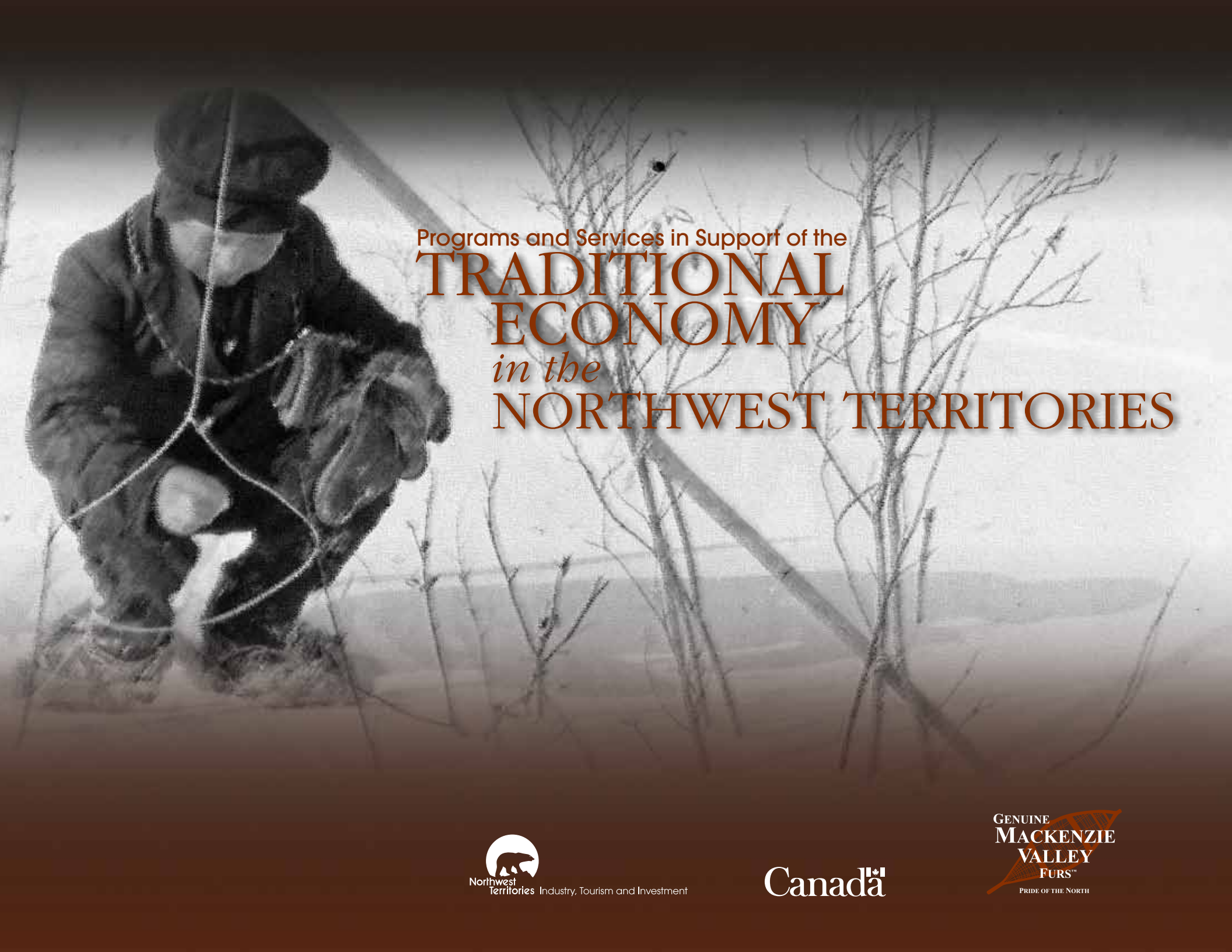
Programs and Services in Support of the

TRADITIONAL ECONOMY *in the* NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



Northwest Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment

Canada

Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs™ Pride of the North

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Traditional Economy Summary

The traditional economy has sustained the Aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories (NWT) for thousands of years - providing food, clothing, shelter, tools and goods for trade.

The GNWT recognizes both the economic value and inherent challenges in traditional harvesting. The Government is taking action to ensure traditional economy practices continue and that these traditional values are sustained. This publication provides a detailed summary of programs and services that support the traditional economy including:

- Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program (GMVF)
- Support to Traditional Crafts – Hide & Fur Supply Program
- Take a Kid Trapping
  - » Traditional Canoe Building
- Canada – Northwest Territories Growing Forward Agreement – Traditional Harvest Program
- Harvester Support
  - » Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP)
  - » Local Wildlife Committees
  - » Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy (SEED)
  - » Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation
  - » Workers Compensation for Harvesters
  - » Community Hunts

Honourable David Ramsay
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Government of the Northwest Territories

Minister's Message

The Aboriginal people of our Territory have a long proud history of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The transfer of life skills relating to this proud history ensures that these values are sustained, and important social and cultural links are maintained to the land and its resources.

