

# Elder Host Manual

**How to start an Elder Host Program  
in your community.**



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# **Elder Host Manual**

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## **Grateful acknowledgement to:**

- \*Yukon Tourism & Culture:  
Yukon Heritage Resources Unit  
Product Development & Research**
- \* Great River Journey**
- \*First Nations Investment Group:  
Kwanlin Development Corporation  
12028 Yukon Inc (Ta'an Kwäch'än Council)  
Selkirk Development Corporation  
Chief Isaac Inc.**
- \* Selkirk First Nation & Elders**

Cover Photo: Johnson Edwards stick gambling with Pattie Balsillie, Dennis Zimmermann and Sarah Charlie

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**Figure 7- Bev Buckway**

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## Starting an Elder Host Program

*Before you can determine where you are going, you have to know where you have come from...*

**O**ur Elder Host Pilot Project was conceived through discussions with the First Nations Investment Group (comprised of Kwanlin Development Corporation, 12028 Yukon Inc. [(Ta'an Kwach'an Council)], Selkirk Development Corporation, Chief Isaac Inc. and Selkirk First Nation), YTG Heritage Resources Unit, YTG Tourism & Culture and the Great River Journey. These groups were seeking additional experience and insight into the business opportunities and challenges of incorporating First Nation traditional knowledge and "lifeways" into tourism activities in traditional areas.

For many years, the Fort Selkirk Co-management Group wanted, to have Elders visit Fort Selkirk and engage in traditional activities. They felt having Elders on site would show great potential for visitors to be able to see an aspect of the Northern Tutchone people and traditional lifestyles that may otherwise be unavailable to them. As much as

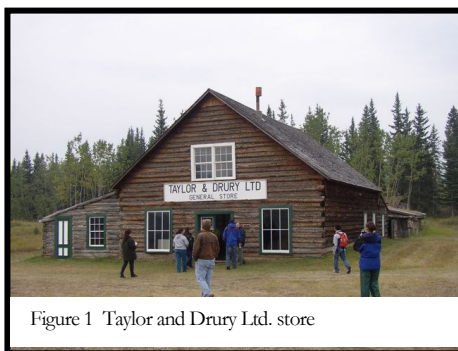


Figure 1 Taylor and Drury Ltd. store

we are perhaps awed by a visit to another part of the county, visitors to the Yukon are truly impressed by our wilderness spaces and traditional lifestyles, and are keen to learn more in a special setting.

Yukon Tourism & Culture was also encouraging new First Nation tourism products, and held a one-day tourism awareness workshop in Pelly Crossing in March of 2004 to talk about ideas. The importance and potential of applying traditional knowledge in the development of business opportunities was discussed with residents. Examples were given of how

everyday life is of great interest to others from afar, and the simple task of going fishing can spark many lively comments from visitors.

Great River Journey recognizes the cultural potential for their prospective guests to engage with Elders on their river trip, and were enthusiastic with the idea of Fort Selkirk being used as an ideal location for the demonstration aspect of the pilot project. Fort Selkirk will be a scheduled stop on GRJ's river trip from Whitehorse to Dawson City.

From the numerous discussions mentioned above, it was agreed that a pilot project would be the ideal way to proceed. A funding application was presented to Tourism Yukon, identifying Selkirk First Nation traditional land as the best location, since Fort Selkirk is an established heritage site, with First Nations peoples already engaged there during the summer months.



Figure 2 Steven Silverfox

The value of producing a simple “how-to” manual was determined to be of benefit to other communities who might have similar ideas for working with Elders in developing tourism products. If this manual can assist others in omitting steps that were not needed, or encouraging them to take an extra step, then the value will be received. If the readers can utilize suggestions, and learn from what worked and what did not work, and blend it to the needs of your community, it will prove worthwhile.



Figure 3 David Johnny and Don Trudeau

This manual was produced in a very simple format. Throughout the manual, you will see references to *the process, the protocol and the program*, which are the key components of the pilot project. All were documented.

## **Our Approach (Process)**

*Planning, planning, and more planning...*

**T**he key to making an Elder Host Program a success is planning. With a solid outline to guide you through the process, you will be able to reach your goals more smoothly than if you start without a good plan. Flexibility is a must.

### **Planning ideas**

The goal of the interested groups was to have a pilot project happen during the summer of 2004, without benefit of much lead-time. On the list of planning necessities were:

- Identifying sources of funding
- Designating a Project Manager
- Hiring a local Projector Coordinator
- Consulting with Elders in Pelly Crossing
- Coordinating a Demonstration Day event
- Evaluating the project
- Forming conclusions
- Documenting the above in a “how-to” manual for other communities to use

### **Funding**

Kwanlin Development Corporation (with support from First Nations Investment Group, Selkirk First Nation, YTG Heritage Resources Unit and Great River Journey)

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submitted an application to Tourism Yukon, as the main source of funds. Included in the application were details on:

- Background of the applicant
- Project request (in dollars)
- Project objectives
- Project management
- Activities and timelines
- Budget
- Funding sources
- Product possibilities

Forming partnerships with governments, private business and other entities worked well, and is always recommended. Potential partners are more likely to contribute when the financial load can be shared, increasing the potential funding dollars to be found.



Figure 4 A time gone by

## **Budget**

A simple budget was prepared and further breakdowns were detailed as the project proceeded, as in the following table:

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## Elder Host Budget

	Budget
<b>Income</b>	
YTG Product Development	7,775
YTG Heritage Resource Branch	5,000
Kwanlin Dun/FNIC	1,000
Selkirk First Nation	1,000
Great River Journey	3,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$18,275</b>
 <b>Expenses</b>	
Project coordinator	6,000
Gas for project coordinator	150
Elder honorariums	4,125
Demonstration Day Phase One	1,500
Demonstration Day, Phase Two	1,500
Project Manager	3,500
Administration Costs	1,500
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$18,275</b>

## Timelines

Activity	Who	Timeline
Define terms of reference for hiring & supervising project coordinator and determining desired outcome of interviews	Project Manager, FNIC	By May 31
Interview 25-30 Elders to establish a “traditional ways inventory” and expression of interest in participating in showcasing those ways, determine necessary resources, prioritize interview results	Project Coordinator	June 1-July 15
Hold initial test demonstration of one day duration with selected activities at Fort Selkirk, based on interview results	First Nation Elders	July 22-24th
Refine methods for a second day of program demonstration targeted to select visitors at Fort Selkirk	First Nation Elders	July 31/04
File reports to project manager, including comments on the process	Project Coordinator	August 07/04
Prepare a “how-to” manual	Project Manager	By September 30/04

The timelines shown in the table above were initially determined for the application, and some adjustments were made during the project. The Project Coordinator had



insight into appropriate times for consulting with Elders, and for acceptable dates for demonstration days, which we did not have at the initial planning stage.

