for observing the northern lights, the aurora borealis. It is therefore a popular tourist destination. Especially vacationers from Japan, China and South Korea travel to the Northwest Territories for this purpose. Add-on, well-liked activities to aurora viewing are for example dog sledding and fishing. Marketing efforts examine closely the preferences of the different markets and target promotions to countries based on their favourite activities.

Business travel numbers are also on the rise. The NWT Conference Bureau is a focal point in coordinating conventions and helping to avoid shortages in accommodation. Almost half of tourism spending in the NWT is derived from business travel, which offers visitors a chance of a uniquely northern experience. Increasingly more business travellers are engaging in guided tourism activities during their business trip. This somewhat contradicts Jacobsen's prediction of 1994 for the Arctic tourists of "tomorrow:" he foresees among other more freedom, independence, self-centredness, and individuality.⁵⁰³

Other reasons to travel to Yellowknife are visiting friends and relatives, general touring, fishing, hunting, and outdoor adventure. In almost all categories the numbers

⁵⁰³ Jacobsen (1994)

are rising steadily,⁵⁰⁴ except during the 2014/2015 season, where forest fires in the summer caused flight cancellations and affected air quality. The following year, visitor numbers increased again and have been gradually rising.

Yellowknife's population is approximately 31 percent Indigenous,⁵⁰⁵ and a growing segment of the travel industry is tourism product offered by Indigenous providers. Even though not yet of significant proportions, Indigenous tourism is steadily developing with a number of enterprises in the greater Yellowknife area. Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment is offering many services aimed at tourism and several specifically at Indigenous tourism.

A major contributor to NWT and Yellowknife economy is diamond mining. In 2004, a study was conducted about the feasibility of diamond tourism.⁵⁰⁶ Comparisons were made with locations in South Africa, Australia, The Netherlands, Brazil and Israel that successfully combined gemstones with tourism experience. Numerous recommendations were made for diamond tourism in Northwest Territories but did not develop further than the creation of the Northwest Territories Diamond Centre. In the end, the project did not go off the ground. As Noakes (2009) identified, it was for absence of a champion or champions, for security reasons around visiting the mines, for insufficiency of secondary industry of cutting and polishing in Yellowknife and for general lack of interest. It is unfortunate that the City of Yellowknife does not seem to

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Figure 5-1

⁵⁰⁵ Yellowknife Statistical Profile (2016)

⁵⁰⁶ The North Group (2004)

be interested in actively generating a connection between its diamond industry and its tourism activity.

Before diamonds, there was gold. During a large part of the last century it was mined in the Yellowknife area. The initial settlement was created in Yellowknife Bay, and when room became sparse and sanitary conditions became intolerable, today's Yellowknife was created several kilometers to the southwest as something akin to an edge city. Old Town still exists with some original buildings such as the Wild Cat Café but understandably is lacking modern appeal. If the squalor could be eliminated but the area otherwise preserved in its originality, it would be a testament to the history of the city with numerous colourful stories. Perhaps it would qualify for UNESCO World Heritage designation, which often boosts local economies by stimulating tourism. In addition, UNESCO funds and supervises numerous efforts to preserve and restore sites around the world.⁵⁰⁷

Yellowknife is surrounded by vast landscapes that Indigenous people call home, but few roads and fewer amenities that travelers expect exist in the adjoining area. To draw tourists, certain circumstances must be in place: the destination has to be reachable by affordable means, accommodations, sustenance and guidance have to be available, and “tourism product” is required. For what reason, therefore, do people travel to Yellowknife?

⁵⁰⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica (2018)

For one, Yellowknife is a city with all modern comforts. It is the capital of the Northwest Territories; most government employees live there. It has natural beauty, bright, warm summers and scant rainfall. Its people are exceptionally friendly, and many will go out of their way to help visitors, as the researcher experienced. It is well connected via its airport to the world beyond. But there is a unique factor that tips the scales. Due to its favourable positioning within the aurora belt, Yellowknife registered the trademark Aurora Capital of the World.

Several elements are considered when measuring a country's favourable position in tourism. In the example Yellowknife, it is applicable that "both natural environment and cultural and historical heritage are significant in explaining comparative advantages in tourism."⁵⁰⁸ Therefore the location directly under the aurora belt, enhanced by the many cloudless nights, represents a comparative advantage for Yellowknife in tourism.

