

Building Capacity of Fond du Lac
Entrepreneurs to Establish and Operate
Local Tourism Business:
Assessment and Proposed Training

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ABSTRACT

Tourist interest in, and easy access to, northern Canada is growing rapidly. Fond du Lac is located in the heart of largely pristine and attractive landscape, including Lake Athabasca Provincial Wilderness Park, which is the ancestral land of the Fond du Lac Dene. With a view to develop local capacity to establish and successfully operate tourism businesses, the authors embarked on a two-part strategy: (1) to conduct an assessment of the knowledge and skills that are lacking and for which require training; and (2) to begin creation of a socio-political environment supportive of entrepreneurship.

With respect to assessing the knowledge/skill gap, the authors invited interested Fond du Lac community members to be interviewed with the prospect of receiving the training required. Of the thirty people signed up, twenty-two were interviewed using a one-on-one personal and confidential interview. Five operators of existing Fond du Lac businesses were also interviewed and meetings were held with the chief and several councilors. The responses were compiled and, guided by the results, a topic outline designed for a nine-week training program, pending funding and delivery.

With respect to creating a socio-political environment supportive of entrepreneurship, it is recommended that the chief and council strive toward an Empowerment Model, as opposed to a Dependency Model, of governance, and a Fond du Lac Community Tourism Development Committee be initiated as a community-driven discussion and action forum to support local tourism business development.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Three compelling reasons exist for Dene people of the Lake Athabasca region to obtain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to become successful tourism business owners and operators: (1) external interests are increasing pressure to use the region's traditional Dene lands; (2) an all-season road access from the south is imminent; and (3) the local economy is under-developed.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES TO USE DENE LANDS

Like Aboriginal people throughout the world, the Chipewyan Dene of the Lake Athabasca region are being increasingly challenged by outside business interests, such as mining and tourism, who are pressuring governments to use traditional Dene lands (Beyrouti, 2001; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2000; Saskatchewan Northern Affairs, 2002). Dene

lands are rich in desirable mineral and gem deposits. Lake Athabasca Provincial Wilderness Park, a 2000 square-kilometre preserve established in 1992, is spectacular for its scenery and unique for its ecology. Recent photographic and educational publications about the dunes (e.g. Jonker and Rowe, 2001; Karpan and Karpan, 1998) are helping to stimulate tourist interest in visiting this area.

Mining, which is mostly dependent on specific technologies and skills foreign to traditional ways of living, does not complement traditional land-based values and skills. However, tourism, especially cultural tourism and ecotourism, offers Dene people opportunities to own and operate businesses that make good use of traditional land- and water-based skills, knowledge, and values (Morrison, 1997; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2002; Saskatchewan Northern Affairs, 2001; Sofield and Birtles, 1996). An increasing number of Aboriginal people are becoming ecotour business owners/operators, basing tourism programs on their traditional culture, history, and skills, and building within their traditional lands (Jonker, 2004).

Although some Chipewyan Dene are occasionally and casually employed by nearby fishing/hunting camps, almost all these businesses are owned and operated by non-local people. Non-local ownership means that profits flow south rather than into the local community. The desire to have business profit flow into and feed the local economy is a compelling reason to build capacity among local people to establish and operate their own tourism businesses.

To establish, operate, and sustain such tourism businesses, Fond du Lac residents need to have the relevant traditional and non-traditional knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and a socio-political environment that is supportive of entrepreneurship (Nyce, Fregin, Mercer, and Krekic, 2001).

The Fond du Lac Assessment project (Phase I) takes the first step in addressing the need for both training and a supportive environment. First, it identifies what tourism-relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes already exist among potential Fond du Lac tourism business operators, and, by comparing these with industry standards, what gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes need to be addressed through training. Second, the project establishes a framework for community-driven planning, monitoring, and nurturing of conditions for tourism entrepreneurship.

ROAD ACCESS FROM THE SOUTH

Difficult and expensive access to the Lake Athabasca area has limited growth of tourism here. Although several hunting and fishing camps have flourished over the last twenty-five years, they are entirely dependent on a relatively select clientele that can afford to come in on scheduled flights to Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac, or Uranium City, and then take a boat or float plane to their respective destinations.

In 2001, an all-season (albeit rough) road was completed to Black Lake and Stony Rapids, and plans are to improve and possibly extend this road to Fond du Lac. There have been discussions to eventually extend it northwest to Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, with a ferry crossing at Fond du Lac. It is expected that developments such as these will usher in a new wave of tourists from the south. Now is the right time for developing capacity among local people to start and sustain their own tourism businesses.