## **Contacts**

In order to hire a Project Coordinator, a list was made of community contacts to speak to-people who knew various individuals respected by the Elders, with the necessary skills for the position who would be available for the period we needed.

We recognized that the coordinator would have the largest role in the project; needed to be self-directed; have the ability to carefully organize a one-day event; and have suitable communication skills for speaking with the Elders. The input from community members as to possible candidates was very valuable.



Figure 5 Grandfather's treasure left for others to ponder

## Getting Started

### *Organizing and coordinating...*

**F**irst steps necessary to get the pilot project going were to have the Project Manager and Project Coordinator in place.

### Project Manager

As part of the Great River Journey's in-kind contribution, a Project Manager was selected from their crew. This position had the responsibility for hiring and maintaining regular contact with the Project Coordinator, undertaking site visits in Pelly Crossing and Fort Selkirk, reporting to the funders and applicant group on a regular basis and assembling the documents necessary to write the "how-to" manual.

### Terms of Reference

Community acceptance of the project was critical to the overall success of the pilot project, and a local First Nation member was recruited as Project Coordinator

For the recruitment process, a 2-page Terms of Reference was developed to guide us in the selection of candidates for our part time, flexible hours job. Along with background on the project and remuneration, we included:



Figure 6 Stanley Johnson, Maria Van Bibber and Bev Buckway

### *Project Objectives:*

*To define, record and demonstrate, via a pilot demonstration project, traditional activities that Elders could and would engage in as a tourism product. The Selkirk First Nation is a natural choice to use as a model, based on the agreement that "Fort Selkirk should be preserved, protected and developed as a living cultural heritage site", the underlying concepts being spiritual learning, cultural renewal and sharing of history. (The Fort Selkirk Historic Site Management Plan of May 2000). The process, protocol and potential programs will be outlined in the form of a manual that may be used by other First Nations to assist in developing similar tourism products.*

### *Responsibilities*

- *Arrange for interviews with 25-30 Elders in the Pelly Crossing area to take place between June 1 and July 15, 2004*
  - *Engage in the interview process with the Elders based on a predetermined list of objectives (attached separately)*
  - *Explain to the Elders the desired outcome of having them on site at Fort Selkirk*
  - *Establish a "traditional ways inventory" and an expression of interest in showcasing those ways*
  - *Prioritize interview results by July 15/04*
  - *Report to Project Manager at least twice weekly throughout the project, both verbally and through electronically sending e-mail and documents*
  - *Determine resources necessary within budget amounts to hold a Phase One demonstration day at Fort Selkirk based on priorities from interviews*
  - *Coordinate and participate in a Phase One demonstration day to take place on the weekend of July 24th or earlier within budget*
  - *Report on what worked well and what could be done differently*
  - *Determine resources necessary to plan and coordinate a Phase Two demonstration day to take place on July 31st at Fort Selkirk, based on recommendations from Phase One, and within budget*
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### *Reporting and Records*

- *Keep Project manager appraised of progress, successes and difficulties at least twice weekly*
- *Send any documents that will become part of the manual to the Project Manager weekly, as the manual is the end result of this project*
- *With permission, take pictures where possible to include in the manual*
- *Prepare final written report detailing the process, the protocol and the program of demonstration day activities for Project Manager by August 7/04 in Microsoft Word and Excel format*

## **Project Coordinator**

The requirements listed for our Coordinator included being a community member, (and preferably First Nation although not stated as such), someone with good knowledge and understanding of the Elders in the community, computer skills, First Aid, a driver's license, excellent communication skills, and availability on a part time basis for the duration of the project. Flexibility and ability to adapt as the project progressed was also taken into account, since it was recognized this was a “pilot” project and many adjustments would need to be made.



Figure 7 Adam, Maria and Robert Van Bibber.

The position was posted at various places within the Selkirk First Nation, at Employment Central in Whitehorse, as well as passed along in person to potential candidates, to ensure maximum coverage. We accepted resumes for the position, conducted interviews and hired the candidate. Had the candidates not been suitable, our timelines would have been extended while we re-advertised. Our successful candidate was Robert Van Bibber.

## Interviews (Protocol)

*Respect, sharing and awareness of cultural sensitivities...*

**W**

e consistently ensured the Elders knew we were only seeking information they cared to share with us. Any traditional areas or topics that were off limits would be recorded as such.

### Scheduling

The Project Coordinator was able to schedule consultation sessions at times when the Elders were available, not necessarily falling into any pre-set days or hours of the day. It

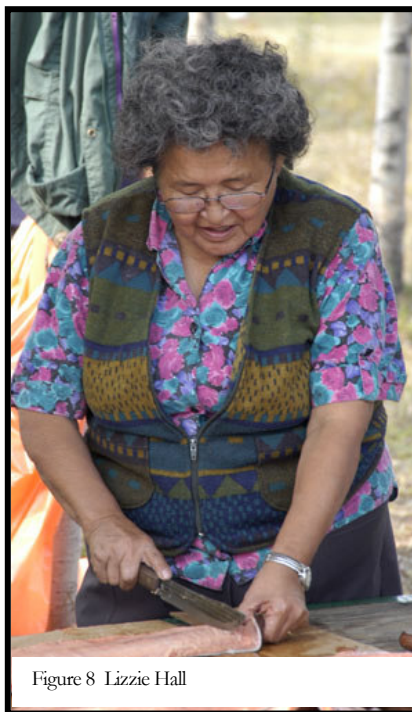


Figure 8 Lizzie Hall

might be over a cup of tea in an Elder's home, while walking along the river, or at fish camp. Initial contact was made with Elders to set up a convenient time to meet; sometimes these worked and sometimes they had to be rescheduled. As the Coordinator was familiar with the Elders, he had a good idea of who might be more available at certain times and schedule accordingly.