In the Northwest Territories, these traditional and cultural skills are recognized and supported by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) as the foundation of our traditional economy. The practise of these traditional and cultural skills help to diversify and sustain local economies, which support the government's goal to provide all communities and regions with opportunities and choices.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, in partnership with others, provides quality programs and services to promote and support traditional economy practices across the territory.

A critical element of that support is to improve local traditional economies and provide residents with the opportunity to pursue traditional livelihoods – the benefits of which are often measured in non-economic values.

By working with communities and through the responsible development of natural resources in the NWT, our ultimate goal is to create a prosperous, diverse, and sustainable economy which will benefit all NWT residents for years to come.

Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs

Wild fur from the NWT is considered among the very best in the world. The harvesting of fur is a fundamental part of Aboriginal culture and the traditional economy in the territory.

Through the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Program (GMVF), ITI works in partnership with Regional Offices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), NWT harvesters and the fur industry to support and promote the NWT's traditional fur economy in compliance with the *NWT Wildlife Act* and Regulations and international trapping standards.

The program provides trappers with the opportunity to sell their fur into the international fur auction market. In addition, the program actively markets and promotes fur at international venues through partnerships with other harvesting jurisdictions and the private sector.

Fur Marketing Services

Guaranteed Advance

Trappers who ship their fur through the GMVF Program are eligible to receive a guaranteed advance payment. Pelts need to be in good condition in order to be eligible for consideration. Advances are reconciled when fur is sold. If the fur sells for less than the advance, the Program absorbs the cost. However if, the fur sells for more than the advance, the trapper receives the additional proceeds.

Prime Fur Bonus

As an incentive to deliver high quality well-handled fur pelts for sale, the Prime Fur Bonus provides funds based on successful market performance. If a trapper's fur sells for an amount equal to or greater than the guaranteed advance received, the trapper is entitled to receive a Prime Fur Bonus payment.

Grubstake Program

Introduced in 2003/04, the overall aim of the Grubstake Program is to provide financial support to trappers in order to offset a portion of their start up costs at the beginning of the fur trapping season.

Benefits from the Grubstake Program are based on the trapper's previous year of trapping activity. Trappers who harvest and deliver for sale 20 or more pelts to a maximum of 400 pelts, of any species, are eligible to receive funding of $5.00 per pelt based on their previous year's harvest.

GMVF Programs and Services

Trapper Education

Trapper training remains an integral part of ITI's mandate to keep trappers knowledgeable about current NWT Trapping Regulations, trap standards and technology.

Workshops provide trappers with expert advice and information from auction house specialists. Pelt handling workshops, introduction of new and improved technology and hands-on demonstrations provide trappers in the NWT with information vital to their continuing success in the international fur industry.

Trapper Recognition

As part of a continuing program to build and strengthen the productive capacity in the trapping industry, ITI administers an awards program in recognition of trappers' efforts and achievements. This recognition is performance based and considers trapper age, volumes and values of fur harvested.

Awards range from achievement certificates to personalized jackets, drums of gas and a $500 dollar spending certificate for the Top Youth Trapper in the NWT. Awards go to active senior trappers, active youth trappers, highest sales and highest volume achievers. These recognition programs have been positively received by trappers and are seen as a means of creating healthy competition among trappers.

The following awards are given annually:

Highest Sales Award – Producers with highest revenues in each of the five regions.

Highest Number of Pelts Award – Producers with the highest number of pelts in each of the five regions.

Senior Trapper Award – Eldest active trapper in each of the five regions.

Youth Trapper Award – Youngest active trapper in each of the five regions.

Top Youth Trapper NWT Award – Most productive of the five regional youth trapper award recipients.

Support to Traditional Crafts

GMVF Hide and Fur Supply Program

Traditionally Tanned Moose and Caribou Hides

This program buys traditionally smoked moose and caribou hides from producers in the NWT and makes these available to arts and crafts producers at the same cost as the purchase price.

Prices are based on measurements used to calculate the square foot area of the hides.

GRADES	DESCRIPTION	MOOSE $	CARIBOU $
# 1 Select	Slight flaws, free of hard spots, uniform color.	$65/ sq ft.	$50 / sq ft.
# 1	A few hard spots, some sewn up holes, color not as uniform.	$45 / sq ft.	$40 / sq ft.
# 2	A lot of sewn up holes, many hard spots, discoloured, thin.	$35 / sq ft.	$30 / sq ft.

Note: valuations are subject to change

For example, a moose hide measuring 28 square feet, depending on grade, could be sold to the program for prices ranging from $980.00 to $1,825.00.

Seal Skins

As a result of the ban imposed on seal skins by the European Union (EU) the international markets for seal products has collapsed.

In an effort to sustain the NWT subsistence traditional economy, especially in Beaufort communities, GMVF Program continues providing the guaranteed advance to harvesters for seal skins.

