

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**

**The Wells -- Goldfields Trail Network: Towards  
Community Based Tourism In A Very Small Town**

by

**Judith A. Campbell**

**A MASTERS DEGREE PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN,  
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (PLANNING)**

**FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN**

**CALGARY, ALBERTA**

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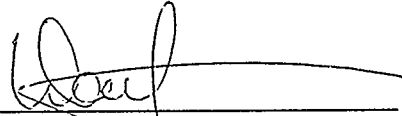


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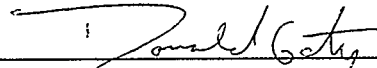
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**The Wells -- Goldfields Trail Network:  
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submitted by **Judith Ann Campbell** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Design.



Supervisor: Dr. Walter Jamieson  
Faculty of Environmental Design



Dr. Donald Getz  
Faculty of Management



Prof. William Perks  
Faculty of Environmental Design

DATE: 9/4/06/27

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE WELLS -- GOLDFIELDS TRAIL NETWORK: TOWARDS COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN A VERY SMALL TOWN**

Judith A. Campbell

prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the M.E.Des. degree in the Faculty of Environmental Design, The University of Calgary

As Canada has become more urbanized, rural communities have had to undergo difficult changes to survive. Wells, British Columbia, like many traditional resource-based communities in British Columbia, is looking to tourism to stabilize the boom-bust cycles that have plagued its existence. Although its population has declined to 200 people, it is experiencing limited growth due to a growing number of people who are choosing to live in and visit small communities due to amenities such as environmental quality, outdoor recreation opportunities, and rural and historic ambiance. This Master's Degree Project examined a network of recreational trails adjacent to the community and suggested ways in which this amenity could generate more value to the community.

An inventory of the trail network was conducted indicating the location, condition, current use, suggested development, and management concerns. A number of development projects were prioritized using a set of criteria that maximized benefits to the local community. An inventory of the support facilities in the local community examined the type and capacities of the accommodation, restaurants, camping, retail, transportation and commercial outfitting sectors, as well as the local events, attractions and entertainment.

Using available data, the study examined the potential winter demand for the trail network and raised a number of marketing issues for future consideration by the community. The conclusions include a number of recommendations for trail work, signage, trail grooming and marketing as well as pointing the way to future research that could be undertaken by the community.

**KEY WORDS:** community development, amenity, rural, outdoor recreation, trail, resource community, community-based tourism, eco-tourism.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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Jurg Feldmann (Cariboo Ski Touring Club),  
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Greg Lawrence (North Cariboo Community Futures),  
Marilyn Rummel (North Cariboo Community Futures),  
Rob Rummel (Wells Improvement District). and  
Bob Zimmerman (North Cariboo Trails Association/Quesnel Snowmobile Club),

The information and ideas contributed by this group were invaluable in preparing this report.

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Thanks are also due to

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- the work of the Cariboo Ski Touring Club in compiling information on the local trails,
- the ongoing work of the North Cariboo Trails Association to promote the development of local trails,
- and to North Cariboo Community Futures for funding the project.

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## **PART ONE: BACKGROUND**

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Master's Degree Project was:

- 1) to devise a plan for trail facility development that is achievable in stages over the next five to ten years, for the community of Wells, British Columbia,
- 2) to develop a strategy that will make a difference to the economic base of the community, especially in the off-season, and
- 3) to begin to develop the organizational structure necessary within the community to pursue the project.

The community of Wells, in British Columbia's Cariboo region, which was chosen for the case study, is typical of many small resource-based communities. Its single industry economy, once based on mining, has slowly been turning to tourism. Residents who remained after the mine closures did so because of the perceived amenities -- scenery, slow pace, historic ambiance. Those amenities have also resulted in an influx of new residents, both temporary and permanent.

Economic development is the focus of a number of community groups. The tourism industry remains seasonal. Population fluctuations have resulted in lost services and business failures. The uncertainty of the community's future makes access to capital difficult.

Recently community groups have identified the extensive trail network that surrounds the community as a potential asset for tourism development. This recognition has come from both within the community and outside. Outside user groups wish the community to play a greater role in the grooming and maintenance of the trail network and in the organization of events using the network. Some business interests within the community feel that they should be able to capture more revenues from trail-related activity.

An outside community economic development organization, North Cariboo Community Futures supplied the funding for the case study. For them, this work would form one module of a much larger trail planning process that was being used as an economic development strategy for the entire Cariboo-Chilcotin region. Their concern was that there be a high level of community 'buy-in' in Wells. The researcher's related concern was that the plan not only reflect community

opinion and aspirations, but also that it be accessible, understandable, and usable by the community. The researcher brought together a local steering committee to advise and direct the research.

Both the funding group and the steering committee identified the need for an inventory, both of the trail network and of the services available to support it. The community wished to look at what initial actions could be taken that would result in the most economic benefit. There was a strong desire to have some indication of the economic feasibility of the project. Without doing an in-depth economic analysis all parties wished some initial estimates of how much visitor spending could be expected in the area as a result of the development of the trail network. Lastly, the researcher wished to lay the groundwork necessary to ensure that the community had a high degree of control over the development of the trail network and the resulting benefits.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT**

This document is divided into two parts. The first part examines community-based tourism as an economic development strategy for small communities from a theoretical perspective. It looks first at the decline of rural communities and the inability of current programs and policies to effect any real change. Amenity theory is discussed as a model that explains some of the recent changes in rural communities. It then examines how community-based tourism, especially a model that embraces the principles of eco-tourism, can be a contributor to community economic development.

The second part is a case study that examines the role that the extensive recreational trail network that surrounds Wells, often called the Goldfields Trail Network could play in community economic development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The researcher wished to use a community-based research approach that would pave the way to community action. While the project was not truly a participatory action research project, the focus of the researcher was to involve the community in developing the direction of the research, identifying research needs and discussing the results.

The researcher formed a steering committee that would be representative of local community interests and outside user groups. Local interests were represented by the Wells and District Chamber of Commerce and the Wells Improvement District (local government). The representative from the Wells Chamber was also an executive member of the Wells Trackers (the Wells ski and snowmobile club). The funding agency was represented by the Business Development Centre manager. The Business Development Centre makes loans to business ventures that can not receive support through regular loaning institutions. North Cariboo Community Futures was further represented by the head of their Tourism Sub-committee who was also a Wells resident and business person. User groups represented were the Cariboo Ski Touring Club, the Quesnel Snowmobile Club and North Cariboo Trails Association, an umbrella group for a variety of user groups wishing to pursue trail development.

The steering committee meetings were open to the public and were attended by a variety of community members wanting to know 'what's going on'. In addition, two well-publicized public meetings were held that attracted interested community members. Community members had the opportunity to read and comment on the draft report and their critiques were incorporated into the final report.

#### **ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

The researcher was also a long term and active community member. It was the intent of the researcher to blur the role of 'expert consultant'. This proved easier than expected. As is so often the case, local people who may have the same credentials as an outsider, have less credibility because they are known to the community. The researcher felt that this worked in the project's favour. People felt comfortable questioning the results and beneficial discussion arose as a result.

The researcher felt that she had enough objectivity to analyze the project results from the perspective of a professional planner and where needed, point out to committee members possible pitfalls. In some cases her opinion was accepted, in others not.

#### **THE TOURISM SERVICE INVENTORY**

The need for an inventory of services in Wells had become evident through the work of Wells and District Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber disburses information on facilities

and services by mail and through their Infocentre, but there was no document that presented all the relevant information. Further, an inventory is needed to identify weaknesses relevant to the development of the trail network.

A format for recording the information was developed by the researcher after discussion with the committee. It was decided that the information should be adequate to serve the needs of Infocentre staff, i.e. hours and days of business, season, services provided, fees. In addition it should aid event planners and so should include capacities. The researcher also recommended recording employment levels. This would provide base line data to which future employment levels could be compared. Owner responses did not give the accuracy necessary to convert all employment to Full Time Equivalents (FTEs); instead categories of year round or seasonal were used. Seasonal referred to anything less than 9 months employment.

The inventory was completed through owner or manager interviews. No attempt was made to verify responses through examination of records. In such a small community, confidentiality is an issue and it is unlikely that, even if such records were kept, examination would be permitted.

#### **THE ANALYSIS OF THE TRAIL NETWORK**

It was decided with the steering committee that this analysis should serve two purposes. It should compile an inventory specific enough to be useful for future planning. It should be in such a format that when North Cariboo Trails Association developed a data base for the region that the information could be included. It should also indicate for each trail specific work that could be done that would increase its value to the network. This would include such things as creating a loop trail or linking to another trail. Information gathering should include specific locations, current conditions, suitable uses, management concerns and a notation of immediate development needed.

#### **MARKET CONSIDERATIONS**

It was beyond the scope of this project to conduct a complete market analysis. Existing information is limited and must be compiled from a variety of sources and geographical locations. It is not known if data would be applicable to the Wells--Barkerville area. However, it is important for the community to move towards considering marketing issues. Therefore, a

number of demand estimates were developed for the sake of community discussion. These estimates are based on assumptions that are clearly stated and open to question. The intent of the exercise was to raise awareness about possibilities rather than to generate accurate figures.

## **PROJECT RELEVANCE**

The project was completed in a provincial environment of competition for land use. Demands on the land by extractive resources, in particularly logging, are increasing as are demands by other users such as tourism and recreation. Forestry and mining interests have established tenures, in the form of Tree Farm Licenses. Tourism and recreation does not. While a lobby exists within British Columbia Tourist Industry to change this (British Columbia Council of Tourism Associations, 1992), support information is lacking. One area sorely lacking is the documentation of the benefits (economic and otherwise) of alternative uses of the land, such as recreation. It is hoped that this study in some small way will contribute to that knowledge base.

## **CHAPTER TWO: AMENITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES**

### **THE DECLINE OF COMMUNITIES IN RURAL CANADA**

The fabric of rural and small town Canada has changed dramatically in less than 100 years. A country whose population at the turn of the century was only 37% urban had, by 1971, become only 23% rural (Coppack, Beesley & Mitchell, 1990: 115). As a result of this population shift, many communities in Canada's rural hinterland are losing services -- schools and post offices are closing, RCMP detachments and hospitals are cut back, railway stations become defunct, and retail stores are moving to larger centres. People in rural areas must travel further and further to obtain the goods and services that once were readily available locally. Many, including both theorists and politicians, see this as the natural consequence of greater efficiency and cost effectiveness and a small price to pay for the convenience and lower prices of larger centres. Others lament the passing of a way of life that has value other than cost effectiveness and efficiency.

In resource-based economies some of the changes are even more dramatic.

Plant closures are not new in Canada. The remnants of more than 400 ghost towns across the country stand as mute reminders of communities that became the victims of exhausted ore bodies, denuded forests, declining fish stocks, changes in transportation patterns, and other adversities (Canadian Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, 1987).

In British Columbia, where natural resources play a large part of the economy, communities are plagued with boom/bust cycles. In 1987, 37% of British Columbia's Gross Domestic Product was generated by exports and of that, 80% was from the resources sector, making the economy susceptible to these cycles (BC Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, 1993a: 25).

According to the British Columbia Forest Resources Commission (1991, as cited by Travers, 1993b: 209), there are over 200 forest dependent communities in British Columbia. Of these 175 have less than 1000 people. The lower mainland has achieved a level of economic diversification that has led to economic growth and stability (BC Central Credit Union as cited by Travers, 1993b: 207). But for the other 50% of British Columbia's population living in the regions,

economic diversification has not been significant and has been hampered by reliance on traditional resource industries. A recent study assigned 'diversity indexes' to 55 local areas in the province outside the Lower Mainland. Of these only seven had indexes over 75, indicating a highly diversified economy (Horne and Robson, 1993: 13).

Demographic trends are exacerbating the problem. The effects of the changing demographics of the Canadian population, such as a lower fertility rate and the aging population, may be more pronounced in small communities; and impacts on school enrollment and retail demand may be enough to cause closures (Dykeman, 1990:8). But the root causes of such regional disparities are deeper and not readily explained merely by current demographic trends.

The historical conditions that have led to the development of a heartland/hinterland (core/periphery) dichotomy have been well documented (McCann & Smith, 1991). Central place theory (Preston, 1991) can explain the development of a hierarchical urban system, with some centres having more importance than others. The heartland/hinterland model is useful as it applies regardless of scale. A community that is in the hinterland of a larger city may be the heartland of a smaller village and similar dynamics apply at all scales. At the very bottom of the totem pole are very small communities and rural areas with populations less than 5,000.

Traditional economic theories see exports as the road to regional wealth. The more 'central' an area is (closer to the 'core' or 'heartland'), the stronger and more diversified will be the export base. Hinterland areas export lower order goods and raw materials to heartland areas in return for higher order goods. But these theories are not adequate to explain the nature of change in today's rural communities, nor do they point to solutions to the problems that plague them. They predict that increased exports will lead to integration and diversification, not to dependency and boom/bust cycles. Examination of the effect of the global economy on Canada's national and regional economies can lead to a clarification of the processes that affect rural Canada.

The move towards a global economy has had detrimental effects on Canada's small communities (Nozick, 1992: 19-32; Dykeman, 1990: 8). The de-industrialization of the developed world is occurring as large multi-national corporations move to more competitive labour sources. The external control of small community economies by urban-based multi-nationals and the ability of these companies to move capital and assets quickly have led to plant closures and unemployment.



Both government and business policies of fiscal efficiency and cost reduction often favour urban areas, where economies of scale exist. The planning of rural areas often occurs in neighbouring cities. Urban planning perspectives that call for specialized land uses and that have little concern for the rural context are applied. These may be oriented towards technology and efficiency and result in more rural job loss (Troughton 1990:24).

Mechanization has reduced the necessary work force, particularly in basic industries such as forestry, mining and agriculture. In British Columbia's forest industry, over 26,000 jobs have been lost due to technological change in the last 10 years (Travers, 1993a). This has devastated small communities such as Chemainus and Port Alberni, and seriously altered the employment rate in many others.

Canadian rural development policy, instead of dealing with root causes, has treated the gap between rural and urban economies as typical of the core/periphery (hinterland/heartland) relationship. This disparity, it was believed, could be rectified by increasing the export base of these regions which would result in a diversified economy. If that was not possible than integration with the urban system would result in a general trickle down effect to rural areas from the prosperity of urban regions (Weaver & Gunton, 1982: 10).

But forty years of Canadian development policy have done nothing to address regional disparities (Weaver & Gunton, 1982: 6; Powers, 1988). The growth and profits of large corporations have not necessarily resulted in more jobs and higher wages as predicted by the 'trickle down' theory of economics; instead corporations are driven by efficiency and cost reduction to relocate in other countries with lower wages and less regulations. (Nozick, 1990: 7)

According to Weaver & Gunton (p. 22):

...there is a consensus emerging that market forces will not result in regional convergence, let alone efficient allocation of resources. The central argument is that functional economic power, removed from the control of territorial authority, will likely exacerbate the social and geographical inequities inherent in polarized development. Transnational capital, working partly through local elites, will create an ever increasing dependency on outside economic interests. For dependent countries and regions, labour, resources and capital will be exploited by unequal terms of trade. The hypothesized spread effects of economic growth will be captured by faraway industries and financial institutions. So unless

regions regain control of their basic economic institutions, the rich will become richer and the poor even poorer.

Theoretical frameworks that recognize this dependent relationship can better explain the repetitive boom/bust cycles and the ever increasing rural decline. 'Staple theory' developed by Canadian economist Howard Innis, was largely ignored by Canadian policy makers, even though it worked well to describe the colonial nature of many regional economies and to suggest policy changes (Weaver and Gunton, 1982: 8). Innis, as early as 1950, documented "discrepancies in power, consequences of external control, problem of leakages of capital, institutional blockages to diversification, and frequent occurrence of disequilibrium and crisis" (as cited by Weaver and Gunton, 1982: 8), but his theories were disregarded for 'dominant core-areas doctrines'.

Underdevelopment/dependency theory, which developed out of the Latin American experience, is also useful in explaining the ongoing differences between the core and periphery and the inability of current policies to affect it. These theories view underdevelopment as a process that occurred over time, not a beginning state. It has been fostered by inequitable power and trade relationships that resulted in growth at the core at the expense of the periphery (Weaver and Gunton, 1982: 18; Chilcote, 1984).

Under the open market conditions of the global economy, Canada is at a comparative disadvantage (Nozick, 1992: 27). Because Canada sells low value raw resources (lumber, minerals, power, gas & oil) in exchange for higher value manufactured goods, Canada develops an uneven, dependent trade relationship. Similar relationships exist between the regions and the national economy, and between small centres and the regional economy.

The practice of economic development in small resource-based communities must recognize and address these issues.

Nozick (1992: 7) sees five pressures on communities that affect their viability and sustainability:

- 1) De-industrialization as we enter the post-industrial age resulting in plant closures and more unemployment in small town and rural areas.
- 2) Environmental degradation affecting water and air, caused by industrial and consumer waste and auto emissions.
- 3) Loss of local control of decision-making.

- 4) Erosion of social networks leading to the neglect of human needs and to an increase in the number of marginalized and jobless.
- 5) Erosion of local identity and cultural diversity, and conformity to the homogenous global culture.

Weaver and Gunton (1982: 22) identify four important factors that impede local economic development that are specifically linked with ownership outside of the region.

- 1) Resource rents are not available for local capital, instead they are invested outside the region.
- 2) Externally located firms have existing forward (value added) and backward (supplies and services) linkages outside region.
- 3) Local entrepreneurship is hampered due to lack of access to capital, competition from larger multi-national firms, and inability to secure contracts from firms who prefer external suppliers.
- 4) Because these firms control savings, employment and production, technology and investment, government must cooperate or suffer an investment strike .

Community Economic Development strategies must seek to move local economies away from dependencies such as these and towards development that is locally controlled and sustainable for small economies. Principles such as sustainability, local control, meeting community and individual needs and maintaining community cultural integrity are prevalent throughout community development literature (Nozick, 1992; Butler and Clark, 1992; Max-Neef, 1991) and provide a framework for evaluating economic development strategies. As will be discussed later in the chapter, sustainable 'eco-tourism' or 'low-impact' tourism can be seen as an industry that can address some of these issues.

