

Wilderness Tourism Best Management Practices

Issue - Identifying active use areas and values and consultation

Concern: Key to avoiding conflict and understanding issues and interests is ensuring that the locations of key wilderness tourism areas are determined.



Best Management Practices

- Background information on wilderness tourism activity areas, uses and values is available from the Government of Yukon Department of Tourism & Culture.
- Consult known operators in the activity area – both fixed base and non-fixed base operators.
- Schedule consultations to avoid tourism operating seasons.

Issue - Trails

Concern: Trails are important for winter and summer wilderness tourism activities.

Best Management Practices

- Minimize or avoid trail use during periods of high precipitation and spring break up, when the ground conditions are soft or saturated.



- Travel on the most durable surfaces available: rock, gravel or snow.
- Avoid marking trees, hanging flagging tape or building rock piles to mark your path (use GPS technology).

Issue - Lakes and River Corridors

Concerns: Remote fly-in lakes are used for high quality fishing and as put-ins for wilderness river/hiking trips. River corridors are vital to the wilderness tourism industry.

Best Management Practices

- Access into regions with identified wilderness tourism values should be restricted to use of aircraft, existing trails or winter roads.
- Where a permanent or multi-season road is necessary, all precautions should be taken to minimize the impact on wilderness tourism values and restrict use to operator only.
- Exploration and production activity should be set back from water and watercourses within identified wilderness tourism use areas.
- Avoid flying over known wilderness tourism areas during active wilderness tourism times except where necessary for safety reasons. Maintain adequate height to lessen disturbance.

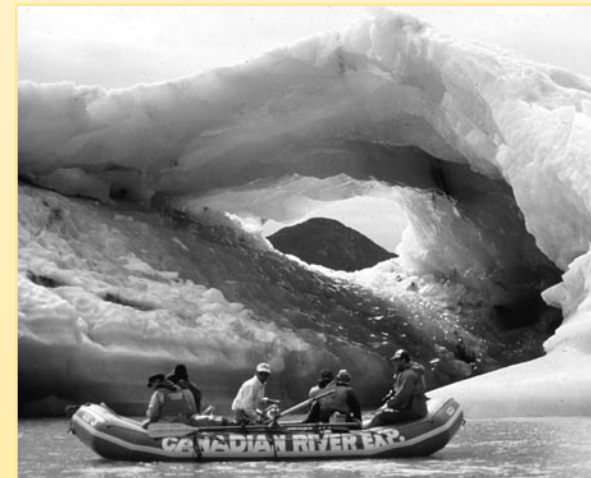


Issue - Infrastructure

Concern: Activities at wilderness properties take place in all seasons and include canoeing, dog mushing, snowmobiling, skiing, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.

Best Management Practices

- Identify and avoid lodges, back-country cabins, camps and trails being used by wilderness tourism operators.
- Minimize visual impact within view of lodges, cabins and camps.
- Use existing infrastructure when possible and if agreeable to all stakeholders.



Issue - Wildlife/Human interactions

Concern: Careless disposal of garbage or feeding wildlife can leave a legacy of habituated bears and other scavengers that could potentially have deadly consequences for future wildlife and human interactions in the region.

Best Management Practices

- Ensure crews receive bear awareness certification.
- Provide reusable lunch and drink containers to reduce littering and prevent the discarding of food remains in the bush.
- Ensure temporary camps are managed in such a way as to discourage wildlife interest and reward (strict camp rules regarding feeding wildlife, managing cooking facilities and food wastes, electric fences, deterrent guidelines etc.)



This is not a comprehensive list of Best Management Practices for Wilderness Tourism. For more information see the Best Management Practices web page on www.yukonoilandgas.com.

Context

Yukon's wilderness attracts guided and self-guided visitors. Licensed wilderness tourism operators guide and accommodate tourists on the land and water year round and rely on the Yukon's large pristine areas to maintain their livelihood.

As wilderness areas decrease throughout the world, the demand for wilderness-based tourism has increased. This trend has increased the economic value of the Yukon's intact landscapes and encouraged operators to grow and develop new products.

The viability and growth of the Yukon's wilderness tourism sector depends on the consideration and cooperation of other industries using the land. Access, exploration and development activity that alters wilderness landscapes has the potential to impact visitor experience and Yukon's attractiveness as a wilderness tourism destination. As such, use of best management practices are encouraged in order to minimize conflict and encourage a healthy and collaborative relationship between the tourism industry and the oil and gas industry.

Rationale

The wilderness tourism industry and the oil and gas industry often share the same landscape. Tourism is a vital part of the Yukon's economy. Activities are based on wilderness landscapes, parks and special areas, significant wildlife features and wilderness-based historical sites and events. With few roads, undeveloped landscapes and healthy and intact ecosystems, intangible qualities of wilderness come from the size and feel of the country, its natural condition, and the expectation of seeing wildlife.

Objectives

- Maintain a vibrant, healthy and growing Yukon tourism industry;
- Maintain intact wilderness landscapes in key wilderness tourism areas;
- Ensure infrastructure that supports wilderness tourism is respected (e.g. trails, airstrips, cabins, lodges);
- Reduce the creation of access into areas previously not accessible;
- Ensure that natural, cultural and historical features important for tourism are respected and maintained;
- Minimize conflict between the tourism industry and the energy sector; and
- Encourage a healthy and collaborative relationship between the tourism industry and the oil and gas industry.

Description

The tourism industry is an important component of Yukon's economy. Tourism is the largest private sector employer in Yukon with approximately 80 per cent of all Yukon employees working for businesses that report at least some level of tourism revenue.

Of the 251,704 summer visitors in 2004, 56,266 included wilderness tourism activity as part of their trip. The highest expenditures made by visiting tourists were parties travelling primarily by boat.

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