Yearly, aurora viewing draws many tourists from all over the world. Their numbers have climbed over 20,000 in recent years.⁵⁰⁹ However, the aurora alone would not be able to attract travelers. The City of Yellowknife, indeed many communities in the Northwest Territories, work actively on making the environment attractive, pleasant, and suitable for visitation. To enjoy the unspoiled nature in and around the city, campgrounds and several trails were built for people's use, and the Great Slave Lake was made accessible for fishing. The Prince of Wales Heritage Museum presents

⁵⁰⁸ Algieri et al. (2016) p. 248

⁵⁰⁹ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2015); Government of Northwest Territories (2017)

exhibits and cultural events;⁵¹⁰ restaurants supply fine dining; shops and galleries offer merchandise, not least the extraordinary crafts and clothing items created by Indigenous people. Add-on attractions were put in place such as dog-sledding and the numerous festivals that take place annually.⁵¹¹ The city's history is founded on gold mining, and currently diamonds are extracted from an area to the north-east. This can be utilised to create the Story of Yellowknife ("The city where gold is paved with streets") and be presented to visitors and locals alike. The dedicated work of the NWT Tourism staff promotes the territory as a spectacular travel destination.⁵¹²

The more the basic needs, as presented in a Maslow's pyramid modified for tourism,⁵¹³ are met at a tourist destination, the more successful it is as a desirable location to visit and re-visit. In one form or another, Yellowknife can fulfill most needs of a tourist: it offers escape from routine plus relaxation and external excitement, and it provides for one's health and a concern for other's safety. Social need is met by the opportunity to initiate and maintain relationships and to experience group membership; and self-actualization can be found in fulfilling a dream, understanding self more, and experiencing inner peace & harmony.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁰ "Tourists remark to me that they cannot believe that a city of our size has a museum of that quality and caliber." Mark Heyck (Mayor of the City of Yellowknife), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife

⁵¹¹ Yellowknife Online (2018b)

⁵¹² Spectacular Northwest Territories (2018c)

⁵¹³ BINUS University (2007) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs & Travel Motivation

⁵¹⁴ BINUS University (2007) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs & Travel Motivation

All these factors combined contribute to making Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories a sought-after tourism destination. Its residents recognize this and are committed to working on tourism in the future. Three important areas for future development can be drawn as a result of the input from local community members and organizations. These are the importance of “Sufficient and sustainable budget,” “Packaged tours and activities,” and “Partnerships with stakeholders.”

The following observations are discussed in detail in Chapter Methods (Interviews and Analysis).⁵¹⁵ Collaboration and partnership are considered by most people interviewed as important in tourism, with variations of the terms. Working cooperatively with other communities; collaborating with NWT Tourism in participation in the Chamber’s trade shows; support for the endeavour of a mining museum; partnership for building tourism from the ground up in the outlying communities are a few examples. Cooperation is also the mandate of the NWT Conference Bureau. Conversely, a deficit of communication by stakeholders and operators is confirmed by the Mayor of Yellowknife.

The interview partners also considered funding and budget essential for tourism. Governments and organizations cannot deliver infrastructure and services without proper financial backing. The request by the City of Yellowknife to the GNWT⁵¹⁶ to amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to enable an accommodation levy, if passed,

⁵¹⁵ Sub-chapter Interviews and Analysis

⁵¹⁶ Government of Northwest Territories

would make funds available for tourism. NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment offers a range of comprehensive funding programs.⁵¹⁷ Before it closed permanently, the former Northern Frontier Visitors Centre was financed in part with funding from the federal government, which Industry, Tourism and Investment and ENR⁵¹⁸ matched to a great part. Obtaining funding is a most challenging task, hampered by “red tape,” when trying to finance an enterprise.

Product and packages were also referred to in the interviews as important in the tourism industry. Into the category “product” for tourism falls also the City of Yellowknife itself and all it has to offer. Mentioned by several interviewees, especially the Mayor, were the features, facilities and attractions of Yellowknife.

Tourism does not just happen. It takes concerted effort by three levels of government, the Destination Marketing Organization, the tourism providers, the hospitality industry, the visitors centre, and the retailers. It takes measuring success, that is feedback from the traveler, such as the visitor exit survey and the road travelers’ journal. In Yellowknife, a framework of support for tourism is in place. Stakeholders from industry and community work towards the common goal of keeping their city safe and making it attractive for visitors.