FOSTER LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Most adults in Fond du Lac are unemployed. Although traditional hunting and gathering still provides some food, most money flowing into the community derives from one of two dominant sources: government support programs (including social assistance) and mining (Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). A small amount of seasonal income flows from externally-owned fishing lodges. Developing local capacity to establish and successfully operate sustainable tourism business is critical to nurturing entrepreneur-based economic self-sufficiency.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The Assessment is Phase I of a two-phase project. The long-term objective of the overall project is to develop capacity of interested Fond du Lac people for establishing and operating their own tourism businesses. The particular objective of the Assessment is to determine what targeted training must be brought to Fond du Lac to achieve the overall objective. Two secondary, supporting objectives are to begin a community dialogue about the need for a socio-political environment that nurtures entrepreneurship and local tourism business development; and to establish and facilitate, at a minimum, the first meeting of a Community Tourism Development Committee.

To determine the targeted training needs, a questionnaire was developed (**Appendix A**) to assess respondents' self-perceived levels of relevant knowledge and skills. The questionnaire assessed a wide range of traditional and non-traditional knowledge and skills, and further determined the source of such learning. Thematic areas of skills and knowledge assessed include land, wildlife, history, business skills, program development skills, program delivery skills, client assessment skills, and issue awareness.

The interviewer personally administered each questionnaire and recorded the responses. For each recorded response, and before proceeding to the next question, the interviewer verified with the respondent what was written. All participants' responses were then pooled and measured against industry standards provided by the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council. The difference between the responses and standards represents the knowledge or skill gap that requires further training and determines the proposed training program (**Appendix B**).

SURVEY RESULTS: POTENTIAL TRAINEES

AGE AND GENDER

Seven of the twenty-two potential trainees interviewed were female and fifteen were male. The female interviewees were, on average, significantly younger (average age=25) than the males (average age=36). Five females were in their early twenties and two were in their early thirties.

Table 1. Age Grouping of Interviewees.

Age	Interviewees
20-30	10
31-40	8
41-50	2
51-60	2

FORMAL EDUCATION

Formal education achievement is illustrated in **Figure 1**. Additionally, fifteen interviewees indicated that they had completed at least one certificate program, a significant number of these being First Aid/CPR.

EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

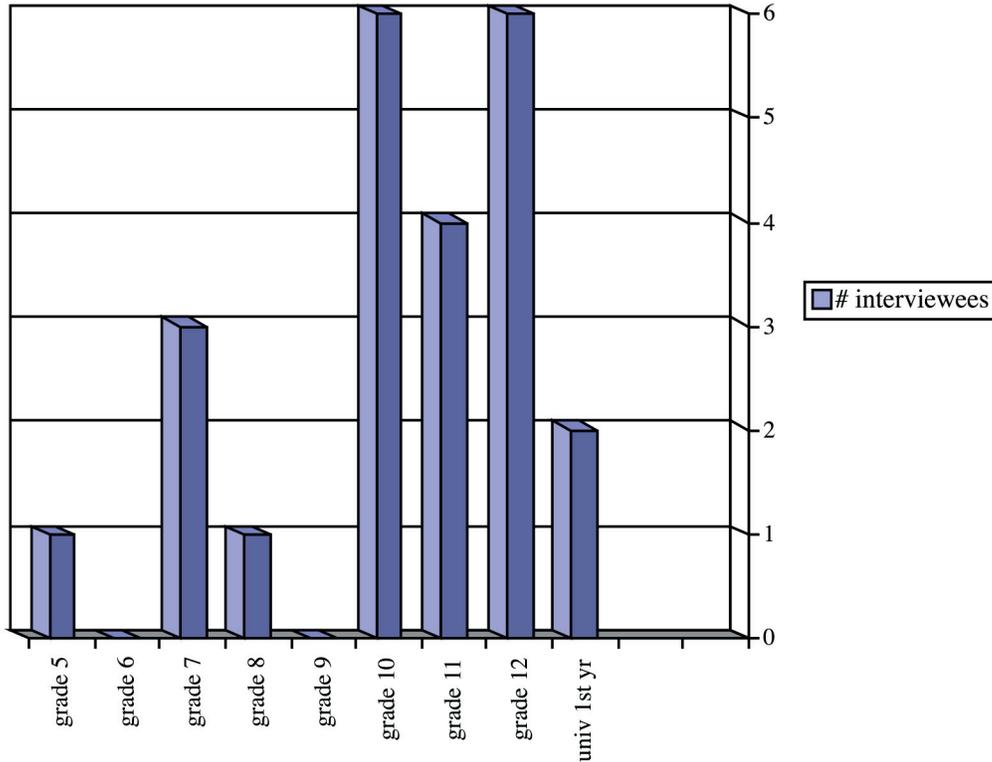
Most interviewees (15) indicated that they had no previous tourism experience. Of those who indicated that they had some experience, most mentioned guiding anglers (at Scott Lake Camp or Athabasca Camps) and/or providing services associated with guiding anglers.