## **THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROLE OF AMENITY**

Strategies based on 'economic base' theory have not been successful in stimulating economic development in rural areas (Weaver & Gunton, 1982; Power, 1988). Examination of communities where change, diversification and economic growth are occurring has led to a theoretical approach that is useful when considering the problems of small resource-based communities. Amenity-based theories examine new relationships between urban and rural areas, allow us to better understand the role of tourism in rural economies, and help to explain the seemingly contradictory changes in many rural areas.

After 1971 the population decline in rural Canada reversed itself and rural areas began to grow at faster rates than urban areas. Upon closer examination it was found that while rural farm populations continued to decrease, rural non-farm population increased. This growth was especially evident in rural areas close to larger centres (Coppack, Beesley & Mitchell, 1990).

Export-base theory (Preston, 1991; Heilbrun, 1981) assumes that only highly paid professionals relocate because of amenity. Availability and wage levels of employment are main reasons for worker migration. Amenity theories (Bryant and Coppack, 1991; Coppack, 1990; Coppack, Beesley and Mitchell, 1990; Power, 1988; Webster, 1992) hypothesize that 'quality of life' is a stronger force in decision making than employment opportunities and wage levels. There is also evidence to suggest that jobs follow people to amenity rich areas, as opposed to people migrating to job-rich areas (Power, 1988: 106-128). This pursuit of amenity environments is linked with the changing attributes of post-industrial society which have prompted a search for a wide life space, the increased affluence and accessibility that support that search, and with the aging of the population (Coppack, 1991; Webster, 1992).

Amenity has been variously defined in the literature. Webster's (1992: 6) is one of the broadest, referring to the "attractiveness of a place to human beings as a locale for residence, tourism, study or investment." Shafer and Zeigler (1991) define 'amenity resources' as 'those aspects of the rural environment in which residents and visitors may find beauty, pleasure and experiences that are unique to the particular locale.' The attributes included in amenity are various and include such things as scenery, rural sentiment, historical ambiance, outdoor recreation opportunities, cultural events, 'rurality', elbow room, historical integrity, and quaintness (Zimmerman, 1959 as cited by Coppack, 1990:91; Shafer and Zeigler, 1991).

About one half of Canada's communities with populations of 9,500 or less are located within what Coppack (1990: 91) calls 'urban fields'. This concept encompasses more than just urban fringe, extending to include networks of small communities, regional centres and rural areas surrounding core communities with populations of over 300,000. Rural communities within urban fields are influenced significantly by their associated urban cores. Not only does the urban field include suburbs and exurbia within the commuter sheds of larger centres, but also the weekend and seasonal life space (parks, recreation areas, cottage and second home areas) up to 100 miles from the city. Within these areas, rural population as a whole is increasing, but rural farm population is continuing to decrease (Bryant & Coppack, 1991).

British Columbia, which is much less agricultural than Ontario where Coppack completed his studies, can be seen to have a similar system of urban fields. Heavily populated areas such as the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island have urban fields with a similar structure to those Coppack studied in Ontario. The Okanagan is somewhat more complex, having a number of medium sized core areas with interlocking fringe areas. Much of British Columbia is not in the shadow of what Coppack would consider a major urban core (population 300,000), but has a similar relationship with a smaller, regional centres. Even more of the province is part of the weekend and seasonal life space of regional centres or larger population bases.

Rural communities in British Columbia are well endowed with amenities resources such as rivers, lakes and mountains, and a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Old mining towns of the Kootenays and Cariboo provide architectural streetscapes reminiscent of the turn of the century. The quaint 'ranchscapes' to the Chilcotin provide what Coppack, Beesley and Mitchell (1990:125) refer to as 'rural sentiment' -- closeness to nature, wholesome lifestyle, historical ambiance, peace and quiet. The arts, long an amenity associated only with urban centres (McNulty, Jacobson, and Penne, no date), is finding a niche in the periphery towns such as Nelson, Kimberley and Wells. Many communities possess a mix of these attributes that make them very attractive locations for residency or visiting.

Amenity theories allow us to consider the transformation of rural communities, rather than just economic growth, a concept that has ramifications for long term sustainability (British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 1993b; Power, 1988:174). Coppack (1990: 90) reviews the work of several researchers who have indicated that many rural communities are changing rather than dying. Their strength seems to be in their ability to adapt. This change is characterized in part by moving to satisfy the demands for qualitative lifestyle attributes by exurbanites (Coppack, Beesley and Mitchell, 1990). An examination of these changes can lead to strategies for economic renewal in other communities.

Amenities are a marketable product in the same way as a hockey game or a theatre performance. Its purchase price is the opportunity cost (what is forgone to partake in the activity) and the associated costs such as travel to the amenity (Driver, 1986:53). Like tourism, amenity is an export and creates access to new income and new opportunities for small communities. Small towns shift from being agricultural supply centres to multi-role communities drawing customers for their 'amenity attributes' from urban cores (Coppack, 1990:92). The higher order amenities

are the primary attraction and commodity. They result in the development of lower order goods and services such as gifts, food, accommodation and fuel. These latter do not draw exurbanites in and of themselves but profit from the traffic drawn by the amenity.

The new income generated by amenity differs from the communities previous income that was generated from basic industries such as forestry, agriculture, fishing, mining. It comes from an urban economy that is less susceptible to boom/bust cycles. It is discretionary income that is spent on leisure and non-essential items.

The implications are that small communities must preserve, manage and enhance their amenity environments. These environments have value to the residents and may form a large part of the reason they have chosen to live or to remain living in the area. They are goods and services enjoyed directly and which contribute to their overall economic well-being (Powers, 1988: 191). However, these amenities are also one of the rural community's major 'exports' to urban areas. The development of tourism-oriented facilities -- commercial recreation, accommodation, restaurants and retail -- seem almost a natural consequence.

The question of for whom amenity resources should be developed and at whose expense needs to be addressed. Power (1988) and Nozick (1992) would argue that they are primarily for the current residents and that they must have control over how development will take place. Amenity resources enrich local communities by giving pleasure and pride to local residents, by attracting new residents and retirees. Care must be taken that these amenities will not be preserved just for the 'politically influential professional and managerial classes' rather than for the needs of the local populace, and that they are not unduly taxed for resources that they will not use (Mason, 1992; Webster, 1992). Coppack (1990) and Coppack, Beesley and Mitchell (1990) argue that amenity development is demand driven by the needs of urbanites. A distinction should be made between amenity resources and tourism (Shafer and Zeigler 1991). Tourism is just one potential use of amenity environments. There will be a delicate tension between the needs of local residents and the needs of visitors.

## **TOURISM AS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL AREAS**

Tourism is sometimes viewed as the panacea of all resource-based communities with declining economies. But in small communities there may be a number of barriers to actually achieving that benefit. The major economic impact of tourism is to the service sector (hotels, restaurants,

transportation) which tend to be concentrated in larger centres. These areas may be dependent upon the attractions of the rural hinterland, but most of the economic benefit may go to the larger centre (Murphy, 1985: 90). Lack of training and experience may also inhibit the community's ability to provide services desired by visitors. Residents may have a negative attitude towards tourism due to the increases in traffic, noise and prices (Gunn, 1988; Murphy, 1985). Rural areas may lack the necessary drawing power to attract visitors, they may suffer from a 'backward' image, their attractions may be dispersed over too broad an area, or they may have difficulty in identifying and reaching the appropriate target markets (Hill, 1993).

Many small communities in British Columbia are seen as having 'great potential' for tourism. But having the potential and achieving that potential do not necessarily go hand and hand. Small communities must possess the right mix of entrepreneurs, investment capital, local expertise, market demand, and attitudes and behavior and at the right time. It is the existence of opportunities to take advantage of the potential, rather than the potential itself which is crucial in controlling the degree to which a community develops (Coppack, 1990; Gunn, 1988). But even a small success can have a significant effect on a small economy.

Tourism should not be viewed by small communities as a development strategy that is beyond criticism. Like any development it is a double-edged sword, and has associated problems. At its ugliest, it is a foreign-owned accommodation and restaurant sector that compromises local environments with golf courses and ski hills, only hires local people for low paying, seasonal service jobs, and commercializes local amenities. It can create a single-industry dependency that is no better than other basic industries (Luloff, Bridger, Graefe, et al, 1994).

However, tourism can provide a type of economic development that conforms to community development principles and results in real gains for small communities. Small towns should position themselves in such a way as to attract the type of tourism that provides the most benefit with the least impact on their amenity resources.

The Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) and Canada's signing of the Caracas Declaration have led to increased concern with sustainable development. The tourism industry has experienced problems with degradation of its resources through overuse by its own clients, which has led to an introspective reexamination of policies. Guidelines for sustainable tourism policy and practice have been developed (D'Amore, 1993; Tourism Industry Association of Canada, 1993; The British Columbia Council of Tourism Associations, 1992; Bramwell, 1991). Within this framework,

two approaches to tourism -- 'community-based' tourism and 'eco-tourism' offer specific recommendations that are useful for small communities.

'Community-based' tourism refers to tourism that is generated and controlled by the local community and that is based on the amenities that make the community unique and appealing. Derno (1991) defines community-based tourism as "a privately offered set of hospitality services (and features) extended to visitors, by individuals or groups of a local community. Such services are provided in or around the home of the host or, respectively, in the host community; their critical facet is that they be locally owned and operated and not be 'colonized' by external interest."

Murphy's (1985: 167-176) ecological model for community tourism stresses a number of factors that will contribute to a healthy relationship between the living and non-living components of the tourism system:

- widespread participation in decision making
- multi-level approach (as opposed to local control) from national interest in policies to local interest in project impacts, capacities, etc.
- protection of resource attractions
- acceptable levels of commercialism and congestion balanced by economic and amenity benefits
- visitor satisfaction
- balance between components and scale. -- balance tourist demands with community's other needs

The Northwest Territories Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism takes a somewhat stronger view, defining community-based tourism as "an industry which would be substantially owned and operated by Northerners, reflect community aspirations, and one which would be well distributed across the Northwest Territories" (NWT Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism, 1990). Other aspects of the NWT vision of community-based tourism are its compatibility with skills and aspirations of host communities, sustainability, broad distribution of benefits, respect for aboriginal land claims and community involvement.

Community-based frameworks tend to focus on the benefits to the host community, with the main issues being local control and ownership and the distribution of benefits. They apply principles of community development (Nozick, 1992) to tourism. Eco-tourism, on the other hand,



focuses on the importance of protecting the resources that act as the tourism attraction, in particularly the natural environment. The tourism industry itself has realized that it is reliant upon the carrying capacity of its resources, and that in the case of many wilderness and rural environments these are very limited.

Eco-tourism has been variously defined in the literature. "Ecotourism includes purposeful travel to natural areas; to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people" (The Ecotourism Society, 1990).

Low Impact Eco-Tourism is 'defined as supply-controlled specialty tourism niche within the leisure tourism market which serves to establish tour sales and tour prices commensurate with biological, sociological and logistical carrying capacities and includes the long-term management cost of natural and cultural resources which are the basis for the tourist attraction (Lillywhite, 1992). It is concerned:

explicitly with establishment of socially acceptable, locally managed, tourism business that stimulates economic development and natural resource management by the supplier country and communities living in the tour destination areas. LIET [Low Impact Eco-Tourism] puts control in hands of destination country and communities not demand side travel agents and tour operators. The price of the tourism experience is based on the long-term value of the cultural and natural resource (i.e. "high end"). ...This approach to tourism development maximizes the retail tour price and the revenues accrued to destination communities and minimizes the number of tourist and their environmental and cultural impact (Lillywhite and Lillywhite, 1992: 30).

While definitions vary there are a number of aspects that characterize eco-tourism.

- 1) It is supply driven. The carrying capacity of the resource is the primary concern and this is not exceeded. Whether the resource is a heritage site, a trail network, a sensitive third world culture or a rural community, the sustainability and resilience of that resource becomes the 'bottom line' of the planning process. Demand side needs are met by looking for new locations rather than exceeding the carrying capacity of individual sites. Eco-tourism strives to integrate conservation and development.

- 2) A high degree of participation and control is relegated to the host community. The community can determine the level of tourism it would like to sustain and when its carrying capacity is being exceeded. All sectors of the community should have a chance to participate in this decision-making process.
- 3) The host community must show a net benefit from its participation. The community should have total or partial ownership and profits should remain in the community. Local jobs should be created. If local skills do not match the necessary jobs, training programs should be instituted. Available jobs should include higher paying management jobs. As much as possible goods and services should be purchase locally.
- 4) Clients are purchasing a quality product that often includes an educational component. Behavior expectations of the client group can be high. Clients are often willing to sacrifice a certain amount of freedom for the 'privilege' of visiting an area. Pricing is commensurate with quality and a fair 'price' is paid to the community for use of the resource.

There are a number of trends in tourism that will assist communities in positioning themselves to develop in this way (Winterbottom, 1992; Hill, 1993).

- 1) International growth has made the industry more competitive. Severe lessons have been learned from situations where resources have been damaged and pressure is now for value conscious, sustainable developments. To be competitive the industry will have to conform to these standards and deliver a high quality product.
- 2) The rapid growth in Whoppies (wealthy, healthy, older people) has led to a demand for shorter vacations, and in particularly those that bring people back to small town experiences and quiet attractions. As well, there has been a major growth in individuals seeking brief natural and recreational holidays. Although there is increasing emphasis on short trips, Whoppies will also demand longer adventure related trips.
- 3) Nature and adventure travel have become one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry, exhibiting growth rates from 8 to 22% in regions of North America, Europe and the Pacific Rim. (Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, 1988; Lillywhite and Lillywhite, 1992).

- 4) Telecommunications and information technology have made access to and residency in small communities easier (Polese, 1987). It is now possible to 'telecommute' from many remote areas in British Columbia, making it easier for small communities to tap into the knowledge and resources they need to operate an effective tourism industry.

Tourism based on amenity or outdoor recreation is not automatically 'eco-tourism' or 'community-based tourism'. Coppack, Beesley, and Mitchell (1990) document how amenity-based tourism in Elora, Ontario has evolved. Originally the natural and historic amenities attracted artists who opened locally owned outlets and shops. This in turn attracted more urban residents and visitors driving rents upwards. Local artists moved out to more affordable spaces, and retail space was taken over by non-local 'chains' selling gifts and knickknacks with rural character but likely made off-shore.

Even eco-tourism may not be as benign as we would like to believe. The long term impacts of exposure of sensitive environments and cultures to even limited visitation have not yet been documented. Nor is it certain that low-impact tourism will not eventually lead to mass tourism as demand expands.

The principles encompassed in the community-based model and the eco-tourism model provide a framework that can be applied in the small town situation to drive locally-controlled tourism development with favourable results. When compared against the pressures outlined by Nozick (1992) and Weaver and Gunton (1982) earlier in the chapter, the models can be seen to ameliorate or avoid most of the difficulties. De-industrialization does not effect tourism activity. The environment is not degraded. There is a high degree of local decision-making. The social and cultural structures of the host community are respected. Community needs are a starting point for development. Jobs are created not destroyed. Adequate resource rents are received and the benefits of these accrue to the local community. Backward linkages (input goods and services) are purchase locally. Local entrepreneurship is encouraged. Because of local control, undo pressure is not put on government agencies to amend policy in ways that are detrimental to communities.

A development model stressing community-based and eco-tourism based on amenity can be applied to very small communities. Careful planning is required to ensure that the positive characteristics of the models remain in play as development proceeds and the community

changes. Structures that bring tourism planning into the hands of the community must be in place, as well as a strong will be the community to control its own destiny.

## **TRAILS AS AMENITY AND TOURIST ATTRACTION IN THE CARIBOO**

The case study focuses on one amenity -- outdoor recreation -- and specifically on the role of recreational trails as an amenity resource.

The history of trail development is closely linked to movements to preserve landscapes that reflected rural sentiment and an area's sense of place. Hiss (1990) reviews the work of Benton MacKaye, a colleague of Aldo Leopold's in the 1930s, who felt that landscape connectivity is essential to human well-being. MacKaye master-minded the Appalachian Trail, the first long-distance hiking route in the US and the forerunner of the Pacific Crest Trail, the Great Divide Trail, and the Nuxalt-Carrier Grease Trail.

In the last decade landscape connectivity has also been linked with the preservation of biodiversity (Hammond, 1991:205). Trails, like river corridors and greenways, can provide protection to threatened areas or to wildlife and play a role in connecting ecosystems across the landscape. Thus, trails as an amenity provide personal well-being, recreation experiences, contribute to environmental quality, and provide connectivity.

Trails also provide considerable economic benefit. These benefits include the short term benefits of trail development (job creation, goods and services purchases) and the longer term effects of increased users and responses to their demands (McLaren, 1986).

Trails are essentially transportation corridors and it is no surprise that hotels and services spring up along them. In Nepal, where the principle user groups of the trail network are changing from supply caravans to trekkers, traditional inns have adapted naturally to the new clientele. There are obvious opportunities for similar facilities -- lodges or resorts -- to be developed along long distance hiking routes in Canada.

Less obvious are the facilities that are necessary in a community that serves as a trailhead for a more concentrated trail network. The historic gold mining town of Ross in New Zealand shares some similarities with Wells. The opening to the Historic Goldfields Walk, a relatively short interpretive trail, has resulted in significant economic benefit for the community. Visitors stay

longer, overnight visits have increased, businesses enjoy more revenue and there has been considerable job creation in the interpretation and maintenance of the trail (Lucas, 1986).

A number of communities in British Columbia have developed trail networks that serve as amenity resources. Quesnel has developed a trail network that links all areas of the community with the central core as also connects to more remote recreational trails. While this network is not an attraction for tourism, it is an amenity that the community feels adds greatly to the city's 'livability'.