Overall, even though from a distance Yellowknife seems an unlikely destination for tourists, in fact it presents itself as an attractive option. The landscape and the

⁵¹⁷ Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment (2018j)

⁵¹⁸ Environment and Natural Resources

infrastructure have an appeal to vacationers that is unequalled in many destinations. Many dedicated people in government and organizations, in hospitality and retail work individually and together to develop and support tourism in their territory.

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

This section examines what directions the research could have taken. All results of research have limitations, and so does this one. As the research questions for this study dealt with decisions made by the municipal and territorial governments, and a sufficient number of qualified interview partners were available, no tourists were interviewed. The research concentrated on tourism provided rather than tourism consumed. In future studies, it might be of benefit to hear the side of the consumer.

The interviews were obtained using the snowball method, i.e. interview subjects suggested other representatives of the tourism industry to be questioned. Except for the fact that the researcher has the final decision over whom to interview, this method takes control out of his or her hands, especially when time on site is limited and decisions have to be made swiftly. It is, on the other hand, beneficial as a research method as the interviewed know the local scene better than any outsider, and snowball sampling utilizes natural social networks. The effect this had on the study is, while there may have been other prospects equally qualified to give testament to the tourism scene, the ones selected represent a wide variety of segments of and positions within the tourism industry.

One limitation of the study is the fact that few stakeholders of Indigenous tourism could be found to interview. This was in part contributable to the fact that it is in an earlier phase of development than mainstream tourism, and fewer operators exist. Other reasons were that the research was restricted to Yellowknife, and Indigenous tourism typically does not take place in the city. Also, the summer season was occupying the tourism providers, making many of them unavailable for interviews.

Among opportunities for future study is to explore the city more extensively. This time it was not possible because during the first visit the schedule was almost completely occupied by activities related to interviews, and the second time the researcher suffered from restricted physical mobility.

Another activity to enhance the research would be to allow oneself to experience somewhat more the time on site from a tourist's point of view rather than mainly as a researcher. This of course is subject to time and budget allowance, although not all activities are costly.

On the whole, the research resulted in an unexpected wealth of material that was compiled, analyzed and shaped into this thesis.

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APPENDIX A

Organizations as Stakeholders

Mandates that target tourism

Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council. Mandate: ATCAC is an independent body comprised of qualified people with a background in tourism and a familiarity with Aboriginal culture in the Northwest Territories.
http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/aboriginal_tourism_champions_advisory_council_members.pdf.

CDÉTNO (Conseil de développement économique des Territoire du Nord-Ouest). Mandate: CDÉTNO promotes tourist attractions of the Northwest Territories (NWT) in Francophone markets. It shares tourism information and promotional tools in French and distributes information about the territories at NWT Tourism Trade Shows in Canada and abroad. As a member of RDEE Canada (The Network of Economic Development and Employability), CDÉTNO has access to tourism professionals in all provinces and territories outside of Quebec. Together, they work to showcase Canadian tourist attractions in Francophone markets. <http://cdetno.com/en/tourism/>.

City of Yellowknife. Mandate: Goal 1: Enhancing Yellowknife's tourism management and partnership model; Goal 2: Increasing Destination Awareness; Goal 3: Improving community tourism infrastructure and services. Proposed the Yellowknife Accommodation Levy. <https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/doing-business/Tourism-Development-Strategy.asp>.

GNWT Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mandate: Offers training, product development, and guidance for communities to develop local tourism initiatives. Tourism investments support the building of vibrant and sustainable communities, with the development of local jobs, investments in community infrastructure and activities, entertainment, food and retail services, and preservation of heritage and cultural activities. The benefits of tourism investments can make a community more attractive to new residents, therefore,

tourism investments can also support the GNWT's goal of increasing the population of the NWT http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/tourism_2020.pdf.

Northern Frontier Visitors Association. (Contracts with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the City of Yellowknife dissolved.) CBC North <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nfva-disbands-1.4319838>.

NWT Conference Bureau. Mandate: Within Spectacular Northwest Territories, a hub that coordinates conventions and helps avoid bottlenecks in accommodation. <http://conferences.spectacularnwt.com/>.

NWT Tourism. Mandate: destination marketing organization, a non-profit organization, reporting to its own Board of Directors (CEO Cathie Bolstad). Northwest Territories Tourism is a not-for-profit organization, responsible to over 200 tourism business members in the Northwest Territories. We are the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the NWT tasked with marketing Northwest Territories Tourism (NWTT) products. NWTT promotes tourism product locally, nationally and internationally. <http://spectacularnwt.com/contact-us>. Spectacular Northwest Territories. Mandate: "NWTT is [...] a Destination Marketing Organization whose mandate it is to provide a venue for [...] operators to offer their services."