Honorariums were discussed with the Elders right away so they knew their contribution was deemed valuable.

As the project progressed, we determined how the scheduled Demonstration Days would work within the timeframes, and found that having two days close to each other was not a workable solution. As it was more difficult to reach the Elders than anticipated, the first date was put on hold, and focus shifted to one day instead of two. (An attempt was made to gather on July 31<sup>st</sup>, but

this did not prove feasible due to the forest fires and smoke in the area).

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## Engaging

A list of questions was established to work from, and all were geared to determine the thoughts of the Elders. We stressed this pilot project was about activities the Elders would be comfortable sharing, and not ideas that “somebody else” wanted for the Elders. The following is the list of questions we worked with:

1. *Tell me about the traditional ways that you feel should be passed on to the younger generation with help from Elders.*
  2. *Are these the most important, or ones that you as an Elder would personally work with?*
  3. *Would you tell me about the traditional ways that you feel you are best able to pass on?*
  4. *How would the Elders react to occasionally having some visitors there, observing and learning from Elders?*
  5. *We want to use Fort Selkirk as the location for two, one-day pilot demonstrations- how do you think can we make this idea work well?*
  6. *How are you interested in helping with this project?*
  7. *What are the most important things about Fort Selkirk, and what would we have to be aware of when going there?*
  8. *What would you need in the way of help to make sure you have a good time?*
  9. *How can we find other Elders to help?*
  10. *We hope to learn enough from the pilot project to prompt a continuation in the next few years-what are your thoughts?*
    - a. *Is there enough interest to make it happen?*
    - b. *How often could Elders be on site at Fort Selkirk during the summer months?*
    - c. *Who would take the leadership role?*
    - d. *How many Elders would participate?*
    - e. *What age groups of children would be involved?*
    - f. *What are the problems we might find along the way?*
    - g. *What are we overlooking?*
-

## Recording Results

All the interviews included names, addresses and date of interview for the Elders, and documentation was processed for further analysis<sup>1</sup>. Honorariums were paid by cheque based on these records.

## Keeping in Contact

The Project Manager kept in close touch with the Project Coordinator, either by e-mail or by phone, and problems were addressed as they arose.

Since the Elders were not always readily available, or necessarily interested, keeping consultations within the timeframes set out in the application proved to be one hurdle. Forest fires and heavy smoke throughout the region for weeks on end were added restraints, as residents of Pelly Crossing were advised to stay indoors for a number of days for health reasons.

## Prioritizing for Demonstration Day



Figure 9 Peter Johnny fiddling a tune for the dancers.

As the consultations were conducted, a general sense of suitable activities for the demonstration became evident as the weeks advanced. A theme quickly appeared, with meat and fish preparation and story telling high on the list. A brush camp setting, with sewing, drum making and traditional food preparation were high on the interest list. Of the Elders that showed an

interest in the project, many were keen to go to Fort Selkirk for the one day. An assortment of

abilities and skills was desired to best demonstrate the variety of potential products, and difficult decisions had to be made when selecting Elders for the Demonstration Day, as the budget limited the number of participants. We viewed the interest as a positive development that balanced the thoughts of those not selected to participate.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 3

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Figure 10 Franklin Roberts and Peter Johnny entertaining at the gathering



## Demonstration Day

*Putting theory to the test...*

**D**emonstrating cultural and traditional activities helped to determine the level of comfort the Elders have with guests on site, and also gauge reaction from family, children and visitors as to the potential product.

### Picking a Date

July 31<sup>st</sup> was initially chosen as the choice day for the second phase of the demonstrations, in part to coincide with the Industry Leader Consultation familiarization tour being hosted by YTG Tourism & Culture. Ten individuals from the USA, as part of a working group, were to be in the Yukon to experience our wilderness tourism opportunities, and stay at Fort Selkirk on the night of July 31<sup>st</sup>, in between stays at Tincup Lake and Dawson City. We felt this was an ideal chance for these select tourism industry experts to meet and engage with First Nations people in



Figure 11 The fireside activities drew an audience

their own environment. As well, the First Nations had an opportunity to share their culture and experiences with high profile professional guests. As part of their work here, the guests would comment on the type of interactions available with First Nations and make suggestions for future consideration.

The Elders would have traveled to Fort Selkirk on July 31<sup>st</sup>, for a mid day arrival, and departed on August 1<sup>st</sup> after lunch.



Figure 12 Summer smoke obscuring the bridge at Pelly Crossing.

Due to the extreme forest fire situation in the Yukon during the summer, we ended up with one demonstration day instead of the two planned. The Industry Leader Consultation familiarization tour was also cancelled due to the fires and smoke. We rescheduled our demonstration day for August 24<sup>th</sup> and arranged for a group of 15 local representatives of the tourism and related industry to stand in for the original group from the USA. This proved a practical compromise, although not international in scope, with each of them happy to complete an evaluation form detailing their

experiences of the day.

## Transportation and Meals

Once the Project Coordinator selected the five Elders who would participate, transportation was arranged to make the trip by van to Pelly Farm, then by boat to Fort Selkirk by noon, and depart for the return trip at 6:30pm. The Selkirk First Nation Restoration Crew provided the boat travel for the Elders as well as prepared two meals for the Elders and visitors while on site. Most favorable comments were made on the quality and content of the meals.

The industry representatives traveled from Whitehorse by vehicle in time to depart by chartered boat from Minto at 10:00 am. This charter also departed Fort Selkirk for the return voyage at 6:30 pm. A few other independent travelers made their own way on the river.

## Resources

The Project Coordinator ascertained in advance which supplies were necessary for the Elders to take along with them, and estimated the five Elders would be accessible with their skills and knowledge for a period of about three hours. A brush camp was set up over a fire with tarps and poles; tables and chairs were provided for each of the Elders that needed them.

**Lizzie Hall** showed how fresh fish was cut in the traditional manner, and the previously dried fish hanging in strips from the poles over the fire providing the authentic look. Everyone around the fire was able to enjoy a taste of the finished product. Lizzie's normal processing speed was drastically reduced as she explained her technique in detail.

