

LILLOOET-LYTTON TOURISM DIVERSIFICATION PROJECT



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1. Project Background

1.1 Introduction

The Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Project was undertaken as one of the commitments flowing from the completion of the Lillooet Resource Management Plan. The mayors of Lillooet and Lytton, the BC Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM), and the Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA) agreed to collaboratively investigate the role that tourism could play in developing the economies of Lillooet and Lytton. The WTA is a trade organization that links together the full range of nature tourism sectors active in BC and specializes in assessing tourism resource potentials. Thus it was agreed that the WTA could play a key role in assisting Lillooet and Lytton to develop a pragmatic tourism strategy. As well, the communities were especially interested in WTA's abilities to link them with potential investors in the industry. Accordingly, the Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Project was undertaken subject to the following Terms of Reference.

1.2 Terms of Reference

1.2.1 Objectives

The purpose of the Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Project is to:

1. Identify the role that tourism can play in bringing new revenues, jobs, residents, and investments to the Lillooet-Lytton area
2. Identify tourism opportunities with an emphasis on frontcountry tourism in the Lillooet-Lytton area and with linkages to backcountry tourism in the surrounding area
3. Explore how tourism can function as a catalyst to enhance the amenities of Lillooet-Lytton (i.e. golfing, fishing, etc.) that in turn could encourage new economic activities within these communities for other sectors (i.e. new economy workers, early retirees, etc), and
4. Serve as an example to demonstrate how similar heartland communities can utilize tourism to help diversify their economies.

1.2.2 Method

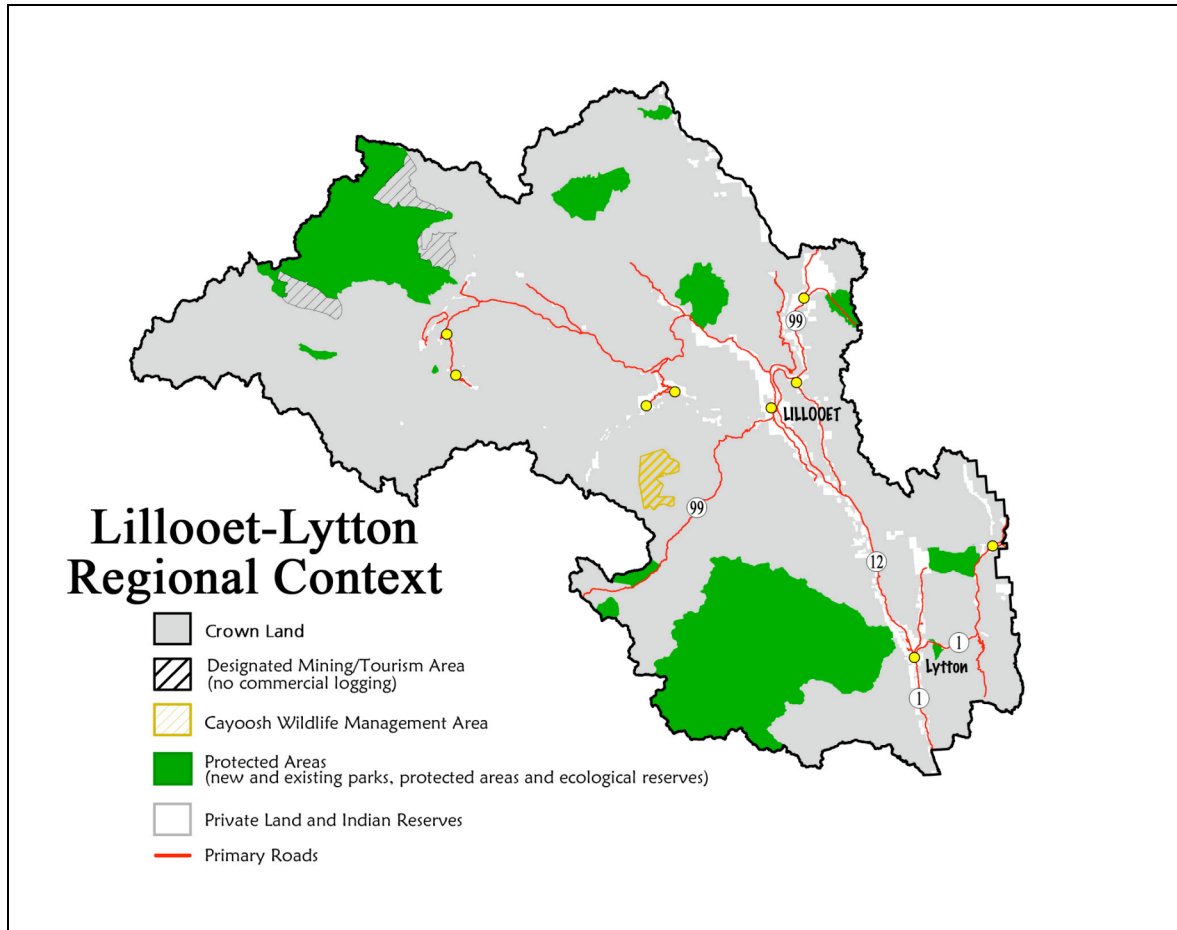
This Study incorporated the following elements:

1. Reconnaissance tours with the mayors, council members, and members of the business communities of Lillooet-Lytton to identify potential tourism products

2. In-region workshops to discuss with community leaders, decision-makers and the public on the role that tourism could play as a catalyst for local economic diversification
3. Provision of information to assist community decision-makers in understanding the range of possible tourism options and opportunities available to their communities
4. Providing experiences from other communities who are going through a similar tourism-generated transition in their economies (e.g. Fernie, Tofino, etc)
5. Prioritizing potential viable new tourism opportunities for the Lillooet-Lytton area, and
6. Providing Lillooet-Lytton community leaders with access to major prospective tourism investors, and specialists to help accelerate the region's transition to a more diversified economy in which tourism plays a key role.

1.3 Study Area Description

The study area includes a portion of both the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (Areas A and B) and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (Area D). It encompasses the municipalities of Lillooet and Lytton, and the communities of Spences Bridge, Pavilion, South Shalath, Seton Portage, Gold Bridge, and Bralorne. Year-round and seasonal residential areas are also located throughout the rural portions of the study area, mostly along transportation corridors and lakes, including the settlement areas of Moha-Yalakom, Foundation Valley, Texas Creek, West Pavilion, Anderson Lake, Gun Lake and Gun Creek Road, Marshall Lake, and Tyax/Tyughton Lakes. There are 35 First Nation communities within the plan area. The residential population in 1996 was 6,296. As well, there are approximately 500 seasonal recreational properties that are used part-time by approximately 1,000 people.



1.3.1 Historical Use

The Lillooet-Lytton region is rich in First Nation traditional use areas, as well as more recent cultural heritage sites. For example the Stein and Botanie Valleys are two very important First Nation traditional use sites where local and regional gatherings took place. There is also ample evidence in the Pavilion area of long-standing First Nation use. As well, beyond such sites some of the higher peaks on the east bank of the Fraser River have significant First Nation spiritual significance.

With the coming of the Europeans, the Fraser and Thompson Rivers were quickly utilized as travel corridors during the early exploration and development of the province. Simon Fraser passed through the area in 1808, exploring the river that bears his name as he sought a passage to the Pacific Ocean. Near Lytton, Fraser encountered the mouth of the Thompson River, naming it after his fellow adventurer David Thompson who was exploring in the Kootenays at the time. Later explorations led to the discovery of gold in the Bralorne area in 1859 and later on the gravel bars of the lower Fraser River. The Gold Rush to Barkerville saw thousands of miners pass through the study area over the Harrison-Lillooet Road and later the Cariboo Wagon Road from Lillooet north to Clinton and beyond. Agriculture and ranching along the fertile river bottoms and benches began to develop during this time in order to

provide the provisions needed to feed the miners. Many small communities sprang up to accommodate both residents and travellers, but most of these settlements are now only a memory.

The lower Fraser and Thompson River valleys were also the routes taken by the Canadian Pacific Railway (in the 1880s) and the Canadian National Railway (in the early 20th century) to open up the interior of the province and connect it with the rest of Canada. Later the British Columbia Railway was built along the trans-Coast Mountain route to Lillooet via Seton and Anderson Lakes, and from there followed the Fraser River north through Moran Canyon en route to Prince George and beyond. The Trans-Canada Highway, completed in the 1960s, parallels the national railways along the Fraser and Thompson River valleys, thereby creating yet another national route that traverses the study area.

1.3.2 *Geographical Features*

The Lillooet-Lytton study area incorporates the drainages of the Bridge River, Anderson and Seton Lakes, Cayoosh Creek, Stein Valley, and the Lower Thompson, as well as the immediate small watersheds flowing directly into the main stem of the lower-mid Fraser.

Lillooet (district population 2,741 according to the area's web site) is a four-hour drive from Vancouver via Highways 1 and 12, or 130 kilometres east of Whistler on Highway 99. Lytton, population 317, is located 64 kilometres south of Lillooet, and is 255 kilometres east of Vancouver on Highway 1. In addition to these two municipalities, the sizable First Nation population is arrayed through a sequence of communities and reserves up the main stem of the Fraser River, from Kanaka Bar to Pavilion, and in the Lower Bridge River and Seton-Portage areas.

The study area is dominated by the dramatic peaks of the Coast Mountains, which are dissected by deep, sheer valleys. These scenic valley bottoms feature lakes and major rivers, the most notable being the north-south trending Fraser River and the east-west trending Lower Thompson River, Seton and Anderson Lakes, and Bridge River Lakes (Carpenter and Downton). It is dramatic country located on the dry, rain-shadow side of the Coast Mountains.

1.3.3 *Project Focus*

The focus of the Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Diversification Project is on identifying the tourism opportunities for these two communities and their immediate surroundings. However given that nature tourism here, as elsewhere in British Columbia, is land and water resource-based, the more distant hinterland that these communities relate to is also of importance. Hence, while the study focuses on the frontcountry corridors - especially in the areas adjacent the communities of Lillooet and Lytton - it also references those mid- and backcountry tourism resources throughout the Lillooet

Forest District, which would be within the economic catchment area of Lillooet and Lytton.

1.4 Local Economic Challenges

The Lillooet-Lytton region has traditionally featured an economy based on resource extraction, particularly forestry and mining. In recent years however, growth opportunities in the forestry sector have become more limited due to a number of factors:

- A finite availability of timber which places a limit on the development opportunities for new mills
- Cyclical lumber prices that subject these communities (as indeed is the case for most forest communities throughout BC) to a boom and bust style economy
- Softwood trade restrictions imposed by the United States
- First Nation concerns
- Environmental concerns, and
- Increasing competition for the land base from a range of other economic sectors.

Similarly the potential for mining to assist these communities has become more constrained due to a number of factors, including:

- Cyclical prices for metals (until the recent strong upsurge in mineral values, prices over the last several years had been suppressed)
- A wariness of mining investors to invest new money in British Columbia due to political, environmental, and First Nation concerns
- The fact that the most obvious, higher value, easily accessed mineral deposits have already been exploited.

Given these extractive resource realities, Lillooet and Lytton, like so many other communities in rural British Columbia, have been experiencing economic challenges. Increased mechanization in the resource sectors associated with the forest and mining industries' desire for increased productivity have exacerbated this, as such mechanization results in fewer jobs being required to process the same amount of raw materials. As well, recent government efficiency initiatives have resulted in downsizing of the civil servant labour force in these communities. Thus these recent years have been a challenging time of adjustment for Lillooet and Lytton. Consequently, these communities are now actively seeking new opportunities for diversifying their economies. Tourism's potential contribution is something that definitely warrants further exploration.

2. The Significance of Tourism

2.1 Tourism in British Columbia

Tourism is currently the world's largest industry. It generates in excess of \$6.1 trillion globally, and is growing rapidly. In British Columbia tourism generated \$9.3 billion in revenues in 2003, and supported 114,000 direct jobs (Tourism BC 2004). Despite the recent challenges of the 9/11 tragedy and SARS, tourism in BC has mostly recovered and the prospects for growth in this sector are excellent, especially given the advent of the 2010 Winter Olympics and the publicity that will be generated in advance, during, and after the games are held.

Tourism in British Columbia currently generates \$4.4 billion of gross domestic product (GDP) and returns \$1 billion in revenues annually to the BC government. (Tourism BC 2004) Indeed a comparison with forestry demonstrates just how significant a role tourism plays in the British Columbia economy: Tourism already generates 74% of the GDP of the forest sector (Tourism BC 2004). Therefore, tourism clearly can play a role in enhancing the economics of places like Lytton and Lillooet, building on the foundations provided by forestry. This means that the best approach for BC communities such as Lillooet and Lytton to maximize the benefits of these sectors is a diversification strategy that is based on tourism *and* forestry (rather than tourism *versus* forestry).

2.2 Nature-Based Tourism and Rural BC

Tourism in British Columbia markets itself to the world under the slogan of 'Super Natural British Columbia'. This is because so much of BC's key product offerings are nature-related due to our province's abundance of wildlife, fisheries, wilderness, and dramatic scenery. Travellers come here from around the world to enjoy our high quality natural environment. The nature-based portion of the overall BC tourism industry includes the following sectors:

- Adventure (e.g. rafting and heli-skiing)
- Guided hunting and fishing
- Ecotourism (e.g. nature viewing and cultural experiences)

As a sector, tourism plays a unique role in the economy of BC. Whereas all other land resource sectors export products from the region out to the marketplace, tourism in effect imports the market directly into the region. The result is that tourism imports dollars from urban areas in British Columbia (and beyond) into communities such as Lillooet and Lytton. Given this, tourism can play a key role in the economic growth of rural communities throughout the heartland of British Columbia.

Nature-based tourism in particular offers promise to rural communities given that the tourism products it markets are found throughout rural British Columbia.

Nature-based tourism is currently the fastest growing sector of the overall tourism economy, with a growth rate of at 11% per year (Wilderness Tourism Association). Tourism, and especially nature-based tourism, is associated with the highest rate of owner-operators in any sector of the economy. As well, nature-based tourism can play a critical role in smaller communities by creating opportunities for youth employment. Indeed, for those who choose a life in tourism, the opportunities this sector offers to advance up the management ladder or develop new businesses are exceptional.

2.3 Nature of the Global Tourism Marketplace

Tourism has been and is forecast to continue to be a flourishing sector globally, due to:

- Increasing affluence throughout the G7 world and beyond,
- Ongoing improvements in air and other transportation services, and
- Increased information availability to would-be travellers around the world via television and the Internet.