Senior Administrative Officers / Economic Development Officers for the bands. Mandate: "These Officers are key to engage because they are the front-line people engaging within the community and supporting the business development," Amy Lizotte, ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]), interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Visitor Centre. Mandate: Delivers information visitors need to choose a place to stay and arrange a tour, a fishing trip, or an Aurora viewing package. The Visitor Centre can provide information on many of Yellowknife's activities, attractions and fine stores. Maps, brochures and information to pick up about the latest Yellowknife events and tourist attractions. Visitor Centre staff welcome visitors to Yellowknife and can respond to information requests and assist with visit planning. <https://extraordinaryyk.com/contact-us>.

Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce. Mandate/Mission: To be a leader in the improvement and development of a strong Yellowknife business community

with a diversified economy and sustainable growth.

<https://ykchamber.com/about-us>.

Guides for Tourism and Economy

Aboriginal Tourism: Recommendations for a Strategic Action Plan. Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council. 2013. Mandate: Aboriginal tourism is at the early stages of development. For development of the industry, energy and support are focused on people, communities, and business. Through Aboriginal tourism, the intention is to protect and preserve culture and language and develop our human resources and skills.
http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/13-11-07td_13-175.pdf.

Building the Aboriginal Tourism Product. Development of a Northwest Territories Aboriginal Tourism Sector. Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment 2010. Mandate: Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories face challenges including erosion of culture, lack of economic opportunities, threats to places of spiritual, cultural and ecological significance, and breakdown of social bonds holding communities together. Tourism development could address many of the current issues that Indigenous communities face. It offers value in four key areas that can contribute benefits to Indigenous communities: economic, cultural, social and environmental.
<http://www.deslibris.ca/ID/225948>.

CDÉTNO (Conseil de développement économique des Territoire du Nord-Ouest) Business Tourism Guide. Mandate: CDÉTNO offers help with every detail of planning and holding a conference in an incredible northern setting. In conjunction with the Northwest Territories Conference Bureau, CDÉTNO takes care of logistics, air tickets, restaurants, hotel bookings and entertainment. We can also suggest places and activities for visitors wanting to extend their stay before or after their meetings. <http://cdetno.com/en/tourism/>.

City of Yellowknife 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy. Mandate: Enhancing Yellowknife's tourism management and partnership model; Increasing awareness about Yellowknife as a destination; Improving community tourism infrastructure and services. Assesses the entire Yellowknife tourism context, and addresses not only the need for destination marketing, but also for enhancing partnerships, establishing structures and infrastructure to support destination marketing, funding of marketing activities, and various elements of the tourist experience.
<https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/doing->

[business/resources/Economic_Development_and_Tourism_Strategy/2015-2019_Tourism_Strategy_Summary_Web.pdf](https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/doing-business/resources/Economic_Development_and_Tourism_Strategy/2015-2019_Tourism_Strategy_Summary_Web.pdf).

Destination Marketing Strategy for the City of Yellowknife. Mandate: To promote and market Yellowknife or individual events. A destination marketing strategy is designed to attract people to come to Yellowknife as tourists. The City of Yellowknife's Destination Marketing Strategy supports its 2015-2019 Tourism Strategy. https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/doing-business/resources/Economic_Development_and_Tourism_Strategy/Marketing-Strategy/DOCS-456748-v1-DESTINATION_MARKETING_PRESENTATION_TAIT_2016_.pdf.

New Paradigm for Economic Growth, prepared for the City of Yellowknife. 2006. Mandate: To attract new investment to add value to traditional industries, or to diversify their economies by adding a new or expanded range of goods and services for businesses, households or for export with support of the Canadian Investment Support (CIS) Program. <http://library.assembly.gov.nt.ca/2006/OTHER/a280360.pdf>.

Northwest Territories Economic Opportunities Strategy. Mandate: Jointly prepared by the NWT Chamber of Commerce, the Northern Aboriginal Business Association, the NWT Association of Communities, Canada's Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) and the GNWT's Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the Governance Committee determines that fundamental requirements including transportation access, accommodations, food services, and attractions and must all be in place to realize full tourism potential. http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/0004-704_econ_opp_strat_-_low-res.pdf.

