

6 PRODUCT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

Section 5 of this report provides our rationale for product selection, and defines the various geographic units to be evaluated. Nine products have been identified for further resource, economic and market evaluation. These products can be regarded as the best *short-term* options for outdoor recreation-based tourism products. None of the products exist in isolation, however, and a key objective of the analysis is to identify the linkage between each.

In this section, each of the tourism products will be evaluated using resource criteria in order to identify the geographic units exhibiting the highest potential. Having done this, each geographic unit will then be assessed by market, economic and social criteria. By evaluating the units within the context of these additional constraints, we can narrow down the scope and more precisely identify the specific areas, or *polygons*, which exhibit the greatest potential. Those areas that are filtered out should be regarded as those with longer-term opportunities. In narrowing down the choice to those most likely to be developed, the consultants are not suggesting that the others do not have merit, simply that they may only be feasible on a longer-term basis.

The reader should note that not all products are relevant to all units. For example, ocean kayaking is evaluated only for the Outer Coast, Fiords and Lakes, and Princess Royal Island geographic units. Conversely, road touring is evaluated only for the inner Mid Coast (Mountains and Trade Routes unit).

We note here that Culture Heritage will be treated in a somewhat different manner than the other products. While the project Advisory Committee has indicated that culture and heritage is an important tourism feature on the Mid Coast, the decision about how to develop specific First Nations cultural and heritage features into tourism products lies entirely within the domain of the First Nations communities. Some First Nations participants in the Tourism Opportunity Strategy process have indicated that it is not in their best interests to fully disclose the location of their cultural, traditional and/or sacred sites. Others have voiced the need to plan and control the rate of tourism development in their territorial lands. There is a general recognition that tourism will provide communities with a powerful tool for fostering local economic diversification, but that the local communities must be positioned to develop tourism at their own speed, on their own terms. The Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture fully concurs, and makes the good point that this project is not necessarily intended to be an exhaustive inventory of tourism features.

In light of these very real concerns about First Nations tourism development, we have taken the approach of mapping and narrowing down the highest potential polygons for all products *except* Culture Heritage. However, for each product, we identify the key cultural or heritage links that would enhance its development. The decision to develop any of the products, or to make the link with culture or heritage features, will lie with the proponents who choose to build the Mid Coast tourism sector.

Our overall approach to evaluation begins with an analysis of the resource, incorporates the socio-economic considerations, and culminates in a description of the polygons with the greatest potential. The evaluation criteria is as follows.

Table 6.1-1: Description of Product Analysis Criteria

| Resource Criteria | |
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| Uniqueness of Key Features | Identifies level of uniqueness from the target market. The implication is that the setting and key feature will attract those tourists/recreationists from those areas where the product is not available. |
| Supportive Resources | Rates the availability of features integral to the viability of a product, i.e. ocean kayaking generally requires freshwater and sheltered landing. |
| Existence of Supportive Infrastructure | Rates the current availability of infrastructures integral to the viability of the product, i.e. snowmobiling requires trails or logging roads |
| Associated Products | Identifies the products that enhance the opportunities of the product described. |
| Significance of Associated Products | Rates the significance of the associated products. |
| Access to Staging Area | Analyzes the accessibility of the related staging area to the markets |
| Access from Staging Area to Resource | Determines the accessibility for the product described to travel from the staging areas to the optimal resources. Enhanced access such as shuttling is not a factor. |
| Culture Heritage Features | An indication of the presence of First Nations and Post-contact Cultural and Historical artifacts including petroglyphs, totems, canneries, village sites and other man made evidence of habitation and land use. |
| Prime Season | Is the optimal season. There are opportunities related to the shoulder seasons. |
| RESOURCE DISCUSSION | General discussion on the products as they relate to the unit. |
| COMMUNITIES MOST ABLE TO BENEFIT | These communities lie within or close to the unit discussed. |
| Market, Economic and Social Criteria | |
| Level of Competition | Evaluates similar products at the local, regional, provincial and/or international levels |
| Market Demand Potential | Potential for future demand growth. |
| Impact/Conflict | Existing Recreation Use Other Land Uses Community Use or Plans Environmental |
| Local Employment Impacts | |
| Regulatory or Crown Tenure Requirements | Key government regulatory processes in achieving development of the opportunity |
| Level of Community Support | |
| Infrastructure Requirements | Physical infrastructure needed for development (e.g., roads, communications, etc.) |
| General Capital Requirements | |
| POLYGONS EXHIBITING HIGHEST POTENTIAL WITHIN EACH UNIT | Identifies the POLYGONS WITH THE GREATEST POTENTIAL that fall within each unit. |