SELF-IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Interviewees were asked to list their own strengths and weaknesses related to establishing and operating their own tourism business. The responses to these questions were evidently conservative. One reason may be that some were not confident of their perceptions as to what were useful knowledge/skills and, hence, did not risk identifying knowledge/skills that would be clearly irrelevant.

Overall, a minority of interviewees (less than one-third) indicated that they already had some knowledge of local land, wildlife, and history; computer skills; communication and people-management skills; and program delivery skills (e.g. guiding and cooking). Areas mostly or entirely unmentioned were program preparation skills, emergency skills, assessment skills, and context/issue knowledge. Up to one-third of interviewees felt that they needed greater business, professional, and leadership skills.

Figure 1. Interviewee Education Levels.



TOURISM INDUSTRY STANDARDS COMPARED TO INTERVIEW RESULTS

Below, occupational performance standards are listed under eight tourism-related themes and compared with interviews results. Applicable occupational performance standards for tourism operators generally, and ecotour operators specifically, were selected from the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council's *Freshwater Angling Guide*, *Hunting Guide*, *Outdoor Guide*, and *Business Manager*. The standards are categorized under eight areas of necessary knowledge/skills for a would-be tourism operator.

Land, wildlife, and history knowledge

Local water and landscape

Familiarity with the local water and landscape was generally high. Most interviewees (16) indicated that they were familiar with the water and shorelines leading from Fond du Lac east to Stony Rapids, the most commonly traveled route to access Stony Rapids' services.

West of Fond du Lac, however, water and shoreline familiarity declined quickly with distance. Less than one-third of interviewees indicated they that were familiar with the south shore west of MacFarlane River or the north shore west of Black Bay.

With respect to landscapes inland from Lake Athabasca, almost half the interviewees indicated that they were familiar with the caribou hunting area and the route there (north up to Dunvegan Lake). Approximately one-third of interviewees indicated that they were familiar with the Richards, Riou, and Engler Lakes area south of Fond du Lac.

Although more than half the interviewees were familiar with the MacFarlane River area, less than one-quarter were familiar with Thomson Bay and William Point, and their respective shorelines. In some cases, the interviewee indicated that she/he had been there only once or twice.

Apparently the high level of familiarity with local landscape and water has resulted largely from traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping use. Accordingly, the knowledge was less broad than what might be desirable from an ecotourism point of view.

Knowledge of Dene place names is relatively high. Fourteen interviewees indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about these. Most learned these from elders/family/friends, while some learned the place names through the Athabasca Land Use research project.

Local wildlife

Familiarity with local wildlife was generally high. Most interviewees (15) indicated that they knew a “fair amount” to “a lot” about local wildlife. They indicated that their knowledge about wildlife was mostly obtained from elders/family/friends (16). However, school (8) and books (5) also contributed to this knowledge. Twenty-one interviewees indicated that they were familiar with Dene names of wildlife, most of which was learned from elders/family/friends.

Local history

Most (18) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about local Aboriginal history, mostly learned from elders/family/friends (17) and, to a lesser degree, learned through school (6). The interviewees indicated that they were less familiar with local archaeological and geological history. Only eight indicated that they knew a “fair amount” or “a lot” about local archaeological history, learned mostly from elders/family/friends (6) and books (4). Only nine indicated that they knew a “fair amount” or “a lot” about local geological history, learned mostly from elders/family/friends (5) and books (4).

Recommended further education

Familiarity with local Aboriginal history was generally high and reliant on traditional sources. Knowledge about archaeological and geological history—more science-de-

pendent—was less prevalent. Further education should focus on directing students to the sources of content, rather than the content itself. Instruction time should be spent on learning and practicing skills.

A further education program should help satisfy the following questions:

- What range of tourism products are being offered by other Aboriginal operators in North America?
- What local resources are suitable for ecotourism product development?
- Where can information about local ecology, wildlife, history, archaeology, and geology be found?

Business skills

Interviewee knowledge/skill levels

Overall, interviewee knowledge/skills related to business was limited. Although most (16) indicated familiarity with conducting inventories, they further indicated that they knew “nothing” or “not much” about core business management skills such as making a business plan (15), developing a management program (17), the difference between product development, market development, and advertising (16), promotional planning (18), and negotiating a liability insurance policy (18). Of those interviewees who indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot,” most (15) learned the skill through some formal training (such as high school or a professional school), a book (8), and/or on the job experience (6).