In an ever-urbanized world there is an increasing hunger to reconnect with nature. Therefore, the natural experiences that a destination such as British Columbia offers are likely to continue to lead growth of the overall tourism economy. One of the key forces driving the growth of nature-based tourism is the maturing of the baby boom generation across North America and Europe. Demographics reveal that the leading edge of the boomers are now turning fifty-five, with the bulk of the bulge now in their 40s. Generally this 40-something group has at this point established their careers, secured their housing, and is in the middle-late stage of raising a family. They are becoming increasingly interested in adventure/ecotourism vacations. As for the fifty-five year old cohort, they are mostly into the empty nest stage, and many are taking early retirement. Typically these people have significant disposable income, available recreational time, and an interest in travelling.

These market trends are reflected in the changing nature of tourism product offerings. The older 'rubber tire' style of car touring that characterized the 1970s has been replaced largely by resort-focussed ecotourism vacations, although a very high-value RV tourism market niche is also emerging (e.g. today's RVs can cost up to \$300-400,000). This niche area is strongly linked to affluent U.S. retirees. Expectations are that these trends will continue and intensify. As well, today's tourists are increasingly discerning in the experiences and facilities they choose. These visitors commonly get their cues on where to vacation from well-developed marketing efforts. These marketing campaigns tend therefore to emphasize:

- a) Large sophisticated tourism companies capable of providing high-quality destination resort experiences, or
- b) Eco- and adventure tourism niche marketers who offer top calibre products.

Insight into the potential for adventure-based tourism in a region like Lillooet-Lytton is evidenced by a major survey recently undertaken by Intrawest (North America's largest resort corporation). A letter (23/03/04) to Lytton Mayor, Chris O'Connor, from Graham Kwan, Intrawest Vice President for Business Development states that:

"Statistics from our survey that are very supportive of active travel experiences in British Columbia include:

- 54% of our respondents indicated that the destination Country/Region of most interest was Western Canada
- 50% of our respondents indicated that they have taken an active vacation travel tour in the last 3 years or anticipate taking an active tour in the next two years
- 91% of respondents indicated that they are interested in taking a tour
- 70% of respondents would prefer tours that include physical activity levels that range from moderate to challenging (4-6 hours of walking or biking a day, over varying terrain)

The types of activities that were of most interest included viewing geological wonders, learning about the local culture/history, viewing wildlife, exploring rainforests, and visiting a national park/preserve. Consistent with the survey we could see the following list of potential activities supporting British Columbia tourism:

Winter Activities

- Snowshoeing
- Dog sledding
- Cross country skiing
- Snowmobile Touring
- Horse-drawn sleigh rides
- Skating
- Winter camping

Summer Activities

- Fly fishing
- Golf
- Culinary classes/retreats
- Mountain climbing
- Horseback riding/ranches
- Health spas
- Mountain biking tours
- BC "Luxury RV Camps"
- Remote camps
- Cultural/heritage tours
- 4x4 tours
- ATV tours
- Jet boat tours
- Helicopter tours
- Whitewater river rafting
- Paragliding
- Walking and hiking tours
- Canoe/kayak tours
- Photography tours

To capitalize on this important tourism sector, resort and ecotourism companies reach their prospective clients with marketing efforts that utilize strategically targeted TV, magazine, newspaper, and Internet marketing campaigns. Such efforts are then focused on those portions of the regional, national, and international populations that market research reveals to be most interested in the product offerings of a specific geographic region.

British Columbia's primary markets include the following subgroups, according to the BC Visitor Study published in 1998 and available from the Tourism BC website.

Resident Visitors:

1. **British Columbia** residents account for about 60% of the overall tourism flow

Non-Resident Visitors:

2. The rest of **Canada** (primarily Ontario and Alberta) makes up 34% of the non-resident market
3. **United States:** Cross border tourism traffic has always been important to British Columbia. In earlier days people often came over the border to highway tour by car or camper truck. Today, the focus for multi-day excursions is much more on destination resort and adventure tourism as well as very large and expensive recreational vehicles. (While American travel has experienced some downturn in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks, recovery is underway although a lingering anxiety of travelling beyond the U.S. continues to act as a damper. This suggests that tourism operators who overly emphasize the U.S. market would be well advised to continue to diversify their offerings to the marketplaces.) U.S. visitors typically make their travel choices based on mass media and Internet marketing (16% of non-resident market).
4. **International Travel:** Although international travel represents 14% of non-resident visitors to British Columbia, it is associated with the highest daily expenditures. These visitors are particularly guided in their travel choices by large-scale marketing that has the ability to attract their attention to British Columbia.

Core international markets for BC include Britain, Germany, and France, all of whom have a strong interest in nature. The Japanese and South Korean markets can have a strong interest in soft adventure tourism if it is suitably packaged, as packaged tours are the preferred mode for these visitors. While Australia and New Zealand represent a much smaller market volume, their visitors are especially enthusiastic about experiencing British Columbia's nature product.

2.3.1 *Marketing in a Global Context*

Given today's global marketplace realities, British Columbia's tourism product, including areas such as Lillooet-Lytton, will be evaluated in the context of competition from elsewhere in Canada, North America, and around the globe. Fortunately, if it is strategically developed, the Lillooet-Lytton tourism resource has the potential to eventually compete in these marketplaces. The proximity of this region to Vancouver and to the internationally recognized Whistler resort community gives this part of British Columbia a potential leg up. However, despite such potential, and the quality product that Lillooet-Lytton might have, the challenge on the shorter term is to develop sufficient high value offerings to attract the desired tourism flow.

The first step, obviously, is to make the decision to develop an integrated regional tourism economy that will be of a calibre to match distant market requirements. Clearly some of the products identified in this report, such as destination resorts, ecolodges, and rail/bus tour products are prerequisite to distance marketing. As these products come on-stream, they will need to be linked and packaged together if the Lillooet-Lytton region is to effectively project itself into the national/international marketplace in order to draw prospective visitors into the region.

2.3.2 *Using Marketing Partnerships to Develop New Tourism Products*

However, this can be more simply said than done, as there is a 'chicken and egg' situation that must be overcome. To be able to market the Lillooet-Lytton region means that certain key products must be developed first, such as destination resorts or ecolodges. Yet for investors to be willing to exploit this region's opportunities, they want to be able to reap a return. Clearly there is a lag between the development of a new product and the time when it begins to show a profit. Depending on the marketplace to which it is targeted, this investment period typically runs from 3-5 years. (The latter is especially the case for internationally targeted products.) During this time period, substantial investment is required to cover actual development costs, project start up, as well as operating and marketing costs.

There are several means of overcoming this impediment. These include:

- Seek larger investors, e.g. for the destination resort(s), who have the resources to endure until project profitability is achieved
- Develop smaller scale ecolodge and adventure/ecotourism products that require less investment
- Link and partner new products with established large-scale tourism marketers/packagegers. In the Lillooet-Lytton area, there is good potential to effect such partnering with companies such as Rocky Mountaineer Vacations, the new tourism rail operators on the BC Rail line through Lillooet, and who has just announced that it is actively seeking such partnership opportunities. Similarly Intrawest (which is North America's largest resort company, and is headquartered in Vancouver) has also expressed interest in possibly

developing relationships with resort/ecolodge/adventure tourism operators in southern BC. As part of this project the Intrawest Vice-president responsible for New Product Development has toured the Lillooet-Lytton region to assess product potential and longer-term possibilities for market partnering.

2.3.3 *The Importance of Branding*

A key requirement for success in today's marketplace is the ability to project a distinctive image of a region and its tourism attributes out to distant marketplaces. In our highly urbanized and globally linked world, effective branding is absolutely essential if a tourism location is to succeed. This is because today's prospective tourist is bombarded by a vast array of marketing messages via the mass media and Internet, all competing for his or her potential business. Branding builds on modern principles of marketing to create a clear image of a destination and the experience to be had in visiting an individual locale in the consumer's mind. Branding is more than just achieving consumer recognition of a product. It also seeks to build a story or elicit an emotional response in the consumer that will encourage him/her to choose to visit a particular locale. Successful branding (achieved by careful logos, messaging, and pictures that are repetitively and compellingly imprinted) results in a consumer choosing to integrate the experience that a brand represents into his or her life.

This means that for locations such as Lillooet and Lytton, the development of the region's product offerings, which are based on its natural and cultural attributes and imagery, must be linked together in a unique and appealing story line. This must then be effectively projected out into the distance marketplace. This is exactly what corporations such as Intrawest and Rocky Mountaineer Vacations have done so well. Developing a marketing strategy, and creating the story and the images and the symbols that will become part of the Lillooet-Lytton brand will require considerable marketing research. Initially agencies such as Tourism BC and the regional tourism marketing associations can help (Vancouver Coast and Mountains Tourism Association for Lillooet; Thompson-Okanagan Tourism Association for Lytton). However, further work by an experienced tourism-marketing consultant will likely also be required. Once the Lillooet-Lytton brand has been developed, it will be necessary for individual operators in the region to participate in conveying it via their own marketing. This step is essential. For only by working together to communicate unified messages will all of these businesses send a clear message to the marketplace as to the distinctive tourism offerings of Lillooet-Lytton.

3. Tourism and the Lillooet-Lytton Region

3.1 Tourism Strengths

Tourism is already playing a significant role in the Lillooet/Lytton economy. In 2001, Lillooet's tourism industry accounted for about 15% of the employment (458 jobs) in the Lillooet Resource Management Plan area and approximately 5% (\$5.8 million) of the employment income. (Source: MSRM Summary of Socioeconomic and Environmental Implications.) Given the attributes of the region, the prospect is for strong growth in this sector provided that it is strategically developed. Strengths associated with the Lillooet-Lytton region fall within the following categories:

- Proximity to Vancouver/Whistler
- Climate
- Topography and Scenery
- Fish and Wildlife Resources
- First Nations Culture
- Transportation Links
- Links to the Olympics

3.2.1 Proximity to Whistler and Vancouver

The Lillooet-Lytton region is fortunate in that it is especially accessible to the urban population of the Lower Mainland, where half of BC's residents live (1.5 million people). Lillooet is approximately four hours from Vancouver by highway, with Lytton even closer at just three hours. This proximity enables a strong tourism flow to be developed from the Lower Mainland region. As well, the project area is readily accessible to Whistler, Canada's leading resort community: it is only 1.5 hours by Highway 99 to Lillooet. These driving distances are also very appealing to those people who can be attracted by enhanced tourism amenities to consider relocating permanently to Lillooet or Lytton.

The project area's proximity to Vancouver International Airport and air service out of Whistler also enables the prospect of ready visitation from out-of-province tourists. These travellers can either access this region quickly by road from Vancouver or Whistler, or by a half-hour flight from Whistler. This flight access is especially significant given that major tourism operators in Whistler are now considering how to 'step out' their residents for adventure tourism activities in nearby locations.

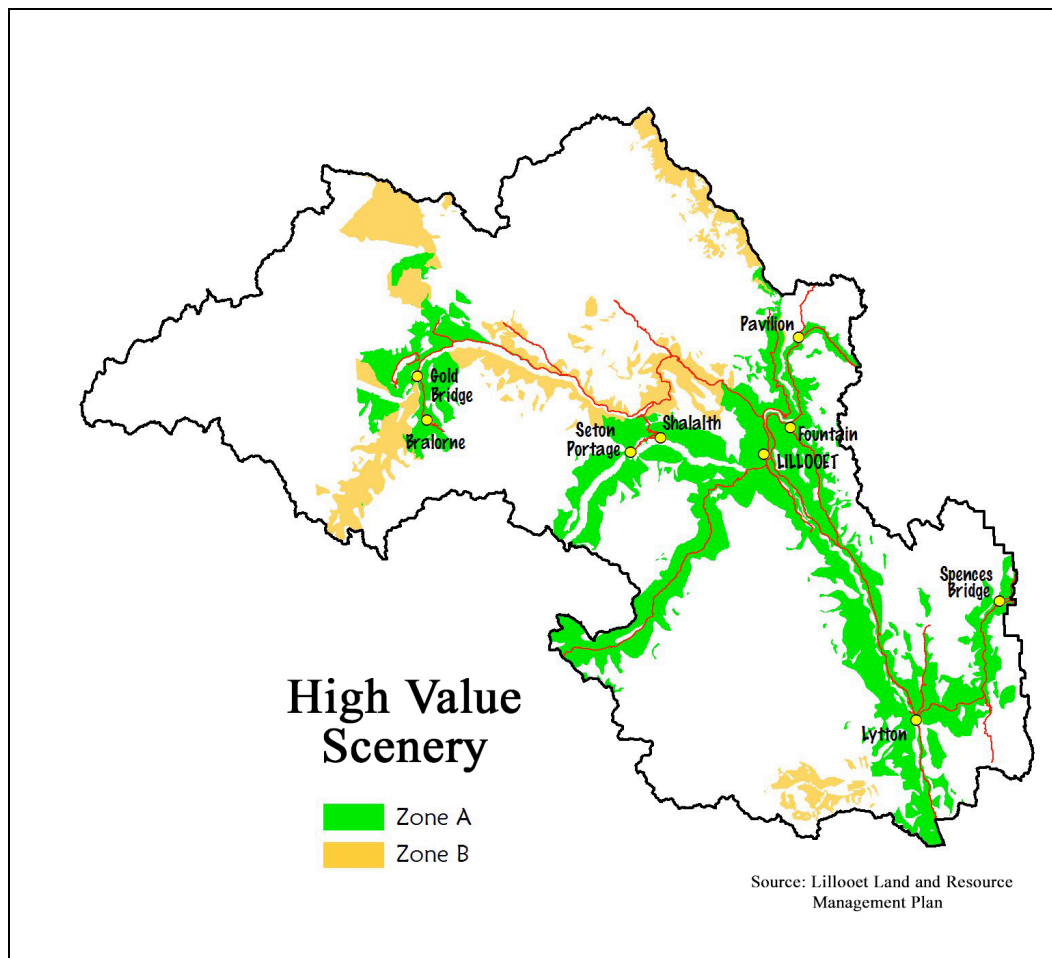
3.2.2 Climate

The Lillooet-Lytton area is especially fortunate to experience a warm, dry, and indeed almost semi-desert climate. Lytton for example, prides itself as being the "Hot Spot" in Canada, (although Lillooet might dispute this claim!). Certainly, this Fraser Canyon region located in the rainshadow of the Coast Mountains experiences a

climate at least as good as the Okanagan. The summers are hot, the winters mild, and precipitation low throughout the year. The valley bottomlands of the Lillooet-Lytton region are one of the very few places in Canada where the prospect of snow is very limited. Hence this region has the potential to enjoy a longer tourism season. It can exploit a prolonged spring and fall season so as to support a range of outdoor tourism activities when other parts of the province are too cold or too stormy (Nevertheless, the higher elevation locations in the northwestern portions of the study region features good snow depths that can support winter tourism products such as heli-skiing in the Goldbridge area or downhill skiing in sites such as Melvin Creek.)