100 Mile House area, which has over 200 kilometer of trails that link the 99 Mile House Community Forest to the 108 Ranch area, has established itself as the first centre in Western Canada to cater to four-season, trail-based recreation. The network extends over a mix of Crown and private land, but the majority has permanent, registered right-of-ways. The trail network is controlled by a non-profit foundation with directors from the local community. Recent consulting studies estimated that improvements to the trail network that would raise it to the standards expected by an urban market, would cost \$1.2 million but would return \$1.2 million annually to local businesses and create 25 direct jobs and 11 indirect jobs (Nordic Group International, 1991; D.E. Park & Associates, 1993). Because of the local control of the group coordinating the development, and because of the local ownership of the benefiting retail, restaurant and accommodation sector, these benefits will actually accrue to the community. In addition the trail network and the recreational activities that go with it have made 100 Mile House an extremely attractive place to live. It has much stronger arts and cultural community than would be expected in a town of less than 2,000.

As the personal, social and economic benefits of trail systems as amenity resources, tourism attractions and landscape connectors have become realized, trail societies have blossomed -- the Rails to Trails Conservancy in United States, the National Trails Association in Canada, the US Department of the Interior, Parks Canada, BC Parks, the BC Ministry of Forests, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, and various regional organizations have all been involved in trail development and management. A National Trails Symposium is held yearly. In the Cariboo, two umbrella trails organizations have been formed. The Cariboo-Chilcotin Trails Society encompasses the area from Clinton north to Williams Lake and from Horsefly and Likely west to Bella Coola. The North Cariboo Trails Association is concerned with trails in the Quesnel, Wells-Barkerville and Nazko areas. These associations act as coordinating groups, bringing together

motorized and non-motorized, summer and winter, commercial and recreational users to discuss trail management issues.

An overall objective of the groups in the Cariboo is to provide linkages between areas to create a region-wide trail network with coordinated signage. The network would include several long distance routes such as the Telegraph Trail, the Barkerville - Likely trail, and the Nuxalt-Carrier Grease Trail that connect nodes of intensive activity such as the 100 Mile House and the Wells-Barkerville areas. The case study was conducted in the context of the ongoing development of this network.

### **THE POSSIBILITIES OF AMENITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT IN WELLS, BC**

The development model developed earlier in the chapter is useful as it can apply regardless of scale, even to a very small community such as Wells (population 200).

The case study community has a number of amenity resources -- its unique architecture that give the main street a gold rush town feel, the mountainous viewscape, the cultural tourism attractions such as its galleries, concerts and the summer arts school, and its extensive trail network that blends outdoor recreation with heritage.

The case study looks at the feasibility of a very small community developing its amenity resources as an economic development strategy. It focuses specifically on the extensive network of recreational trails that surround the community.

The case study was conducted in such a way as to lay the ground work for community-based development of the network. The steering committee represented local businesses, local residents and outside users and provided an organizational framework that could continue once the study was completed.

Subsequent to the study, a local trails association was formed. In conjunction with the North Cariboo Trails Association, an umbrella association of user groups, a five- year action plan has been completed prioritizing a number of suggestions from this report. The responsibility for the development and management of the trails will fall almost entirely to local community groups.

It is likely that the community will continue to have a strong leadership role in the development of the trail network. It will have less control of the development of associated facilities, such as hotels or resorts. The residents will face difficult choices if development brings visitation to near the carrying capacity of the community. A number of safeguards are in place that protect some of the communities amenity environments. A Development Permit By-law limits development in the heritage area to that sympathetic to existing architecture. Visual Quality Objectives have been set for the Crown Land surrounding the village (BC Ministry of Forests, 1981). However, the trail network is currently under more threat from logging activities than from over use.

Wells is a community that should have been a ghost town. When the mines closed in 1967, it had little to fall back on, except the new historic park, Barkerville. The community has been focused for many years on issues of decline. In an ongoing struggle to maintain services, the community has shown itself time and again to be capable of organized action. There is strong sense of community identity and a high awareness of the necessity to support local endeavors. It is hoped that its citizens will show the same determination, participation, and leadership when faced with growth issues.

The community-based tourism model holds great hope for small town development. A greater awareness is needed about the importance of amenity to economic development. Economic base theories have become like 'folk economics' that permeate city councils and economic development offices throughout British Columbia and result in self-defeating development strategies (Power, 1988). Communities need to develop their own resources at their own pace, while retaining the natural, social and cultural amenities that form the basis of their unique identity.

**PART TWO:**

**THE WELLS TRAILHEAD PROJECT CASE STUDY**



## **CHAPTER THREE: INTRODUCTION**

What makes a good 'trailhead' town? Moab, Utah, once just a sleepy Uranium mining town, now a thriving adventure travel destination, is an example. The town is in a spectacular natural setting, on the banks of the Colorado River adjacent to Canyonlands National Park. The area offers river rafting, hiking and mountain biking as its main attractions. The networks of mountain bike trails have become world famous.

The town caters to a wide range of visitors from luxury-seeking foreign travelers to budget-conscious students. There is a wide range of options for accommodation, from informal camping to high end hotels. Regardless of price preference, things are made easy for the visitor, their needs are anticipated. Shuttle services, trail guides, good information, equipment repairs and rentals are all available. There is a range of dining experiences, good grocery shopping and convenient hours of business.

Most of all, you feel welcome in this community.

### **THE WELLS TRAILHEAD CONCEPT**

Wells has a lot to offer as a 'trailhead' community. The small, compact town site is nestled among snowcapped peaks between a lake and a beautiful meadow. Everything is within walking distance. You can park your car on arrival in Wells, and proceed on foot, ski or bicycle. The interesting main street offers heritage and local arts. Accommodation ranges from bed and breakfast in a historic hotel to modern motels. Trails start within sight of the community. The area has superb snow for winter recreation.

Yet with all these assets, Wells is realizing few benefits from a trail-based visitation.

### **STUDY AREA OVERVIEW**

#### **THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

The Wells-Barkerville-Bowron Lakes area is located one hour east of Quesnel on Highway 26 (see Map 1). It is approximately 750 kilometres from Vancouver and 200 kilometres from either Williams Lake or Prince George.



The area is contained within the Bowron Valley Ecosection<sup>1</sup>, a moderate to high elevation upland<sup>2</sup>. Wells sits at an elevation of 1200 metres with Barkerville 100 metres higher and Bowron Lake at 900 metres.

Climatic processes are dominated by rising air masses resulting in a high amount of summer precipitation. The area is affected by boreal air masses, resulting in cool summers and cold winters.

The topography is moderately to steeply rolling and includes incised valleys and rounded summits with elevations from 900 to 2200 metres. Bedrock is varied and overlain with a mantle of glacial till. Drainage systems are well developed and small lakes and ponds occur in the broader valley bottoms. Flood plains and large wetlands are not extensive, but some occur in valley bottoms at lower elevations. Subsurface seepage flows in forested areas are moderately high due to the high amount of precipitation.

The principle biogeoclimatic units<sup>3</sup> of the Bowron Valley Ecosection are the ESSF (Engelmann Spruce - subalpine fir) and the SBS.(Sub-boreal Spruce) which make up over 90% along with areas of AT (alpine tundra) and very limited areas of ICH (Interior Cedar Hemlock).

Vegetation is characterized by extensive old spruce and subalpine fir forests, mature pine forests at lower elevations, and riparian spruce forests along streams in valley bottoms. Deciduous forests occur on areas of calcareous bedrock and in disturbed areas. Cedar and hemlock forests are uncommon but occur in the south part of the ecosection, along the Cariboo River, where it borders the Quesnel Highlands ecosection. Wetlands include both shrub and sedge types and resemble boreal wetlands. Alpine areas are luxuriant due to high precipitation. Grasslands are absent.

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<sup>1</sup> Ecosections are unique landscape types within which there is a high degree of similarity in the type of ecosystems found (forests, water bodies, wetlands, species composition) and which are noticeably different from adjacent ecosections. There are 105 ecosections in British Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> The following biophysical description is taken directly from the ecosection descriptions prepared by the Regional Protected Area Team for use during the Protected Area Strategy process.

<sup>3</sup> Biogeoclimatic zones are a system of classification by ecosystem and are an indicator of climate, soil type and vegetation. They are useful tools for managers making land-use decisions. A quick reference for the province is the map *Biogeoclimatic Zones of British Columbia*, 1992. Ministry of Forests, Victoria.

Habitats that contribute significantly to biological diversity of this ecosection include the old spruce and subalpine fir forests especially on seepage sites, pine forests on dry sandy soils, streamside riparian spruce forests, north slope alder thickets, and shrub and herbaceous wetlands. Some rare plant species occur.

High habitat values occur in all subzones (AT, ESSF, SBS and ICH) of the Bowron Valley Ecosection for grizzly bear, caribou, moose, black bear and marten. Critical winter caribou habitat includes mid to high elevation old spruce forests as well as lower elevation cedar/hemlock. Grizzly habitat includes alpine meadows, seepage sites, avalanche tracks and riparian areas. Moose use lower elevations for winter range and higher elevation as summer range. Wetlands and streamside riparian zones are used extensively.

This mountainous area supports a multitude of small streams and lakes. Bowron Lake is known for its Kokanee fishery. Rainbow Trout and Dolly Varden are the main sport species. Kokanee and Lake Trout are found sporadically. Sockeye and Chinook inhabit the Willow and Bowron Rivers. The Cottonwood and its tributaries support spawning habitat for Chinook Salmon.

#### THE SETTING/HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The study area is within the ethnohistoric area of the Carrier Indians who occupied the upper Fraser basin. Fish, both salmon and fresh water species, were a staple food along with berries, roots, caribou, bear, beaver, marmot and rabbits<sup>4</sup>. Numerous archaeological sites have been found on Bowron and Spectacle Lakes and it is believed that the band inhabiting that area was destroyed by smallpox or relocated due to pressure from the influx of gold miners<sup>5</sup>.

It is unknown if native groups inhabiting the lower elevations of the area had contact with the early Hudson's Bay outposts at Ft. George and Ft. MacLeod. However, after the discovery of

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<sup>4</sup> Rousseau, M.K., Merchant, P.S., & M. Will. *Results of the 1992 Archaeological Impact Assessment Study Conducted for West Fraser Mills Limited's Timber Harvesting Blocks ... Within the Quesnel Barkerville Corridor near Wells, BC*. West Fraser Mills, Quesnel, BC, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Bussey, Jean & Diana Alexander. *Archaeological Assessment of the Cariboo Forest Region*. Archaeological Branch, Victoria, BC, 1992, pg. 43.

gold on the Fraser River in 1858, the area was quickly populated by hundreds of gold seekers. Keithley Creek was staked in 1859 and during the winter of 1860, Yanks Peak was crossed and Antler Creek staked. By 1861, the town of Richfield had been erected on the banks of Williams Creek and the late summer of 1862 saw Barkerville emerge as the main town in the area. An estimated 10,000 persons resided in the area by 1864<sup>6</sup>.

With the completion of the Cariboo Waggon Road in 1865, from New Westminster to Barkerville, the area took on a more permanent aura. More women and families moved to the area and the cultural activities that accompany a more settled life began to thrive. Barkerville boasted a library, a theatre, a school, a brass band, a Church Institute where classes in Greek and the Classics were taught, as well as the obligatory saloons and houses of ill-repute.

By 1870, however, the easily reached deposits were exhausted and people were already moving on to other more promising strikes. Capital was needed to develop the remaining deposits. The next 60 years saw the area's fortunes follow the boom and bust cycle of resource extraction.

By the late 1920's interest in discovering the lode deposits in the area was increasing. New milling processes using cyanide looked promising for treating the ore. Fred Wells proved the deposits in Cow Mountain and went into production in 1933. The town of Wells was built by the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mining Company to house workers for the new mine. Shortly afterward, the Newmont Mining Company opened a mine in Island Mountain directly across Jack of Clubs Lake. The new town of Wells capped a small knoll between the two mines. Placer mining continued in the area with extensive hydraulic mining occurring in Lowhee Gulch. Barkerville and Wells remained the commercial centres of the Cariboo until eclipsed by Quesnel and Williams Lake after World War II.

During W.W.II, gold mining was classified as a non-essential industry. After the war, production was subject to rising costs while the price of gold was pegged at \$35 an ounce. The mines slowly declined with the last closure in 1967. The population of the area had dwindled steadily.

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<sup>6</sup> Wright, Richard, 1984. *Discover Barkerville -- A Gold Rush Adventure*, (2nd ed.) Vancouver: Special Interest Publications.

In 1958, the provincial government had purchased Barkerville and started a major restoration project. By the early 1970's, Barkerville was already attracting over 100,000 visitors<sup>7</sup>. The price of gold and government tax credit systems have resulted in several rushes of mining activity during which the population of the area has increased and the economy thrived. These have tended to be short lived and have produced little of lasting benefit for the area. Slowly the area's economy has switched to tourism which is currently the major employer in the area.

Today, the area is noted for its scenic and cultural attractions. Wells is nestled in a picturesque valley bordered on one side by Jack of Clubs Lake and the other by a large meadow/wetland complex. Its major attractions are its heritage main street, the museum, art galleries and shops, and Island Mountain Arts' summer school. In winter, the ample snowfall attracts skiers and snowmobilers.

Barkerville, currently managed by the Provincial government, hosts a living history program, live theatre and a variety of shopping experiences. It is the main attraction in the area with a visitation of close to 90,000<sup>8</sup> visitors annually.

Bowron Lakes Provincial Park attracts an international clientele for a wilderness canoe trip of several days. The variety of habitat types experienced on the trip produce excellent wildlife viewing opportunities.

These attractions form the basic tourism product of the area. A trail network will add components to this product that will expand its appeal among the existing markets and develop new markets for the area.

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<sup>7</sup> Figures jump from 78, 700 in 1968 to 117,200 in 1969 and climb to an 'estimated' 217,000 in 1975. Some doubt has been cast on these figures due to the variety of techniques that were used to collect them. However, it seems clear that visitation in the early 1970's surpassed current visitation and probably was consistently over 100,000 visitors annually.

<sup>8</sup> Current statistics count paid visitors. Estimates from the traffic counter are higher.

Nordic Group International has developed a matrix to evaluate cross-country ski areas<sup>14</sup>. It involves assigning points according to criteria in fourteen different categories. When this matrix is applied to Wells, we find that Wells is at the high end of the below average category with an overall rating of 4.6 (see Figure 5.1). Scores from 1 - 4 are below average, 5 - 8 are average, and 9 - 10 are above average.

**FIGURE 5.1 SKI TRAIL EVALUATION MATRIX**

CATEGORY	WELLS	BC AVERAGE
Access	2	6.7
Aesthetics	8	7.3
Length of Season	9	7.1
Kilometres of Trail	6	6.3
Ski Terrain	6	6.7
Quality of Track	3	5.9
Ski Facilities	2	6.3
Services	4	6.1
Programs	1	5.8
Accommodation On-site	5	6.4
Accommodation Off-site	n/a	5.2
Other Winter Recreation Opportunities	6	5.4
Other Tourism Attractions	7	5.5
Operation	2	6.2
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.2</b>

This sort of analysis is very helpful in determining how the Wells trail system compares to others around the province, identifying the strengths on which to build and the weaknesses that need addressing. It can be misleading however. Wells scored very high because of its exceptionally long winter season and its proximity to Barkerville and Bowron Lake, and these factors may not have the same propensity to draw users as do quality and quantity of track.

<sup>14</sup> Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

Unfortunately, this sort of matrix was not available for the other uses. This one is included by way of example of the type of analysis that should be conducted on the trail system in the future.

#### **THE HIKING NETWORK**

(See Map 3)

The hiking trails of the area have developed around a number of old pack trails, mining roads and ditches. As would be expected, most of these historic routes radiate from Barkerville. Currently, the trailheads for the popular hiking trails are not in Wells.

The trail system encompasses a wide variety of attractions - alpine meadows and lakes, wetland environments, vistas including distant views of Mt. Robson and Mr. Sir Alexander, geological features, fishing, wildlife viewing, gold panning, historic cabins and mine sites and remains of the Chinese diggings. Currently, appreciation of the historic aspects of the trails is not optimal, as information on the routes is not readily available to the casual visitor.

Substantial volunteer effort on the part of Jean Speare and Heather Grady in conjunction with the Ministry of Forests has resulted in the signing of some of the trail network in the vicinity of Mt. Agnes. Ministry of Forests has also supplied trail and trailhead signage for the Mt. Murray hiking trails. Many other routes are unsigned and unflagged.

The condition of the commonly used trails is generally good. Problems associated with overuse, such as braiding, shortcuts, and mud holes, are not prevalent. Washouts due to improper drainage are becoming problematic on some routes.