Recommended further education

This area needs to be addressed thoroughly and should form a core component of the local training program, satisfying the following questions:

- Why and how do I assess the market for a potential product?
- Why and how do I develop a product?
- Why and how do I develop a market for a product that I already have?
- How do I create and sustain winning partnerships?
- How do I get the travel trade to help market my programs?
- Why and how do I create and sustain excellent client service?
- Why and how do I make business, marketing, operations, and assessment plans?
- Why and how do I perform an equipment inventory?

- Where do I go for business loan? How do I apply? How do I manage it?
- Why and how do I perform bookkeeping, banking, sales projections, cash flow projections, income projections, and financial analysis?
- How do I hire and fire staff? How do I build and maintain good employee relationships?
- What laws and regulations apply to a northern Aboriginal tourism business? How do I comply with these?

Professionalism and leadership skills

Interviewee knowledge/skill levels

Almost all interviewees (20) indicated that they could “demonstrate professionalism,” and the examples that they provided confirmed a good understanding of this concept. Almost all (21) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about telephone communication skills, which was learned mostly in school (11) and through work or personal experience (12). Most (16) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about how to handle criticism and complaints, much of it learned through personal and/or work experience (9) and some learned in training through professional education (5).

Almost all interviewees (20) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about providing leadership and managing groups. This knowledge was obtained mostly from on-the-job training (11), elders (9), school (8), and books (4). Most interviewees (16) indicated that they felt comfortable dealing with the public and making public presentations. Others indicated that they would like to learn, but were anxious about public speaking.

Recommended further education

Further education should satisfy the following questions:

- Why and how do I provide leadership?
- Why and how do I effectively manage a group of clients?
- How do I make an instruction/interpretation program?
- How do I conquer shyness?

Program preparation skills

Interviewee knowledge/skill levels

Almost all (20) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about satisfying customers through great service. Most indicated that their knowledge was obtained from

previous work experience. Fifteen interviewees indicated that they knew “nothing” or “not much” about creating a promotional brochure. Four of the seven who indicated at least some knowledge of creating a promotional brochure stated that they had learned this from personal experience.

Recommended further education

Further education requires satisfying these questions:

- How do I plan and organize the logistics of a program event?
- How do I determine and prepare for client needs and expectations?
- How do I assess and build awareness of potential environmental hazards into my program plans?

Program delivery skills

Interviewee Knowledge/Skill Levels

Most interviewees (17) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about guiding anglers and hunters. Most learned this from elders (13) and work or personal experience (10). Almost all (21) indicated that they knew how to set up and take down a wilderness camp. Most (17) said that they learned this from elders/family/friends. All interviewees knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about preparing camp food. Again, most (16) learned this from elders/family/friends, while the rest cited work experiences. All but one were familiar with handling a camp stove, and all indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about handling garbage and human waste in the wilderness. Most of this (17) was learned from elders/family/friends, while for others (10) it was through work experience at mines or elsewhere.

All but one interviewee indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about safely operating an all-terrain vehicle or snowmobile. Most of this (14) was learned from personal and/or work experience. A majority (16) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about safe boat handling, most (10) having learned this from elders/family/friends. Over half (12) indicated that they knew “nothing” or “not much” about operating a dog team and sled.

Most (15) indicated they knew how to tie a variety of knots (most having learned this through mine training). An equal number indicated that they knew “nothing” or “not much” about using a Global Positioning System (GPS).

Most interviewees (16) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about making water safe to drink. Some (8) said that this was learned from elders/family/friends, while others cited work experience/training (6) and school (5). Half the

interviewees indicated that they knew “a fair amount” or “a lot” about handling bear encounters without using a gun. Most of these (8) indicated that they had learned this from elders/family/friends, while three said that they had learned this from television or reading a brochure.

Recommended further education

It is evident that almost all interviewees had a great deal of experience in and a high level of comfort with wilderness camping. Further education needs to focus largely on interaction skills (instruction, interpreting, monitoring) with clients and should satisfy the following questions:

- How do I establish and manage a camp?
- What steps do I follow to deliver an ecotour program?
- What basic safety features should I follow for operating various kinds of equipment?
- How do I provide instruction and interpretation?
- How do I monitor client comfort and expectations during the course of a program?

Emergency skills

Interviewee knowledge/skill levels

Most interviewees indicated that they knew “a fair amount” (14) or “a lot” (13) about First Aid and CPR. Most had taken such training through their work at a mine or at the Fond du Lac Health Centre. In some cases, however, the certificates were not up-to-date.

Most (18) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” to “a lot” about surviving in wilderness. Most of these (15) said that they learned this from elders/family/friends, while others (7) cited their schooling. Almost all interviewees (20) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” to “a lot” about making people comfortable in extreme weather. Twenty-one said that they learned this from elders/family/friends, while eight claimed work experience/training associated with mines and fishermen guiding.