Northwest Territories Tourism Fact Sheet. Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mandate: Present individual facts about Northwest Territories to travelers. http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/final_tourism_factsheet.pdf.

NWT Tourism 2018-19 Marketing Plan. Spectacular Northwest Territories. Mandate: Northwest Territories Tourism will work closely with ITI in marketing efforts to assist in achieving the overall goals of the plan. The focuses outlined intertwine with Northwest Territories Tourism's 5-year Strategic Plan, and the work undertaken by Northwest Territories Tourism will support Tourism 2020's

success. http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/nwtt-2018-19-marketingplan_-_final_approved_-_nov_16.pdf.

Spectacular Northwest Territories Explorers' Guides. Mandate: NWT Tourism's annual online guides for promoting the Northwest Territories. It complements the hard-copy version distributed to travel agencies. The Explorers' Guide presents the NWT in attractive illustrations, story-focused content and a wealth of information. <http://spectacularnwt.com/>.

The Perfect Setting: Diamond Tourism in the Northwest Territories. 2004. Mandate: Recommendations to develop diamond tourism in the Northwest Territories. The consulting firm concluded that cooperation and collaboration as well as a champion are required to follow through on the recommendations.

Tourism 2015: New Directions for a Spectacular Future. Mandate: To increase tourism in the NWT by growing the tourism sector from \$111 million to \$130 million by 2015. It builds on the work and success achieved in Tourism 2010 and acts upon lessons in the implementation of that Plan. http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/tourismplanbrochure2015_20110223.pdf.

Tourism 2020: Opening our Spectacular Home to the World. Government of Northwest Territories. 2016. Mandate: The tourism plan that will serve as a road map to guide tourism investments by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) over the next five years. http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/tourism_2020.pdf.

Representatives of Tourism Stakeholders Interviewed

Mayor of the City of Yellowknife; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Executive Director / CEO, Northwest Territories Tourism; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Director, Diamond Secondary Industry, NWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Executive Director, Yellowknife Chamber; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

President of Yellowknife Heritage Society, prospector, mineral exploration consultant, newspaper columnist, artist; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

ITI Tourism, North Slave Regional Tourism Development Officer [RTO]; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Owner, Arctic Safaris; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Director of Communications and Economic Development; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Owner, B. Dene Adventures; May 2015, Yellowknife.

Former Indigenous tourism provider; interviewed by the author, September 2015, Yellowknife.

Vice President, Northern Frontiers Visitors Association, Proprietor, Arden Avenue Bed & Breakfast, Arctic Executive Limousine; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

Executive Director, Northern Frontier Visitor Centre; interviewed by the author, May 2015, Yellowknife.

TREB Permission



OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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Ontario, Canada M1V 1B8

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 Facsimile: (705) 748-1587
 Email: research@trentu.ca

Ulrike Flesser
 Frost Centre
 TC

March 13, 2015

File #: 23460
 Title: Tourism in the Northwest Territories

Dear Ms. Flesser,

The Research Ethics Board (REB) has given approval to your updated proposal entitled "Tourism in the Northwest Territories".

A reminder that the committee strongly suggests and encourages you to encrypt your data that is being collected. For help with encryption services, please contact Trent's IT Department.

In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6.) your project has been approved for one additional year. If this research is ongoing past that time, please submit a Research Ethics Annual update form, available on the Research Office website.

Please note that you are reminded of your obligation to advise the REB before implementing any amendments or changes to the procedures of your study that might affect the human participants.

On behalf of the Research Ethics Board, I wish you success with your ongoing research.

With best wishes,



Dr. Peggy Wallace
 REB Chair
 Phone: (705) 748-1011 ex. 7932 Fax: (705) 748-1587
 Email: peggy.wallace@trentu.ca

C.C.: Karen Mauro
 Compliance Officer

AEC Permission

(not needed)

ARI Permission



Aurora Research Institute - Aurora College

PO Box 1450 Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Phone: 867-777-3298 **Fax:** 867-777-4264 **E-mail:** licence@nwtresearch.com

April 28, 2015

Notification of Research

I would like to inform you that Scientific Research Licence No. 15662 has been issued to:

Ms. Ulrike E Fliesser
Trent University
1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, ON
K9J 7B8
Canada
Phone: (705) 748-1011 x7107
Fax: (705) 748-1205
Email: ulrikefliesser@trentu.ca
to conduct the following study:

Tourism in the Northwest Territories (Application No. 3070)

Please contact the researcher if you would like more information.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

This licence has been issued for the scientific research application No.3070.