3.2.3 Topography and Scenery

The Lillooet-Lytton region is focused on the scenic and geologically dramatic Fraser Canyon, arguably the finest river canyon landscape in Canada. The Fraser is one of the larger free-flowing rivers left in the world, making it a river of international distinction. The western portion of the region is dominated by the rugged igneous and metamorphic Coast Mountains. By contrast, on the eastern side of the Fraser (and the project area), the mountains are of a sedimentary formation, reminiscent of the Rocky Mountains. Together this topographic splendour makes for a very impressive setting of a calibre able to attract visitors from around the world. This mountainous topography is the basis for the very wide range of ecosystems (or life zones) found here, from valley-bottom ponderosa pine and bunch grass, through the wet and dry coniferous forests of the mountainsides, up to the alpine and high ice-clad peaks.



3.2.4 Fish and Wildlife Resources

Given the extraordinary ecological richness of the Lillooet-Lytton region – which results from the interaction of its dramatic topography with climate – the area features important fish and wildlife populations that are of strong appeal to visitors. Of note is the opportunity to view salmon (the Fraser is the largest wild salmon river in the world), grizzlies, and California Bighorn sheep. The range of ecosystems found here, from dry valley bottom to alpine ridges, is also associated with a corresponding broad range of birds and plant life that are of special interest to nature-viewing ecotourists.

3.2.5 First Nations and Cultural Attributes

Due to the concentration of salmon associated with the Fraser River, the Lillooet-Lytton area features one of the strongest concentrations of native peoples in interior British Columbia. Thirty-five First Nation communities comprise an important part of the local population. They display a remarkably rich culture. Whether it be the opportunity to watch traditional methods of salmon fishing and drying, to visit traditional communities, or to witness local First Nation art and dance, the potential for the development of First Nation cultural tourism products here is very strong.

Not only is the First Nation peoples cultural tourism potential substantial, but as well there are also other strong historical themes that are associated with Europeans venturing into the Lillooet-Lytton area. As mentioned, the Fraser River is named after the explorer Simon Fraser who undertook his intrepid discovery of this great river in the early 1800s. Later, in the middle of that century, discovery of gold on the Fraser River bars and upriver at Barkerville led to the construction of the Cariboo Wagon Road. Remnants of this road can still be seen today. Mining was an early part of the region's economy, first with placer mining for gold, and then hard rock mining later. Some of these mine workings remain visible today and would be of interest to area visitors.

3.2.6 *Transportation Links*

Given that the Fraser River has always been the primary route from interior BC through to the coast, this area has always had a strong association with transportation. In the Lytton area, the Canadian National (CN) Rail and Canadian Pacific (CP) rail lines snake along the spectacular canyon walls. Lillooet is accessed by BC Rail (now leased to CN Rail), which comes upcountry from Anderson and Seton Lakes and then crosses the Moran Canyon just north of Lillooet. Both of these routes feature scenery of top international calibre. Thus the prospect exists to develop long distance rail tour products of global appeal. However, there is also potential for further products linked to these tours. For example, these rail links offer the opportunity to develop high volume excursions between Whistler and the project region, as well as the Lower Mainland and the region.

The primary highway access routes into the study area, either up the Fraser Canyon (Highway 1) or along Duffy Lake Road (Highway 99), also offer extraordinary scenic experiences of world-class significance. They also provide direct access to the region from Vancouver and Whistler respectively.

As far as air access is concerned, there is a good quality paved airstrip capable of handling Dash 8 aircraft at Lillooet, while a gravel strip services Lytton. The proximity of the region to Vancouver and Whistler offers the possibility to develop charter or even scheduled flights over time. This could not only further strengthen the tourism economy, but would also serve to help attract new residents to the region.

3.2.7 *Links to Olympics*

The coming 2010 Winter Olympics is very much on peoples' minds in British Columbia, and particularly in the tourism sector. Again, due to the proximity of the Lillooet-Lytton area to Vancouver and Whistler, the opportunity for this region to benefit from the world attention the Olympics will bring is truly exceptional. As Lytton already cheekily boasts, it is the 'other Olympic Village'. Certainly, of any of BC's heartland communities, both Lillooet and Lytton are among the most likely to be able to benefit from a tourism effect induced by the coming Olympic games.

4. The Lillooet-Lytton Region's Existing and Potential Tourism Products

Given the attributes of the Lillooet-Lytton region, the range of existing and potential tourism products is exceptional. These products fall into the following categories:

- Destination Resorts and Ecolodges
- Touring
- Adventure
- Wilderness Gateway
- Cultural

4.1 Destination Resorts and Lodges

According to the BC Resort Strategy and Action Plan (November 2004):

“The resort sector represents an enormous opportunity for British Columbia and contributes significantly to the provincial economy. For example, in 2002:

- Approximately \$1.9 billion was spent by resort tourists, which represents 20% of the total \$9.2 billion spent by tourists in the province.
- Direct spending by resort tourists created an equal amount of indirect spending and over \$200 million in induced economic effects
- British Columbia resorts generated nearly \$178 million in tax revenue for governments, and
- British Columbia resorts employed an estimated 26,000 people.

British Columbia has some 700 resorts, from fishing lodges to ski mountains to ecotourism operations. Development of new resorts and expansion of existing facilities would provide significant benefits throughout the province.”

Given the locational, climatic, and scenic tourism advantages of the Lillooet-Lytton area, this region offers strong potential for the development of new resorts and lodges. As such, it should be promoted by the BC government – and especially Land and Water BC – as a top priority location for prospective resort investors to consider.

The creation of such destination resorts (and associated ecolodges) shows promise and should be investigated as a priority. This is because the establishment of such facilities would play a key role in creating a critical mass and serve as a marketing magnet to help increase the profile and development of the tourism sector in the

project area as a whole. The best destination resort product opportunities would seem to relate to golf and downhill skiing for Lillooet. This topic is discussed in section 7.1.

With the exception of the Tyax Mountain Resort (near Gold Bridge and adjacent to Spruce Lake Provincial Park), the Lillooet-Lytton region has yet to develop smaller-scale but higher quality ecolodge and touring-related accommodation facilities. These will be needed to enable a full development of the ecotourism adventure and tourism product potential. Especially promising ecolodge opportunities would seem to exist for the Botanie Valley, sites at the mouth of the Stein River near Lytton, in Lillooet near the old suspension bridge, and north at the mouth of the Bridge River. As well, touring-associated hotel opportunities would appear to exist in downtown Lillooet across from the railway station, and near the Siska Reserve south of Lytton. Details on these opportunities are discussed in Section 7.2.

4.2 Touring Products

Touring products include:

- Railway, on either BC Rail or CN/CP Routes
- Automobile, either one-way or a circle tour via Highways 99 and 1
- Bus tours, either a circle tour or possibly linked with a rail leg
- Rental RV and car self-drive tours originating in Vancouver and Whistler

4.3 Adventure Products

4.3.1. Rafting and Canoeing

Day rafting in the Lillooet-Lytton region is already well developed and is marketed to the Lower Mainland and the Kamloops/Okanagan areas. The potential also exists to explore marketing of this product into Whistler.

- The Thompson River with its warmer water, canyon topography, and dramatically situated rail lines paralleling the river represents one of the best day-use river rafting products in Canada. It is well suited to high-volume raft tourism, with several companies operating here offering both motor and paddle rafting trips. There is significant potential to expand use levels without product degradation.
- The Fraser River provides for day-use product through the gorge of the lower Fraser Canyon, and especially Hell's Gate. However, given the massive hydraulics of this section of the Fraser, the season is much more restricted for safety reasons. As well, only large, motorized rafts may be operated here. Consequently, the usage and expansion potentials for rafting are more limited compared to the Thompson. World-class multi-day trips are also offered on the Fraser, originating upstream in the Chilcotin area and running down to

Lillooet. This is a high-value wilderness product with limited expansion potential.

- Between Lillooet and Lytton, the Fraser River flow is quieter and could support 24' brigade-style canoe day trips.

4.3.2 *Whitewater Kayaking*

The lower Thompson River is one of the premier white-water kayaking rivers in Canada. Other local rivers, particularly the Stein, and the nearby Nahatlatch (which supports rafting as well) also offer significant high-quality commercial kayaking potential. However, whitewater kayaking is a 'hard adventure' product suitable only for fit and experienced participants. This limits product development possibilities.

4.3.3 *Trail Riding*

The ponderosa pine - grasslands - Douglas fir ecosystems associated with the dry bottom land of the Fraser, Thompson, and Botanie valleys offer the prospect to develop high quality day-use trail rides and guest ranches. The trail ride product would be of appeal to the urban Vancouver market. International quality, multi-day wilderness trail riding is already available in the newly created South Chilcotin Park.

4.3.4 *Heli-hiking*

Outstanding heli-hike prospects would appear viable in the study area. Generally, the best heli-hike products feature scenic alpine-subalpine terrain that is gentle enough to enable easy hiking, that is close to frontcountry resorts or communities, and that is ideally within 5-10 minutes flight time. A good example of such high calibre terrain is situated on the gentle mountain ridges directly south of Lillooet and west of the Fraser.

4.3.5 *Heli-skiing*

Heli-skiing is already well developed in the upper Bridge River portion of the study area, based out of Whistler and Tyax Mountain Resort. This product is likely at or near potential since the suitable terrain in the western portion of the study area has long been tenured. In the eastern portion of the study area lower snowfall levels and less suitable topography limits the potential for an economically viable heli-skiing operation.

4.3.6 *Mountain Biking*

The combination of dramatic scenery, good climate, and extensive resource roads offers the possibility of developing top calibre short or longer distance networks of mountain bike routes. Good potential to market into the Vancouver/Whistler market exists due to the strong interest in mountain biking that is already found there. Increasingly mountain biking (for both casual and experienced users) is a popular activity associated with today's destination resorts and ecolodges. As these facilities are built in-region, the development of adjacent mountain bike trail networks will occur.

4.3.7 Road Biking

The exceptional scenery along the highway in the Fraser Canyon and Highway 99 is already of interest for bike touring. (The ability to do a circle tour through the region is a major plus.) The potential exists to develop this further and make the Lillooet-Lytton area renowned nationally and internationally as a bike-touring destination. The possibility also exists to develop a high quality midcountry bike tour product using the remnants of the old Cariboo Road. This could be quite unique and appeal to an international clientele.

4.3.8 Nature Viewing

Key nature-viewing opportunities in the Lillooet-Lytton region relate to salmon, grizzlies (particularly in South Chilcotin Park), California Bighorn sheep, deer, and songbirds (especially in springtime). As resorts and ecolodges develop, these products will become more in demand.

4.3.9 Fishing

The Fraser River supports a distinctive catch-and-release recreational sturgeon fishery. This is a unique fishing experience that needs careful management to ensure sustainability. The lower Thompson River was long renowned for its high calibre steelhead fishery. Tragically, this latter stock has seen fish numbers plummet so that its future is now uncertain.

4.3.10 4x4 Touring

The potential exists to create a long distance 4x4 route using resource development roads along the Seton-Anderson corridor or along the Bridge River, which could link directly to Whistler. This could become a unique product of international appeal.

4.3.11 Crosscountry Skiing

The Botanie Valley near Lytton is a mid-elevation location that supports a good snow base throughout winter. The possibility exists here to develop the closest low-elevation interior crosscountry skiing site to the Lower Mainland. This would emulate the product that has been successfully developed over the years at the more distant 100 Mile House region.

4.4 Wilderness Gateway

The South Chilcotin Park offers international calibre wilderness-style tourism. The primary products are multi-day horseback trips, backpacking, hunting, and backcountry skiing. This Park currently generates \$11 million worth of wilderness tourism activity (Economic Impacts of Tourism in the South Chilcotin Mountain Park: Pacific Analytics Inc. 2001) and the opportunity exists to expand the level of activity of non-consumptive riding/hiking products, provided it is done consistent with the conservation requirements of the provincial park. Other wilderness tourism opportunities exist in the Upper Yalakom and Shulaps area. As well, the Fraser River rafting product upstream of Lillooet qualifies as an internationally significant wilderness product, and already supports an array of rafting companies.

4.5 Cultural

As indicated earlier, a number of historical and cultural products in the study area are suitable for development:

Opportunities exist to develop First Nation salmon fishing viewing sites at the mouth of the Stein Valley, the mouth of the Bridge River, and in the Botanie Valley. There is also emerging First Nation interest in developing cultural tourism products such as dancing, story telling, carving, and art. Given the rich heritage and diversity of these bands, this could be a very strong theme for the region. The various First Nation communities are located on some of the most scenic and ecologically significant sites in the Lillooet-Lytton region. As a result, the opportunity exists for site-focused First Nation products, which in part delivers a cultural message but could also feature ecolodge and Interpretive Centre facilities.

In both Lillooet and Lytton, proposed native cultural centres could also create a key cultural tourism offering (if that is consistent with First Nations wishes).

Historical products could be developed in this region based on the early gold rush days and Cariboo Wagon Road themes.

4.6 Agriculture

The fine, sunny, dry climate of the Lillooet-Lytton region, along with river irrigation and fertile valley bottom soil, can support a range of agricultural activities: ranching, fruit growing, or organic farming. The possibility may well exist to develop vineyards and the potential of this industry for the Lillooet-Lytton region is currently under investigation. Each of these could support tourism products, such as guest ranches, organic fruit picking, and wine tasting tours.

5. The Tourism Zonation System: Integrating Tourism Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability

5.1 Achieving a Comprehensive Land Use Planning Approach for Tourism

The Tourism Zonation System (TZS) is a land planning technique that allows tourism development in areas such as Lillooet-Lytton to be systematically developed in an economically viable and environmentally sustainable way. Developed by WTA Executive Director Ric Careless in several studies across BC, this system subdivides the tourism resource land base of the province (and its regions) into Frontcountry, Midcountry or Backcountry zones according to degree of naturalness based on:

- Type of tourism outdoor experience
- Method of transport
- Intensity of use, and
- Scale of facilities (e.g. from destination resorts to cabins).