Recommended further education

An education program should satisfy these questions:

- Why and how do I get my First Aid and CPR certificates?
- How do I develop an emergency plan?
- How do I operate emergency communication equipment?

- How do I survive in the wilderness if stranded?

Assessment skills

Interviewee knowledge/skill levels

More than half (13) indicated that they knew “a fair amount” to “a lot” about measuring customer satisfaction. Most (12) indicated that they had learned this through their work experiences.

Recommended further education

Education should aim to satisfy the following questions:

- Why and how do I assess client interest in a possible program?
- Why and how do I assess client satisfaction at the end of a program?

Context and issue awareness

Interviewee knowledge/skill levels

All the interviewees indicated that they knew “nothing” or “not much” about SaskTourism programs. A majority of the interviewees (17) indicated that they knew “nothing” or “not much” about Saskatchewan Northern Affairs and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada programs.

Most (19) indicated that they know “a fair amount” or “a lot” about practicing camping/hiking skills without damaging the environment. This was learned from elders/family/friends (15) and through personal experience and guiding (7).

All interviewees expressed the feeling that tourism would be good for the entire Fond du Lac community. Various reasons were offered, with potential employment revenue being by far the most common. In listing tourism’s potential drawbacks to the community, interviewees cited the following issues (which could be addressed through education):

- environmental impact;
- visitors may not be respectful to local wildlife, people, and landscape;
- surrounding businesses may feel threatened by new start-ups;
- some community members may not make clients feel welcome, which would be bad publicity;
- a business owner/operator may restrict hiring to only family, which would result in bad feelings in the community; and
- failure to succeed in business may reflect negatively on the entire community.

Recommended further education

A further education program would aim to satisfy the following questions:

- What are the demographic profiles and trends of (eco)tourism?
- Where do I learn about tourism business-support programs provided by various government, educational, or other agencies?
- What are the potential positive and negative impacts of tourism for the local community and environment?
- How can I plan my business and programs to have as little negative impact as possible on the local community and environment?
- How can I help the community feel that they are benefiting from my tourism business?

SURVEY RESULTS: EXISTING BUSINESS OPERATORS

Five current business owners were interviewed. One or more indicated that s/he would like to see an all-season road to Fond du Lac (to reduce supply costs) and more small businesses owned by local community members.

The business interviewees expressed unanimous support for more locally owned tourism business because: it provides opportunities for local employment and skill development; it generates more community income; money stays in the community; it creates further business opportunities; it is better to have local, rather than outside ownership; it will revitalize community history and culture; and new businesses generate more sales for existing businesses.

Several of these business interviewees expressed concern that too many non-Aboriginal people owned and operated businesses in the Fond du Lac region. They additionally expressed interest in receiving training for: camp management; business management, business administration, and hotel management; book-keeping; cooking and catering; guiding anglers; housekeeping; proposal planning/writing; and advertising.

PERCEIVED POTENTIAL OBSTACLES TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

Many potential obstacles were identified anonymously by both potential trainees and existing business operators. Upon reviewing these, it was found that they appeared to cluster into six themes: community jealousy; competition/cooperation issues; unfriendly provincial government regulations/agreements; issues around protecting traditional land; lack of education/training; and need for start-up funding.

Perceived obstacles relating to community jealousy issues

Issues under this theme were vocalized with more passion than any other. Evidently, some community members or clans are inclined to frustrate and possibly paralyze promising initiatives being pursued by other community members. The underlying motivations are undetermined, but might involve historical clan rivalries and/or a lack of understanding that individual economic success positively affects the community's economy.

One interviewee phrased the issue this way: "people in the community have differences in thinking; [if they foresee] that he or she will get successful, they will be thinking that they do better or they get better than them." Another focused on the consequences of petty rivalries, observing that, "Involving other members of the community will just stir up negative sentiments and this will result in the entrepreneur losing interest."

Perceived obstacles relating to competition/cooperation issues with existing business owners/operators

Only one interviewee anticipated that conflict with other nearby businesses might be an obstacle to his own business success. However, it is unclear whether this concern was of competition from within the community or from nearby and mostly non-Aboriginal businesses such as fishing lodges.

A sub-issue under this theme involves ambivalence (even a degree of confusion) about the appropriate role of chief and council—how much control should chief and council have over the entrepreneurial initiatives of individual band members? Should chief and council be developing communally-owned, band-operated economic ventures, or should they be cultivating individual entrepreneurship? Is it possible for chief and council to do both without finding themselves in conflicts of interest? For example, one interviewee observed that becoming an entrepreneur risks strained communication with chief and council. Another stated that community members "would also want to know how much percentage [of the profit of an entrepreneurial venture] will be going to the band."