**Johnson Edwards**, well known for his drum and snowshoe making, set up outside the warming cabin. Along with explaining about the process of making drums with his

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hides on hand, drumming filled the air during the opening welcome and the impromptu stick gambling that left the rookies bewildered, but enthused.



Figure 13 Frances Woosley and Scott Bradley

Located aside Johnson was **Linch Curry** with a collection of traps that she regularly uses. We were able to see how the traps were set, and more importantly and audibly, sprung. A beaver was displayed on the table, and the visitors were able to examine it from head to toe, providing not only a close encounter, but also most likely the first such encounter for most of the non-First Nation people present.

**Steven Silverfox** delighted the visitors with his knife handling and meat cutting skills (using a set of hand made knives), while a moose head rotated over the smoking fire. A moose nose was singed and a porcupine skinned, to the delight of most who were watching.

**Kathleen Thorpe** had her display set up inside the warming cabin where she provided samples of beadwork and moccasins, as well as a portfolio of her paintings. Questions were flying throughout the day, and people were keen to try their hand at the beadwork.

An event brochure was distributed with the schedule, list of participants (which changed from the time of printing), purpose of the pilot project, the funders and, of course, a “Thank You” to those involved.



Figure 14 SFN Councilor Carmen Baker and Johnson Edwards

## Evaluating

Overall, the Demo Day was a lively, colorful, cross cultural and noisy success. The day belonged to the Selkirk First Nations members who organized and hosted the event.

Through the evaluation process, including comment sheets from both Elders and visitors and a de-briefing meeting with the funding group representatives, we identified items we had missed and could improve on another time. Most importantly, the overwhelming enthusiasm and thankfulness for the opportunity to participate with the

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Selkirk First Nation members on their traditional land was repeatedly voiced by the visitors. The summary of comments<sup>2</sup> shows the potential for a well-developed product.

## **Recommendations from Demonstration Day**

- Coordinate timeframes to have transportation readily available for the Elders to lessen waiting times for them
- Introduce the Elders at the start of the day
- Have all the tables for Elders outside, if possible, for maximum exposure to visitors, weather being a factor
- Thaw the frozen beaver for a longer time beforehand
- Have fewer areas with activities happening at the same time, to avoid missing the excitement, or schedule so they are not concurrent
- Make sure Elders get a rest, and tea throughout the day
- Increase budgeting for transportation costs

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2

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## Pilot Project Evaluation

*If we had to do it all over again...*

**N**o project is complete without doing an evaluation. We needed to ask ourselves what worked well, what would work better, and what we discovered to assist those that follow in our steps.

### What worked well

- Support from the applicant group, including the First Nation was obvious and appreciated
  - The application to Tourism Product Development was readily accepted, and funding quickly authorized
  - Our project coordinator was very enthusiastic, and as a local, knew most of the Elders prior to being hired, making his job easier and more effective
  - The Elders that were keen to participate were *very* keen
  - Demonstration Day was an overall success
  - The Elders listed few complaints
  - The flexibility of everyone involved helped with last minute changes
  - The overall process was workable, despite the distances involved for administrating the project
  - The cross cultural coordination and working together of numerous stakeholders was effective
  - Indications of potential product was obvious
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## What would work better

- More lead-time would have been helpful in planning, as it took longer than hoped to hire a project coordinator
- An unprecedented heat wave and numerous forest fires/smoke in the Pelly region were not to our advantage
- Some of the Elders indicated the honorariums provided were not adequate, so more examination of this for budget purposes would be beneficial
- Some of the Elders felt left out at not being able to participate
- Some of the Elders had difficulty relating to the questions asked, based on their cultural perspective compared to non-First Nations
- An earlier date would have provided a warmer day for the boat ride
- Work the project through fewer financial entities to ensure an accurate and timely accounting of the expenses.
- We were able to carry the pilot project along to a point of envisioning potential products, but not to actually defining a specific “product” including names, dates, times, and a definite budget

## What we did find out

The Selkirk First Nation members can take full credit for the success of the Demonstration Day. We know the Elders enjoyed themselves, and expressed their positive thoughts on having Elders at Fort Selkirk all summer on a rotation basis in years to come. The community that was present appeared to participate fully, and the warmth and sharing was sincere.

Although the visitors of the day were not all true tourists, many were seeing specific traditional ways for the first time. Many questions, smiles all around, interest, intrigue, and humor were apparent.

Cameras were madly clicking and whirring. The “real” tourists that happened by on the river were enthralled with the timing of their journey that dropped them into the middle of our event. Many of the industry representatives took a step back from the formal activities at some point, and just observed the onlookers, gauging reactions.



Figure 15 George Asquith

Their comments strengthen the knowledge that the potential product is here, needing definition and packaging.

We confirmed that the Selkirk First Nation can provide the key elements identified by Kent Stewart in his report “A Review of the Marketing Aspects of the Great River Journey Business Plan” (April 2004):

*“First Nations Elements – Our research confirmed that **First Nations content** on this journey is a very desirable component of the product, both in terms of their ownership of and involvement in the tour. This market wants **genuine, personal interactions with contemporary First Nations people in their own environment. To be hosted and guided by local people, particularly the First Nations people whose traditional lands are being visited, would be a very desirable component for this product. Simple, authentic, opportunities for insight into First Nations lifeways, crafts, and their interpretation of the landscape, wildlife, and peoples of the region would be very desirable in the tourism experience. We are confident that the proponents are working in a very appropriate and respectful way toward this outcome”***

*“Activities – The key is to provide personal programming, responding to interests of the individuals on the journey. Activities and experiences need to be flexibly programmed **to take advantage of both special interests and special opportunities.** For example, opportunities to hike, fish, canoe, **explore an historic site** or view wildlife need to be matched with the clients’ interests and enjoyed as the opportunities arise. Understanding the needs and interests of the individual guests and **having First Nations people involved, in day to day tasks, throughout the operation should lead to the natural, unscripted, personal interactions and experiences that the market seeks. A scheduled visit to a summer camp to have tea and see fishing drying or a stop along the river to have a river ranger explain his or her job and what to look out for in the next section of the river would be examples of stops with interesting, authentic, First Nations content.** The Great River Journey route is rich in opportunities to develop the kind of activities and programming to which the market will respond. We are satisfied The Great River Journey proponents have planned for an ongoing process of consultation and activity development for such a mix of activities.”*

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## Conclusion (Program)

*The final word...*

**T**he Elder Host Pilot Project was definitely a success. The enthusiastic support of the Selkirk First Nation Elders was, and will be, critical to future activities in their community.

