

DRAFT

YUKON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

FISHING

Y U K O N · 2 0 0 0

Building the Future

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Yukon
Government

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Fisheries Strategy

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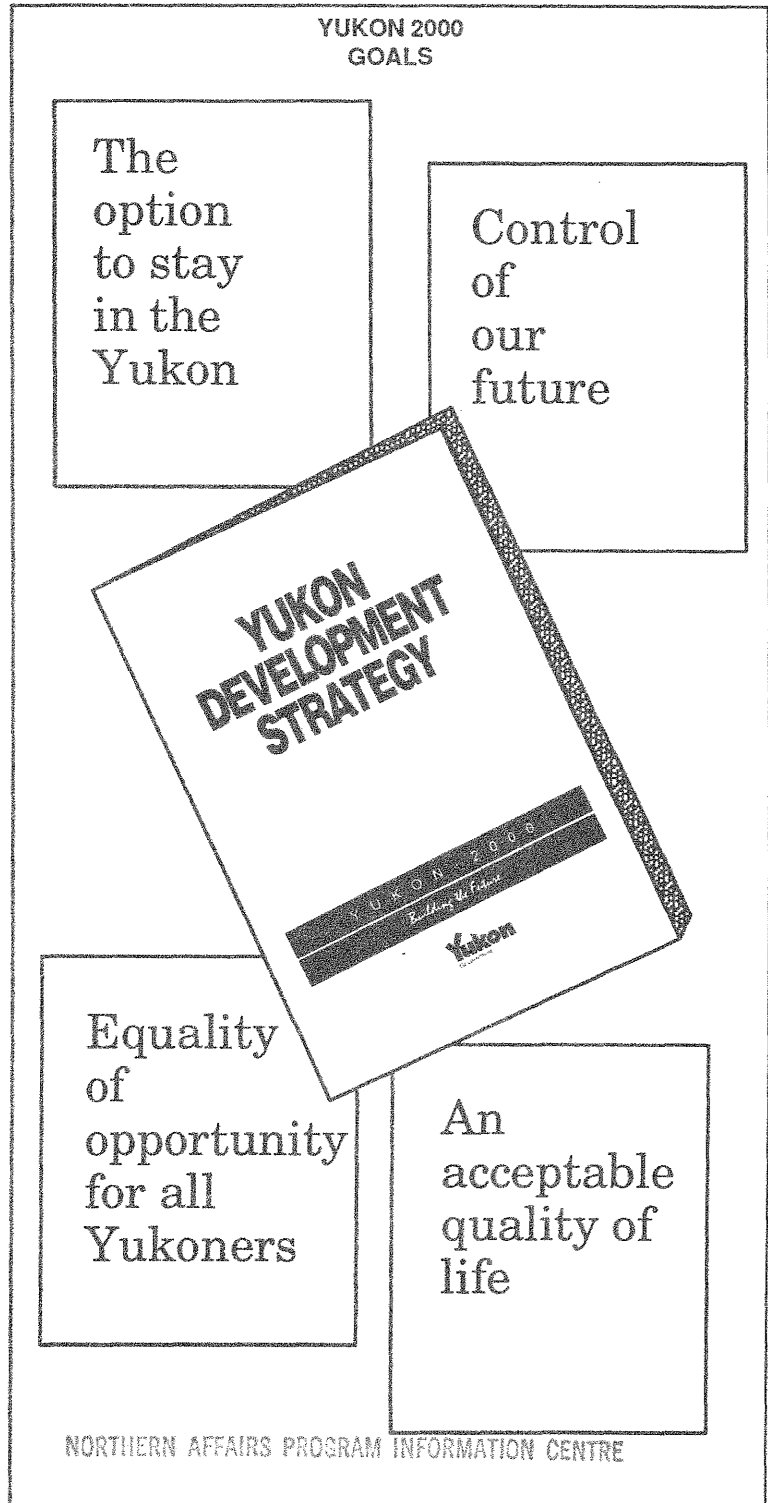
The fisheries industry includes the Native and domestic subsistence fisheries, commercial and sport fisheries. The value of the fish-processing industry to the Yukon in 1985 was about \$580,000 which does not include the value of the subsistence fisheries or the sport fishery which is closely linked to the recreational and tourism industries.

Directions

The different sectors of the fishing industry account for a small but significant proportion of the Yukon economy. The fisheries are important not only for their financial contribution but also because of their importance to the subsistence economy and their contribution to the traditional Yukon culture, particularly for Indian people.

The role of government in the fisheries industry will be to ensure its orderly and coordinated development to benefit the interests of the fishing industry as well as all Yukoners. This requires maintaining a balance between conservation and development, as well as improving access to financing and other supports such as the research and development of access roads.

Fish grow slowly in the Yukon, therefore large scale commercial operations are unlikely to be successful and may deplete the fish stocks. A more successful approach would be to encourage the development of small scale operations, and to develop a specialty line of products with a strong "Yukon" identity.



This small-scale "Yukon" approach would be applicable to all sectors of the industry involved in commercial ventures, whether they involve fish-processing or tourism.

The development of new products will require a thorough investigation of potential markets as well as the development of an effective marketing strategy. Accessibility to funding and coordination are crucial because small operators may have neither the money nor the expertise to develop either products or markets on their own.