NWT seal skins are sent directly for processing, to be tanned and dyed accordingly. Processed seal skins are then shipped back to the NWT for sale. The selling price for dressed seal skins is equal to the costs incurred by GMVF.

Beaver Pelts

GMVF is now directing a portion of NWT beaver pelts to dressers for tanning. Pelts are then returned to the NWT for sale to craft producers. The selling price for the dressed pelts is equal to the costs incurred by GMVF.

Take a Kid Trapping

The Take a Kid Trapping Program is designed to introduce school age youth in the NWT to the traditional harvesting practices of hunting, trapping, fishing and outdoor survival. The Program is delivered through schools and Aboriginal organizations and in co-operation with the Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and Environment and Natural Resources (ENR).

Instructors incorporate visits to trap lines and hands-on experience setting traps, snares and fishnets. These activities teach traditional life skills, conservation and best practices in the preparation of pelts for market.

Take a Kid Trapping provides an ideal foundation to prepare youth for other trapper training programs. It is consistent with the *NWT Wildlife Act*, *NWT Trapping Regulations* and the *Agreement on International Humane Trap Standards*. The delivery of this program is also consistent with the objectives of the GMVF marketing strategy.

Traditional Boat Building Program

The Traditional Boat Building Program aims to assist youth in building one traditional boat in each region of the NWT. To date birch bark canoes have been constructed in the North Slave and Dehcho Regions and a moose hide boat was built in the Sahtu region. In addition, a traditional sealskin kayak was constructed in the community of Tuktoyaktuk.

Traditional Harvest Program

The Canada Northwest Territories Growing Forward Agreement (Growing Forward) is a cost shared program entered into by the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories. Growing Forward recognizes the Traditional Economy and its contribution to not only the NWT economy, but also to the environment and its efforts, health and wellness of Northerners.

The following programs are offered through Growing Forward:

Traditional Harvest Program

The Traditional Harvest Program is designed to assist NWT Community Wildlife Organizations in the local harvest of plants, berries, caribou, musk-ox and other wild species wherever possible. The Program consists of three components:

Take a Kid Harvesting

The Take a Kid Harvesting Program is a new initiative that encourages NWT youth to participate in traditional land-based food harvesting practices.

Community Harvests

This initiative assists with up to 60% of eligible costs to a maximum of $3,000 to conduct community hunts/harvests.

Community Harvest Equipment

This initiative assists with up to 60% of eligible costs to a maximum of $3,000 towards the purchase of related equipment to harvest, process or store foods from community harvests.

Harvesters Support

ITI offers a variety of programs that aim to provide funding and support to harvesters in the NWT.

Local Wildlife Committees

The purpose of Local Wildlife Committee (LWC) funding is to provide financial assistance to organizations recognized by the Minister of ITI as representing the interests of hunters and trappers within a particular community. LWC's provide important insight, information and advice to the Government on matters relating to wildlife management and conservation.

Community Harvesters Assistance Program

The department provides LWC's with annual funding assistance through the Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP) for distribution to their respective memberships. These program funds assist in defraying a portion of capital and operating costs of harvesting activities. Funding is available for renewable resource harvesters for the purchase of small tools and related equipment required to store, process and preserve foods from community hunts or harvests. All recognized LWC's are eligible to apply.

Western Harvesters Assistance Program

One-time contributions are available through the Western Harvesters Assistance Program to eligible local and regional Aboriginal organizations to assist and promote renewable resource harvesting. Regional or community-based Aboriginal groups showing the active support of their constituent membership may apply. Funds are allocated based on the number of General Hunting License holders in each community.

Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy (SEED)

Eligible trappers have access to funding to help pay for capital expenses. Eligibility is based on fur sales and harvest amount for the past three years.

Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation

In the event that a traditional harvester in the NWT suffers loss or damage to equipment or assets because of a natural disaster, compensation is available. To qualify for assistance, harvesters must possess a GHL and/or be a land claim beneficiary, be actively engaged in renewable resource harvesting activities, and prove that their harvesting provides for at least 25% of their gross annual income. The maximum compensation allowable under this program is $4,500.

This program does not compensate for losses incurred from forest fires and cannot be used to defray losses arising from poor judgement, carelessness or acts of vandalism.

Workers Safety and Compensation Commission

The Workers Safety and Compensation Commission and the GNWT have a program to assist harvesters in the event they are injured while working on the land. Through this program, harvesters are eligible to collect benefits during the time they cannot work due to the injury. These benefits help them to support their families until they are able to work again. In the event that a harvester dies as a result of the injuries, benefits are payable to the dependants of the harvester.

For more information on Traditional Economy in the NWT please contact your regional office of Industry, Tourism and Investment at:

Inuvik	1 (867) 777-7286
Sahtu	1 (867) 587-7170
North Slave	1 (867) 920-8967
South Slave	1 (867) 872-6430
Dehcho	1 (867) 695-7510

Toll Free 1 (866) 264-5441

Or online at:

http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/fursagriculturefisheries/

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