### Possibilities-logistics

The Elder Host Pilot Project was designed to determine what, if any, ideas could be generated to turn into a defined product. The logistical aspects are addressed here first and will, of course, vary from community to community, as will the definition of the programs.

From the consultations with the Elders<sup>3</sup> involved in the pilot project, it was apparent there is indeed unanimous support for a summer presence at Fort Selkirk by the Elders. They have identified that all of the Elders who are healthy enough to be involved should be involved (probably a group of 6-10); a rotation basis for the duration of the summer would work best. All the Elders should have an equal say on how a program would be set up, and a coordinator is recommended, possibly an Elder him/herself. This would be a paid position, perhaps part time for the summer, and would coordinate travel, schedules, supplies etc.

Elder Evaluation Comments from Demonstration Day<sup>4</sup> further clarified the initial consultation thoughts. Most felt the 3 hours set aside was adequate; all agreed that having Elders at Fort Selkirk regularly was a good idea. They would like to stay overnight (which would require appropriate accommodations), and an honorarium is necessary, but was not defined in dollars. Most felt that having Elders on site every day was better than only a few days a week, and everyone needed to have suitable breaks during the day. Some of the Elders would be comfortable working by themselves, some in groups and some with same genders.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1

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Health issues and the weather were determined to be the biggest problem factors, followed by a comfortable place to stay, possible lack of interest and budget concerns. Funerals and fish camps would possibly take precedence over being at Fort Selkirk at specific times, and we need to be aware of long established summer patterns. The Elders have recommended that all ages be involved and that some of the younger Elders also need to be involved.

As the Demonstration Day proved, the Elders have no difficulty in sharing skills and traditional ways with visitors, indeed the pride was very evident. Concerns about having visitors at Fort Selkirk centered on respect for the historical artifacts and graves there, and numerous Elders mentioned potential problems with bears, requesting a bear dog and/or a gun for protection.

The Project Coordinator identified the issue of having adequate meat and fish supplies on hand to last through a summer. Preservation and harvesting costs need to be budgeted for. As the fish and wildlife harvesting would be done on SFN traditional land, it would be done according to the Doo'li Laws, dictating which times of the year certain animals and fish may be harvested. Planning for this a year in advance is recommended.

Traditional medicine has similar harvesting requirements, as does trapping. The evolution from past traditional styles of traps to the humane steel traps of today could be combined with the construction of traditional clothing to complete the circle and show the original uses of fur, as opposed to the income generating activity it is today.

From a compilation of all the comments, one possible consideration would be to have a family group, including Elders and children, on site for the various rotations. Visitors would be most impressed to witness the whole and complete traditional family picture, and this would allow for the variety of talent within the Elders to be shared. A group of Elder entrepreneurs is another possibility. A traditional camp setting is highly recommended, built using traditional materials and supplies with careful attention to detail. Part of the area might need to be fenced, in order to levy an admission charge. Arts, crafts and a small convenience store could be implemented for extra revenue. Traditional foods, such as tea and bannock could be served.

## **Possibilities-traditional skills**

The traditional ways that ranked highest for the Elders to pass on and share were meat and fish preparation, fishing and hunting camps, use of language and stories/oral history. A few Elders also noted trapping, traditional clothing, and plants/berries for food. Noted less often were the Doo'li laws, traditional medicine and wilderness survival.

Interestingly and encouragingly, the range of activities was equally supported by both the men and the women. Exceptions were the drum and snowshoe making and travel

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which had more male interest, and fish preparation and traditional clothing that drew more interest from women.

The traditional ways the elders thought should be passed on were also the same as the ones they were personally willing to share, which is a reasonable assumption.

The snowshoe and drum making skills highlighted on Demonstration Day could be expanded to include traditional boats, fish wheels, birch baskets and baby chairs and bows and arrows. Items could be also available for sale, as previously suggested.

As in many communities, the Elders know what they know, but do not realize what others do not know. Thus, a product. There is a need to speak with the Elders to give them a sense of how unique and in demand their product is, and where they can go with it for financial rewards. The Elders demonstrated via the Demonstration Day how accomplished they were in getting their message across-interesting, informative and professional.

## **Putting it together**

At a de-briefing meeting of representatives for the various funders, it was stated that a program of this nature would not have the necessary elements of a business to be a stand-alone product. Capacity and sustainability were identified as issues. How does it become sustainable and generate revenue?

The location and activities at Fort Selkirk, (which is its own being, given the history) provides a unique physical and cultural environment, and the model that works there would need adaptation to be effective elsewhere. The product fits the overall Fort Selkirk picture, with a better chance for success there than other locations. Entrepreneurial activities are encouraged by the Selkirk Co-management Group as part of their mandate, such as retail activity in the T&D store or in the campground, although so far nobody has taken advantage of the opportunities.

A pot of money, created from different levels of funding, to create a program that would assist people to feel pride in their skills, coming from a partnership opportunity, is the key to success for future endeavors. Tour developers such as GRJ would contribute to such a program. As an example, they could provide a scheduled set of people in increasing numbers over time with a company contribution matched to honorariums. If Selkirk First Nation sees value and builds it into their budget, they will provide funding themselves towards this concept for long term viability. YTG Tourism & Culture, and Product Development and Marketing can assist with refinement and product development.

Additional funding dollars would give added incentive. SFN is learning about interacting with a visiting public while maintaining its initial goals of preserving and transmitting the language and culture, and utilizing momentum that is already there.

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SFN has the advantage of being culturally intact, unlike most other communities, and we know that authenticity is the key.

There is a huge potential with product expanding and Pelly Crossing itself using Fort Selkirk. Tourists ask about the Northern Tutchone language, and are looking for CD's, etc. that the SFN could provide. Strong comments came from the community meeting about alternate uses for Fort Selkirk, such as retreats and training locations, which would need additional accommodations. There is also talk of rebuilding the trail to Victoria Rock.