Each of the tourism zones has its own features and is best suited to a particular type of tourism. By using the zonation system it is possible to:

- Enhance compatibility between different types of nature-based tourism products
- Reduce conflict between the needs of tourism and other land users
- Increase compatibility between tourism and conservation requirements, thereby enhancing sustainability

The Backcountry/Wilderness Tourism Zone provides a high quality (often world-class) wilderness experience in a pristine environment to a smaller, though generally affluent clientele. Multi-day wilderness trail riding and backpacking, canoe tripping, photo safaris and nature treks, multi-day ski touring, and guided mountaineering are examples of nature-based tourism associated with this zone. The absence of motorized road access and comparative lack of infrastructure characterize the Backcountry zone. The tourism experience emphasizes personal and small group interaction and physical activity within pristine natural landscapes. In the Lillooet-Lytton study area, South Chilcotin Mountain Park, Stein Valley Park, Benders, Central Shulaps, and Nine Mile Ridge fall into this zone. Managing use and preserving the pristine wilderness is the key management challenge of this zone.

The Midcountry/Natural Tourism Zone is characterized by the provision of recreation experiences for 'intermediate' numbers of visitors in a quality natural – but not a purely wilderness - environment. This zone is often associated with motorized access and accommodation, but on a more dispersed basis and less intensive fashion than in the Frontcountry. Midcountry accommodation typically is characterized by

more remote (and often smaller) lodges with more limited facilities. Rustic basic comforts are provided, but the emphasis of the experience is still on the natural environment rather than the facilities themselves. Access in the Midcountry may be by helicopter, floatplane, snowmobiles, or unpaved resource roads. Heli-skiing, heli-hiking, snowmobiling, and backroads mountain biking are examples of adventure activities associated with this zone. The majority of the Lillooet Forest District and the Lillooet-Lytton study area falls into the Midcountry Zone. This is due to the extensive development of resource roads throughout the region that enable a range of Midcountry tourism activities.

The Midcountry/Natural Zone can be one of the most challenging areas to manage for tourism. Potential conflict with other users can be significant here, as this is the portion of the crown land base where industrial forestry and mining activity is focussed. In the study area, large portions of the Midcountry are of limited tourism appeal due to the degree of forest harvesting that has occurred. The Midcountry locations of most significance to tourism include the Hurley and Bridge River road corridors, the Botanie Valley, and the Fraser River corridor upstream of Pavilion.

Conflicts between different type of mechanized recreationalists and between mechanized and non-mechanized recreationalists can be more common in this 'transition' zone than in either the Frontcountry or Backcountry. To overcome this, increasingly agreements are being reached between various recreational users in places such as Whistler, Valemount, and Golden. These demonstrate that resolution to such Midcountry recreational conflicts is achievable through joint negotiations and sensible management.

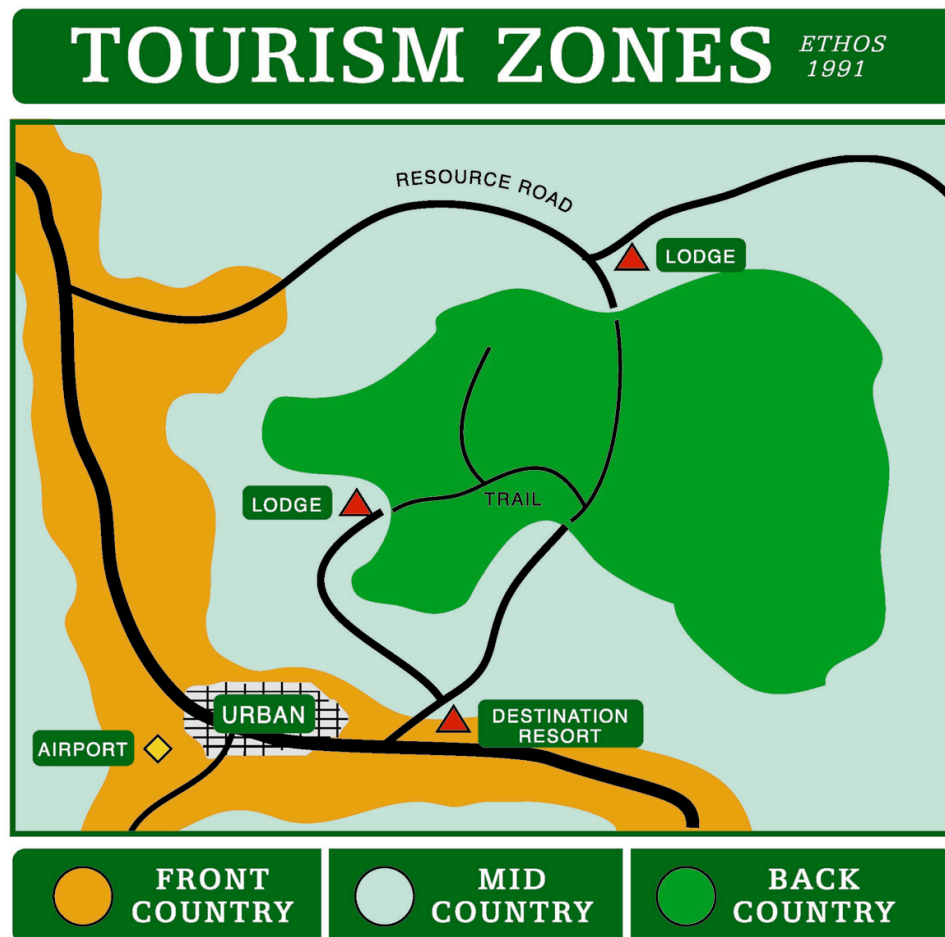
The Frontcountry/Intensive Tourism Zone services large volumes of tourists in a visually attractive though substantially human altered environment. Often, the more natural Mid and Backcountry zones provide the scenic backdrop for Frontcountry/Intensive tourism sites. This is certainly true in the project area, where the Frontcountry valley bottom corridors of the Fraser and Thompson River valleys are backed and scenically enhanced by the vistas of the high mountains in the adjacent Mid, and to a lesser extent, Backcountry Zones.

Tourism in the Frontcountry/Intensive Zone will often be closely linked to motorized, high volume transportation on major highway and rail corridors, and/or proximity to airports. Frontcountry tourism generally involves the use and development of substantial infrastructure: destination resorts, motels, restaurants, shopping areas, entertainment services, ski areas, golf courses and so on. Adventure tourism activities associated with the Frontcountry/Intensive zone include day trip rafting or canoeing, day trip crosscountry skiing on trail networks, day trip highway-based nature viewing tours, paved road bicycle tours, and shorter day walks or horseback riding. Rail and bus tours are also considered to be Frontcountry products.

Frontcountry tourism activities appeal to those tourists seeking short duration outdoor-oriented activities and a full range of facilities and amenities. Tourists

enjoying the Frontcountry often do not have the time to explore further into the Midcountry, or they prefer to limit their natural experience in order to enjoy the comfort and convenience of hotels and restaurants. Retention of quality viewsapes and scenic corridors is an important element of Frontcountry tourism management.

Below is a schematic illustration of the Tourism Zonation System.



5.2 Tourism Zonation Implications for the Lillooet-Lytton Study Area

The Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Zonation Map shows how the Study Area can be zoned into Front, Mid, and Backcountry according to the Tourism Zonation System. This Zonation can then be used to guide existing and prospective tourism operators, potential industry investors, and government land use planners in planning, developing, and managing the tourism resources of this region to achieve optimal economic viability and environmental sustainability.

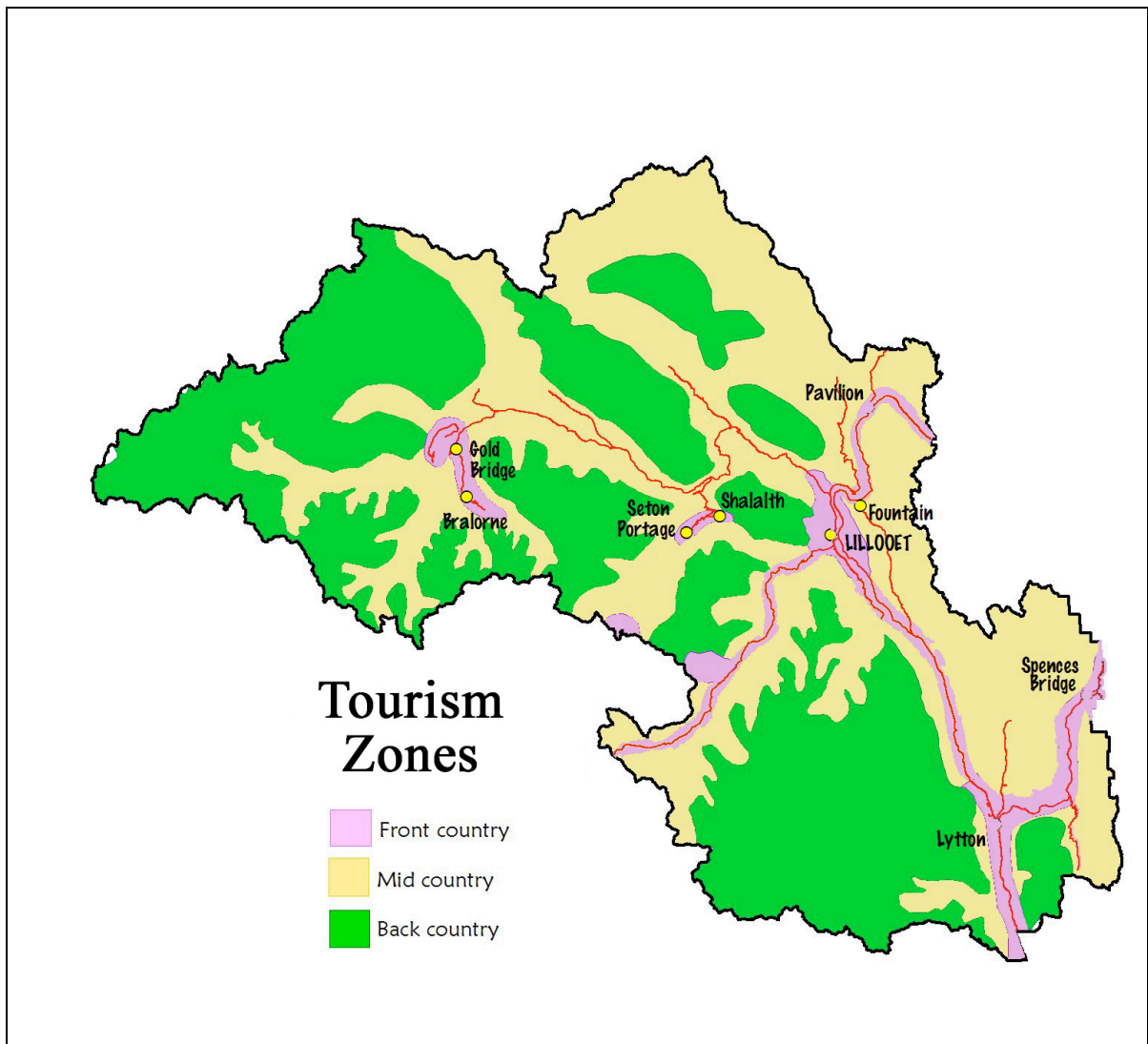
As tourism zonation mapping and the product-by-product inventory shows, the Lillooet-Lytton area features the full range of high-calibre tourism development opportunities, from Frontcountry to Backcountry. This enables a 'systems approach'

to be taken to planning the development of the study area's tourism economy. The objective is to enable a range of different products to be integrated so that a synergy develops where the total regional tourism economy can become more than just the sum of its individual businesses. Strengthening the Lillooet-Lytton economy by using the Tourism Zonation System approach can lead to a diverse, interlinked, and sustainable tourism economy that will be easier to brand and market to distant marketplaces. It can also enable individual businesses to mutually benefit from and assist other businesses in the study area. As well, it can support the development of ancillary regional services for both visitors and residents.

Accordingly, the most strategic means to develop the tourism resource in the Lillooet-Lytton region both economically and environmentally will be to site new developments in the appropriate zones. This implies that wilderness-style ecotourism businesses (e.g. nature, viewing, wilderness multi-day trail riding, backpacking, backcountry skiing, and mountaineering) should be focussed in South Chilcotin Mountain Park, the Shulaps Range, and possibly the Stein Park. Extensive, motorized 'in-nature' activities - such as heli-skiing, heli-hiking and 4x4 touring - should be focussed in the Midcountry. The Frontcountry corridors along Highways 99 and 1 are ideally suited for more intensive, day-oriented products such as car, bus and rail touring, day horseback-riding, guest ranches, and river-rafting, etc. The Frontcountry is also the logical and best place to develop larger scale facilities such as golf or ski resorts and ecolodges, since they are associated with substantial built infrastructure and depend upon high tourist flows.

Locations such Whistler, Golden, and more recently Fernie all exemplify how such a synergistic and systematic tourism strategy works. In each case, high-calibre Back and Midcountry nature-tourism opportunities linked with Frontcountry resort community offerings are proving exceptionally successful in attracting a strong and affluent tourist flow from international markets. The prospect is for such an approach to be applied with success in the Lillooet-Lytton area.

The following map graphic portrays the front, mid and backcountry tourism zones of the Lillooet-Lytton area.



6. Tourism as a Catalyst for Rural Community Economic Transition

The direct role that tourism can play in diversifying rural community economics is well recognized. By capitalizing on local scenic, recreational, and cultural attributes, new tourism businesses can be developed that generate revenues and jobs. However, the catalytic role that tourism can also play in attracting new residents into communities, thereby furthering growth, diversification, and economic transition, is only now being appreciated. Indeed, research being undertaken across the western U.S. by the Sonoran Institute, and in Canada by Alberta's Chinook Institute, suggests that one of the striking features of the economies of many communities in western North America is the degree to which the populations of select rural communities are starting to grow strongly again. There are two prime drivers for this growth:

- Early retirees (associated with the first wave of retiring baby boomers), and
- Footloose knowledge workers.

In either case, tourism is often the catalyst for such growth.

6.1 Early Retirees

Increasingly today, people in Western North America are making fundamental lifestyle choices as they enter their retirement years, with many finding the appeal of urban living losing its lustre. Hence they are deciding to relocate to smaller communities for a range of reasons that include:

- The opportunity to live in a town where there is a true sense of community and the desire to reconnect with their roots by 'coming home' to a more neighbourly type of community that resembles the one that they grew up in as a child
- The desire to live in healthier and safer surroundings (e.g. cleaner air, cleaner water, lower crime rates and less stress)
- The opportunity to live in a beautiful locale
- The opportunity to enjoy high quality recreational experiences such as skiing, golfing, fishing, and
- The ability to enjoy lower-cost rural living.