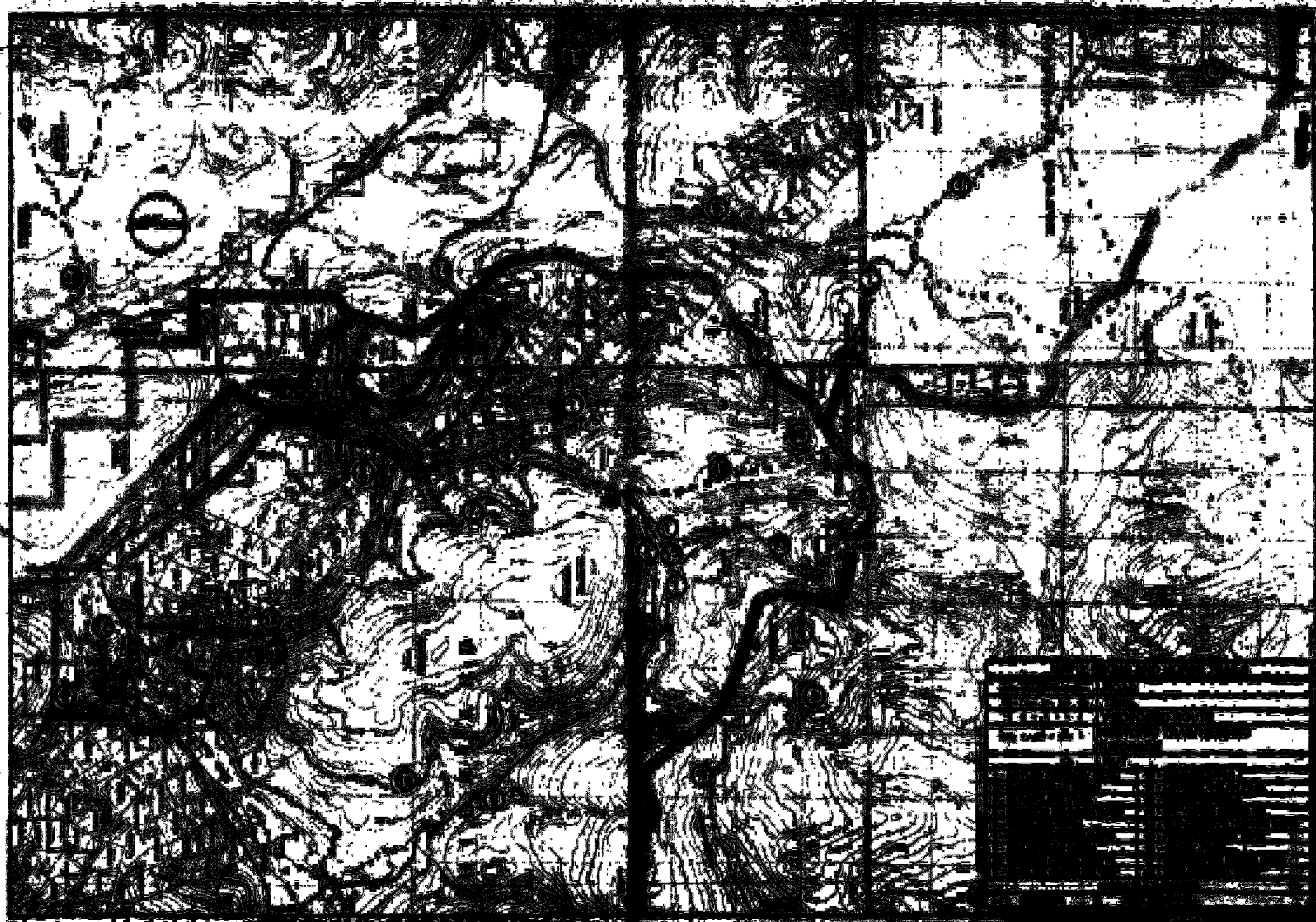
In general, the existing trails provide an excellent basis from which to build a comprehensive network of provincial importance. Currently, lack of a proper map or guidebook and lack of signage makes the network inaccessible to many.

#### **MOUNTAIN BIKE LOOPS**

(See Map 4)

Mining and logging roads in the area provide excellent mountain biking opportunities. A number of day tours start and finish in Wells. These provide a variety of attractions including





gold panning, fishing, swimming, scenic vistas, wildlife viewing and heritage sites. None of these routes are marked with mountain bikers in mind.

Because mountain bikes can cause damage to sensitive alpine meadows, their use on the high elevation trails of the area is not recommended in this study. The existing road network provides riding of beginner to intermediate level. There are a few opportunities for 'single track' of more difficulty (e.g. Lowhee Gulch). The Cornish Mountain system will be usable by mountain bikers in summer and more difficult routes can be created in this area.

Opportunities exist for more extensive multi-day cycling trips over Yanks Peaks.

#### **SNOWMOBILE TRAILS**

(See Map 5)

Snowmobilers range further afield than non-motorized travellers. For the most part they follow routes established through other uses. The area trails are attractive as they give access to open alpine areas with good vistas, and have excellent early and late snow conditions. Other than the Mt. Agnes and Bald Mountain routes, trails are generally not marked.

More and more visiting snowmobilers have been requesting groomed trails. Local volunteers with inadequate equipment have had difficulty complying with these requests.

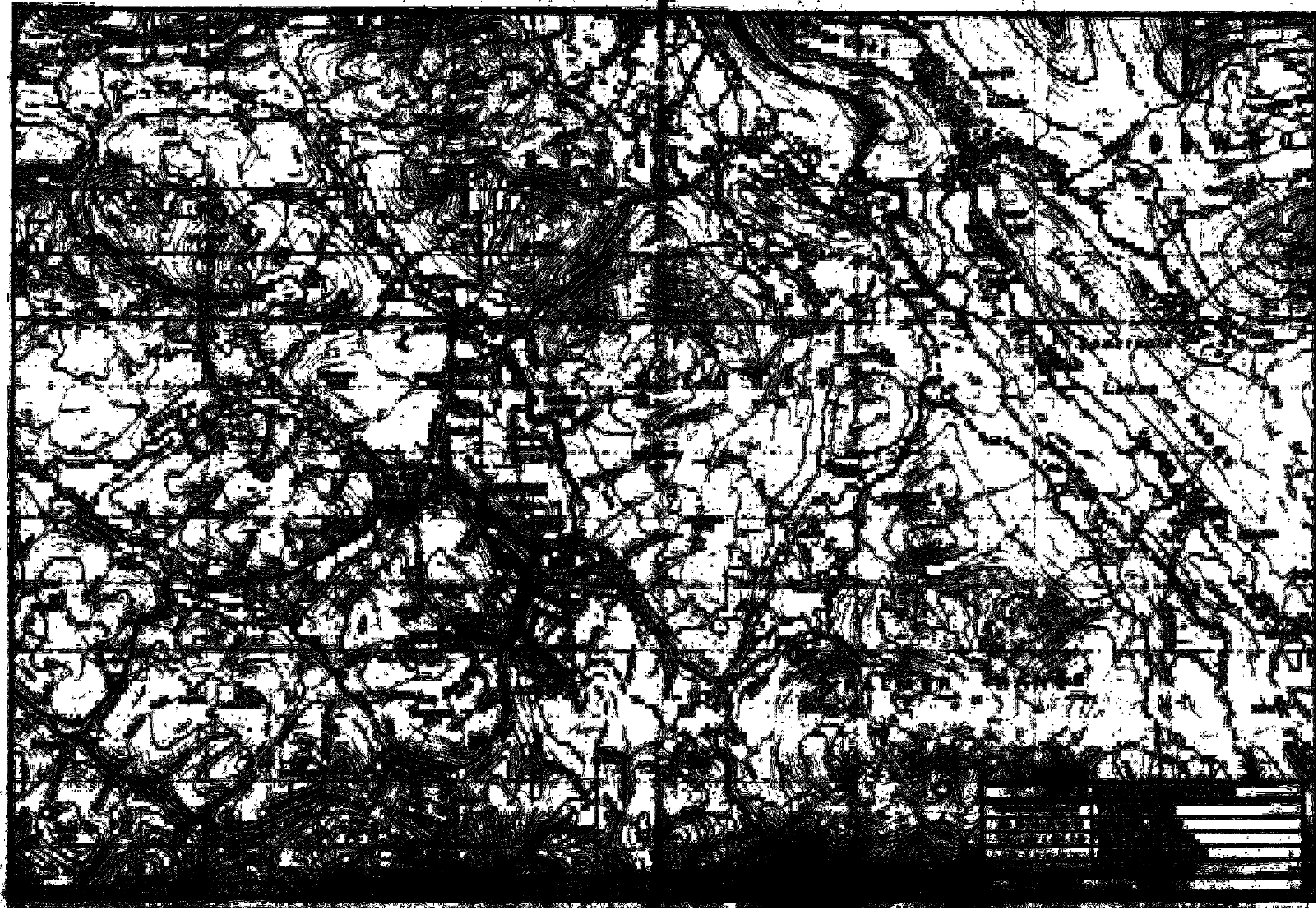
Snowmobilers interviewed in Quesnel expressed a preference for the wide-open spaces found in the Chilcotin area, but felt Wells was an important area because of the early and late snow conditions and the events held there.

#### **HORSE TRAILS**

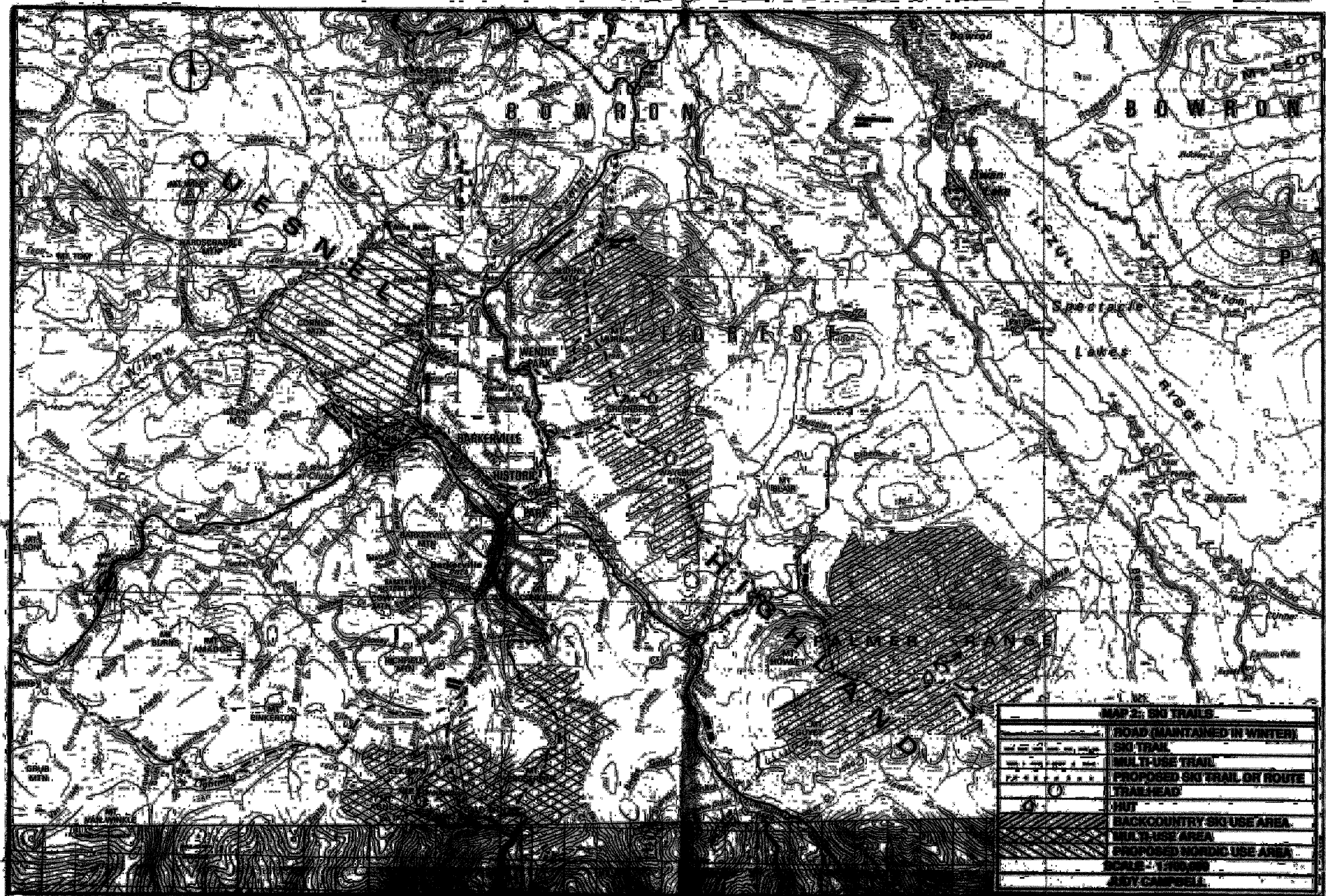
(See Maps 3)

Most of the existing hiking trails are suitable for and receive some use by horses. The exception to this is the portion of the historic ditchlines. The burms of these ditchlines can be extremely fragile and severe disturbance can lead to erosion and wash-outs. At this point, use level is not such that there is direct conflict between horses and hikers.

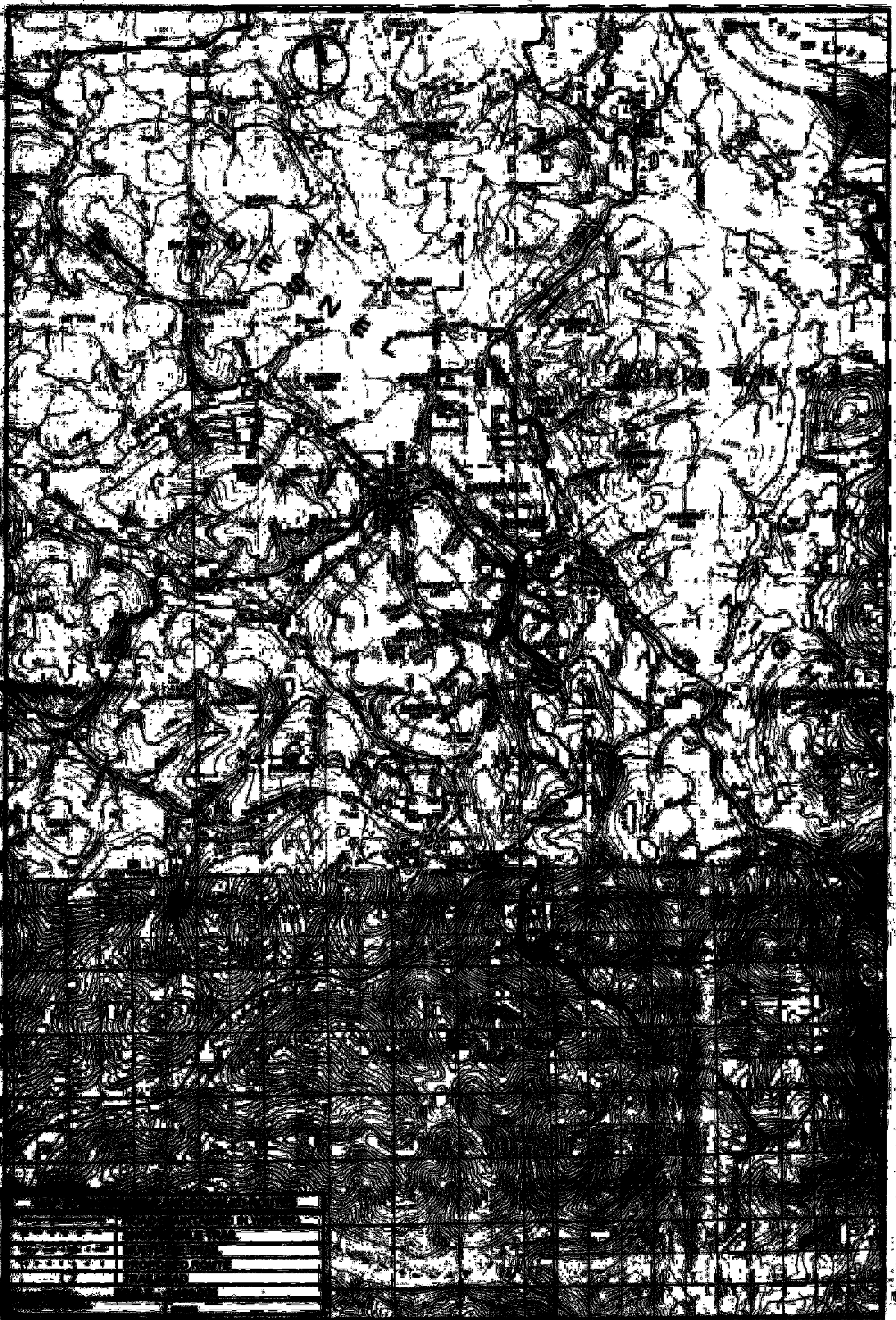












## **DOG SLED TRAILS**

No trails in the area are designated for dog sledding, although interest in this sport is increasing. Dog sledders need a packed trail and can use any of the snowmobile trails in the area. Unmaintained roads are also suitable if snow is compacted. Dog sleds can also use ski trails if groomed for skating (no tracks) and are hard packed. For special events, other routes may be designated as well.

## **OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE**

The use of Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs), including All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and trail bikes has been increasing. No areas or trails are designated for their recreational use.

Unfortunately, some of the wet alpine areas, in particularly in the area of Mt. Agnes, are beginning to show negative impacts from their use.

## **BRIDGES**

The trail networks include several significant bridges, some in need of repair. Of particular note are:

- Old Cariboo Hudson Road Bridge at Barkerville - This bridge is too narrow to accommodate a groomer making it impossible to groom the Proserpine - Bald Mountain route.
- Baker St. Bridge - The railings on this bridge also make it too narrow to accommodate a larger groomer.
- Willow River Bridge at Mickeyville - The road bridge was washed out in the spring of 1993 and to date there is only a foot bridge at this location.
- Motley Crew Bridge on the Meadows - This bridge has also been damaged by spring runoff and needs replacing or repair.

## **ACCESS**

Overall, access to the trail network is very poor. Most trailheads are not signed and many trails are not marked. There is no gateway signage or trail maps in a central location. There is no map or guidebook, and most of the trails are not marked on the topographic maps. Most visitors to the network depend on local knowledge to access the network or they come originally with someone who knows the area.

## TRAIL CLASSIFICATION AND STANDARDS

Currently, no system of classification other than by type of use has been applied to the trail system in the Wells Barkerville area. The classification used by Nordic Group International in their South Cariboo Study<sup>15</sup> is geared to high use areas. Class I Trails receive over 150 users per day, Class II trails receive 50 to 150 users per day, and Class III receive under 50 users per day. This classification system is not useful in the Wells area, where all the trails are Class III.

More useful is the system used by the Ministry of Parks, see Figure 5.1. Although trails have not been classified individually as part of this study, most trails in the area would be Type III, IV or V.

No uniform standards have been applied to trail maintenance. A limited number of trails are under the management of the Ministry of Forests and are maintained to a minimum standard for safety and enjoyment. The other trails in the area are either user maintained or not maintained. In the future, it will be useful to apply a classification system to the network that is helpful for management and planning.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher assigned 'suitable uses' for each trail (see Figure 5.2). The criteria for 'suitable' were not rigorous. It was a subjective notation by the researcher based on her intimate personal knowledge of each trail. A specific use was deemed suitable if the trail was physically capable of sustaining that use, if the trail was not dedicated solely to an alternative use, and if there were no current user conflicts involving that use.

There are a number of trails in the area, for example, One Mile Road, that are currently used by both snowmobilers and skiers. There is informal recognition by both local user groups of the other's right to be there. It needs to be recognized by community managers that while this sort of agreement can work at the local level, it does not create a marketable product for attracting outside users. Skiers, in particular, wish to be separated from motorized recreation.