## **Next steps**

As the Pilot Project concludes, we have identified logistics and possible skills that could be incorporated into specific product, assuming a suitable amount of funding is available. It is beyond the scope of this project to go further.

The combined possibilities point to a need for the community to have a focused strategy to make use of the information gathered from the Elder Host Pilot Project. The recommendation is to:

- Strike a committee with representatives from SFN, Tourism & Culture's Heritage Resources Unit and Product Development, Selkirk Co-management Group and First Nations Investment Group to determine where and how to proceed.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** Elder Evaluation Comments from Demo Day

**Appendix 2** Visitor Evaluation Comments from Demo Day

**Appendix 3** Summary of Consultations Results

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# Appendix 1

## Elder Evaluation Comments from Demo Day

<b>1</b>	<b>What was the best part of the day for you?</b>	
	Answering the questions	3
	Doing the demo	3
	Everything	2
	Stick gambling	2
	Good time-fun	1
	Rest periods	1
<b>2</b>	<b>What did you like the least?</b>	
	Beaver was frozen	1
	Cold boat ride	1
	Liked everything	1
	Singing	1
<b>3</b>	<b>What did you learn today that you did not know before?</b>	
	Nothing	2
	From other Elders	1
	People have not seen moose nose before	1
	People really interested in our ways	1
<b>4</b>	<b>What else would the visitors have been interested in today?</b>	
	Traditional medicine	2
	Details of drying meat	1
	Everything we do	1
	Gophers, games	1
	History of drumming, more songs	1
	Story telling	1
	Tanning hide	1
	Traditional dress	1
	Young people should be there here too	1
<b>5</b>	<b>Did you have:</b>	
	Enough time	3
	Too much time	1

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	Not enough time ....with individuals today?	1
<b>6</b>	<b>Is it a good idea to have Elders at FS regularly?</b>	
	Yes	5
	No	0
<b>6a</b>	<b>How often?</b>	
	Every day	4
	3 days a week	1
	2 days a week	0
	4 days a week	0
<b>6b</b>	How many hours?	
	Three	2
	All day	2
	<b>One</b>	0
	<b>Two</b>	0
<b>6c</b>	Stay overnight?	
	<b>Yes</b>	5
	No	2
<b>6d</b>	Is an honorarium necessary?	
	Yes	5
	No	0
	<b>Comments, suggestions</b>	
	What we teach should be passed on	1
	Should have Dooli laws	1
	Need heated cabin to stay in	1
	Traditional Medicine should be shown	1
	As long as we can have a rest, can go all day	1
	Could rotate Elders, a week at a time maybe	1

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# Appendix 2

## Visitor Evaluation Comments from Demo Day

### 1. What was the best part of the day for you?

- The river is so awe inspiring, knowing the history it holds for the traditional lands we were guests of
- Sitting down with the Elders, one-on-one and being able to ask them questions on what they were working on; stick gambling
- The heritage buildings
- Meeting the Elders in Selkirk where they felt comfortable enough to share. Learning about traditions and language
- Best part was the guided tour of the old fort/buildings. Having an Elder share her childhood was very interesting and made me feel more connected to the history of Fort Selkirk
- Listening to Lizzie talk about her family life and growing up near Pelly at a fish camp; being at Selkirk
- Meeting the people who actually knew Fort Selkirk because they lived there
- The relaxing and interacting with people; seeing the pride in the Elders sharing their skills with us
- Walk about
- Seeing the cohesiveness of the FN members working together and being proud of their traditional skills, sharing their knowledge and so willing for others to learn
- Meeting and visiting with the Elders and other people in our group; learning about the Great River Journey; having time to visit with locals
- Spending time and listening to the Elders-especially Lizzie; first hand stories about Maria growing up at Fort Selkirk; Peter talking about the fiddle-actually everything-very authentic
- There isn't one thing-the stories, history, the boat ride, the food, the company, the Elders, the kids, stick gambling, learning to drum
- A total day. It was an event!

### 2. What did you find particularly interesting today?

- The history told through Maria's eyes; support & coordination by the communities; stick gambling-first time in 14 years in the Yukon!!
-

- People & Elders; Activities/demo; watching the tourists get so excited about the demos-they totally ate it up!
- Fort Selkirk tour; wild meat and salmon prep; the people
- Stick gambling; tour & interpretation with Elders; watching the Elders at activities/learning and participating
- Fish cutting; the improvements at Fort Selkirk
- Salmon cutting demo; stories told on the walk; meeting the Elders
- Country food; stick gambling; music and interacting with the people from Pelly
- Food preparation methods; natural interaction between the two cultures
- Yukoner for 13 years-first time to Fort Selkirk (one of first posts)
- Guided tour; traditional activities; conversing with Elders about the past, their way of life and their take on the failure of their people and place in the Yukon
- Traditional laws, stunning visuals, food
- Stick gambling, wild game demo, fiddling
- Elders working with wild meat, talking with the Elders, site tour, food was exceptional
- How to cut and smoke a salmon; taking the history of Fort Selkirk and giving it a face lift; the absolute joy the Elders have in sharing with us

**3. In your opinion, what will visitors be looking for? Which of the activities presented today will have high visitor appeal?**

- Anything FN oriented and in particular the drumming, meat handling, working with salmon and the beauty of the region
  - Hands-on experience-not only being able to watch but getting a chance to participate in the activities; seeing the tanning process; traditional medicines (picking and making) and tasting
  - FN messaging; stick gambling, fiddling, wild game demo; stories
  - Preparation of the fish & how much is used-“no waste”; tasting the fish; stick gambling; the talents of the FN members
  - Stick gambling; tour & interpretation with Elders; watching the Elders do activities; learning and participating
  - Wild meat and salmon preparation
  - What was presented today is what visitors are looking for-people stories, interaction, authentic experience, history of the people, stick gambling & meat preservation
  - Drying meat; stick gambling; Maria’s walk through time
  - Stick gambling, Fort Selkirk, the Elders, traditional language, local stories
-