Indeed, the evidence is that this trend is becoming extremely well established. As David Foote, the author of *Boom, Bust, and Echo* explains, this pattern is associated with the baby boom generation. In fact he forecasts this trend to be a major growth opportunity that wise rural communities will take advantage of as they plan their future. Given that the leading edge of the baby boom is now reaching fifty-five, Foote contends that this relocation to rural centres will be a significant demographic phenomenon over the next two decades.

Retirees looking to leave the cities for smaller communities tend to share a common set of traits. They are increasingly choosing early retirement in their mid-fifties, and as such they have a significant stretch of active life ahead of them. Thus they are especially drawn to communities associated with quality recreational opportunities, such as golf, skiing, and horse riding. Given today's real estate markets, many of these people see an added incentive in selling an urban home for a comparatively higher price, and then purchasing in a smaller centre where real estate costs are lower. They realize a profit that they then can use to enhance their lifestyle in their newly adopted community. These retirees arrive with their pensions and life investments, consequently bringing a net flow of wealth into their new community.

Research shows that this influx of wealth is substantial. In many communities the effect is so pronounced that a mid-fifties retiree moving into a community can have the spin-off effect of creating one new service job. (Tom Power 1996. *Lost Landscapes and Failed Economies: the Search for a Value of Place*). Beyond this, many early retirees are not yet ready for full retirement. They will often create a new job for themselves in their adopted community. This of course then adds to the economic well being of that town.

Surprisingly this significant economic impact of early retirees often goes largely unnoticed by traditional economic tracking procedures. Typically, Chambers of Commerce tend to be more alert to the higher profile opening and closing of a mill or a manufacturing plant. Yet, in today's economy where consolidation and increasing productivity are the 'watchwords' of industry, there are fewer such facilities opening. Rather more are being closed or downsized. This lack of growth of new larger scale facilities and the associated employment would seem to suggest that many communities are faltering. Yet when a review of building permits and other measures of economic health in rural communities is undertaken in towns such as Salmon Arm, Cranbrook, Kelowna, Merritt and so on, it reveals that are doing far better than expected. One only has to look at the dramatic growth of housing along the east side of Vancouver Island, up the Whistler corridor, throughout the Okanagan-Shuswap and the East Kootenay to recognize that this phenomenon is becoming well established.

When one considers the Lillooet-Lytton situation, it is surprising that this early retiree trend is yet to be exploited, especially given the proximity of these two communities to the large urban Lower Mainland population. It would seem that the only reason these towns have not yet capitalized on their ability to attract these new residents is because the benefits offered by retirees to Lillooet and Lytton has not been fully recognized.

6.2 Tourism as an Amenity Creator and Attractor of New Residents

Another reason perhaps that Lytton and Lillooet have yet to harness this early retiree effect is that new residents are typically attracted to places where recreation, health

care, and transportation are well developed, as these amenities are often a prerequisite for such in-migration. This is where tourism has a catalytic role to play. Typically, people's first introduction to a community is as a tourist. They visit on holiday and participate in some recreational activity such as rafting, trail riding, skiing, or golfing. They decide they like the recreational opportunities of the area and the feel of the community, and they make the decision to relocate there. In short, tourism is a sector of the economy that plays a key role in attracting people to a potential new home.

So while tourism businesses develop recreational products (such as ski hills and golf courses), adventure opportunities (such as river rafting), and amenities (such as restaurants, theatres, and spas) primarily for economic gain, the induced effect is to make the communities where tourism and recreational products are developed more attractive to prospective early retirees.

Therefore the opportunity exists for communities such as Lillooet and Lytton to strategically use the development of the local tourism economy and its amenities to also trigger community economic transition. They can use tourism to help create the foundation for longer-term diversified growth by attracting people who leave urban centres to locate in their community. Hence, a smart tourism plan for communities such as Lytton and Lillooet will be a strategy that seeks to yield opportunities directly on the shorter term as well as on the long-term.

6.3 Footloose Knowledge Jobs

In the 21st century economy, knowledge workers are an increasingly important component of the workforce. Computer technology, biotechnology, software development, filmmaking, and advanced education are all examples of this new and growing knowledge economy. Indeed in G7 countries knowledge work represents the growth engine of the modern economy. This is also an emerging reality in many parts of rural British Columbia. Those communities with the good fortune of having an attractive setting, favourable climate, quality outdoor recreation, and proximity to urban areas, as well as good Internet and transportation links are those that have the opportunity to benefit from the emergence of the New Economy. This is because more and more knowledge workers are finding themselves to be locationally independent or 'footloose'. Using the Internet as their means of connection, they can literally choose to work wherever they prefer and connect with their office or their marketplace anywhere in the world.

There are countless examples of people who are already doing this. Take the case of the footloose CEO, Scott Fearnley of Basis Applied Technology of Gibsons, BC. In a recent interview (Coast Reporter November 12, 2004), Fearnley stated, "My wife and I came to Gibsons for a visit and fell in love with it. The nature of the new media is it's so portable, we realized that we didn't have to be based in a big city. Our clients are used to working in cyberspace. The quality of where you live is more important than it's location on a map."

Communities such as Kelowna, Gibsons, Sidney, Whistler and so many others across British Columbia now are starting to see the effects of this footloose knowledge-based economic trend. Recent discussions this author has had with a group of past vice presidents of Microsoft reinforce this new reality. They report that the challenge in today's hi-tech corporate world is finding and keeping quality employees. According to these executives, the primary concern of software employees is no longer salary - they are generally well paid - but rather the quality of lifestyle they wish to experience with their families. These ex vice-presidents made it very clear: those rural BC communities that offer a quality environment for a young family - including good recreational opportunities, restaurants, and efficient electronic and transportation links to urban centres - will be the ones that can attract a new generation of knowledge workers in their late 20s and early 30s. These affluent individuals can thereby contribute significantly to the economic strength of their newly adopted homes.

Once again the strategy for locations such as Lillooet and Lytton should be to recognize the role that tourism can play to increase the attractiveness of their communities by building recreation, transportation, and communication amenities. Doing so will not just directly attract visitors and their expenditures, but can also attract technology residents and the development of a whole new sector of the local economy based on these New Economy workers.

6.4. Examples of BC Communities that have made a Tourism-Inspired Economic Transition

The situation that Lillooet and Lytton find themselves in today is reminiscent of what so many other BC communities - such as Kimberly, Nelson, Fernie, Tofino, Ucluelet, etc - have experienced over the past 20 years. Each of these communities made the transition from the earlier resource-extraction dominated economy to a more diversified one.

Traditionally communities throughout rural British Columbia were heavily dependent on resource extraction, especially forestry and mining, which resulted in a comparatively narrow economic base. This worked well in earlier days when towns were smaller and easily accessed timber, mineral, and fishing resources supported economic expansion. Nevertheless this approach often made such communities vulnerable to boom and bust cycles that were related to commodity prices and world market forces. In more recent years, as timber supply limits have been encountered in many regions across the province and as the more obvious mineral deposits have been exploited and played out, the ability of traditional resource extraction to power ongoing community growth has become less reliable. On the coast, fishing-dependent communities have also experienced this trend due to the reduced capacity of many of BC's fisheries. These contractions in the traditional extractive resource sectors have encouraged many communities to look for new means of economic diversification.

Starting in the 1980s (in part triggered by the success of Expo 86), tourism began to become a larger factor in the BC economy. This was also the result of the rapid expansion of the global tourism industry due to increased affluence and improved transportation systems. Since then, the growth in the tourism sector in British Columbia has been particularly dramatic. For example, the industry has doubled in revenues over the last decade from \$5 billion to \$10 billion (Tourism BC). As a result, many resource communities who had been facing challenges in the resource extraction sector have looked to tourism to diversify their economies.

One good example is Nelson, which went through a difficult economic downturn in the early 1980s, when the community's saw mills were closed. Concurrently the major provincial government regional offices were relocated elsewhere in the southern interior. As a result, for several years in the early 1980s, Nelson faced tough times, with real estate prices becoming very depressed. However the advent of tourism coupled with an associated interest in the area by the film industry - both of which occurred due to the scenic quality of Nelson surrounding and the fine community heritage buildings - initiated an economic turnaround. Since that time Nelson has grown dramatically and its economy has diversified.

Now tourism is a major contributor to the Nelson economy. While the logging industry still plays a role, it is now a much less significant. The development of quality restaurants, adventure sport offerings, the Whitewater Ski Hill, a revitalized downtown, and strong community spirit have enhanced Nelson's attractiveness. Today people are increasingly relocating to Nelson, both as early retirees and as knowledge workers. These workers find they can link to their office or marketplaces by the Internet, particularly as broadband capability has become available. The consequence is that Nelson's real estate values have soared, and the restoration of the town's heritage buildings has accelerated.

As was once the case with Nelson, up until the mid-1990s Golden in the East Kootenay had been almost entirely dependent on its sawmill for employment. Then it encountered a serious crisis when its major employer, Evans Forest Products, faced collapse because of a shortage of harvestable timber. The community rallied and began to see the role that tourism could play. The establishment of the Whitetooth Ski Area was a key factor in the community repositioning itself to focus on tourism as a growth engine. Increasingly this ski resort has served as a magnet to attract a range of new adventure tourism operators. While heli-skiing had a long tradition in this community for over 20 years, it was now joined by new backcountry hut operators, river rafters, nature viewing tours, and ecolodges. As occurred in Nelson 15 years earlier, in recent years Golden's economy has rebounded, and property values have skyrocketed as newcomers have arrived to stay.

More recently still in the East Kootenay, the community of Fernie has replicated this pattern. Originally a coal mining community, after the mines were exhausted some years passed when Fernie resembled a semi-ghost town. What Fernie had going for it

however was very dramatic mountain terrain and superb deep powder snowfall. This combination led to the development of the Fernie Ski Hill, which in recent years has developed into a full-scale destination resort. As well, numerous adventure tourism businesses have been established offering a range of products from cat skiing to mountain biking. Recently an internationally televised ecotourism race in Fernie became a key factor in attracting attention.

Given the East Kootenay's high calibre tourism product and burgeoning adventure and ecotourism sectors, the Fernie Campus of College of the Rockies has chosen to develop a college diploma program geared to training people for the adventure and ecotourism industry. One thing has built on another so that now Fernie has clearly become a community of high appeal for urban relocatees. Real estate values have climbed dramatically, and the range of services in town – restaurants, entertainment, recreation, and health – are all of increasingly high quality, further enhancing the attractiveness of the community. Indeed this community is now on its way to developing into a small-scale 'Whistler' of southeast BC. Fernie's evolution is especially reminiscent of similar patterns that have been experienced in nearby resort communities in U.S. resort towns such as Sandpoint (Idaho), and Kalispell and Bozeman (Montana).

On BC's outer coast, Tofino, and more recently Ucluelet, have gone through a similar economic transition. Traditionally these towns were small fishing and logging communities. Now these resource industries are much less significant contributors to their economies in comparison with the dramatic growth in tourism. Again the resulting amenities: the parks, hiking trails, restaurants, and art galleries that have come to these communities coupled with the natural beauty of the area has resulted in a strong market for recreational and early retirement homes. The construction of these high value homes has supported a whole range of trades and services, thus further strengthening the economy of these communities.

So pervasive is this evolution of rural BC that increasingly this trend is no longer merely associated with individual communities. Whole regions of heartland southern British Columbia are making the transition from the older resource-extraction dominated economy to a more diversified New Economy in which tourism plays a key catalytic role. For example, tourism in the Whistler corridor now generates one billion dollars of revenue per year. (Suzanne Denbak, former CEO Whistler Resort Association) Elsewhere in southern BC, the Okanagan-Thompson, East Kootenay and Nelson areas, the Sunshine Coast, and the east side of Vancouver Island are experiencing similar dramatic change.

One only needs to look at the development of rural retirement housing in the nearby Merritt and Nicola valleys to see that patterns there are likely to come to the Lytton-Lillooet area soon. That the Lytton-Lillooet area has seemingly lagged in this economic evolution is perhaps surprising given the proximity and the quality climate of the project area. This may be due to the degree of attention that has been required by these communities over the past decade to resolving their land-use priorities.

6.5 Native/non-native Tourism Collaboration

Given the strong First Nation population component in the Lillooet-Lytton area, extra attention has been required to determine how to best integrate the aspirations of both native and non-native peoples so they can work together collaboratively on tourism products.

Tourism-related First Nations' concerns in the Lillooet area have been strong at times, as witnessed by the protest that developed around the proposed Melvin Creek Ski Resort. While centred on the issue of land rights, these tensions have also presumably been linked to issues of First Nation economic and social wellbeing. This tourism/First Nations' friction has not been unique to Lillooet, however. It has also been seen in other areas of southern British Columbia, such as the Apex Ski Hill near Penticton and Sun Peaks near Kamloops. However the trend across the province and in the Lillooet-Lytton region seems to be one of increased understanding and collaboration, as First Nations and non-natives are beginning to better learn how to move beyond standoffs and to develop strategies that will work for all local peoples.

Native/non-native tourism-related collaboration has already occurred elsewhere in BC. For example, this has happened with: the Gitskan at Hazelton, the Haida on the Queen Charlottes (Haida Gwaii), the Haisla in the Kitimat area, and the Ktunaxa in the Cranbrook area. Clearly the prospect is that Lillooet-Lytton will experience increased tourism collaboration in a fashion that benefits both non-natives and First Nations. As this occurs, the development of new tourism products, and hence the diversification of the local communities here, will accelerate and follow the patterns seen in so many other towns around rural British Columbia. To achieve this, a key part of the challenge of this project is to help identify possible projects that can involve both native and non-native players, and that could serve as positive triggers to support sustainable economic diversification.

7. Developing Lillooet and Lytton's Tourism Potential

Devising a tourism-based economic diversification strategy for the project area will require community leaders and residents, both native and non-native, to review the range of available options in order to determine their best course of action. Based on in-region tours and meetings held with community leaders as part of this project, a short list of especially promising projects that could be developed has emerged. These are discussed below individually. However, if the Lillooet-Lytton region is to effectively capitalize on its tourism potential, an overall integrated strategy must be pursued where the individual elements are interlocked.