This fieldwork will supplement previous secondary library and archival research on the way in which tourism is being presented as a growing opportunity for the Northwest Territories and how that will help to assess its importance in relation to changing resource development landscapes, Yellowknife's role as a service and administrative center, and broader regional development plans. I believe that it is necessary to understand the logic of the discursive which orients policy and community discussion and decision-making on this topic by speaking with those involved in the Yellowknife community.

Semi-structured interviews of approx. one hour each, one-on-one with key stakeholders in government and local business community, recorded via pen & paper, recording device or video camera. Participants will be recruited in consultation with and approved by the Supervisor. Sources of the organizations will be the Internet and suitable contacts (i.e. snowball technique). The participants themselves will be determined by approaching senior staff of these organizations and soliciting suggestions as to staff/personnel best suited for the task. There are questionnaires for those unable to participate in person; library research on local publications; and, an on-site assessment of local tourist facilities.

The principal investigator will be consulting with local government (GNWT, City of Yellowknife), businesses and tour operators about tourism and its impact on NWT economic development. Social, cultural, educational and economic benefits are derived from the knowledge obtained from the study, for example possible enrichment of cultural and social life through tourist-oriented events or better understanding of the nature of opportunities provided by the tourist industry.

The principal investigator will make a summary of work available through research supervisors (or own) website and will provide this information to anyone interested upon request.

The fieldwork for this study will be conducted from May 1, 2015 to July 31, 2015.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Michel,

Manager, Scientific Services

DISTRIBUTION

Akaiicho Territory Government
 City of Yellowknife
 Northwest Territory Métis Nation
 Yellowknives Dene First Nation

Aurora College - Yellowknife/North Slave Campus
 North Slave Métis Alliance
 Wek'èzhii Renewable Resources Board

Organizations approached

From: Ulrike Fliesser <ulrikefliesser@trentu.ca>

Date: Fri, 4 Apr 2014 18:13:17 -0400

To: Ulrike Fliesser <ulrikefliesser@trentu.ca>

Subject: University Research in Yellowknife

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please see the attached letter. It is part of the requirements for a Portal to Online License Application for Research (POLAR), the licensing system for research in Northwest Territories' (NWT) communities.

I am a Master's student of Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, in the Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies Department. I intend to travel to Yellowknife in July 2014 to research tourism in the Northwest Territories, specifically in the Yellowknife area.

My letter explains in detail the scope of my research.

In hope of a favourable response to my request, I am expecting your reply.

Sincerely,

Ulrike Fliesser

Emailed (bcc) to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Yellowknife Dene First Nations | mcheeks@ykdene.com |
| 2. Northwest Territories Métis Nation | rcc.nwtmn@northwestel.net |
| 3. North Slave Métis Alliance | general@nsma.net |
| 4. Wek'èezhì Renewable Resource Board | jmccullum@wrrb.ca |
| 5. City of Yellowknife | mheyck@yellowknife.ca |

Community Representatives Letter

Ulrike Fliesser
[redacted]

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir or Madam:

As part of the licensing procedure for the Aurora Research Institute, I am asking for your consent to the following. As a student enrolled in a Master's Program at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, I intend to visit Yellowknife in the spring of 2015 as part of my research to speak with representatives of organizations, government staff, tour operations, and decision-makers involved in the tourism industry.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the emerging landscape of tourism in the Northwest Territories and to assess its importance for economic development in the Yellowknife area.

I intend to conduct research in Yellowknife this spring in order to examine the approach of policy-makers and stakeholders in the Yellowknife area and understand what plans territorial and municipal government decision-makers undertake to develop tourist infrastructure and capacity. The goal is to investigate how tourism tendencies toward cultural experience are being facilitated in the region. I will also examine what travelers are seeking, from where they are coming, and what the tourist experience is in the Canadian Northwest.

For this research, I plan to conduct semi-structured interviews in Yellowknife with regional, municipal and territorial decision-makers and representatives of agencies which interact, collaborate with or regulate the tourist sectors, as well as with tourist stakeholders and tour operators, including those representing Aboriginal tourism, within the city. Some of the organizations of which I intend to question spokespersons are the Northwest Territories Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), Northwest Territories Tourism, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, and the Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council of the Northwest Territories. The parties and individuals to be interviewed will be determined and contacted prior to my fieldwork.