- Not one in particular, but living and participating in a full day of “life”- hunting, trapping, food prep, cooking etc.
- Fish smoking, fiddle playing; walking tour; seeing the beaver and porcupine up close
- People will be looking for authentic cultural experiences; all the activities will appeal even though it will not be *all* activities for *all* people
- Country food demos; fiddling and stick gambling; anything interactive, hands-on & participating
- Traditional lifestyles, walk about, stories

**4. What traditional activities would you have liked to learn more about today?**

- Someone making a drum or snowshoes
- Traditional laws; individual experiences of growing up in Fort Selkirk, natural ingredients
- Hunting & trapping techniques
- Medicines; history; traditional laws
- Hide tanning; hands-on beading-make a small craft; exploration of the animal parts and use of all parts
- I missed the smoked fish area-busy with something else
- Trapping
- FN spirituality; stories
- Actually being able to skin/singe meat; tan a hide; doing bead work
- Stick gambling-got busy and only got to tap my toes
- Cleaning a fish; trying my hand at beading
- Quill work, moccasin making
- Snowshoe making; story telling; legends, history of FN
- Drum making, dancing, meat cutting for drying

**5. Did you have 1 too much time 10 enough time or 3 not enough time to talk with the individual Elders today?**

- Great to mingle and ask questions
  - More time would have been better
  - They all have wonderful stories that one falls upon another. The laughter was the one magical thing heard all day long
  - Elders will get too tired to do on a continual basis; more structured programming would have been better
-



**6. Please provide some encouraging comments and possibilities, based on your experience at Fort Selkirk today that could help the First Nation and Elders to develop a tourism product for future years.**

- Commentator of tour should have a portable microphone system for better hearing
  - Pamphlets of each residence to refer to with the history of the residences
  - Write a book with the history to sell with lots of pictures
  - Elders demo to youth with hands-on
  - Hosts could wear traditional garments or display them with history of sewing
  - Arts & craft store-display the community talent
  - Have a one or two day program
  - Incredible, enjoyable day-thank you.
  - Excellent & authentic
  - What visitors are looking for
  - Food was excellent
  - Franklin & Peter-an added touch
  - More about the river on the boat ride-special sites, fish camps etc, oral history of area
  - Waivers of insurance of some sort need to be developed to protect the FN involved in the project.
  - Lizzie's idea of rotating Elders is excellent idea
  - Develop a complete and comprehensive package. When visitors come, they will be like the FN-maybe be adopted by the people of Fort Selkirk
  - The site is so rich in culture and history that more interpretive info would be nice
  - Thank you for the experience-something I will never forget!
  - There was so much today that needed to be seen that one could not in the time allowed to digest. I believe that introductions were missed. As I felt the experience was personal and this should have been re-enforced with introductions of those attending and the Elders. The experience provided: taste, sight, sound, feel, smell-the Keys to Success
  - They are on the right track. The demonstrations were important but there should be a chance for people to purchase the end-products. Having smoked salmon or a drum available for sale would give visitors an opportunity to complete the experience. At all times it is important for the person doing the demo to explain what they are doing, as they do it.
-

- Have more time to organize before the event; traditional dress, tools etc; stories take time
  - Develop a craft with an Elder that you can take home (small basket, drum)
  - Medicinal talks
  - Mix youth and Elders in discussion-people want to see modern youth leaning skills and are intrigued by youth
  - Have a drummer come by boat to symbolize how they did it-makes a statement!
  - Should have photo disclaimers/waivers and ask if pictures can be taken
  - Need codes of conduct for visitors
  - Safety briefing would be good-waiver to acknowledge risks
  - Provide paper copy or documentation to allow guests to follow Elder-acts as a keepsake
  - I thank the generosity on behalf of the Elders to share their stories-beyond the demo. It was part of what made the experience special & memorable.
  - The difference between an experience where you can watch someone showing his or her traditional ways & an experience where you can meet and share is what makes this experience amazing. I feel what we experienced today was a sharing one in which I walked away with a lot.
  - I think what Lizzie touched on-rotating the Elders-is important to explore. The ultimate experience is going to leave both parties exhausted-as a tourist I can go and rest-how to look after the Elders, maintaining that desire on their behalf to share is the challenge. Encouraging communities to become active in passing the info down to other generations is work that needs to be addressed before we burn out a very valuable resource.
  - Yukoners will love and cherish the sharing of this info. It needs to be accessible-scheduled-regular to draw awareness and the interest. Build it and they will come. Lizzie suggested to incorporate language too-totally agree.
  - Thank you so much for your generosity in sharing your time and wealth of knowledge. A most enriching, blessed day.
  - It was so well organized. You could see the pride on everyone's face. Just as we respected what was gifted to us today the Elders showed the same respect to us. One Elder asked permission to speak her language to her brother-unheard of by one is constantly around other languages. When you think how much of SFN history is oral, it becomes imperative to not only write down the history and language, but to record it as well.
-

- Perhaps an idea for the future is to have FN language on all points of interest including historical signage.
  - Expand to other communities-use Fort Selkirk as a learning/test place and bring members from other communities to view what can be done.
  - Continue having Elders teach./show their work-rotate Elders so everyone gets a chance to participate and nobody gets too tired
  - Have scheduled times for activities every half hour or so-not overlapping because you miss out on some activities
  - Have a microphone on guided tours
  - Have more than one teaching a day
  - Stories on spirituality and creation
  - Perhaps a dance/music interpretation
  - Presentation on traditional plants/medicine
  - Have interpreters in traditional clothing
  - Perhaps a bit more discussion or explanation as to why certain things are done in traditional ways-eg. Moose nose
  - Have Elders actually working on project, such as Kathleen beading
  - A few things today the Elders had ideas (stick gambling, music) that they brought out slowly to see if we would be interested. Nice to have them leading rather than in the background
  - Have tour guides face the audience when talking and wait for everyone to catch up before starting tour again
  - “Time” is the most important part of visiting-experiencing and getting comfortable with people. These cannot be quick visits
  - It would be nice to develop a “valuable” souvenir to make with the Elders to take home
  - Develop tours for local groups-like today-to experience and be an ambassador for our product.
-