Perceived obstacles relating to issues of provincial government regulations/agreements

A widely shared perception among interviewees is that provincial laws, regulations, and policies are not supportive of Aboriginal economic success. As one interviewee pointed out, "I believe the initial agreements with existing [fishing] camps do not have the red tape that the provincial and federal government demands now with respect to environmental protections and public awareness." Another interviewee stated that "provincial and federal governments' agreements with existing tourist camps and non-native community" need to be reviewed.

The negative perception of government appears to be nurtured in the more immediate time frame by on-the-ground experiences involving enforcement personnel, such as police and conservation officers. Several interviewees feared that enforcement officers are likely to stand in the way of their business plans or activities. However, interpretation of these experiences may, in part, be predicated on a culturally entrenched cynicism resulting from generations of misunderstanding and abuse.

Perceived obstacles relating to protecting the land

Although one interviewee unequivocally stated that “[we need] to have the sacred areas lands and lakes protected,” several anticipated that local elders and/or political representatives might rationalize obstacles to success as a desire to protect traditional lands. This raises a related concern—will the community welcome or forbid tourists visiting traditional lands? One interviewee expressed concern that tourists would not be welcomed by the community on its traditional land for fear that they might remove archaeological, historical, or natural resources. Another interviewee expressed concern that bringing visitors to traditional land “will result in more garbage/waste production; what to do with it?”

Perceived obstacles relating to lack of education/training

All interviewees observed that a lack of knowledge and skills presents a challenge to their success as entrepreneurs. However, they all felt this could be readily addressed with sufficient opportunity for the required education and training.

Perceived obstacles relating to start-up funding

Several interviewees cited the importance of being able to access adequate start-up funds to implement their business plans. One person stated, “Money is the main key in order to start the business; where to receive?” Tied to this issue may be poor awareness of assessment protocols, the rigorous assessment criteria, and payback requirements that characterize a typical start-up funding contract.

Perceived obstacles relating to local chief and council

This theme appears to embody the greatest amount of confusion and frustration among interviewees and was already introduced as a sub-theme in the discussion of competition/cooperation issues with existing business owners/operators.

Interviewees wished deeply that their chief and council would affirm, encourage, and actively support individual band members’ entrepreneurial instincts. In their expe-

rience, however, chief and council themselves commonly want to develop and control so-called band-owned businesses, resulting in individual entrepreneurial ideas and activities that are, at best, only tolerated, and more often negated or actively suppressed. The challenge to chief and council is to consider whether they can successfully have it both ways without finding themselves in a conflict of interest with the very people who have elected them to lead and govern community development.

One interviewee described an opinion shared by most: “Council should treat all Band members equally; should not support Council members to compete unfairly with existing businesses; for example, Council helped get cigarette and gas rebate for Northern Store [a band-owned business], but not for other businesses; Council should operate on the principle of ‘all for one and one for all’; Council should not give itself more privileges than other Band members.”

Furthermore, several interviewees offered examples of how chief and council could more proactively support entrepreneurship. One suggested that “Council should help local businesses get financial support from INAC for freight costs.” Another suggested that “Council should lobby hard to improve the access roads such as from Black Lake to Fond du Lac.” Finally, a third suggested that “Council should lobby to get finances for building a fish plant.”

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHIEF AND COUNCIL

The chief and council should consider adopting a governance model that supports entrepreneurship and empowers individual initiative. As illustrated in **Table 2**, a band council that strives to empower individual community members continuously nurtures ideas, enthusiasm, and leadership among its young people.

COMMUNITY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

More often than not, non-local expert researchers and planners come into town, complete their research, write their reports, and then leave their reports with the chief and council and/or the community. Time and again, this has proven to be a very unhelpful approach. Instead, the community needs to be involved from the very beginning and in every step along the way in designing their own futures. All the interviewees, both potential trainees and existing business operators, expressed interest in working together in developing of local tourism. How, though, should conditions be created for this community involvement?

In keeping with the Empowerment Model of Governance, it is recommended to establish a Fond du Lac Community Tourism Development Committee (CTDC) in Fond du Lac. This committee would consist of any/all community members who wish to participate to help local tourism flourish. The University Extension Division and Prince

Albert Grand Council would help start up the CTDC (e.g. facilitate its first couple of meetings) and then offer support when requested and feasible.

Table 2. Two Models of Governance.