7.1. Resort and Lodge Facilities

One of the reasons that tourism development may have lagged in the Lillooet-Lytton area is due to the lack of an established destination resort. Development of such a multi-season larger scale resort would serve as a magnet to attract a strong flow of tourists over the Duffy Lake Road from Whistler or up Highway 1 from Vancouver. What is envisioned is a facility (or facilities) of potentially international calibre, associated either with a golf or ski component (or both), similar to those found at Okanagan Lake, Fairmont Hot Springs, Kimberly, or Fernie. Such a resort(s) would have to be large enough and of sufficient quality to compete in the national and international marketplace.

While they would be stand-alone operations, from a marketing standpoint such a Lillooet-Lytton area destination resort(s) would likely link and build on the adjacent resort offerings in nearby Whistler, the Lower Mainland, and the Okanagan. The development of such a Lillooet-Lytton destination resort(s) would serve as a trigger to dramatically accelerate the development of associated ecotourism and adventure offerings in the region.

(The community of Valemount is currently at this stage, where the establishment of the Canoe Mountain Destination Resort is now just underway. The investment this project attracts will not only move their community to a new level of tourism profile, it will serve as a catalyst to encourage the development of a whole range of other tourism services: e.g. adventure and ecotourism products, restaurants, cultural attractions, transportation improvements, etc.)

The Lillooet-Lytton region offers exceptional opportunities for the development of a destination resorts related to both golf and skiing. Achieving this will require further site investigation, strong community leadership and support that will attract investors, as well as a joint collaborative approach between native and non-native residents. Accomplishing this collaboration will also serve as a strong incentive for the provincial government's Resort Strategy (via Land and Water BC) to place a high priority on this area.

7.1.1 Golf Destination Resorts

Given the excellent climate, the dramatic setting, the proximity to Vancouver, Whistler, and the Okanagan, the development of a golf resort (or eventually multiple resorts) seems especially feasible for the Lillooet area. To have sufficient stature to attract users from afar, developing a destination golf resort here would require at least an 18-hole golf course. It could likely link with adjacent courses in Whistler and the Okanagan to take advantage of packaged marketing. This is because golfers often like to have the opportunity to tour a number of locations and golf at multiple courses. The scenic attractiveness of the various sites in the Lillooet area suggest that over time Lillooet could become well recognized in golfing circles, particularly given the warm dry climate and lengthy season found here. However to attract such users will require a high-calibre facility, which is not yet available in Lillooet.

Several potential sites likely exist, including: the Kamenka lands on the plateau east of the Fraser River and the town of Lillooet; the current Sheep Pasture golf course in Texas Creek area; and possibly the Diamond S property 30 km north of Lillooet.

The Kamenka property is an attractive prospect for several reasons. It features dramatic river valley and mountain vistas. It is easily large enough (more than 1,000 acres) to accommodate a golf resort. It is not in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and is suitably zoned. This means that the opportunity exists to develop a golf resort that incorporates a sizeable real estate development. Preliminary plans suggest 74 large lots could be subdivided as part of the project. This number could likely be increased with smaller lot sizes. Such a real estate component is a key element of many modern destination resorts as it is used to help finance these developments, often through pre-sales. This real estate component could also play an important role in attracting early retirees and/or knowledge workers to Lillooet. As well, the construction activity involved in building the golf resort and recreational homes would generate significant local economic benefits.

The presence of the airport onsite would facilitate easy fly-in use by wealthier recreational users or international tourists. The limiting factor for this property is the availability of water. While some preliminary research has been undertaken that suggests that this need not be a problem, more investigation is required.

The Sheep Pasture site south of Lillooet on bench lands on the west side of the Fraser River in the Texas Creek area also shows promise. It is very scenic and water is likely not a limiting factor. Currently a community-oriented nine-hole golf course operates here. However, for it to meet resort criteria, this operation would have to be re-designed and expanded to 18 holes, and be accompanied by facilities such as a high-calibre club house/restaurant/pro shop, etc. However a golf resort located on this site would be situated within the ALR and thus would not be able to directly benefit from a recreational home/real estate component.

As well, there are also other possible locations on First Nation lands in the Lillooet area that likely have the requisite biophysical characteristics. Development in these

locations would require the approval and support of the First Nation peoples involved. In the Lytton area, the potential to develop a golf resort exists on the west side of the Fraser in the vicinity of the mouth of the Stein Valley, where the land is scenic, the terrain suitable, and water plentiful. Here too the ALR could be a limiting factor unless the project was located on First Nation lands, in which case First Nations' approval and collaboration would be essential.

Once one destination golf course was established in Lillooet-Lytton area, it is possible that more might follow over time. Developing multiple courses would only increase the attractiveness of the study area as a golf destination and would certainly be very appealing to recreational homeowners, new retirees, and knowledge workers.

7.1.2 *Ski Destination Resorts*

The potential to develop a ski resort at Melvin Creek just west of Lillooet on Highway 99 has been known for a long time. The terrain here is well suited for a smaller-scale, elite, boutique-style hill; the type of facility that has been envisioned by project proponents Al Raine and his associates. It is no secret however that feelings have run high over this proposal for many years, with strong opposition voiced by local First Nations. Hence, the limiting factors to the development of a ski resort near Lillooet have been more political and sociological than biophysical. Should some means of moving beyond this impasse be achieved, the terrain, snowfall, and beauty of the site, as well as the proximity to Whistler and Vancouver would surely make a destination ski resort here viable.

However, this proposal will only become reality if some innovative development vision is defined that has the support of the entire community. This would likely require that both the Lillooet native and non-native sectors derive employment and revenue benefits. To achieve this might well require a native/non-native ownership formula. Accomplishing this would demand both leadership and the ability of all parties to collectively demonstrate solutions-oriented innovation. The degree to which this is achievable in the near future is uncertain.

Certainly if a Melvin Creek Resort were to be developed in the fashion suggested, it could bring significant economic benefits to both the Lillooet native and non-native communities. This resort could be marketed in association with other ski resorts at Whistler and Kamloops. The development of a resort at Melvin Creek would do much to develop the destination status of Lillooet. It would have a ripple-through effect, which would strongly support community economic diversification.

Several environmental concerns have certainly been identified with the Melvin Creek proposal, such as possible impacts on mountain goat and grizzly bear habitat. For this project to be viable it would have to address these and other environmental concerns successfully so as to receive government approval.

7.1.3 Hotel Facility Focussed on Supporting Bus-Tour / Rail-Tour Product

As the Lillooet-Lytton region is located on a road and rail circle-tour transportation network, a quality tour-oriented hotel(s) could be a very viable product option. While the Lillooet area already attracts bus tourism, this could grow substantially. Further development of a tourism-oriented passenger rail product is also a strong possibility. However, if this community is to better benefit from such traffic and intensify the visitation levels of usage, it needs to further develop the accommodations needed to service such a product. This would encourage many more bus tourists and rail travellers to stay overnight, therefore capturing significantly increased expenditures. Such a hotel should incorporate high calibre dining and ideally some entertainment, as well as providing amenities such as a health spa. It should be located on a scenically attractive site that is easily accessible to a highway and/or rail station. It should be suitably sized, accommodating 40 guests as a minimum, and scalable to handle increasing numbers of bus passengers, and /or increases in rail travellers.

Such a touring-oriented hotel could either involve the upgrading of existing facilities, such as Lillooet's Reynolds Hotel or the building of a new facility. In Lillooet the municipality currently owns an especially attractive 2-3 acre scenic site right across from the train station at the entrance to town. Other locations likely exist in the Lillooet townsite - such as the riverside Kaser property.

Near Lytton the Siska First Nation owns a dramatic site at the dual railway bridges overlooking the Fraser gorge. This location is also directly accessible to Highway 1.

The growth potential of cruise-related rail tour/bus tour product through Lillooet-Lytton is likely substantial. The cruise industry is increasingly interested developing land-based loop tours out of Vancouver to link with new, shorter cruise offerings focused on the Gulf of Georgia. Discussions with companies such as Princess and Holland-America indicate that they are looking for land-based touring routes where cruise ship passengers would off-load and travel one day through scenic country (either on bus or on rail), stay overnight, and then carry on with the second half of the journey circling back to Vancouver. Clearly Lillooet and Lytton are ideally suited to service this opportunity.

7.1.4 Ecolodges

The potential exists in the Lytton/Lillooet region to develop a number of ecolodges. These facilities would be smaller in scale, accommodating from 20-40 guests. They would offer a high calibre, even world-class experience for seasoned adventure and ecotourism travelers. Such lodges would be linked integrally with a range of soft ecotourism/adventure products, including river rafting on the Fraser or Thompson, trail riding in a guest ranch setting, heli-hiking out of Lillooet, mountain bike touring, nature viewing, cultural tourism, etc. Ideally these types of facilities could also incorporate a health spa capability such as done so successfully by the Echo Valley Ranch and the Hills Ranch near 100 Mile. Once such ecolodges become established in this region, a variety of accommodation and activity packages could be offered that

range from two to five days in length, which would be highly attractive for travellers from Vancouver, or Whistler.

Intrawest, the largest resort corporation in North America, (which is based out of Vancouver, and owns much of the tourism product in Whistler) sees the establishment of such ecolodges as a key aspect of its development strategies for BC. The type of product they envision would be modeled after ecolodges found both in BC, such as those operated by Canadian Mountain Holidays in the Purcells and Monashees (of which Intrawest is the major shareholder), as well as in distant locations like Tanzania and the Amazon. Intrawest is interested potential ecolodge sites in BC that are easily accessible from its major resort communities (Whistler and Invermere). Given that Lillooet and Lytton are within a half hour flight time from Whistler and Lillooet is only 1-1.5 hours drive away, this region would probably rank well as a candidate location that could benefit from such Intrawest-related ecotourism development.

In the Lillooet area a number of locations situated along the main stem Fraser River (such as the Kaser property, the Bridge River confluence, the Diamond S Ranch, and Seton Lake) seem promising. In the Lytton area the Botanie Valley and the mouth of the Stein River hold significant potential. Additionally, sites on the rim of South Chilcotin Provincial Park (such as the successful Tyax Mountain Resort) and elsewhere along the main stem Fraser and Lower Thompson Rivers seem promising for such ecolodge development.

Given the smaller-scale of ecolodges and the ease with which they can be integrated with cultural products makes this type of facility especially well suited for First Nations participation. In BC, the Quaaout Lodge on Little Shuswap Lake exemplifies this. Elsewhere in the world such indigenous peoples' ecolodges have been developed in places such as the Amazon and East Africa. A couple of potential sites stand out in the study area as being particularly well suited for such a First Nations-linked ecolodge.

The Siska First Nation touring hotel site (mentioned above) might be developed in more of an ecolodge style. Properly sized (25-40 rooms), and built to sufficient quality standards, this lodge not only could serve as overnight accommodation for circle rail or bus tours; it too could be designed to provide executive seminars or retreats. As well it would provide highway-accessible accommodation in an appealing ecolodge style. Such a facility could also provide a higher-end accommodation for river rafting guests than currently exists in the region. (Presently, rafting guests stay in a camping setup at the put-in site on the Thompson River.)

The current lack of higher quality hotel/lodge accommodation in the Lytton area is an obstacle to this community's desire to develop its eco- and adventure tourism offerings. Such a Siska hotel or ecolodge would not only attract potential ecotourists, it would encourage visitors to stay overnight and spend money in Lytton. This in

turn would lead to the development of other tourist-oriented facilities in the town such as restaurants and shops.

The mouth of the Stein Valley also offers an exceptional opportunity to develop a First Nation-linked ecolodge. This very scenic location is situated on native land adjacent to the Stein Valley Provincial Park. This park is already collaboratively managed by First Nations and the provincial government. A facility here could link with adventure products that could include hiking in the Stein River Valley (a nationally renowned wilderness area), kayaking on the Stein River, rafting and canoeing the Fraser River. This would be an ideal take-out place for a 24' brigade canoe product running down from Lillooet (discussed below), horse back riding, native dancing and healing, and a health spa.

Other First Nation potential ecolodge sites exist in the project area such as the Botanie Valley (see below) and the Bridge River Delta.

7.2 Potential Tourism Product Offerings

Given the project area's strong natural attributes, a range of product offerings and services could be established. Some of the most promising products include the following:

7.2.1 Rail Tours

As discussed, the BC Rail and Canadian National/Canadian Pacific rail routes through the Lillooet and Lytton region are of top international tourism calibre. The potential exists to develop several rail-tour products in the project area using these spectacular rail routes. Examples include: an overnight return trip on the BC Rail to Lillooet; on the CN/CP lines to Lytton; and/or a circuit coming up through Whistler and down through Lytton, with a bus shuttle linking the two. Such products could certainly bring significant numbers of travellers to the region in the summer, and potentially on a multi-season basis.

The challenge in developing such a product will be gaining the interest and cooperation of the railway companies. Currently the opportunity to provide tourism service on the BC Rail line is linked with the Rocky Mountaineer Vacations (RMV). RMV's current plan focusses on running trains from Vancouver through to Prince George, Jasper, and eventually also to Prince Rupert. As this service will bring rail passengers through the region, it might be possible to encourage Rocky Mountaineer Vacations to use Lillooet as an overnight stop.

Ideally RMV could well be encouraged to develop a more frequent tourist service on the BC Rail line, from Vancouver via Whistler, to Lillooet (with a possible extension to Moran Canyon), with Lillooet serving as the overnight stop. Such a two-day return rail product might be tied in as a marketing spin-off product linked with the 2010 Olympics. The challenge is to have Rocky Mountaineer Vacations decide that they wish to offer this product in addition to their multi-day Prince George-Jasper (Prince

Rupert) offering. Although there is no guarantee that this can be done, the overtures made to Lillooet in the recent community meeting held by RMV, as well conversations the author has had with RMV's CEO Peter Armstrong and Marketing Vice-president Graham Gilley, suggest that with ongoing community effort and the development of quality touring accommodation and local eco/cultural/adventure tourism products, such rail service could be achieved. Indeed, RMV has just announced, it is creating "the position of Economic Development Officer who will work with the local communities to develop new partnerships that will generate significant economic benefits throughout the region". (RMV press Release Sept. 3, 2004)

In the Lytton area, Rocky Mountaineer Vacations already offers tourists rail service on the Canadian National/Canadian Pacific mainline from Vancouver to Calgary, with a stopover in Kamloops. As well, VIA Rail runs a regular transcontinental passenger service that travels the same lines through the region. Presumably there might be the possibility of developing an associated product that might entail attaching cars to either of these trains to allow day trips out of Vancouver with overnight stays in Lytton or Kamloops. Once again, the requirement is to convince Canadian National/Canadian Pacific and the tourism operating services of VIA and Rocky Mountaineer Vacations that this is a viable product.