As use of the trail network increases, user conflicts will develop. It is assumed that much additional work and considerable public input will be needed to determine where user

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<sup>15</sup> Nordic Group International. *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study*. Cariboo Tourist Association and Cariboo-Chilcotin Economic Futures Committee, Williams Lake, BC: 1991.

# FIGURE 2.1. COUNTRY OF PARKS TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Table 2.1. Country of Parks Trail Classification System

[REDACTED]

## Primary criteria

Highest standard \_\_\_\_\_ lowest standard or route only

Number of \_\_\_\_\_ least number of \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest \_\_\_\_\_ highest \_\_\_\_\_  
environmental impact

Highest \_\_\_\_\_ lowest \_\_\_\_\_

Highest maintenance \_\_\_\_\_ lowest maintenance

## Trail type system

[REDACTED]

Trail					
Route					
Waypoint					
Trail					
Marker					
Location					
Comprehensive					
Marker Post					



compatibility will indicate some uses to be unsuitable. In some areas it will be wise to take a proactive approach and institute zoning systems to separate incompatible uses such as skiing and snowmobiling. There has been a precedent set for this type of management in the Mt. Agnes area. Issues surrounding user compatibility are discussed further in Chapter Six.

## **RESULTS OF THE TRAIL ANALYSIS**

The inventory identified 49 trails, roads and ditchlines that receive recreational use (see Figure 5.3). Using the criteria discussed at the beginning of this chapter a number of projects were identified that would be the most effective enhancements to the trail network for economic development reasons. These are discussed in detail below.

### **SHORT TERM TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

The implicit strategy for trail development will be to work outwards from the community. Priority is given to trails that start and finish in Wells. For visitors to use the services in the community they must be easily accessible from the trailhead. The short term (one to three years) project priorities should be the following:

- 1) to provide three to five kilometres of good quality, signed and consistently groomed cross-country ski trail.
- 2) to repair and consistently groom the snowmobile trail to Mt. Agnes.
- 3) to provide a signed hiking trail that links Wells, Barkerville and the government campsites at Barkerville.
- 4) to design and implement a system of signage for the entire trail network, including gateway signage.
- 5) to construct two trailheads in Wells -- one for skiers, one for snowmobilers.

The community's ability to achieve these projects depends on two factors:

- 1) the purchase or availability of a suitable grooming machine.
- 2) the funding of staff to do trail grooming.

### ***Ski Trails***

In the short term it is necessary to establish a clear, consistent product that can be marketed. The trails should be easy and accessible to a wide variety of skill levels, while still providing

a product that has high appeal due to scenic and natural values. Even without more challenging terrain, the early and consistent snowpack will attract a regional audience.

A four kilometre figure-eight loop can be established on the meadow with no slashing and using existing bridges. Bridges will need to be improved to accommodate a larger groomer. Sections of the One Mile Road can also be groomed, but priority should be given to the sections of the Meadow Trails that can be maintained easily and inexpensively.

In previous years a short track has been set in the school yard for training. Local skiers have indicated that the old ball diamond area would be more suitable. Due to the placement of existing streetlights and the ambient lighting of the nearby residences, little additional lighting will be needed. Lights and cable that belong to the original Wells Ski Club are still at the ski hill and could be salvaged for community use.

### ***Snowmobile Trail***

The trail to Mt. Agnes, although a popular route, becomes almost impassable if not groomed on a regular basis. Feedback from snowmobile groups indicates that grooming this route would be a priority for them. Trail repairs will be completed on the route in the Fall of 1993 by the Ministry of Forests and the Quesnel Snowmobile Club. Given good equipment and labour, the community will be able to maintain this route on a regular basis.

### ***Hiking Trail***

The Wells-Barkerville area abounds with excellent hiking trails. Most require an investment of several hours to complete. In the short term, for Wells to begin to be perceived as a trailhead for hiking, loop trails need to be developed. These loop trails should be short, easy and should link to the larger system at several places. This will round out the overall product to include a wider variety of trails. It will also create a certain logic to the trail system with the short, easy trails within the vicinity of the town site and the longer backcountry and alpine trails further away.

The creation of a set of easy to intermediate hiking loops in the vicinity of the accommodation and eating facilities will add an activity for summer overnights and contribute to the overall image of the community as an exciting place to stay. The success of

the existing Williams Creek Nature Trail with both visitors and local residents has established that these trails will receive increasing use.

Linking Wells and Barkerville by hiking trail will provide a variety of opportunities for natural and historic interpretation. It may encourage visitors in the campgrounds to use services in Wells. Family members could hike to Wells after dinner for coffee and dessert and be picked by other family members or a Wells-based shuttle service.

Friends of Barkerville have provided two short trails in the vicinity of Barkerville - the Barkerview Trail and the Lowhee Campsite Trail. Only short sections of new trail are necessary to link these trails to Barkerville and Wells via all of the three campsites. The trail would connect the existing Williams Creek Trail to One Mile Road, then use two old mining roads along the north edge of the meadows to reach Forest Rose Campsite. This section would need .5 kilometre of new trail construction, some brushing and one bridge. From Forest Rose the trail would cross Highway 26 and pick up the trail connecting Lowhee Campsite to Government Hill campsite near the Barkerville Cemetery. The route traverses several forest types, old mining areas and natural wetlands and riparian zones.

By including the Lowhee Gulch route, a loop is created that includes the historical mining areas of Stouts Gulch and the Lowhee Pit. The route provides excellent opportunities for interpretation of natural and cultural themes and can become an attraction in its own right.

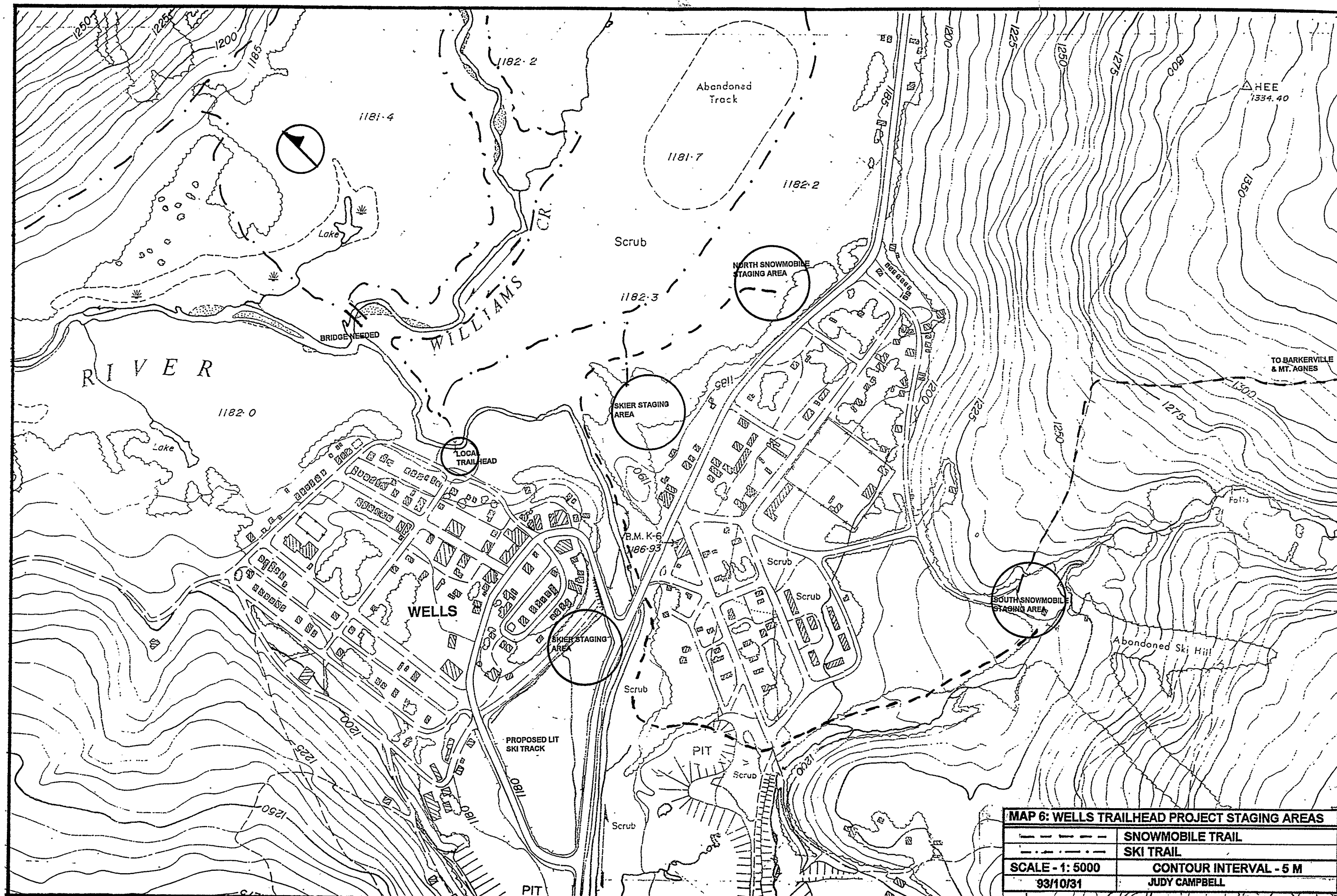
### ***Signage Program***

One aspect that distinguishes a professional trail system is signage. It should be clear and informative. Gateway signage, at the area by Jack of Clubs Lake where other Wells signage is located, should introduce the basics of the trail system and introduce the logo that will distinguish all trailhead and trail signage.

By the end of the first three years of operation all area trails, including the network of historic trails and ditches surrounding Barkerville should have trailhead and directional signage.

### ***Trailhead Staging Areas (See Map 6)***

It is important to provide some basic trailhead facilities in the form of a staging area for winter users. The staging areas should consist of a number of elements:



MAP 6: WELLS TRAILHEAD PROJECT STAGING AREAS	
	SNOWMOBILE TRAIL
	SKI TRAIL
SCALE - 1: 5000	CONTOUR INTERVAL - 5 M
93/10/31	JUDY CAMPBELL

- washrooms,
- an organized, efficient and safe parking area,
- an all-weather kiosk with trail information,
- a warming/waxing hut with barrel heater and firewood supplied.

Such facilities not only fill basic needs of the users, but they leave visitors with the impression that some thought has gone into considering and providing for their needs. This does much to overcome the attitude that tourist towns are out to exploit their visitors and to encourage visitors more willing to spend money locally. The idea is to make it easy for trail users.

Separate areas should be developed for skiers and snowmobilers. Because of high noise levels, the snowmobile staging area needs to be away from residential areas. An obvious location to consider is the base of the old ski hill at the end of Ski Hill Road. There is already an informal parking area and the Mt. Agnes trailhead is immediately accessible. This location is somewhat at risk from high peak flows from Lowhee Gulch. Development would need to include some preventative measures such as a berm along the creek. Brushing may be necessary to increase the size of the parking area.

An additional location would be on Parcel X, District Lot 131 (helipad) or Parcel Y, DL 131. These locations give access to the marsh area and trails leading north.

A problem that has faced snowmobilers, both local and visitors, is crossing the highway. Currently local snowmobilers may be able to get a permit, but visitors must use trailers for their machines. A minimal amount of work would allow snowmobiles to cross under the highway bridge along the edge of the creek. The bridge area is accessible via crown lands from either staging area. Cribbing would allow a narrow one way trail even if the creek were open. The area would have to be used cautiously and strict safety regulations observed. However, it would provide an inexpensive solution to the problem and should be considered if demand is high enough.

A staging area for skiers could be located in a number of areas:

- part of the existing school yard with access to the trails via the Baker St. bridge,
- reclaimed mine tailings area north west of Pooley St. with access to the trails at the Highway Bridge,

- reclaimed mine tailings area south east of Pooley St. (old ball diamond) with access to trails at the Highway bridge,
- crown lots Block 6, lots 13 -22.

The latter area has good access from the highway and provides easiest access to the trail system.

#### **MEDIUM TERM TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

Medium term (three to five years) projects would be:

- 1) complete minor improvements to and sign mountain bike trails.
- 2) develop an extensive network of cross-country ski trails on Cornish Mountain.
- 3) develop a visitor centre for the trail network, potentially the Wells Community Hall.

#### ***Cornish Mountain Trails***

This south facing, forested slope, adjacent and connected to the Meadow Trails, will allow the development of intermediate and expert terrain with a variety of interconnected loops. The 'outrigger' of this system would be a 10 km loop linking One Mile Road with the Coronado Mine Road via Martins Creek. This trail system would be able to host all events and training camps.

#### ***Wells Community Hall***

The building is one of a very few of its kind in the province. The design, materials and workmanship are of the highest quality. This is the only facility in the community able to host events of 150 people or more. It could provide a number of functions:

- house the offices of the Trail Development Corporation,
- main source of detailed trail information and displays,
- voluntary registration system,
- sale of trail passes,
- headquarters of volunteer trail hosts,
- heated washrooms, showers and changing rooms with lockers,
- multi-purpose rooms for meetings and clinics,
- indoor sporting events (volleyball, basketball, badminton),
- banquet and dance facilities.

Without the restoration of the Community Hall or the construction of a similar facility, the ability of the community to host major events based on the trail system will be severely limited.

#### **LONG TERM TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

Once trail facilities are developed close to the central core, the focus can change to developing trails further afield. Priorities may change over the years, but projects might include adding a longer ski loop via Wendle Lake to the Cornish Mountain Loop, completing a mountain bike/snowmobile link along the south side of Jack of Clubs Lake to the Jack of Club Creek road, or slashing the Lowhee Ditch for hiking.

#### **SUMMARY**

The priorities identified through the inventory and trail analysis are not meant to be static. Circumstances may allow projects of lesser priority to occur earlier or local priorities may change. New projects may be proposed. The criteria used to evaluate these priorities should be kept in mind as these will be helpful in determining how the project will affect the community. As marketing research becomes available it should also be incorporated into the decision-making process.

A careful analysis of the product has revealed that the trail network can physically support a wide variety of winter and summer activities, and has recommended a number of improvements to the system that can be implemented immediately. The next chapter will examine a number of marketing considerations that should form the next part of the trail planning process.

**FIGURE 5.3 SUMMARY OF CURRENT TRAIL INVENTORY - GOLDFIELDS TRAIL NETWORK**

TRAIL	CURRENT CONDITION	TRAILHEAD LOCATION	SUITABLE USES <sup>17</sup>					
			HIKE	HORSE	BIKE	SKI	SNMB	DOGS
Antler Creek Rd. (Yanks Peak Conn.)	G	B or O <sup>18</sup>	•	•	•	•	•	•
Antler/Keithley Creek Trail (Richfield - Bald Mt.)	UD <sup>19</sup>	B <sup>20</sup>	•					
Antler/Keithley Trail (Bald Mt. - Racetrack Flats)	UD	B	•	•				
Antler/Keithley Trail (Racetrack Flats - Aster Ck.)	M <sup>21</sup>	B	•	•		•	•	
Antler/Keithley Creek Trail Aster-Creek -Yanks Peak	UD	B	•					
Bald Mt. Ski Trail	G <sup>22</sup>	B	•	•		•		•
Barkerville Ditch	M	B	•					
Black Lake Trail	M	B	•	•		•		
Cariboo Waggon Road	G	B	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cataline Trail (C.W.R. - Groundhog Lake)	M	B	•	•		•		
Cataline Trail (Groundhog Lk. - Bald Mt.)	G	B	•	•				
Cataline Trail (Bald Mt. - Barkerville)	G	B	•	•		•	•	•
Cornish Lake Ski Loop	UD	W <sup>23</sup>				•		
Cornish Lake Trail	M	W	•	•		•		
Cornish Mt. Loops	UD	W						
Coronado Mine Rd.	G	W	•	•	•	•	•	•

<sup>17</sup> Suitable uses of trail in current condition .

<sup>18</sup> Remote Trailhead not at either Wells or Barkerville.

<sup>19</sup> Undeveloped. Route may or may not be known to be passable.

<sup>20</sup> Barkerville.

<sup>21</sup> Moderate condition - Needs some slashing or repair, may be difficult sections.

<sup>22</sup> Good Condition. Very little if any work is needed on trail. Little difficulty will be experienced.

<sup>23</sup> Wells.



FIGURE 5.3 (CON'T) SUMMARY OF CURRENT TRAIL INVENTORY

TRAIL	CURRENT CONDITION	TRAILHEAD LOCATION	SUITABLE USES <sup>24</sup>					
			HIKE	HORSE	BIKE	SKI	SNMB	DOGS
Goldfields Ditch (Stout's Gulch - C. W. Rd.)	G	W or B	•	•	•		•	•
Goldfields Ditch (C.W.R. - Cooper's Cabin)	G	B	•	•	•	•		
Goldfields Ditch (Cooper's Cabin - Ella Lake)	p <sup>25</sup>	B	•					
Grouse Creek Route	M	B	•	•		•	•	
Jack of Clubs Creek Rd.	M	W	•		•		•	•
Jubilee Trail	G	O	•	•		•		
Lowhee Ditch (Ella Lake to Wells)	Yanks Peak Connector (Antler Creek Road)							
Lowhee Ditch (Wells - Lowhee Pit)		B or W	•					
Lowhee Gulch	G	B or W	•	•	•	•		
Meadow Trails	G	W				•		
Martins Creek Loop	UD	W				•		
Mickeyville Rd.	G	W	•	•	•	•	•	•
Moncton Bowl/Mt. Tinsdale Trail	M	O	•			•		
Mt. Agnes Rd.	G	B	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mt. Murray/Waverly Ski Trail	G	O	•	•		•		

<sup>24</sup> Suitable uses of trail in current condition.

<sup>25</sup> Poor Condition. Considerable work necessary. Many difficult stretches.