This fieldwork will illuminate the way in which tourism represents a growing opportunity for the Northwest Territories. It may also help to assess its importance in relation to changing resource development landscapes, Yellowknife's role as a service and administrative centre, and broader regional development plans.

Your cooperation in my quest for answers to these queries will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Ulrike Fliesser

Consent form



FROST CENTRE FOR CANADIAN
STUDIES AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES

Catharine Parr Traill College

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Peterborough, ON K9J 7B8

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Facsimile (705) 748-1801
E-mail frostcentre@trentu.ca
Web www.trentu.ca/frostcentre

Standard Consent Form or Statement

Title of Research: Tourism in the Northwest Territories

Name of Participant: _____

Name and contact information of researcher:

Ulrike Fliesser
ulrikefliesser@trentu.ca

School of Graduate Studies
1600 West Bank Drive
Trent University
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7B8

Supervisor's name and contact information:

Heather Nicol
heathernicol@trentu.ca
705 748-1011

Institute of Geography
1600 West Bank Drive
Trent University
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7B8

Trent University Research Ethics Board contact information:

Karen Mauro
kmauro@trentu.ca
705 748-1011

Office of Research Services
1600 West Bank Drive
Trent University
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7B8

The purpose of this research project is to study the current status of tourism and expectations for the future in the Northwest Territories and to measure its importance for commercial development in the Yellowknife area. For this purpose I will interview policy-makers and stakeholders in the Yellowknife area to understand what plans territorial and municipal

government decision-makers, tourist stakeholders and tour operators, including those representing Aboriginal tourism, make to develop the basis for tourism and its expansion.

Nature and duration of the participant's involvement: The participants will be interviewed to the topics outlined above for about one hour.

The researcher, Ulrike Fliesser, states that no **conflicts of interest** arise for her from her research activity.

Data resulting from the research will be encrypted and used for the researcher's Master's Thesis. No commercialization of the research findings will occur.

Participation in the research is voluntary for the interviewees, and participants do not have to answer questions they do not want to. Participants may discontinue participation in the research at any time. If a participant chooses to discontinue the interview, his/her data will be destroyed and will not be used in the research or in any other manner.

Names and identifying information may be used in the final report, but participants will be given the opportunity to give written consent to the use of their name, or withhold consent, in which case name and identifying information will not be used at any stage of the research or in the final report.

Password-protected USB sticks will **hold data** during research. They will be stored in a bank safe-deposit box after research has been completed. Data will be destroyed after the mandatory period for Master's Thesis of retention.

Means of recording data may include any or all of: note-taking, tape recording and/or video cameras. The participant will be informed of which means will be applied and will be given the right to object.

There are no known physical, emotional or material **risks involved** for the interviewee or the researcher to participate in the research.

The participant declares that she/he is **fully informed** about the scope of their expected participation and freely gives consent to participate in the research.

Initials: _____

The participant understands that participation is **voluntary** and not required as part of his/her institution's interest in the researcher's project.

Initials: _____

The participant has **received a copy of this consent form** for his/her records.

Initials: _____

The participant understands that **the project has been approved** by the Trent Research Ethics Board and by the Trent Aboriginal Education Council.

Initials: _____

The participant declares that he/she gives **permission to use the data** obtained in the interview for the researcher's Master's Thesis:

using the interviewee's name and identifying information:

Initials: _____

OR – without using the interviewee's name and identifying information:

Initials: _____

Signature of participant _____ **Date** _____

Individual Research Questions

Tourism Questions, presented depending on expertise / objectives of interviewee

Economy

- 1 What is the overall importance of tourism in the NWT currently?
- 2 How do you in the NWT rate tourism's importance in relation to the changing resource development situation?
- 3 Who are the stakeholders / financiers; how committed are they for the long duration?
- 4 What are broader regional development and investment plans for tourism in Yellowknife?

Status / Development

- 5 How do you see Yellowknife's role as a service and administration centre?
- 6 Is there a comprehensive plan for expansion in place; what does it encompass?
- 7 Is the tourism industry in the NWT community-based; is the structure of its organization bottom-up or top-down; is it environmentally sustainable, low-impact tourism?

Facilities, Amenities

- 8 How many and what type of accommodation facilities are available; where are they located; what is the current capacity in number of beds?
- 9 What are means of transportation on land; where are the roads and what connections do they create?
- 10 How are RV travelers accommodated in Yellowknife?
- 11 In your experience, what are the main characteristics that draw tourists to the NWT? In natural / in man-made / in cultural features? What will the Northwest Territories provide in the near future to attract tourists?
- 12 How are tourism tendencies toward cultural experience and eco travel being facilitated in the Yellowknife region?