Dependency	Empowerment
Ruling body is normally expected to provide for everyone's needs.	Community members are normally expected to provide for their own needs.
Ruling body spends most of its time in finding, gathering, and distributing resources requested by community members.	Ruling body spends most of its time thinking about and creating conditions for everyone to compete respectfully and safely.
Dependency of community members on ruling body is perpetuated (i.e. paternalism).	Dependency of community members on the ruling body is discouraged (i.e. true leadership).
Community members feel powerless to "get ahead," unintentionally resulting in apathy.	Community members feel encouraged to get ahead, fostering a sense of hope and motivation.
When times are tough, community members tend to blame the ruling body.	When times are tough, community members tend to challenge themselves to rise to the occasion.
Members of ruling body may have mixed feelings about community members becoming educated. Too much education may be perceived as a threat.	Members of the ruling body reward education in every way possible because it results in individuals becoming more capable of providing for themselves.

Any/all interested Fond du Lac residents should be CTDC members. Through informal conversations, it is understood that several council members and most existing business owners/operators and interviewees were eager to participate. It is also expected that a significant number of other community members would be likewise enthusiastic. It is expected that the first few meetings would draw a large attendance, but once people understand more thoroughly what the committee is about, these numbers would probably dwindle to a smaller, committed, and enthusiastic group.

The overall goal is to help tourism business grow. The committee would set its own agenda and schedule. The committee would occasionally bring in speakers, organize workshops with elders, try to resolve tourism business conflicts, develop strategies to improve advertising, or other tourism-related topic of interest. The committee's agendas would likely end up revolving around the following areas of interest: improving business skills/education; improving advertising; helping Fond du Lac become a visitor-welcoming place; discovering opportunities to collaborate and support each other's

businesses; and applying for financial and/or other support from various federal and provincial tourism-related agencies.

It is believed that at one of its initial meetings, CTDC members would decide leadership matters. The CTDC would then decide upon what issues and initiatives it wants to concentrate initially, as well set a meeting schedule.

Chief and council, as the elected governing body of the community, is ideally positioned to help the CTDC if and when it requests band council support. Such support could take any one of many forms, but the council should discourage direct financial support. It is anticipated that, from time to time, CTDC may ask the band council to help advance an agenda item or resolve a tourism-related issue. The band council may want to provide some office support to the committee chair.

CONCLUSION

With a view to develop local capacity to establish and successfully operate tourism businesses, a two-part strategy was initiated: (1) to conduct an assessment of what related knowledge and skills are lacking and hence call for training; and (2) to begin creation of a socio-political environment that is supportive of entrepreneurship.

To assess the knowledge/skill gap, twenty-two community members and five operators of existing Fond du Lac businesses were personally and confidentially interviewed. Responses were compiled and guided the designed of a topic outline for a training program.

With respect to creating a socio-political environment supportive of entrepreneurship, two meetings were held with chief and councilors and a first meeting of community members interested in planning and directing local tourism development facilitated. Following these various interviews and meetings, it is recommended that:

- (1) curriculum be developed for a nine-week tourism entrepreneur training program, and that this program be offered at the community level;
- (2) chief and council strive toward an “Empowerment Model,” as opposed to a “Dependency Model” of governance; and
- (3) community members establish a Fond du Lac Community Tourism Development Committee as a community-driven discussion and action forum to support local tourism business development.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire For Knowledge/Skills Inventory

Notes to Informant:

- The purpose of this interview is to develop a picture of what additional knowledge and skills we should provide through training so that you can become successful in establishing and operating your own tourism business.

- Please don't be embarrassed to say that you do not know this or that; just be honest. There is no way for us to determine what knowledge and skills to train you for unless you tell us honestly what you don't know.

- The information you provide in this interview will be confidential with the interviewer and researcher. Your name or other personal information will not be used in any report.

Date: _____, 2002

Identification

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Age: _____

Education

Elementary School Yes No Level completed: _____

High school Yes No Level completed: _____

Vocational school Yes No Level completed: _____

On-the-job training Yes No Level completed: _____

University Yes No Level completed: _____

Other: _____

Please make a list of the knowledge and skills you have and that you believe would be useful to establishing and operating your own tourism business in Fond du Lac:

Please make a list of what knowledge and skills you feel you lack for establishing and operating your own tourism business in Fond du Lac:

Please describe any experience you have in working in the tourism industry:

Landscape familiarity/experience:

—What places have you visited in the Lake Athabasca region? (refer to regional map)

—In each case, about how often have you visited these places?

—What parts of the Park have you visited and explored? (refer to Park map)

—in each case, about how often have you visited these places?