FIGURE 5.3 (CON'T) SUMMARY OF CURRENT TRAIL INVENTORY

TRAIL	CURRENT CONDITION	TRAILHEAD LOCATION	SUITABLE USES <sup>26</sup>					
			HIKE	HORSE	BIKE	SKI	SNMB	DOGS
Old Cariboo Hudson Road (Barkerville - Devil's Eyebrow)	G	B	•	•	•	•	•	•
Old Cariboo Hudson Road Km 14.5, 3100 Rd. - Yanks Peak	G	B or O	•	•	•	•	•	•
One Mile Rd.	G	W	•	•	•	•	•	•
Powderhouse Trail	G	B	•	•				
Proserpine Mt. Rd. (see Cataline Trail)	G	B	•	•		•	•	•
Slough Creek Rd.	G	W	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sugar Creek Rd.	M	W	•	•	•	•	•	•
Swift River - Mt. Agnes	UD	O					•	
Two Sisters Road	G	O	•	•	•	•	•	•
Two Sisters Ski Trail	UD	W	•	•		•		
Wells-Barkerville Connector (Wells - Stout's Gulch)	M	W		•			•	•
Wells Barkerville Connector (Stout's Gulch Rd.- Barkerville)	G	W	•	•	•		•	•
Wendle Lake Ski Loop	UD	W				•		
Williams Creek Trail (Existing Section)	G	W	•	•	•	•		
Williams Creek Trail (One Mile Link)	UD	W	•			•		
Williams Creek Trail One Mile - Forest Rose	M	W	•	•		•		
Williams Creek Trail (Forest Rose - B'ville)	M	W or B	•	•		•		
Yellowhawk Trail	G	O	•	•		•		

<sup>26</sup> Suitable uses of trail in current condition .

## CHAPTER SIX: MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

Marketing will play an essential role in the development of the trail network. Devising a marketing strategy for the trail network is a project that the community needs to undertake in the near future. Before an effective marketing program can be designed, the community should consider a number of issues.

### FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

#### PRODUCT/MARKET MATCHING

Given the product that is currently found in the Wells--Barkerville area, and the product which the area hopes to achieve in the short term, which markets best match that product? Should the community be marketing to the Japanese, to the Pacific Northwest, or should it concentrate on developing a strong image in the regional market? Although the area may have long-term potential to attract remote markets, the product at this time is too underdeveloped to attract more than a regional audience. As the product develops it will be important to have good information on current and potential markets and match these to the current level of development reached by the community. Small communities such as Wells should be guided by the initiatives of the Regional Tourism organizations and the BC Ministry of Tourism who have the resources to conduct thorough market analyses.

Little data is available on the current users of the trail network. Nordic Group International in *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study* compiled user profiles of trail users in North America: cross-country skiers, hikers/backpackers, cyclists, and snowmobilers. More locally, the demographics of the Cariboo Ski Touring Club conform to the predictions of the Nordic Group profile. The club's 305 members are distributed relatively evenly between the sexes, with the main age groups being 36-40 and 41-45. Average family income of \$75,000 is well above the Canadian average of \$39, 716. Three general groups are represented:

- i) 'Parents who value family participation in outdoor recreation'
- ii) 'Younger, middle-aged adults interested in group competition and recreation'
- iii) 'Mature and retired people who have long been active Nordic skiers'<sup>27</sup>.

Although many members are geared towards track skiing, it is estimated that 75% of the club participate in backcountry skiing at least once a year.

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<sup>27</sup> Cariboo Ski Touring Club. *Economic Opportunities for Cross-Country Skiing*. North Cariboo Community Futures, Quesnel, BC: 1993.

Unfortunately, similar information is not available for other user groups either locally or regionally.

Barkerville has collected fairly detailed information on their summer visitation, but the relationship between that group and trail users is unknown.

Good information on current and potential users is essential to designing facilities to fit target markets and designing marketing tools and strategies. It is imperative that the community begin to collect in a systematic way data to inform its tourism development decision-making.

#### **YIELD VERSUS IMPACT**

Another consideration when developing a marketing strategy is an analysis of yield by user group. If the community could concentrate on attracting only one type of user, which type would give the most return to the community and with the least impact? What is the average daily spending of each type of user? Do snowmobilers spend more than skiers? Do mountain bikers spend more than hikers? Prices for services such as accommodation and food can vary greatly depending on geographical area, so the absolute values of visitor expenditures from outside the region will not be applicable. They may be used to show what one group spends relative to other groups. It is a feasible community project to devise a method to track current spending by user groups and derive figures specific to the community.

What impacts do specific user groups have on the community and the resource? These impacts need to be balanced against the daily spending figures. At what point does ongoing damage to the environment or unacceptable changes to quality of life in the community outweigh economic gain? What are the carrying capacities of the trail network and of the community? These are issues that the community must discuss and incorporate into the development plans and the marketing strategy.

What are the size of the potential markets of each user group? Are there more potential hikers than horseback riders? If one user group numbers 10,000 regionally and another only 500, which group should be targeted? These figures need to be examined along with yield and impact, to determine where the best return for the marketing dollar may lie.

## USER COMPATIBILITY

Conflict between users occurs when the behaviour of one user group interferes with another group's ability to enjoy their experience. Common examples of this type of conflict are hikers and horseback riders, canoeists and motor boaters, and cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. This relationship may be asymmetrical, with the perception of conflict being higher in one group than another. For instance, in a study by Wong on perceived conflict between cross-country skiers and snowmobilers in Alberta, 87% of snowmobilers agreed with the statement that "skiers and snowmobilers can mix happily if both use common sense", while 76% of the cross-country skiers disagreed strongly<sup>28</sup>. These conflicts mean, however, that a multi-use trail system can not be all things to all people without some very careful management.

Where user conflict is strong, the community may chose to encourage one form of use over another, using the criteria discussed above to decide which user groups would be most suitable for the community. However, it may be possible to create zones through mutual agreement among the user groups. These zones should be widely separated with separate trail heads to avoid interaction.

Approximately fifteen years ago, a joint-use agreement for the Mt. Agnes area was reached between local ski and snowmobile groups. This agreement involved shared use of the trailhead area in Barkerville, separate trails most of the way to the destination area, but a short section of shared trail near the destination area. The destination area itself was zoned joint-use with the exception of Elk Mountain which was reserved exclusively for skiers. This arrangement worked well for many years, but in the last three years it has broken down due to non-compliance by snowmobilers. Large numbers of snowmobilers now use the ski trail because it is considerably shorter. Currently, the Meadow is also joint use for skiers and snowmobilers as is One Mile Road and Mickeyville Road.

This sort of agreement can work well between local user groups, when use levels and visitor expectations are low. However, they can detract from the marketability of a product outside the community. As trail development continues the community and user groups will need to

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<sup>28</sup> Jackson, Edgar. 1989. 'Perceptions and Decisions'. In Wall, Geoffrey, (ed.), *Outdoor Recreation in Canada*. Toronto: Wiley & Sons, pg. 127-128.

be involved in discussions to resolve these questions before they develop into issues that reduce the appeal of the product.

#### **COMPETITOR ANALYSIS**

It is important when forecasting demand and in devising a market strategy to know how the trail product in the Wells-Barkerville area compares to its competitors. Although such an analysis was beyond the scope of this study, some recommendations will be given to point the way to future research. A thorough analysis of the main competitors, including year-round destination trail networks such as Whistler, British Columbia, 100 Mile House, British Columbia, or Kananaskis Country, Alberta should be conducted. Additional analyses of specific use areas for hiking, cross-country skiing or snowmobiling should also be completed once target markets have been chosen.

Matrixes such as the one developed by Nordic Group International in the British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study<sup>29</sup> and illustrated in Chapter Five would be valuable.

Comparisons can be made on such factors as access, quality and quantity of trail, support facilities, accommodation, hospitality, and other attractions.

#### **CURRENT VISITATION**

The tourism industry in the Wells-Barkerville-Bowron Lake area faces two very different situations depending on season. The summer sees a very high visitation, while the winter sees virtually nothing.

During the summer, close to 100,000 visitors pass through Wells twice on their way to and from Barkerville or Bowron Lakes. It is perceived that a relatively small proportion visit Wells. Even during this summer peak, facilities in Wells are not operating at capacity.

It is estimated (Figure 6.1) that in 1992 there was a potential of 86,938 visitor nights in the area, between June 1st and Labour Day based on Barkerville and Bowron Lake visitation figures. This assumes that every visitor to the area is a potential overnight visit. Figure 6.2 shows that the area only captured 2/3 of these, and estimated 56,944. This figure is based upon generous

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<sup>29</sup> Nordic Group International, in *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

estimates of occupancy. Wells itself only captured 16% of this potential. Bowron Lake captured considerably more visitation than those who complete the wilderness canoe circuit. It enjoyed a total of 17,494 visitor nights, while only 4412 people canoed the circuit.

**FIGURE 6.1 SUMMER VISITATION**

ATTRACTION VISITATION <sup>30</sup> (POTENTIAL VISITOR NIGHTS) <sup>31</sup>				
YEAR	BARKERVILLE (PAID) <sup>32</sup>	BOWRON CIRCUIT <sup>33</sup>	WELLS MUSEUM <sup>34</sup>	AREA TOTAL <sup>35</sup>
1993	91,061		2942	
1992	82,967	4412		86,938
1991	80,313	3968		83,884
1990	64,257	3208	3300	67,144
1989	62,353	3300	5000	65,323

<sup>30</sup> Barkerville Historic Town and BC Parks statistics.

<sup>31</sup> Each attraction visitor was considered to have the potential of one visitor night in the area.

<sup>32</sup> These figures do not include visits before mid-June or after Labour Day. Figures prior to 1990 do not include estimates for unpaid visits between 5 and 8 p.m.

<sup>33</sup> Visitor nights on the Bowron Lake Circuit itself were not considered as they do not contribute economically to the area. The figures used to represent the number of visitors to the circuit, with each visitor representing one potential visitor night in the surrounding area en route to or from the circuit.

<sup>34</sup> These figures are included as they give an indication of the visitation to the heritage main street.

<sup>35</sup> Data collected by the Wells Historical Society shows that almost 100% of the Wells Museum visitors have or will visit Barkerville on the same visit. Therefore Wells' figures have not been included in the area total. It is local perception that many visitors to Bowron Lakes do not visit Barkerville and vice versa. Therefore, 90% of Bowron circuit visitation has been added to the Barkerville figures to calculate an area total.

**FIGURE 6.2 ESTIMATION OF ACTUAL VISITOR NIGHTS (1992)**

<b>ACTUAL VISITOR NIGHTS<sup>36</sup></b>			
Wells accommodation <sup>37</sup>	11,000		
Bowron accommodation	3,200		
<b>Total Accommodation</b>		<b>14,200</b>	
Government campgrounds <sup>38</sup>	29,834		
Private campgrounds <sup>39</sup>	12,960		
<b>Total Campgrounds</b>		<b>42,794</b>	
<b>Total Bowron Lake</b>	<b>17,494</b>		
<b>Total Barkerville</b>	<b>25,299</b>		
<b>Total Wells</b>	<b>14,200</b>		
<b>Total Visitor Nights</b>			<b>56,994</b>
<b>Potential Visitor Nights (Fig. 4.1)</b>			<b>86,938</b>
<b>Total Visitor Nights Lost (1992)</b>			<b>29,944</b>
<b>Percent of Potential</b>			<b>34%</b>

The estimations derived for 1992 echo the results of the 1987 and 1990 visitor surveys as summarized in Figure 6.3.

<sup>36</sup> Using 1992 figures.

<sup>37</sup> Visitor nights for the lodging sector were calculated from the operators' estimations of their summer occupancy rate x number of units x 100 day season x double occupancy. This method probably gives very generous figures.

<sup>38</sup> Visitor nights for government campgrounds were calculated from actual statistics for number of parties x estimated party size of 3.2. This party size has been calculated by BC Parks in several studies.

<sup>39</sup> No data was collected on occupancy rates at private campgrounds. Occupancy rate at government campgrounds in the area is 31%. Visitor nights for private campgrounds were calculated by using an occupancy rate of 50% x number of units X 100 day season X party size of 3.2.



**FIGURE 6.3 ACCOMMODATION USE BY VISITORS**

VISITOR ACCOMMODATION	1992 (ESTIMATES)	1990 (SURVEY) <sup>40</sup>	1987 (SURVEY) <sup>41</sup>
Camping	49%	31%	46%
Hotels/Motels	16%	21%	29%
Total Overnight	65%	69%	85%

It may be that the 'missing 34%' was not totally lost. In the 1987 survey, 10% of the sample stayed with friends and relatives. Eight percent lived within a half-day drive and so may not be expected to stay overnight. These two figures are not additive<sup>42</sup>, but a certain percentage may have been lost due to these reasons. But clearly, a large percentage of visitors that could overnight leave the area even though facilities are not overcrowded.

There are a number of reasons why Wells is not capturing the market that is virtually on its doorstep.

- Information on facilities in Wells is incomplete and not adequately distributed.
- Many visitors are self-contained and do not need facilities other than campgrounds.
- There is little to see or do in the area after Barkerville is closed for the day.
- Facilities may not be perceived to be of a high standard.

Visitor surveys at Barkerville have indicated that many visitors stay less than 1/2 day. The 1990 survey showed that 34% stayed less than 1/2 day. The 1987 survey had a median visit time of less than 1/2 day. The local tourist industry believes that visitors do not plan to stay longer because they do not have adequate information about area attractions. It is likely that at least a portion of the 'missing overnights' had not allotted time to stay over in the area, and were dashing off to the next stop on their itinerary.

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<sup>40</sup> These figures take into account those staying at friends and relatives, and so do not add to 100%.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Friends and relatives could have been in Wells, Prince George or elsewhere. People staying at friends and relatives could have been within a 1/2 day drive.

The marketing programs for Barkerville Historic Town have tried to address this problem over the last few years, but the success of these programs in repositioning the historic town as a multi-day destination is questionable.

During the fall, winter and spring there is no 'doorstep' market. The area must devise ways to attract visitation for reasons other than the summer attractions. An improved trail network will be key in establishing these off season markets.

## **MARKET DEMAND**

The future demand for the trail network in the Wells-Barkerville area will depend on factors such as the overall number of potential users (number of skiers, number of hikers), the number and location of competitors, the pricing and quality of the product, as well as economic and political conditions. Market demand estimates are important in developing the demand side of a business case for trail development.

A rigorous examination of potential demand was beyond the scope of this project. Instead, the limited existing data was examined to see what it revealed and what questions it raised. It was not expected that calculations based on these figures would yield results of great accuracy, but the researcher felt it was important for community members to gain some familiarity with the concepts involved. The underlying assumptions for the demand projections were clearly stated and were open to question by the community; some were challenged and revised. It is hoped that this exercise would help to raise community awareness about the value of collecting actual statistics and point the way to future research.

The sophisticated models<sup>43</sup> used by the tourism industry to project demand were also beyond the scope of this project. Data does not exist to support them. These models have not yet been developed for outdoor recreation on the regional level. The Cariboo Tourism Association should be encouraged to develop such a model which would assist in developing projections for the sub-regional areas such as Well - Barkerville area.

The demand projections developed in this chapter are only estimates, and a number of assumptions have been made to derive them. Given the nature of the study, there was no testing

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of these models see Smith, Stephen J., 1989. *Tourism Analysis A Handbook*. New York, NY: Wiley & Sons, Inc.

of the assumptions by examining the area's chief competitors or by looking at comparable recreation areas. Depending on the validity of the assumptions, these estimates can vary by orders of magnitude. However, they can be used to generate 'what if' types of discussions and to explore the carrying capacity or levels of growth the community wishes to achieve.

The demand projections focus on winter visits. It is this market that the community most wishes to expand.

Visitation figures in the projections are accompanied by estimates of visitor spending. These are based on average daily expenditures as measured by the BC Ministry of Tourism<sup>44</sup>. These figures do not reflect economic impact. Depending on the number and type of leakages of money to outside the area, the indirect and induced spin-offs of this spending could be quite low.

The intent of the study was not to complete an economic impact assessment. The data necessary to conduct such an analysis is not available at a local or even a regional level, although at the provincial level, the Ministry of Tourism has set up input/output accounts and has published figures on the value of the Tourism industry provincially<sup>45</sup>. There would be great value in conducting a complete economic impact assessment for the Wells-Barkerville-Bowron Lake area. It would serve to inform Quesnel politicians and businessmen of the indirect and induced benefits they enjoy from tourism in the Wells area.

#### OVERALL DEMAND FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Using data from two BC Ministry of Tourism travel studies, projections can be made about the overall market for outdoor activities in the Cariboo and the market share that Wells could expect.

Table 4.4 summarizes these projections. These figures are somewhat clouded by the fact that the 'Resident Travel in BC' study only refers to summer visitation and the 'Visitor '89' study combines summer and winter figures. Therefore, total person trips to the Cariboo would be slightly more than reported.

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<sup>44</sup> Tourism Research Group & Marktrend Research Inc. *Resident Travel in British Columbia: Results of an Annual Household Survey Conducted in 1989*. BC Ministry of Tourism, Victoria, BC: 1991 and Tourism Research Group & Campbell, Goodell and Associates. *Visitor '89: A Travel Survey of Visitors to British Columbia*. BC Ministry of Tourism, Victoria, BC: 1990.

<sup>45</sup> BC Ministry of Tourism, 1993. *The Value of BC's Tourism Industry*. Victoria: Ministry of Tourism

**FIGURE 6.4 PROJECTED MARKET SHARE AND REVENUES FROM OUTDOOR VISITS**

	RESIDENT <sup>46</sup>	NON-RESIDENT <sup>47</sup>	TOTAL
Person trips to Cariboo	624,539	309,000	933,539
Cariboo's Market share (of BC)	4%	1%	
# outdoor-related visits	212,343	77,250	289,593
% outdoor-related visits	34%	25%	
Average daily expenditure (in Cariboo)	\$43.61	\$34.97	
If Wells captured 10% <sup>48</sup> of this outdoor visitorship for 1 <sup>49</sup> night	21,234 visitor nights	7,725 visitor nights	28,959 visitor nights
Resulting expenditure	\$926,029	\$270,143	\$1,196,172

Based on existing visitation to the Cariboo, if Wells can position itself as a centre known for outdoor pursuits and a good trail network, and attract 10% of all outdoor visits to Cariboo for only one night, a visitation of close to 30,000 can be expected. If we look at the estimated Bowron Lake visits (Figure 6.2) and assume that these are 'outdoor' related we see that the area is likely receiving half of this visitation already. An increase of an additional five percent may not be unrealistic given that the implementation of a Regional Trail Network is projected to substantially boost the overall visitation to the Cariboo and it would be projected that Wells' visitorship would increase proportionately.