13 What could sway those holiday-seekers for whom the NWT is not the first choice? How does the natural and cultural environment potential (e.g. Indigenous history & symbols; Aurora borealis; Diamond industry) influence their decisions?

Aboriginal Issues

14 Has an agreement been reached in the NWT what the term “Aboriginal Tourism” should stand for?

15 In what ways do you present your cultures to the tourists? Are there any plans in place to expand on it?

16 What type of vacationers do you target with advertising?

17 Do you track the results of your advertising? How do you measure its success?

18 What is the position of the Indigenous population in tourism matters? Is there consensus or does it vary? Is the population being consulted before decisions are made that have effects on the communities?

Public Relations / Marketing

19 How is tourism being promoted to decision-makers as a growing opportunity for the Northwest Territories / for Yellowknife?

20 What type of tourists does the NWT primarily attempt to attract (e.g. hunters/fishers, families, retirees/RV travelers, tour groups, etc.)?

APPENDIX B

Northwest Territories Tourism 2018/19 Marketing Budget

2018/19 Marketing Budget Projects Summary		Contribution Agreements			Marketing Channel			
Project Name	Budget	Marketing	Parks	Tourism 2020	Consumer	Media	Travel Trade	MC&IT
Call Centre								
Mail and Delivery	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Service Supplies	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Toll Free Telephone	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Upgrades to System	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 10,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Call Centre	\$ 61,500.00	\$ 61,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 61,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Consumer Show Program								
Shipping, Freight and Courier	\$ 3,300.00	\$ 3,300.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,300.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Show Fees and Services	\$ 34,700.00	\$ 34,700.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 34,700.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Supplies	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Consumer Show Program	\$ 48,500.00	\$ 48,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 48,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Agency Contracts								
Project Management	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00
Europe (Germany)	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,000.00	\$ -	\$ 35,000.00	\$ -
Asia Pacific	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -
Total Agency Contracts	\$ 205,000.00	\$ 205,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 115,000.00	\$ -	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Communications								
Media Shows	\$ 12,700.00	\$ 12,700.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,700.00	\$ -	\$ -
Media Familiarization	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 70,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Media Events and Promotions	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Newletters and Publications	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 375.00	\$ 375.00	\$ 375.00	\$ 375.00
Photography Contracts	\$ 71,000.00	\$ 71,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ -	\$ 12,500.00
Supplies and Materials	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 9,600.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,600.00	\$ -	\$ -
Total Communications	\$ 183,800.00	\$ 183,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37,875.00	\$ 132,675.00	\$ 375.00	\$ 12,875.00
Marketing								
General Advertising - Core	\$ 890,000.00	\$ 890,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 860,000.00	\$ -	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
NWT Parks Promotion (\$65,000)	\$ 65,000.00	\$ -	\$ 65,000.00	\$ -	\$ 65,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Regional Advertising	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Special Projects	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Brochure Development	\$ 87,500.00	\$ 87,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000.00	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,500.00
Business Meetings	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Promotional Materials	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
Research	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ 79,145.00	\$ 79,145.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 66,445.00	\$ 12,700.00
Trade FAMS	\$ 53,000.00	\$ 53,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Trade Shows Registration & Fees	\$ 53,100.00	\$ 53,100.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 36,500.00	\$ 16,600.00
Digital Development	\$ 369,000.00	\$ 369,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 344,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00
Total Marketing	\$ 2,230,745.00	\$ 1,795,745.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 1,969,000.00	\$ -	\$ 173,445.00	\$ 88,300.00
ACTUAL TOTALS								
Market Ready Training								
AGM Logistics	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					\$ 10,000.00	
Venue Expenses	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					\$ 10,000.00	
Speaker Travel (AGM)	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					\$ 10,000.00	
Speaker Fees and Expenses	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					\$ 10,000.00	
Total Market Ready Training	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00					\$ 40,000.00	
Total Budget	\$ 2,769,545.00	\$ 2,334,545.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 2,251,675.00	\$ 132,675.00	\$ 298,820.00	\$ 106,175.00
				\$ 2,769,545.00				\$ 2,769,545.00

Source: http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/sites/iti/files/nwt-2018-19-marketingplan_-_final_approved_-_nov_16.pdf