There are conflicting and overlapping pressures on the fisheries resource, within the fishing industry itself, and between the fishing industry and other interests. It is therefore necessary to develop the fisheries in a coordinated fashion to ensure that the interests of all sectors are met. The assumption of responsibility for freshwater fisheries from the federal government is a step in this direction.

Proper policy and regulatory mechanisms must be put into place in order to ensure the orderly development and management of this slow-growing resource. These must permit the growth of the industry, yet recognize the need for conservation.

Fisheries will benefit in the long-term from a better informed public and industry. An appreciation of the different industry components will increase understanding; the encouragement of non-consumptive activities, and the appreciation of a wider variety of species (and small, non-trophy size) will all help to foster the health of the fishing industry.



Constraints

- * marketing problems
- * lack of, or inadequate policy and regulations
- * insufficient product development
- * inadequate public awareness and education
- * access to capital
- * weak resource management



Options

1. *Conduct a well-defined study on marketing for all sectors of the fishing industry.*

A thorough study of marketing opportunities would help to develop marketing strategies for all industry components. A better understanding of marketing strategies is essential if commercial opportunities are to increase within the fishing industry. Small operators and developers may not have the skills or finances to develop their own strategies.

An intensive marketing study would cost between \$50,000 and \$80,000. The completion of such a study would have significant long term benefits to the industry by helping the different sectors identify deficiencies, the market potential, and future marketing strategies.

2. *Assess current harvests and potentials (opportunities). Conduct a study to examine the present industry's products and provide recommendations on new or specialized products to help the industry to diversify.*

The results of such a comprehensive study would help the industry components to define new ways to compete in the marketplace, identify initiatives for new enterprises and provide new and longer term employment.

Large scale economic enterprises may not be economically feasible because of the low levels of sustainable harvests. One alternative may be to concentrate on the development and production of small scale, high-value specialty products.

A study on product development and diversification would best be conducted in conjunction with marketing studies because of the relationships between product development and the market. The combination of the studies would also be more cost-effective. It is estimated that a comprehensive study of the potential for market diversification would cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000, if done in conjunction with the development of a market strategy. If done separately, the cost may be considerably more.

3. Provide financial incentives or assistance for industry to investigate and develop new products.

This would provide an immediate financial stimulus to business, however greater benefits may result from the adoption of Option 2 by focussing development on products which were judged to be potentially the most successful.

The costs of this initiative would vary according to whether a grant system, or a low-cost loan system were adopted. A grant system would be more likely to result in immediate development, but little immediate product development would result unless a market had been identified.

4. Undertake a study to identify the difficulties and gaps in policies and regulations affecting the industry, and to propose corrective measures.

The study and potential draft policies and regulations would provide the industry and the Yukon Government with a framework for the management and better use of the fisheries resource.

All sectors are affected by policy and regulations, particularly the sports fishery and aquaculture interests. The development of an integrated policy would clarify the relationship between conflicting or overlapping interests in the industry.

The costs of a study to both identify the policy gaps and develop new policies and regulations is difficult to estimate, as the cost would be dependent on the number of problems identified. This type of study would probably cost at least \$50,000.

5. Assume responsibility for management and administration of the freshwater fishery from the federal government.

This would help in the management and control of the Yukon's fishing industry. The lack of an integrated policy and regulatory framework may be compounded by federal legislation which is slow and difficult to change. Policy development and policy change should be quicker and more responsive to users' needs.

The cost of the assumption of responsibility for the freshwater fishery remains to be negotiated with the federal government.

6. Strengthen resource management.

Strong resource management is critical to the increased development of a healthy industry. This can be done in part by the development and implementation of sound policies and regulations.

There are, however, two other constraints to development which need to be resolved. The completion of a land claims settlement will assist in providing the necessary Indian participation link in the development of long-term management plans. The other issue is the Canada - U.S. Yukon River Salmon Treaty. A more equitable sharing of the resource between Canada and the U.S. is required if the Yukon is to fully develop its fishery and stocks.

7. Conduct an examination of the public awareness and educational needs of each sector, and develop an educational and public relations strategy to suit each sector and audience.

A study conducted cooperatively with industry would produce a strategy which would benefit all sectors of the industry with respect to their long term needs.

The public and the industry alike would benefit from a well-prepared educational program. It would increase the public's understanding of the industry as well as promote understanding between the different fisheries sectors. An appreciation of the non-consumptive potential for the industry could be encouraged, as well as a positive attitude towards smaller, rather than trophy-sized fish. A stronger conservation ethic could be fostered as well as an appreciation of species other than trout and salmon. A well-informed public will benefit the industry in the long term.

The development of a cooperative strategy may be costly, and could include the development of interpretive programs, publications and audio visual presentations.

8. Provide financial assistance to industry for the development of individual educational programs as the need arises.

The adoption of this option would result in less cost than Option 7, however the result may be a communications approach which would not fulfil the long-term needs of the industry as a whole.

Just history N.!

9. Increase the access to fish

Increased accessibility to fishing areas would enhance the wilderness-fishing experience, and may encourage visitors to stay in the territory.

Accessibility to fishing areas along the highways is extremely poor and does little to

encourage fishing over a wide area. The Regional Resource Roads Program run by the Department of Community and Transportation Services may be able to provide funding for the development of such access roads. Suitable areas could be identified by the Department of Renewable Resources.