<sup>46</sup> Figures in this column from Tourism Research Group & Marktrend Research Inc. *Resident Travel in British Columbia: Results of an Annual Household Survey Conducted in 1989*. BC Ministry of Tourism, Victoria, BC: 1991.

<sup>47</sup> Figures in this column from Tourism Research Group & Campbell, Goodell and Associates. *Visitor '89: A Travel Survey of Visitors to British Columbia*. BC Ministry of Tourism, Victoria, BC: 1990.

<sup>48</sup> For Wells to enjoy 10% of all Cariboo visits that are outdoor related is not unreasonable. There are a number of outdoor destinations in the region - 100 Mile House, the Lakes District, Bella Coola, the Chilcotin, the Nazko-Blackwater area, and the Horsefly-Likely area. Given the outdoor product in the Wells-Barkerville-Bowron Lake area is somewhat underdeveloped, it may be that it would attract less than its share of the total. However, this effect could be counterbalanced by the major destinations of Bowron Lakes and Barkerville. Therefore 10% of this market is probably conservative.

<sup>49</sup> The accommodation sector surveyed for this study indicated that by far the most common length of stay was one night.

## WINTER DEMAND

During the winter season, facilities in the Wells-Barkerville-Bowron Lake area are underutilized. Most accommodation in Wells reports less than 50% occupancy. If a trail network can bring visitation to the area during the off seasons, it will do much to ensure the viability of the local tourism sector.

In estimating winter demand, three situations will be examined:

**Short Term Projections** - One to three years. This projection assumes only that ski and snowmobile trails are established and signed, information is available, and grooming is regular. Very little new trail construction is assumed.

**Medium Term Projections** - Three to five years. Assumes partial implementation of the Regional Trail Network Strategy in the entire region. Assumes some trail construction and general improvements to the Wells system including trailhead facilities. Assumes there have been some attempts to attract events and training camps.

**Long term Projections** - Five to ten years. Assumes implementation of Regional Trail Network Strategy in the entire region and aggressive marketing based thereon. Assumes continued improvements and marketing of Wells system.

Only overnight visits have been considered. No attempt was made to account for day visits, when a lesser amount of money would be spent. Expenditures for day visits may be as low as \$14.37 per visit, while overnight ski visits may be as high as \$92.84<sup>50</sup>. The figure of \$34.97<sup>51</sup> was used for all winter overnight visits, whether resident or non-resident.

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<sup>50</sup> Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

<sup>51</sup> The lower of the two daily spending figures for Cariboo determined in the *Resident Travel in BC* and *Visitor '89* studies.

## ***Cross-Country Ski Demand***

### **Short Term (Figure 6.5)**

Currently and in the short term, the Wells area draws skiers from the region, particularly Quesnel. Recent studies<sup>52,53</sup> have determined that skiers will travel more than 160 km to a ski area with one study<sup>54</sup> showing an average distance of 221 km (one way) for ski weekends. These distances easily put Prince George and Williams Lake and their environs within range of the Wells area.

No information was available on the number of cross-country skiers within the region. An estimate of 39,000 was derived by using population figures for the Cariboo Regional District and the Fraser-Ft. George Regional District and applying the overall percentage for Canadian participation in cross-country skiing (26.2%).<sup>55</sup>

If Wells can capture only 5% of this regional market for an overnight visit, this will result in 1,970 skier nights and revenue of \$68,897.

Using a different set of assumptions a similar figure is reached. In 1989, the 100 Mile House area had 12,000 actual skiers<sup>56</sup>. If Wells captured only 10% of this current business for an overnight visit, it would result in 1,200 skier nights and \$41,964.

These estimates would result in an estimated increase of skier nights by several 100 percent over current rates. These results are within reach of the community, if resources can be secured that will improve marketing and allow for consistently maintained trails.

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<sup>52</sup> Wiesel, J. et al. *Cross Country Ski Area Operators Survey: Winter 1984/85*. Cross Country Ski Areas of America/Ski Industries America. Hinsdale, NH, 1986, as cited by Nordic Group International, in *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

<sup>53</sup> Echenberger, E. 'Profiles of Cross Country Skiers Visiting Commercial Centres' in *Ski Area Management*. Vol. 24. No. 5, September, 1985, as cited by Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

<sup>54</sup> Tourism Canada. *Canadian Travellers Who Participated in Cross Country Skiing*. Research and Analysis, Ottawa, ON: 1983, as cited by Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

<sup>55</sup> Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

<sup>56</sup> Nordic Group International. *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study*. Cariboo Tourist Association and Cariboo-Chilcotin Economic Futures Committee, Williams Lake, BC: 1991.

**FIGURE 6.5 SHORT TERM X-COUNTRY SKI DEMAND**

<b>METHOD ONE:</b>			
<b>AREA</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>EST. SKIERS (26.2%)</b>	<b>REVENUES</b>
Cariboo Reg. District	61,059 (1991 Census)	15,997	
Fraser-Ft. George RD	89,337 (1986 Census)	23,406	
Target Population	150,396	39,403	
Assume Wells captures 5% for 1 night visit		1,970	\$68,897
<b>METHOD TWO:</b>			
Actual Skiers to 100 Mile House 1989		12,000	
Assume Wells captures 10% for 1 night visit		1,200	\$41,964

#### **Medium Term (Figure 6.6)**

The medium term projection assumes a more developed trail network both in Wells and regionally. It also assumes that the area will draw from a larger market, which included the region defined in the short term projection as well as the Lower Mainland. It is assumed that the main destination for Lower Mainland visitors would be the more developed trail network in the 100 Mile House area, but that Wells could capture 5% of this visitation. It would also continue to capture 5% of the Cariboo resident skiers.

The Vancouver area had an estimated 225,000 cross-country skiers in 1988<sup>57</sup>. It is assumed that the Cariboo could capture 10% of this market and Wells could capture 5% of this Cariboo visitation (.5% of Vancouver market). This, added to the existing 5% of the resident market, will result in 3,292 skiers.

The medium term projection also assumes that visitors stay two nights in the area, still well below the BC average of 3 to 4 days for cross-country ski trips<sup>58</sup>. This will result in revenues of \$230,258.

<sup>57</sup> Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

<sup>58</sup> BC Ministry of Economic Development. *BC Annual Ski Area Operating Survey (1985/86)*. Victoria, 1986, as cited by Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988.

The medium term projection can be approached in a different way. Nordic Group International predicted that the implementation of the Regional Trails Strategy would increase the Cariboo's penetration of the provincial market to 25% or 31,800 skiers. If Wells could capture 10% of this group, this would be 3,180 skiers and \$222,409 in revenues.

**FIGURE 6.6 MEDIUM-TERM X-COUNTRY SKI DEMAND**

	<b>SKIERS</b>	<b>CARIBOO SHARE</b>	<b>WELLS SHARE</b>
<b>METHOD ONE:</b>			
X-country skiers in Vancouver	225,000	22,500 (10%)	1,125 (5%)
Est. X-c skiers in Cariboo	39,403	39,403	1,970 (5%)
Total			<b>3,095 visitors</b>
Assume two night stay			<b>6190 vis/nights</b>
Estimated Revenues(2 nights)			<b>\$216,478</b>
<b>METHOD TWO:</b>			
Based on Nordic Group estimates		31,800 (25%)	<b>3,180 (10%)</b>
assume two night stay			<b>6,360 vis/nights</b>
Estimate Revenues(2 nights)			<b>\$222,409</b>

### **Long Term (Figure 6.7)**

The long term projection assumes the complete implementation of the Regional Trails Strategy and the success of the region in capturing a significant amount of the market for Pacific Northwest and Alberta. Wells will ride on the coat tails of this development, positioning itself as the smaller, quieter get-away with superb snow conditions. It is estimated that the Cariboo will capture 10% of this market and Wells will capture 10% of the Cariboo market share (1% of total). The average length of stay will be 3 nights. This will result in 10,772 skier visits and \$1,130,119 in annual revenues.

This projection assumes a well-developed and well-maintained trail network at Wells as well as a variety of ski touring and backcountry skiing opportunities. A number of events and training camps will have been attracted to the area. Accommodation and facilities will have developed apace, in order to provide the variety (especially in dining experiences) desired by this market.



**FIGURE 6.7 LONG TERM X-COUNTRY SKI DEMAND**

	ESTIMATED SKIERS	CARIBOO SHARE	WELLS SHARE
Pacific Northwest	372,227 <sup>59</sup>	37,222	3,722
British Columbia	329,000 <sup>60</sup>	32,900	3,290
Alberta	376,000 <sup>61</sup>	37,600	3,760
TOTAL	1,077,227	107,722	10,772
assume 3 night stay			32,317 vis/nights
Revenue estimates (3 nights)			\$1,130,119

***Snowmobile Demand (Figure 6.8)***

Snowmobile demand projections were derived from the work of Nordic Group International as reported in the *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study* (see Figures 6.9 and 6.10). This work estimated that the Cariboo's share of the BC snowmobile market would be 2569 machines in 1993. The medium and long term projections were based upon a linear extrapolation of the short term projection, at a 3% annual increase. (Nordic Group uses 3.5 to 5% increase annually.) It is assumed that the Wells area will capture 30% of the Cariboo market, as it is one of the more popular snowmobiling destinations. As with skier demand, it is assumed that in the medium term projection the area can hold visitors for a two night visit and in the long term for three nights.

Given that up to 700 machines have attended the one event, the Annual Hill Climb at Mt. Agnes, the Nordic Group International numbers seem conservative. The Maps and Information Handbook of the Quesnel Snowmobile Club records that the Wells-Barkerville receives 3000 rider days per year. It must be remembered that the projections refer only to overnight visits and do not include day visits. It is also likely that the per capita spending figure derived from the non-resident study undervalues the financial contribution of snowmobilers. More documentation is necessary for the snowmobile use in the area.

<sup>59</sup> Nordic Group International. *British Columbia Cross Country Ski Area Study*. Canada-British Columbia Tourist Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement, 1988, pg. 14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. pg. 9

<sup>61</sup> Ibid pg. 9

Method Two uses the local estimates of visitorship and assumes a 3% annual increase over the next ten years. Each of these visitors is considered as a potential visitor night.

**FIGURE 6.8 SNOWMOBILE DEMAND**

PROJECTION <sup>62</sup>	CARIBOO SHARE <sup>63</sup>	WELLS' SHARE 30% <sup>64</sup> (Visitor/nights)	ESTIMATED REVENUES
<b>Method One: Nordic Group Figures (3% yearly increase)</b>			
Short term	2569	771 (1 night)	\$26,951
Medium Term	2,978	1,787 (2 nights)	\$62,488
Long Term	3,453	3107 (3 nights)	\$108,661
<b>Method Two: Local Use Estimations (3% yearly increase)</b>			
Short Term		3,000	\$104,910
Medium Term		6,753 (2 nights)	\$236,154
Long Term		11,743 (3 nights)	\$410,651

<sup>62</sup> The short term projection is taken from figures derived by Nordic Group International in *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study*. Cariboo Tourist Association and Cariboo-Chilcotin Economic Futures Committee, Williams Lake, BC: 1991. The medium and long term assumes an annual increase of 2% annually. The medium term is five years later and the long term is ten years later.

<sup>63</sup> As calculated by Nordic Group International. *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study*. Cariboo Tourist Association and Cariboo-Chilcotin Economic Futures Committee, Williams Lake, BC: 1991.

<sup>64</sup> Estimated in this study to be 30% of the Cariboo market share.

FIGURE 6.9 ESTIMATED POTENTIAL DESTINATION SNOWMOBILING MARKET<sup>65</sup>

Table 3.7

ESTIMATED POTENTIAL DESTINATION SNOWMOBILING MARKET

Location	Number of Registered Machines <sup>1</sup>	Number of Unregistered Machines <sup>2</sup>	Number of Households <sup>3</sup>	Number of Active Riders <sup>4</sup>	Overnight Tours <sup>5</sup>	Distance Factor <sup>6</sup>	Potential Market <sup>7</sup>
Washington	17280	34560	19200	61440	10445	3656	914
Oregon	9533	19066	10592	33895	5762	2016	504
California	7989	15978	8876	28405	4828	1690	422
Idaho	15356	30712	17062	54599	9282	3249	812
Alberta	14169	28338	15743	50378	8564	2998	749
British Columbia	52689	105378	58543	187339	31848	11147	2787
<b>Total</b>	<b>117016</b>	<b>234032</b>	<b>130018</b>	<b>416057</b>	<b>70730</b>	<b>24755</b>	<b>6189</b>

Notes:

- 1 Source: ISIS North American Snowmobile \_ Registration Survey, 1986 to 1989-90
- 2 ISIA figures as provided by individual states and provinces indicate that estimates of unregistered snowmobiles can range from as low as 1/4 of the number of registered machines as in the case of California up to as many as 2.5 times the number reported in Montana. ISIA estimates that overall, registrations account for only about 1/2 the actual number of snowmobiles within the snow belt in any given year.
- 3 In a study completed by the University of Waterloo Occasional Paper #7 (1989), it was indicated that OFSC survey respondents owned an average of 1.8 snowmobiles per household
- 4 The University of Waterloo's occasional paper #7 also estimated that an average of 3.2 persons per snowmobile owning household rode during the 1989 season.
- 5 Sources: 52% for Ontario from the University of Waterloo's occasional paper #7, 27.5% for Michigan and Wisconsin from the Algoma Study (1990), Minnesota presumed to be 27.5% based on telephone conversation with Minnesota Tourism; and 17% for Manitoba based on University of Manitoba report. We have used 17%
- 6 Based on Snowmobile Magazine reference in the Algoma study, it can be deduced that only 35% of those snowmobilers who take overnight trips are willing to travel more than 150 miles from their point of origin to reach a snowmobiling destination. A May 1991 survey report from the University of Wisconsin suggests that as a group, overnight snowmobiling vacationers in that state averaged 290 miles one way to reach their destinations, and that 59% had actually driven further than 201 miles. We have used the more conservative 35%.
- 7 According to the Algoma Study, while 46% of those snowmobilers surveyed expressed an interest in travelling on overnight snowmobile trips, only 17.7% actually did. To bridge this gap between intent and actualization, the Algoma Study chose a midpoint figure of 25% to represent the potential market. We have used 25% here.

<sup>65</sup> From Nordic Group International, 1991. *South Cariboo Region Trailblazer Study*. Cariboo Tourist Association and Cariboo-Chilcotin Economic Futures Committee, Williams Lake, BC.

# FIGURE 4-41. REGIONAL DESTINATION SNOWMOBILE MARKET SHARE

TABLE 4-4  
REGIONAL DESTINATION SNOWMOBILE MARKET SHARE  
1990-1994

Regional Potential	1990-1994		Regional Market Share		
	1990-1994	1990-1994	1990-1994	1990-1994	1990-1994
Alaska	1,000	1.0	1,000	1,000	1,000
Idaho	1,000	1.0	1,000	1,000	1,000
Montana	1,000	1.0	1,000	1,000	1,000
Wyoming	1,000	1.0	1,000	1,000	1,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1991. Snowmobiles: Regional Market Share, 1990-1994. U.S. Census Bureau, 1991. Snowmobiles: Regional Market Share, 1990-1994. U.S. Census Bureau, 1991. Snowmobiles: Regional Market Share, 1990-1994.

**FIGURE 4.11 SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS**

	SILVAPROJECT		CONSERVATION		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	AREA	NUMBER	AREA	NUMBER	AREA
<b>ORIGINAL TOTAL PROJECTS</b>						
1980	12	21,000	10	20,000	22	41,000
1981	10	20,000	10	20,000	20	40,000
<b>REMOVED PROJECTS</b>						
1980	1	2,000	1	2,000	2	4,000
1981	1	2,000	1	2,000	2	4,000
<b>USING SILVAPROJECT AREA</b>						
1980	11	20,000	9	18,000	20	38,000
1981	9	18,000	9	18,000	18	36,000

**FIGURE 4.12 SUMMARY OF WATER DEMAND**



### **CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

An experimental conservation program will be key in the development of the water conservation program. The conservation program will be developed in the following manner:

be shared by the business community. The Partners-in-Tourism program should be used in conjunction with the Cariboo Tourist Association (if available). A local 50/50 sharing program could be developed between the Trails Development Corporation and local businesses.

The production of two basic communications pieces should be completed early in the development - a 'lure' brochure and a trail map(s).

A lure brochure is distributed to infocentres and brochure racks further afield to attract people to an area. It does not try to provide the specific information needed when actually visiting an area. It should be colourful and attractive. It should announce the trail system, its general location, the range of experiences, the most attractive features, and an address and phone number for more information. It should have a long 'shelf life', i.e. it should not contain information that is easily outdated. It may be judicious to combine this brochure with a lure brochure for the entire community.

Trail maps or a guide book provide specific trail information and interpretive notes and are an important associated activity to trail networks. The number and variety of guide books that are written on an area can be an indication of the location's popularity<sup>67</sup>. Although these are often produced on a private basis, the Trails Development Corporation should produce these in order that the profit be applied directly to the trail system. This endeavor could be a major source of revenue. It is likely that much of the work of compiling and producing a guide book or map would be contributed by volunteers.

## SUMMARY

The estimates derived by Nordic Group International for the Province and the Pacific Northwest indicate that the size of the cross-county ski market is much larger than the snowmobile market. It is not known whether these ratios would apply to the Cariboo region. No local or regional data is available on the daily expenditures of either of these groups. It is the perception of the community that snowmobilers spend more money than skiers.

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<sup>67</sup> Lucas, P.H.C., 1986. 'The Value of Trails to Tourism and Society: Ways to a Better World'. In *International Congress on Trail and River Recreation, Proceedings*. Vancouver: Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia.

The importance of gathering good data to support additional market research can not be under-emphasized. User profiles, records of actual user group numbers, information of spending and impacts will serve to inform important community decisions in regard to marketing and development.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **TOURISM SERVICES**

The underdevelopment of the service sector in Wells is the classic 'chicken and egg' situation. While the community should be aware of the short falls in their services, and take advantage of any situation to improve on weaknesses, the energy of volunteer groups such as the Trails Societies should focus on improving the actual trail network. When demand for the trail network increases, private investment should follow with improved services.