7.2.2 Bus Tours

The potential to expand bus tours through the development of suitable accommodation has been discussed above. One factor that would encourage growth of this product is upgrading of the current bottlenecks in the regional highway system. Of highest priority are the bridges on Highway 99 – especially in the Cayoosh Creek Drainage – that need both to be widened for two-way traffic, and their approaches straightened. The one lane section of Highway 12 south of Lillooet needs to be rebuilt to a safer, two-lane standard. Given that the recently released BC Resort Strategy identifies "the improvement of highways to provide increased safety for the travelling public" as an Action priority, the local communities should utilize this in lobbying the province for the upgrading of these highway deficiencies.

7.2.2 Airports

The existing paved landing strip in Lillooet and gravel landing strip in Lytton offer the prospect for fly-in adventure products, linked to Whistler or Vancouver. As examples, half-day river rafting or trail riding excursions could be developed as fly-in products. (This is already at the pioneering stage at Lytton, utilizing Coast Mountain Airlines.) Additionally, if a destination resort(s) was to develop in the area for golfing and/or ski, flight access could be an easy way to service and support this product.

In the future, as the population of Lillooet and Lytton grows with increasing number of early retirees/recreational homeowners demand for charters and even scheduled service out of Vancouver to Lillooet and onto Kamloops will likely develop.

7.2.3 *Lytton River Festival*

In 2004 the Village of Lytton, together with several local First Nation bands, community groups, and a river rafting company initiated the first ever Lytton River Festival. Given that the historically renowned Fraser and Thompson Rivers converge at Lytton in the heart of spectacular canyon scenery, this is likely the best location in British Columbia or even Canada, for such a River Festival. Appropriately Lytton already dubs itself the River Rafting Capital of Canada.

Since Lytton is only a three-hour drive away from Vancouver, this festival stands to capture strong attendance over time from the Lower Mainland and also from Kamloops (one hour distant) and the Okanagan region (less than two hours away). As the Festival grows, it could build on the many compelling cultural themes that relate to: the local First Nations culture and their fisheries; the river's exploration by Simon Fraser; and the building of the transcontinental railways.

The significance of the Festival is not only in the revenues and visitors it can bring to the community during the Labour Day weekend, but also with the role it can play in creating a distinctive brand for Lytton. As well, the increased public profile generated by the Festival will help support the area's efforts to build awareness for its year-round tourism products as they develop over time. Properly planned, this Festival could grow rapidly, especially as over time it attracts big-name entertainment, increased corporate sponsorship, and high-profile publicity in the Lower Mainland. The Labour Day weekend is an ideal time to schedule the Festival; the weather is typically fine in this part of BC and it's easily accessed by people from the Lower Mainland and Thompson-Okanagan regions on a three-day weekend.

The crucial question the community must address is: how big do they wish this event to become? There are obvious attendance breakpoints, given the physical limitations imposed by different local venues and by the availability of accommodation. If not carefully considered in advance, the community could quickly find itself being swamped by a level of attendance that is beyond its capacity to handle. This could then undermine the quality of visitor experience, which would impact negatively on the Festival. On the other hand, if properly planned and suitably scaled this can be a long-term, highly beneficial tourism event for this community. Already, the first Rivers Festival has played a key role in galvanizing the community into an increased awareness of the benefits that could accrue from tourism. Additionally it is playing a very valuable role in consolidating community spirit, as Lytton starts to define its vision for its future.

One of the major benefits of the first Festival relates to the collaborative effort that occurred between the native and non-native residents of the Lytton area residents. Such collaboration is key if this Festival to truly grow to its potential. Not only do First Nations control some of the most appealing and largest riverside venues for the Festival, but also the integration of native culture, dance, art, and heritage is a real strength of the overall event.

7.2.4 Botanie Valley Four Season Adventure Centre

A strong opportunity exists to develop a year-round adventure centre in the Botanie Valley. Located just northeast of Lytton, this centre would focus on trail riding and other equestrian activities in the summer, and crosscountry ski and other snow activities in the winter. This facility would feature, at a minimum, a day lodge. If possible it should also eventually incorporate a high quality ecolodge style of accommodation on site.

This Botanie Adventure Centre could serve multiple purposes. It could be a component of a package developed in part to attract tourists from Vancouver for single or multi-day trips, either staying at the adjacent ecolodge or in a hotel developed in the Lytton area. The Botanie Adventure Centre could also include facilities for executive retreats and seminars, which would enhance occupancy in the non-peak seasons.

Ideally, the objective would be to develop this Adventure Centre not just for tourism but also as an appealing recreational facility that would help attract new residents to the Lytton area, either on a part time, recreational basis or year-round. The approach taken could be to model the Centre along the lines of a membership-based yacht club or golf club. Recreational homeowners or residents of the Lytton area would be able to purchase a share or membership in the Adventure Centre, which would allow them the use of the facilities for e.g. horse riding or crosscountry skiing, depending on the season.

The Botanie Adventure Centre could also offer members the use of the facility's horses, or provide a place for them to stable their own horses. This would free members of the need to own horses or pastureland, but allow them the opportunity to ride when they wanted. The Botanie Valley, with its fine climate and meadowland terrain, is ideally suited to trail riding, through an extended spring/summer/fall season.

In the winter the Botanie Adventure Centre would offer some of the closest lower-elevation crosscountry skiing to the Lower Mainland. It would be developed in a fashion similar to the product of the 108-Mile and Hills Resorts near 100 Mile House. (By comparison, Botanie Valley is much closer to the Lower Mainland and it may have more reliable snowfall than is the case at 100 Mile House.) Associated winter activities such as sleigh rides, tobogganing, snowshoeing, and skating could also be offered.

The Botanie Adventure Centre therefore could service both rural residents *and* a tourism clientele. Again, additionally borrowing from the example of the Hills Ranch or the Echo Valley Guest Ranch near 100 Mile House, and recognizing the huge growth of health and relaxation as tourism products, it might also be possible and wise to integrate a health care or healing aspect into the facility.

7.2.7 River Adventure Products

Two great rivers, the Fraser and the Thompson, define the character of the Lillooet-Lytton region. Therefore river adventure products have already become an important part of the tourism product offering here: multi-day wilderness raft trips on the Fraser upstream of Lillooet, day use rafting on the Thompson and Lower Fraser around Lytton and day jet boat tours out of Lillooet. Given the drama and scale of these rivers, expansion of these products – especially day use rafting trips – is very feasible.

As well, the potential exists to develop a frontcountry canoe product on the quieter portion of the Fraser running from Lillooet to Lytton using large brigade-style canoes. Such canoes take 6-8 people at a time, including a guide/steersman (thereby not requiring that clients be experienced paddlers). The canoes are large (24') and high sided so that they can handle the waves of this portion of the river. This product could be themed to link with Simon Fraser's exploration and the fur trade. Half day, full day, and possibly two day packages could be offered, which could be linked with First Nations fishing demonstrations or camping or ecolodge accommodation on their riverbank lands.

As Lytton is situated at the confluence of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers, this community already benefits immensely from frontcountry day use river rafting. The rivers in this location are capable of taking high volumes of traffic without unacceptable environmental consequences. The community of Lytton has moved to assist this industry by developing a take-out spot for commercial operators right in town. The town's River Festival and its tagline 'The River Rafting Capital of Canada' reinforce this product.

The lower Thompson is also important for experienced whitewater kayakers. (The lower Stein also supports this use to a much more limited extent.) A rendezvous of Pacific Northwest Kayakers in September brings large numbers of visitors to the Lytton area. To enhance this product, a better staging area for kayaks in the vicinity of the Frog Rapids put-in is required. There is a property at this location that could potentially be acquired by an investor and developed to offer improved camping/accommodation facilities at the mouth of the Nicomen.

One initiative that could enhance the tourism significance and marketability of the region's river product would be to profile the existing official designation of the Fraser River as Canadian river of distinction under the federal Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). CHRS status in effect states 'this river is one of the most significant in Canada'. Making this designation better known could thereby enhance the profile of Lillooet's river product nationally and internationally.

7.2 Other Opportunities

A range of other promising product opportunities exist that could strengthen the integrated Lillooet-Lytton tourism brand. For example, the region could capitalize on

its historic gold mining links by offering gold panning. Hikes along remnant sections of the Cariboo Wagon road upstream of Lillooet could be considered, perhaps with accompanying mules or even a camel! since a few of these were actually used on this route.

The development of native art – especially soapstone carving, which is a feature of local native traditions here - should be seriously explored. To this end, one innovative local entrepreneur is proposing the development of a native carving school and production facility that would sell soapstone art into Whistler, Vancouver, and even internationally. Such art production centres have proven successful in places like K'san (at Hazelton), Tofino on the BC coast, and Cape Dorset in the Arctic.

The Lillooet area is renown for its jade. Jade jewelry production could become a distinctive product here, in the same fashion that silver and turquoise jewelry is for the Navajo in the southern U.S., and also throughout much of Mexico.

Mining and the region's geology are intertwined with the Lillooet-Lytton's history. A local beautification group in Lillooet proposes to create 'rock-art' sculptures throughout town. This would be a unique offering of potential tourism appeal that is analogous to the murals that have been so successful in attracting visitors to Chemainus.

7.2.1 Market Branding and Themes

As section 2.3 on marketing indicated, it will be crucial for the Lillooet-Lytton region to develop a clear, compelling, and integrated brand if it is to succeed in building a successful tourism economy. As Graham Kwan, Intrawest Vice-president for Business Development, put it at a community meeting held in Lillooet as part of this project:

"Successful branding is about creating a story... so that visitors come to experience a place like Lillooet. It's about taking a memory back, it's about changing people's lives."

He continued by saying that Intrawest's research shows that when prospective visitors are making a decision about their travel plans:

"First they look at destinations. Second they look at activity, third they consider timing and price, and lastly they choose an operator. In short destination is the key thing that drives a customer to come."

Several elements go into creating a successful brand. It is based on the natural and human attributes that make a destination notable, appealing, saleable, and eventually memorable. These attributes are carefully selected - usually based on market research - and are the basis of integrated messaging (using text, logos, and

imagery, etc) that is conveyed out through strategically targetted publicity campaigns and materials to prospective markets. Consistent with this Lillooet-Lytton's brand could be built on various themes, which could include:

'Canada's Canyonland': This is a distinctive image that could be conveyed into international markets.

'Dry, Warm, and Sunny': this type of messaging might be suitable for the Lower Mainland and eastern Canada. (Lytton's tagline, 'Canada's Hotspot' would link with such a message)

'Gold County': the lure of gold and the history of gold mining remains strong today

'Land of Great Rivers' (Again Lytton's tagline 'Canada's Rafting Capital' links with this.)

The foregoing are only initial suggestions to stimulate discussion and eventual marketing research.

Once possible customers respond to the marketing effort by coming to visit a destination, the 'promise of the brand' must be delivered through what the visitor actually experiences. High quality facilities, engaging activities, and exceptional personalized service are key to ensuring the brand's integrity and follow-on success. In large part this is the responsibility of the local tourism operators, but it also involves the host community. For only if visitors feel welcome by the local people are they likely to rave about their holidays to their friends. This means that for brand fulfillment, the Lillooet-Lytton region must truly embrace the tourism sector as being key to their wellbeing.

7.2.7 First Nation Considerations

The Lillooet-Lytton region is associated with a strong First Nation population. This portion of the local community has a critical role to play in determining the future of tourism here. Given the local native peoples long residency in the area, their constitutionally-recognized rights associated with the land, and their own social, economic, cultural, and environmental concerns, the development of a tourism economy in the region will require and greatly benefit from their participation. For this to happen, the proposed tourism projects will likely need both native and non-native endorsement and support. First Nations support will likely only be achieved if they are integrally involved in all aspects of developing the tourism economy, including participating in the revenues, including employment and ownership benefits. Certainly First Nation cultural centres could be developed in both Lillooet and Lytton that would have strong tourism appeal. Thus for the Lillooet-Lytton tourism potential to be realized, leaders from both native and non-native communities will have to find ways to work closer together. This will be a key

prerequisite in attracting investors who will help to make the tourism potential of this region become a reality.

7.3 The Role of the Community

Depending on how it is pursued, tourism can either be an asset or a problem for a community. Older style, volume-oriented tourism can swamp communities and reduce the quality of life. However, by choosing tourism development strategies that stress value rather than volume, the emphasis is on higher daily expenditures and attracting educated affluent visitors. This kind of clientele is associated with today's top level ecotourism and adventure tourism destination resorts, and can lead to an entirely different and positive community experience.

Done right, tourism should strengthen the community fabric, economically and socially. Quality community-directed tourism doesn't just crassly promote the natural or cultural attractions of a region regardless of the impacts, but directs tourists and tourism development into locations that have both visitor appeal *and* that the local community feels are appropriate. By incorporating community enhancement as a strategic tourism goal at the outset, community leaders should be able to rally citizen support.

This community support is crucial. If tourism is to perform to its potential in the Lillooet Lytton region, it will need the involvement of the people that live here. Indeed those communities around BC and the western U.S. that have successfully made the transition into a high quality tourism economy - thereby triggering economic diversification - have been able to do because the community was solidly behind this approach. This first requires that a leadership grouping of opinion makers come together that envisions quality tourism as part of the future of the community. These leaders need to be able to inspire and excite the community as a whole into seeing that tourism can play a key role in enabling their town to thrive.

During the course of this study, community sessions were held in both Lillooet and Lytton. In each of these towns a discernable shift took place. In each community, the dialogue opened with an apprehension about developing a tourism economy, then it transformed into an interest and even a careful enthusiasm for such diversification. As well, whereas the first conversations could often be typified as "I'm skeptical whether investors are really going to come to town and solve our problems", by the end of the meeting the sentiment had changed to one of: "I believe this town has what it takes to attract investors and build a quality tourism economy. We have the natural and cultural strengths and we have the peoples to make it happen." In effect wariness began to evolve towards confidence and optimism. For as Lillooet Councilor Kevin Anderson so succinctly said, "Now it's about moving the idea forward and believing in ourselves".