# Appendix 3

## Summary of Consultation Results

Question	Total
<b>#1 <i>Tell me about the traditional ways that you feel should be passed on to the younger generation with help from Elders.</i></b>	
Birch bark making	1
Culture camp/events	2
Dooli laws	4
Drums, snowshoes, old tools	3
Early motherhood-both parents	2
Fish net making	2
<b>Fish preparation</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Fishing &amp; hunting/camps</b>	<b>13</b>
History	1
Honesty	1
<b>Language</b>	<b>13</b>
Life skills	1
Living off land	3
Making chew	1
<b>Meat preparation</b>	<b>14</b>
Medicine	2
Monitoring	1
Music, dancing	4
Plants and berries	5
Respect for Elders	2
Skin boat making	1
Spiritual training	1
<b>Stories/oral history</b>	<b>10</b>
Sweat lodge	1
Tanning hide	4
Traditional clothing/sewing	9
Traditional food	2
Traditional games	3
Traditional ways/potlatches	4
<b>Trapping</b>	<b>12</b>
Travel	3
Wilderness survival	4
Work skills	2

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**#2 *Are these the most important, or ones that you as an Elder would personally work with?***

Yes 29

**#3 *Would you tell me about the traditional ways that you feel you are best able to pass on?***

Bush survival	2
Camp work and safety	2
Dooli laws	1
Drum making	1
<b>Fish preparation</b>	<b>14</b>
Fishing	8
<b>Hunting</b>	<b>10</b>
Language	3
<b>Meat preparation</b>	<b>14</b>
Medicine	1
Plants & berries	4
Singing, dancing, drumming	3
Skin boat building	1
Social justice	0
Spirituality	2
<b>Story telling/oral history</b>	<b>8</b>
Tanning hide	1
Traditional clothing	4
Trapping	6

**#4 *How would the Elders react to occasionally having some visitors there, observing and learning from Elders?***

Does not matter who is there	1
Favorably, elders need to teach	3
Hard to understand them maybe	1
<b>I wouldn't mind/be happy to</b>	<b>19</b>
Should be recorded	2
Some might be shy, would get used to it	3
Yes, but ask first	2

**#5 *We want to use Fort Selkirk as the location for two, one-day pilot demonstrations- how do***

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*you think can we make this idea work well?*

Better at Minto	1
Bring it up at Elders council meeting	1
<b>Build brush/fish camp</b>	<b>6</b>
Comfort	1
Demos would be good	3
Fishnets at site, moose. Campfire and tea	3
Fort Selkirk is a good place	4
Have crafts for sale on site	1
Hire permanent coordinator	1
I'll be there	1
Lots of Elders	1
No interference from FS restoration crew	1
Not too many people	1
Not too much heavy work	1
Oral history	2
Planning & coordination	1
<b>Fresh meat</b>	<b>5</b>
Workshops	1

*#6 How are you interested in helping with this project?*

A few days at a time	3
Any way I can	3
As Elder facilitator	1
Displaying clothing	2
Drum making	1
Encouragement to other Elders	1
Have to see first	3
Helping with hunting and trapping	3
Make this my pet project	1
<b>Meat and fish prep</b>	<b>9</b>
Self government	1
Sewing, beading	2
Stories of long ago	3
We have shelter	1

*#7 What are the most important things about Fort Selkirk, and what would we have to be aware of when going there?*

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<b>Bears-need watchdog/gun</b>	11
Cleanliness	1
Early mornings & evenings good	1
Fire smart	1
Good fishing and hunting area	2
<b>Grave sites, artifacts</b>	<b>9</b>
Gun for protection	2
History	1
Look but don't touch Dooli laws	2
Morning is good	1
Not too much traffic	1
Replace cabins	1
<b>Respect</b>	<b>11</b>

**#8 *What would you need in the way of help to make sure you have a good time?***

Assist Elders up the bank	1
Bed	1
Chairs	2
Dry place to display things	3
<b>Food</b>	<b>12</b>
Fresh fish and game	7
Golf cart	1
Sleeping bags	0
Supplies	6
<b>Tent/cabin</b>	<b>20</b>
Transportation	12
Weather	1

**#9 *How can we find other Elders to help?***

<b>Ask Elders</b>	<b>27</b>
House to house or mail	1
Working together	1

**#10 *We hope to learn enough from the pilot project to prompt a continuation in the next few years-what are your thoughts?***

**a *Is there enough interest to make it happen?***

<b>Yes-Try it out</b>	<b>26</b>
Some will be interested	2

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With younger members	1
<b>b <i>How often could Elders be on site at Fort Selkirk during the summer months?</i></b>	
1-2 days a month	1
4 hours a day for Elders, all day for others	1
<b>All summer</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>As required-rotate</b>	<b>9</b>
Few days at a time	2
Need commitment	1
Not sure	2
Not too long	2
Others could do it if they were paid	1
When available	2
<b>c <i>Who would take the leadership role?</i></b>	
<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>13</b>
Depends on health problems	2
Each individual	1
<b>Elders-equal</b>	<b>12</b>
Fittest/smartest elder	3
Johnson Edwards	1
Stanley takes this on as his pet project	1
<b>d <i>How many Elders would participate?</i></b>	
3 to 4	4
5 to 6	3
6 to 10	8
11 to 15	2
12 or 6 on rotation	2
15-20	1
<b>All who are interested and not sick</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>e <i>What age groups of children would be involved?</i></b>	
12 and up	3
8 to 10 listen better	1
9 to 12	1
13 and up	2
<b>All ages</b>	<b>16</b>
Not sure	2

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School age	2
<b>f <i>What are the problems we might find along the way?</i></b>	
Alcohol and drug free	1
Cold for Elders	3
Comfortable place to stay	2
Communications	1
Fish camps	1
Funerals	2
Give YTG an understanding of our intent	2
<b>Health issues</b>	<b>7</b>
Lack of interest	2
Low budget	2
Not too many	4
Talk out problems	2
Teamwork	1
The big boys	1
<b>Weather, fires</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>g <i>What are we overlooking?</i></b>	
Celebration and gifts at end of demo	1
Childcare	1
Consult with younger generations too	1
Elders meeting	1
Fleecy for moose brains for tanning	1
<b>Not sure/nothing</b>	<b>13</b>
Overall effect on everybody involved	1
Our way of life and historical practices	1
Transportation for wheelchairs and walkers	1
Video tape the demo	1
Watchdog	1

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