#### **GROOMING**

The single most important action for the community of Wells in regard to the trail system is to provide consistently groomed trails for both skiers and snowmobilers. For skiers this does not have to be an extensive network of trails. One or two simple loops on the meadow to a total of 3 to 5 kilometre will suffice to start. Snowmobilers have indicated that their priorities are the Mt. Agnes Trail and the Proserpine Trail.

There are a number of impediments to achieving this at the present time:

**Proper equipment** - While snowmobiles can be used to groom trails and set ski track, they are inefficient and expensive. They require more labour than; the product is not as good as; and they are more expensive to run than a professional grooming machine. It is imperative that the community or a private venture purchase an appropriate grooming machine as soon as possible.

**Labour** - Trails must be groomed consistently and regularly. If visitors drive to the area, and find the trails not groomed, they will be less willing to travel to the area again. To expect even a small amount of track to be set on a volunteer basis is unreasonable over extended periods, especially given the time that goes into the maintenance of older machinery. A job must be created in the community, even if it is part-time at first, to coordinate trail grooming. During times of heavy and frequent snowfalls, or before events, volunteer help will also be needed.



**Cost** - The cost of the above has been viewed as beyond the means of the volunteer associations that have been involved in trail grooming - the Wells-Barkerville Ski Club, the Wells Ski Club and the Wells Trackers. The direct benefits of an improved trail system accrue to the service sector of the community. However, the entire community benefits from the improved facilities and services. The initial capital cost of grooming equipment can be funded by a one-shot fund raising effort or a loan. Eventually, there must be a way to derive direct revenue from the trails themselves to fund trail grooming. This could be done through user donations, trail user fees, donations from the business community, and general fundraising activities. A volunteer 'recreation' levy on hotel rooms and meals could also generate revenues for the trail system.

#### **TRAIL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations summarized at the end of Chapter Five can be used as an action plan for implementation. Projects have already been prioritized on the basis of criteria that focus on economic impact to the community.

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

A local group has been formed to spearhead the implementation of the Goldfields Trail Network until such time as the community decides who should administer the network. The group, The Wells Trails and Recreation Society, potentially represents all trail users and networks with large bodies such as the North Cariboo Trails Association and the National Trails Association.

Because of the value of the resource and its potential to generate direct revenues (user fees) and indirect revenues (visitor expenditures), it may be prudent to bring the management of the trail network directly under a corporate structure. It could be a development corporation in which the community makes up the shareholders, or it may be a municipal body that emerges through community restructuring. This is not to say that each of these structures would be equally effective. A municipal structure will offer more resources and continuity than a non-profit society, although a non-profit group may bring a higher level of commitment to the project.

This report makes no specific recommendation as to the structure of the body that will ultimately manage the trails. It does recommend that this body be a responsible public body

working for community benefit, and that the profits from this venture are returned to the community. A 'Trails Development Corporation' or similar body could become a self-sufficient entity and in the long term become a positive development force within the community. It could be similar to the Klondike Visitor's Association which manages Diamond Tooth Gerties Casino in Dawson City, Yukon. Profits from this venture are returned to the community through a variety of projects that make Dawson a better place to visit and to live.

#### **STEWARDSHIP**

Protection of the amenity resources must be a key consideration of community-based tourism planning. A number of stewardship issues were raised during the course of the study, including garbage, sanitation and overuse. Planning for these impacts should begin in the early stages of trail development and solutions should be implemented before serious problems arise.

At this time the resources are under more threat from other extractive industries, particularly logging, than from over-use by tourism and recreation interests. Community members have been active participants in land use planning processes such as the Commission on Resources and Environment, industry management and five-year development plans, and Ministry of Forests Local Resource Use Plans.

#### **ZONING FOR USER COMPATIBILITY**

Zoning is another issue that was raised in local discussion. Some initial suggestions have had a luke warm reception by the community. Zoning will, however, increase the marketability of the overall trail network, and should be the subject of serious community discussion in the near future.

#### **MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS**

With a program outlined for physical improvements to the trail network, the next major area on which to focus planning efforts is marketing. As discussed in Chapter Six, data needs to be gathered to inform the development of a marketing strategy that will be cost-effective for the community. The British Columbia Ministry of Tourism will assist communities in developing marketing strategies through Community Tourism Action workshops.

The success of Barkerville's marketing in producing a longer average stay per visitor is questionable. A different marketing approach for the area should be taken. Rather than trying to convince visitors they need to stay longer at Barkerville, marketing should focus on the many different types of activities there are in the entire area. In this way, the message will be conveyed that more time needs to be allowed to experience each aspect. When visitors begin to allot several days to their visit, and if fact make this the major destination, they will spend more time at each of the area attractions.

Marketing is of key importance to the success of the Trail Network venture. Without adequate marketing, visitorship will not reach the expected levels. Combined with the production of a 'lure' brochure for the trail system, a number of marketing techniques may be investigated:

- direct mail
- infocentre distribution
- radio/TV
- magazine advertisements
- specialized brochures to target the meeting trade or movie companies
- magazine writer tours and 'fam' tours.

The development of packages that combine a variety of activities can be developed locally and sold wholesale through travel shows or to travel agencies. Packages could focus on specialized markets such as particular user groups, charter tours or the meeting trade.

Special planning and consideration should be given to developing Wells as a meeting centre. A number of facilities suitable for meetings, including the Wells Community Hall, the Wells-Barkerville School and the Sunset Theatre are included in the inventory in Chapter Four. The meeting trade can be run as a community venture coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce or a trails development corporation. A meeting coordinator should be sub-contracted to make all arrangements and the coordinator's wages factored into the overall package price. Worthwhile investments for a community group to undertake are a good portable sound system with several microphones for large meetings, several flip charts and portable dry erasable boards. Arrangement to borrow or rent local AV equipment should be formalized.

## **RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Wells and District Chamber of Commerce can use the facility inventory from this report as a basis to provide better information about services in Wells. The inventory should be updated annually, perhaps by the tourist infocentre staff. A tracking system also needs to be designed that can measure the successes of the local tourism industry. A number of indicators should be developed and data collected regularly by cooperating businesses. This could be things such as visitation to the Tourist Infocentre and the Wells Museum, monthly room rental totals from the accommodation sector, or gross receipts from the restaurants. Tracking such indicators on a regular basis will reveal trends in local tourism and will allow increases in trade to be accurately recorded.

Barkerville and Bowron Lake Park conduct regular visitor satisfaction surveys. Wells should develop its own survey tools to be used at the Infocentre and the Wells Museum. These could collect information on visitor profiles, daily spending, origin and other demographics, purpose of visit, length of stay, etc. Survey tools to gain specific information on trail users should be devised.

The Cariboo Tourist Association should be encouraged to collect marketing data at the regional level as well as to develop regional impact models for outdoor recreation.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

This Master's Degree Project proposed to:

- 1) devise a plan for trail facility development that is achievable in stages over the next five to ten years, for the community of Wells, British Columbia,
- 2) develop a strategy that will make a significant difference to the economic base of the community, especially in the off-season, and
- 3) begin to develop the organizational structure necessary within the community to pursue the project.

It has applied a community-based tourism model to a case study involving the development of a network of outdoor recreation trails.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The researcher worked with a steering committee to develop an action plan that can be implemented by the community. Chapter Five outlines specific projects that have been prioritized in terms of their potential to make Wells more central to the trail network. The projects can be divided into 'digestible chunks' and implemented separately by the trails association or user groups. They can be accomplished at minimum cost using volunteer or work program labour and donated or found materials. The Wells Trails and Recreation Society is developing an innovative method for ongoing maintenance, 'adopting' trails out to user and other non-profit groups. Corporate participation is being sought for the development of the Cornish Mountain ski trails from the logging company who has tenure in that area.

## **ECONOMIC BENEFIT**

For Wells to benefit economically from the trail network, the community must become more central to the network. More trails need to start and finish in Wells. There should be more trails that are easily accessible and close to the community. This will encourage trail users to use the facilities in Wells and encourage visitors to stay longer due to the increased outdoor recreation opportunities. The projects outlined in the action plan create ski and hiking trails accessible from the community and construct trailheads to meet the needs of user groups.

Without an economic impact assessment, the net economic benefits to the community can not be quantified. The obvious costs are the capital outlay to improve the system and any additions that have to be made to the community infrastructure to accommodate associated growth. A large portion of the indirect and induced benefits of visitor expenditures will go to Quesnel, Williams Lake and Prince George where Wells' tourism operators buy the bulk of their goods and services. Although the projected visitor expenditures do not give us an exact indication of the true economic impact of the project, their order of magnitude would suggest that the capital expenditures will be off-set by financial spin-off to the business communities both in Wells and Quesnel.

The capital injection for trail development will include 'new' money in the form of government grants, and trail improvements will not be reflected in the area's land taxes. Considerable serviced, vacant commercial property is available and a number of heritage buildings are available for restoration or adaptive reuse. It is estimated that some growth in the service

sector could be accommodated within the existing water, sewer and power infrastructure. It seems likely that considerable growth can occur before it is offset by increased taxes.

Community-based tourism projects differ from private tourism developments. Most revenues in the tourism industry are generated by the accommodation, food services and retail sectors. Facilities themselves, such as ski hills, are lucky to break even. In a private development, such as a ski hill, a guest ranch, or a cross-country ski resort, the profits from accommodation and meals directly offset the capital and maintenance cost of facilities. In the community situation, the costs of building facilities are usually borne by the public in some form, be it a non-profit group or a corporate body such as a municipality. The indirect profits generated through the visitation to those facilities, be it a park or a trail network, go to the business sector. Because of this, when examining the economics of the trail system, we must look at the capital costs in light of the revenues generated in the community, not just the revenues generated by the trail system itself. At this time we can only look at the estimated visitor expenditures derived in Chapter Six to give us an idea of the possible economic spin-offs.

There may be ways to redistribute some of these benefits back to the user groups. A voluntary levy on the hospitality businesses, not unlike the voluntary taxes used to raise money for Business Improvement Areas which assist in downtown revitalization, could be instituted to return money for trail development and maintenance. There may be other creative ways of addressing this issue. Currently, the business community through the volunteer efforts of the Chamber of Commerce is heavily involved in trail related activities, and so should reap the benefit of its efforts.

Some job creation from expansion in the service sector can be expected if demand for the trail network increases. It is possible that some high-end accommodation will be developed and that existing facilities will upgrade to provide additional services. No attempt has been made to calculate the number of indirect and induced jobs created. The overall visitorship of Wells is projected to increase by 200 - 300% and winter visitorship by a much large proportion. The winter visitation, combined with the meeting trade targeted for the spring and fall, could serve to even out the seasonality and provide year-round jobs in the service industry. This would result in an increased population as workers who were previously seasonal decide to settle here permanently. Added to this should be the short term injection of cash and job creation into the community during the development phases.

To implement the projects outlined in Chapter Five, a substantial amount of money and volunteer effort will be necessary. Will it be justified? When evaluating a Community Economic Development project more than just economic benefits should be considered. As discussed in Chapter Two, the non-economic benefits to society derived from trails can be personal, social or environmental. This study has not quantified these but will suggest possible types of benefits that could accrue.

The recreation facilities developed on the trail network will be of immediate benefit to local residents. They will facilitate the offering of outdoor programs within the school and will stimulate the development of sports related to the trail system.

Increased level of services, increased pride by local residents in the community, increased confidence in the investment climate are other benefits that could result from the project.

Increased interest in the trail network could lead to land use decisions that favour tourism and recreation values. The emphasis would be on the preservation of visual quality, wildlife values, water quality, and other natural values. This would protect and enhance the quality of life in the Wells-Barkerville-Bowron area.

High quality recreation facilities are an amenity that attract both residents and industry to an area. In the new economy of the 1990s, jobs are attracted to the places where people congregate - in communities with a high level of amenity<sup>68</sup>. Compatible industry may be attracted to the area, further diversifying and strengthening the economy. This trend can already be seen. From 1991 to 1993, a large number of properties sold to early semi-retirees, empty-nesters or families with a desire to enjoy a slower-paced lifestyle. A number of new entrepreneurial businesses have resulted including one involving the manufacturing of door mats from recycled tires. This trend, which is completely in step with the predictions of the 'new economy', is likely to continue and would be both stimulated by and would stimulate the creation and development of the Goldfields Trail Network.

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<sup>68</sup> Power, T., 1988. *The Economic Pursuit of Quality*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Participation in this project was representative of the local community and trail user groups. Attendance at the steering committee and public meetings has shown that the community identified with the project and felt it was accessible to them.

The researcher hoped that the steering committee would form a nucleus group that would continue with the implementation of the project once her role was completed. Although this did not occur exactly as foreseen, a new Wells Trails and Recreation Society has been formed. This group is closely linked with the Wells and District Chamber of Commerce and is playing a strong role in the North Cariboo Trails Association.

A 'restructuring committee' has recently been formed with representation from every community group and the general public to examine the issues surrounding incorporation, including economic development. The development of the trail network has received recognition by this group as a major facet of the overall economic development strategy. It is likely that even without incorporation, Wells will have the structures to exert some control over the development of the trail network and associated facilities.

A 'data group' has been formed that is devising, with the assistance of this researcher, tools for collecting consistent, valid and reliable data that will aid in the development of a marketing strategy.

Although the community is still plagued with rifts and often works at cross purposes, considerable progress has been made in implementing the trails project. A recent Community Tourism Action workshop has brought several groups together with the common purpose of tourism development in which the Trails Network figures strongly. The community is aware of its difficulties in working together and is striving to build bridges between the different factions. The community has shown itself capable in the past of implementing large projects, and the development of the trail network, assisted as it will be by input from user groups, government agencies, and the North Cariboo Trails Association, should pose no severe problems.



## SUMMARY

Community-based tourism as defined in Chapter Two is characterized by:

- strong participation by the local community,
- control of development by local community,
- net benefits accruing to the community and equitably distributed within the community, and
- protection of the amenity resources.

This study has shown that it is possible to apply this model to a very small community. The model is helpful in identifying positive strategies and potential pitfalls.

The project received a high level of participation by the community in the form of attendance at committee and public meetings and reading and commenting on the draft reports. It has taken a high priority within the community and its implementation is being driven by community members. Structures are developing that should result in a strong level of control over the management of the trail system. However, these structures and the level of commitment that support them are always vulnerable to setbacks caused by community rifts, volunteer burn-out and financial difficulties that can plague community development projects.

This study did not calculate the net benefits that would accrue to the community. Under current conditions improvements to the trail system would be implemented by local volunteers assisted by government grants and work programs. Many non-economic benefits would accrue to the community as a whole. Increased visitor expenditure would accrue to the business community. At this time many members of the business community are active as volunteers promoting the trail network. A way has been suggested, in the form of a volunteer business levy, to direct money from visitor expenditures back to the trail project to cover operating expenses. At this time in Wells there is no outside ownership in the business community. Profits, however meager, have tended to be reinvested in the community. However, serious leakages exist in the form of savings and goods and services bought outside the area. As development proceeds ways to plug these leaks should be sought. Use of locally available materials, recycled materials, expertise within the community, a community development corporation with local shareholders, a lending circle between local non-profit groups could all be applied effectively to this project.

It is possible that a foreign-owned private resort could locate in Wells, in which case profits would leak from the area. Technically, because the trail network itself is on Crown land and publicly

owned, control of the actual resource should remain in community hands. However, the National Parks provide good examples of the compromise of community and environmental values to satisfy the demands of mass tourism. Without incorporation, Wells is particularly vulnerable to this sort of development.

Little discussion around carrying capacities and resource protection occurred in the steering committee meetings. Only a few people in the community view this as a potential problem. However, there is a definite risk that increasing use of the trail network to the levels that many community members would like to see would seriously jeopardize the quality of life that is the reason for many people living in Wells. If the numbers detailed in the Long Term Demand Projection in Chapter Six were realized, this would be four times the capacity of the existing accommodation sector. This would mean instead of four operators there would likely be ten to fifteen possibly resulting in 'strip' development along Highway 26. The increased use of the trail network could result in environmental damage, user conflicts and decreased visitor satisfaction.

However, currently in Wells, growth is slow and controllable. The citizens are committed to community planning issues and awareness of these is increasing. Wells' residents have a future vision of their community as attractive but small, with a convenient and balanced set of services without being overly commercial, with strong artistic, cultural and heritage interests, and where visitors are welcomed and participate in community life. This vision, if translated into a planning policies which adhere to the community-based tourism model, can lay the groundwork for thoughtful and organized development.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX ONE - THE TRAIL INVENTORY**

The following form was designed to present summary information on the major trails in the Wells-Barkerville area. The primary focus of the study was to look at the economic benefits that can be derived by the community of Wells from the trail network. As a result, only trails that are linked or potentially could be linked to Wells are included in the inventory.

The inventory did not attempt to document every trail that is or every was in the area. Attention was focused on the trails that receive significant use or that potentially could be included in an overall trail network.

Consideration was given to trail nomenclature. Every attempt has been made to stay consistent with local usage. The nomenclature also attempts to remain consistent with that used by Jean Speare in her inventory of historic trails completed for the Ministry of Forests.<sup>69</sup>

The inventory sheets were grouped by trail type - i.e. snowmobile, hiking, etc. There is, therefore, some duplication as certain trails are used for more than one function. This system of listing allows each interest group to easily access information about the trail network of most interest to them.

Inventories are not meant to be static. This inventory should be updated on a regular basis as trail development occurs.

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<sup>69</sup> Speare, Jean. The Gold Rush Trails for the Hikers of Today. Ministry of Forests, Quesnel, BC, 1990.

**TRAIL TYPE:**

**TRAIL NAME:**

**MAP NO. :**

**GENERAL LOCATION:**

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

Section 4:

**TRAILHEAD:**

**OTHER USES:**

**CURRENT CONDITION:**

**FACILITIES:**

**DEVELOPMENT NEEDED:**

**MANAGEMENT CONCERNS:**