9. Next Steps: A Proposed Lillooet–Lytton Tourism Action Strategy

9.1 Introduction: Creating a Positive Climate for Tourism Investment

If the tourism potential of the Lillooet and Lytton region is to be realized, the requirement is to create, within each community, a can-do positive attitude towards tourism. Currently there seems to be an uncertain attitude as to the role that tourism could play in these communities. If this sector is to develop successfully – in the fashion of towns such as Chemainus, Tofino, and Fernie – Lillooet and Lytton must embrace tourism as a key part of their future. This is important since investors are more likely to be attracted to communities where the role and future of tourism is strongly supported locally.

This doesn't mean that tourism should be allowed to develop unfettered to the detriment of the community. Rather by embracing tourism as a key part of its future, these two communities need to define the vision of how this sector could be developed so as to be a strong economic and social asset. Therefore realizing the potential of tourism Lillooet and Lytton will undertake the set of tasks as outlined below.

9.2 Create Community Tourism Action Strategies and Implementation Workplans in Lillooet and Lytton

A community-based Tourism Action Strategy should be developed for each of Lillooet and Lytton. This should be undertaken by utilizing the leadership of the Community Tourism Action Group (see item 2) in each community. Assistance for this could be pursued from the Fraser Basin Board and possibly the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

Attracting potential tourism investors to Lillooet and Lytton requires that the kind of approach towns traditionally take to attract light industry or new sawmills etc. should be applied to tourism. This would involve the following sequence of steps (which are detailed below in points 9.2.1 - 9.2.15):

- a) Creating a body tasked with the process of promoting and seeking prospective new tourism investors: a Community Tourism Action Group.
- b) Assessing the tourism resources and strengths of the community. (This has been done by this study.)
- c) Building community support for potential tourism investors.
- d) Establishing local Native/non-native Tourism Forums
- e) Creating promotional materials intended to attract tourism investors.
- f) 'Spreading the word' through the media, particularly in Vancouver, as to the tourism investment opportunities that exist in Lillooet and Lytton.

- g) Creating a Tourism Investment Climate by developing a suite of economic enticements at the local and regional levels that will attract prospective tourism developers to invest in Lillooet and Lytton.
- h) Lobbying the provincial government for services and assistance that could improve the attractiveness of the Lillooet and Lytton areas to prospective tourism investors (e.g. improved transportation access, designated resort development status, and increased availability of tourism-related crown lands).
- i) Building and deepening relationships with interested prospective investors to achieve actual tourism developments in Lillooet and Lytton.

9.2.1 *Establish Community Tourism Action Groups (TAG) in Lillooet and Lytton.*

The membership for each Community Tourism Action Group (TAG) should consider committee members from: the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, tourism operators, prospective and known tourism developers, the local Economic Development Officer (if there is one), and First Nation's leaders. Each of these TAGs should then identify a Tourism Development Officer (TDO). Initially this would be a volunteer position, with this officer serving as chair of the local TAG. In the longer term it would be ideal if a paid position could be established in which case the Tourism Development Officer would become staff to the local TAG.

9.2.2 *Assess the Tourism Resources and Strengths*

Working from the information assembled by this report, Lillooet and Lytton should undertake a community tourism visioning process led by the each community's Tourism Action Group. The intention of this process should be to create a strong, locally crafted vision for the future of the tourism industry in each community, so as to achieve strong local support for the development of this sector.

9.2.3 *Establish a Native/Non-native Tourism Forum in each of the Lillooet and Lytton regions.*

The intention of these forums would be to strengthen collaborative relationships, identify goals and criteria for joint tourism development, and identify cross-cultural tourism opportunities that could result in new revenue, employment, and ownership benefits for both the native and non-native communities.

9.2.4 *Develop Print and Electronic Tourism Investor Materials*

These materials would be required to promote the tourism assets and opportunities of the Lillooet and Lytton area to potential investors. They would be based on the information that has been compiled in this report – specify/outline/etc.

9.2.5 *Create an Economic 'Climate' to Attract Tourism Investment*

In order to attract would-be investors, a suite of enticements should be developed by each community: e.g. identification of available quality tourism land sites, partnership assistance, and site-servicing assistance.

9.2.6 Work with Already Identified Prospective Developers

There has already been interest expressed by several would-be investors for tourism projects in the Lillooet and Lytton areas. These include the Kamenka Lands Golf Course, the Melvin Creek Ski Resort, the Siska Band Ecolodge proposal, the Southern Interior Centre for Artist Development, an in-town Lillooet ecolodge and Native Interpretive Cultural Centres in either or both Lillooet and Lytton. What this means is that there are *already* individuals who have a strong interest in developing new tourism operations in the Lillooet-Lytton region. These interested parties need backing from the community and beyond, to help overcome some of the obstacles they are encountering. The Tourism Development Officers and the Community Tourism Action Group (TAG) have a key role to play here particularly once the non-native and First Nation communities achieve solidarity on individual tourism projects.

9.2.7 Deepen the Relationships with Intrawest and Rocky Mountain Vacations

Relationships with these two major tourism corporations have been initiated as a result of this study project. Top-level executives from each of these corporations have expressed interest in collaborating with Lillooet and Lytton as these communities identify their tourism prospects. This is a major opportunity that should be pursued. The requirement will be to build from this introductory stage to deepen these relationships and the interest these corporations could have. To do this the Tourism Development Officer in each community should pursue ongoing meetings and 'face time' with the key senior corporate individuals. They should get these people into the communities and give them positive memorable experiences (such as river rafting or horseback riding, etc). The intention is to make the involvement of these executives with the communities much more real and personal so they get a heightened sense of the potential opportunities. This can pique their interest in either direct corporate investment, or in providing links to some of their developer associates who could well become interested in the Lillooet-Lytton area.

9.2.8 Undertake a Lillooet-Lytton Investor Promotion Effort

A major part of the challenge facing Lillooet and Lytton is the general lack of awareness in the Vancouver tourism investment sector as to the existing opportunities that exist here. This report clearly identifies the tourism strengths of the Lillooet-Lytton region. The challenge now is to communicate these strengths to a target market of prospective investors, likely located in Vancouver (but also potentially Calgary and the Okanagan). As the region's advantages become known, investors are much more likely to come to town with their money, just as has happened in communities from Invermere to Campbell River.

Therefore, once the foundation for development of a tourism sector has been established each in Lillooet and Lytton (e.g. establishment of the Tourism Action Groups and their Tourism Development Officers, community tourism visioning processes, Native and non-native Tourism Forums) a key next step is to undertake an intensive promotion effort into the Vancouver media and investment community.

What is envisioned is almost a mini 'Team Canada' approach, whereby leaders from Lillooet and Lytton would make their case before key provincial and urban media, politicians, and developers through media interviews, 'breakfast sessions' etc, with prospective developers.

A promotional 'gimmick' might be used to attract media/investor attention, such as offering a free or lower cost parcel of land to the developer who establishes the first or most innovative development within either Lillooet or Lytton.

9.2.9 Develop an Onsite Investor Tour and Reception Package

Such an on-site tour initiative is intended to showcase each of these communities to prospective developers and investors. Once interest has been raised in Vancouver (and elsewhere) as to the investment possibilities of Lillooet and Lytton, the requirement is to deepen this interest and ultimately convert it to an actual investment. This is best done by encouraging direct visits to the communities and creating positive experiences for would-be investors. This is something the towns as a whole can to get behind, again orchestrated through the Community Tourism Action Groups.

9.2.10 Utilize the Rivers Festival to Put Lytton on the Map.

The Lytton Rivers Festival is an ideal focus by which to achieve a number of the PR objectives noted above, and thereby communicate the tourism and recreation potential of the Lytton area. The Festival is a fun event that gives Lytton tourism leaders an opportunity to get face-to-face with the media and the public, not only to talk about this event but also to promote the benefits of living and investing in their community. If careful attention is given to educating visitors on the potential investment and tourism possibilities as part of festival delivery, some of the attendees could in fact become long-term residents and business investors.

What is needed now for this Festival is to increase its profile both with the Vancouver media (through targeting and building relationships with potentially interested journalists) and also by pursuing larger sponsors so as to raise the budget and scale of the event. Done right, the Rivers Festival is one of the strongest elements that Lytton can build on to move towards a diversified economy.

Lillooet is encouraged to consider developing a similar type of tourism event (e.g. annual ice climbing festival), (likely through the Lillooet Tourism Action Group). Obviously such an event should complement rather than compete with the Lytton Rivers Festival. It should strengthen visitation, and thus the prospect for attracting new residents and investors, for the Lillooet-Lytton region as a whole.

9.2.11 Promotional Initiative to Attract New Community Residents

Print and electronic materials should also be developed targeted at potential new residents and early retirees. These materials should showcase the recreational and tourism opportunities available to relocatees. One of the obvious sources for tourism

investment dollars could be from early retirees (who currently reside in Vancouver and possibly Calgary) who are looking to begin a new life and business in a suitably attractive community. Profiling the lifestyle benefits of Lillooet and Lytton in the Vancouver media (perhaps again using a 'PR hook' such as a contest for a free or lower cost piece of land, etc.) could catch the attention of prospective individuals who might well decide to investigate moving to Lillooet and Lytton.

9.2.12 Chose One or Two Specific Pilot Projects

Each community should consider choosing specific pilot projects to focus on for the shorter term to achieve early investment success. This in turn will both build community confidence in tourism as well as attract attention from would-be investors. Examples of specific projects that could be pursued early by Lillooet could include a viticulture demonstration project, native art centre, or an in-town ecolodge. Lytton could consider a Stein, Siska or Botanie Valley ecolodge.

9.2.13 Build a Multi-level Tourism Development Partnership

Lillooet and Lytton should work collaboratively to build a Multi-level Partnership to support the development of tourism in the region as a whole. Such a partnership could include the Tourism Action Groups from each of Lillooet and Lytton, the Fraser Basin Council, the Regional Tourism Associations, Land and Water BC, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, Small Business and Industry Resource Development Task Group, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, and the Wilderness Tourism Association.

The intention of this Partnership would be to collaboratively develop the tourism resource of the region as a whole and to make the Lillooet-Lytton region a priority tourism development zone for southern British Columbia.

9.2.14 Define and Develop the Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Brand

Developing and defining a Lillooet-Lytton Brand should be done by the TAGs, by working with the Regional Tourism Associations (Thompson-Okanagan; Vancouver Coast Mountains) and Tourism BC.

9.2.15 Seek Resourcing for the Development of the Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Sector from Western Economic Diversification.

Development of the tourism economy of smaller communities of British Columbia - particularly those with First Nations involvement - is a priority of the Western Economic Development Agreement signed between BC and the Federal governments. Taking advantage of the above-mentioned Multi-level Partnership (item 15) to make a strong representation to Western Economic Diversification could help to secure the resources required to help trigger the development of the region's tourism economy.

10. Recommendations

The Lillooet-Lytton region clearly has the natural and human resources potential to develop into a high-calibre tourism destination. If it capitalizes on its strengths, strategically develops new products such as a destination resort(s), ecolodges, touring, adventure and cultural offerings in an integrated fashion, and links these under a well-developed brand, it will flourish. It will attract the required investors, it will attract new residents, and it will diversify its economy. However, this will require that the community – both native and non-native - come together to create this future.

To achieve this the following next steps are recommended:

- 1) Opinion leaders in Lillooet, Lytton, and the First Nations communities need to organize themselves into Community Tourism Action Groups (CTAG). These should be organized initially at the town level, but should then interlock at the overall project area/regional level to enable a strategic development of the sector.
- 2) These local Tourism Action Groups need to inform and encourage community dialogues on the role tourism can play, so as to galvanize public support.
- 3) Native and non-native tourism-oriented collaboration needs to be further developed.
- 4) A tourism development strategy based both on community wishes and the information in this report needs to be delineated to identify priorities. This should be done initially at the local community level and then at the Lillooet-Lytton regional level.
- 5) Working linkages need to be developed between the CTAGs with appropriate agencies, such as the Fraser Basin Council, the BC Real Estate Foundation, Regional Districts of Thompson-Okanagan/Squamish-Lillooet, the Thompson-Okanagan and Vancouver, Coast and Mountain Tourism Associations, and the BC Ministries of Sustainable Resource Management and Small Business and Economic Development.
- 6) Investor outreach and education should be pursued, through the CTAG(s), by the individual communities and the project region as a whole to prospective partners such as Intrawest, Rocky Mountain Vacations, and Wilderness Tourism Association operators.
- 7) Targetted investor and urban re-locatee media work should be undertaken by community leaders (again using the CTAGs) and focussed on key Lower Mainland columnists, reporters, talk show hosts, and TV commentators to talk

about the lifestyle, recreational, and tourism assets of the Lillooet-Lytton area. The intention is to inform prospective smaller investors or 'urban refugees' that their future is here in Lillooet-Lytton. As in other communities in BC that have successfully gone through what Lillooet and Lytton are just beginning, there are likely people in the Lower Mainland looking to relocate with their investments to start a new life in rural BC. Some of these individuals can have significant wealth available for investing. As well, there are always developers and investors in the lower mainland looking for the next good opportunity. The Lillooet-Lytton region can be just that to them, if they are made aware of the potential.

- 8) Lillooet and Lytton should reach out and develop contacts with other communities that have used tourism to support their economic transition, such as Fernie, Golden, Nelson, Tofino, etc. These communities are able to share what they have learned, thereby accelerating Lillooet and Lytton's economic evolution. The BC Real Estate Foundation is an organization that supports such networked economic transition learning; it is already interested in the Lillooet-Lytton region and could provide useful assistance.
- 9) The Lytton River Festival should be used to develop awareness - media, public, and investor - of that community. Lillooet might wish to take a similar event-oriented publicity approach.
- 10) Work needs to be done in the community with the Regional Tourism Associations, Tourism BC, and potential marketing collaborators such as Rocky Mountain Vacations, in the development of the region's brand.
- 11) In accordance with the BC Resort Strategy, Land and Water BC should be encouraged to identify the Lillooet-Lytton region as a priority location for the siting of a new destination resort(s).
- 12) The communities should take advantage of the initial contacts that have been provided via this study and to develop their product-development relationships with Intrawest and Rocky Mountain Vacations.
- 13) The communities need to work with the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development to identify means to capitalize on the spin off benefits from the 2010 Olympic Games to help spur development of their tourism economy.

11. CONTACTS

Lillooet Meeting

| Name | Address | Company | Phone # |
|-------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bain Gair | Lillooet | Lillooet News | 250-256-4219 |
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| Barbara Herpes | Lillooet | Red Rock Trail Rides | 250-256-4495 |
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| Michelle & David Harder | Lillooet | Reynolds Hotel | 250-256-4202 |
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Lytton Meeting

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