Land, Wildlife, and History Knowledge

How much do you know about the Dene or Cree names of places such as creeks, hills, communities, etc:

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about wildlife, where they live and how they live (plants, mammals, birds, insects, ecology,)

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know the Dene or Cree names of animals, plants, birds, insects?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about the human (Aboriginal) history of the Lake Athabasca area?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about the archaeological history of the Lake Athabasca region?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how the lakes, rivers, and rocks (geology) of the Lake Athabasca area came to be?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

Business Skills

How much do you know about programs offered by SaskTourism?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot

How much do you know about business and training programs offered by Saskatchewan Northern Affairs?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot

How much do you know about business and training programs offered by Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot

Program Development Skills

How much do you know about creating an interpretive program?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about creating a promotional brochure?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about using effective communication skills such as telephone manners?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about making a business plan?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about the difference between product development, market development, and advertising?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about negotiating a liability insurance policy?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

Program Delivery Skills

How much do you know about guiding fishermen and hunters?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about providing leadership and managing groups of people?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about making people comfortable and safe in extreme weather conditions?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to handle criticism and complaints from clients?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to safely operate off-road vehicles such as quads and snowmobiles?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to handle a boat safely?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to handle a dog-team and sled?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to set up and take down a wilderness camp?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about using a GPS?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about making water safe to drink?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to practice camping and hiking without damage to the environment?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to handle bear encounters without a gun?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about operating a camp stove?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to prepare and cook camp food?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to handle garbage and human waste in wilderness?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to tie a variety of knots?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

Emergency Skills

How much do you know about giving someone First Aid?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about giving someone CPR?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

How much do you know about how to survive in the wilderness without food and shelter?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

Assessment Skills

How much do you know about measuring customer satisfaction?

- nothing not much a fair amount a lot
- Studied in school? (what grade?):
- Learned from elders? (what elders?):
- Learned from books? (what books?):
- Learned elsewhere?(where?):

Issues Awareness

Do you think that locally owned and managed tourism business will be good for the Fond du Lac community as a whole?

- No Yes

Please list as many benefits as you can think of:

Now list as many negative effects as you can think of:

Training Program Administration

Which of the following ways of learning do you like best (check as many as you like):

- teacher telling you what you need to know
- teacher demonstrating how to do it
- teacher offering helpful hints while you practice
- privately reading about the subject in books
- privately reading about it on the internet
- other: _____

To bring a training program to Fond du Lac will require that you attend classes during the day, every day for 1 or 2 weeks per course. Would you be able to make this commitment?

No Yes

If not, what alternative schedule would work for you?

Appendix B. Training Program Proposal.

The following is a proposal for a nine-week education program to be offered at Fond du Lac. Its primary aim is to build the capacity of learners to succeed in establishing and operating their tourism business ventures. Its secondary aim is to help participants' skills match industry standards. The program consists of integrated modules that build on traditional knowledge, place emphasis on mastering required knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and empower entrepreneurs to pursue locating additional information and resources during their business lives. The proposed training consists of four two-week courses and 1 one-week course.

1. Land, Wildlife, and History Knowledge

This two-week module should mostly be taught outdoors as a field course.

Local geography (1 day)

- Dene place names
- traditional travel routes
- maps
- remote sensing images
- where and how to access related information

Geological history (1)

- landscape processes
- glacial and post-glacial evidence in the field
- where and how to access related information

Human Aboriginal history (2)

- archaeological evidence in the field
- early migrations
- origins of Dene
- where and how to access related information

Human post-contact history (2)

- early explorers/travelers
- fur trade evidence
- impacts of explorers and traders on Aboriginal people
- where and how to access related information

Local wildlife (4)

plants (include taxonomy), mushrooms
insects, fish, mammals, birds
ecological relationships
where and how to access related information

2. Business Skills

This two-week module should be taught indoors.

Loan and grant application/management (0.5)

Planning (1)

- marketing planning
- operations planning
- assessment planning

Market assessment/development (0.5)

Product development and design (1)

Advertising (1)

Client service

Inventory management (0.5)

Bookkeeping (2)

Projections (2)

- sales
- cash flow
- income

Employee management (1)

Laws and regulations (0.5)

3. Program Preparation and Emergency Skills

This two-week module should be taught indoors.

Event logistics planning (2)

Client expectations planning and management (1)

Environmental conditions planning (1)

Emergency response planning (0.5)

Communications technologies (including GPS) (0.5)

Survival techniques (including compass-navigation) (2)

First Aid and CPR certification (3)

4. Delivery Skills, Professionalism, and Leadership

This two-week module should be taught both indoors and outdoors.

Equipment safety (0.5)

Camp set-up and management (2)

Instruction/interpretation and practice (4)

Client expectations monitoring and assessment (1)

Leadership concepts and group management practice (2.5)

5. Context and Issue Awareness

This one-week module should be taught indoors.

Tourism impacts on ecosystems and environmental stewardship (0.5)

Tourism impacts on human communities (0.5)

Community-based tourism development (1)

Eco-friendly travel and camping options (0.5)

Ecolodge and site design options (1)

Tourism industry networks (0.5)

Accessing program content info (0.5)

Funding sources (0.5)

