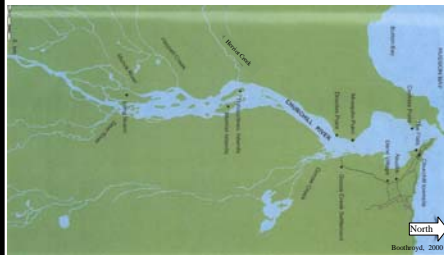




<http://www.shiningfallsdodge.com/images/manitobamaplarge.jpg>

The Lower Churchill River



Purpose

To obtain information from Churchill residents about their uses of the Churchill River from the pre-Churchill River Diversion (CRD) until the present time.



Mark A. Chappell

Objectives

Determine how people in Churchill used the river in the past compared with the present time.

bearing in mind the Churchill River Diversion project of the mid-1970s and the construction of a weir in the late 1990s.

Discover the concerns of the participants regarding the Churchill River and their recommendations to create a better situation.

Methods

I had 2 main guides and a previous study to create my original list of possible interviewees. I also used snowball sampling to create an on-going list of possible respondents (Berg, 1995).

I did 12 semi-structured interviews (Babbie, 2001) in Churchill from August the 4th to August the 20th.

Each interview was around 1 to 1.5 hours long.

Pre-Churchill River Diversion (CRD)

The Churchill River was primarily used for recreation. Some of the main uses were fishing, boating, hunting, and trapping.

The pre-CRD river was full of fish, especially by the tributaries, like Heppell Creek and Herriot Creek (Spence, 2005; Bussell, 2005).

Churchill River Diversion

The diversion opened in the fall of 1977, after the infrastructure was built, and the water intake and cabin situation were resolved (Boothroyd, 2000).



Manitoba Hydro

After the Churchill River Diversion

The river dried up! Regular boating and fishing were impossible (Hunter, 2005; Bussell, 2005).

The majority of residents stopped using the river (Spence, 2005). A few made airboats or jetboats to travel upriver, but they are very expensive to make & run (Daley, 2005).



Neil Boothroyd

Lower Churchill River Weir

The weir was constructed to ensure a more stable supply of water upriver, but water levels vary, depending on the amount of snowmelt or water flowing from the south and how much water is being diverted by MB Hydro (Daley, 2005).



Keith Kefauver

The Compensation Package

- Mitigation trust fund (\$2.8 million)
- \$3 million to Town of Churchill for adverse effects of CRD
- Marina/wayside park and a weir (estimated \$15 million)
- \$5 million (approximately) to conclude MB Hydro's payment for water supply system (Boothroyd, 2000)



Manitoba Hydro



Manitoba Hydro

Recommendations

Explore the idea of using wind power and harnessing tidal energy to decrease reliance on hydro-electricity (Ingebrigtsen, 2005). Further studies regarding the affects of the weir on the ecosystem (Macri, 2005; Brandon, 2005).

Linkages

The participants had a vast array of experience on the river, or a combination of some direct experience and knowledge of the community.

Scientific studies on the river have also recorded negative environmental impacts over this time period. (Bone, 2003; Lower Churchill River Water Level Enhancement Weir Project, 1997)

Need more communication between the scientific and local community.

Conclusion

The recreational activities on the river have not changed much over time, but capability to use the river has changed!

Further studies need to be done, such as linking existing scientific knowledge with local knowledge.



Mark A. Chappell

References

- Babbie, E. (2001) *The Practice of Social Research* (9th edition) Toronto: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Berg, B.L. (1995) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (2nd edition) Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boothroyd, P. (2000) *Let the River Flow: The Story of the Churchill River*. Churchill, Manitoba: Town of Churchill.
- Bone, R. M. (2003) *The Geography of the Canadian North: Issues and Challenges*, (2nd edition) Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Brandon, L. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.
- Bussell, M. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.
- Daley, D. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.
- Hunter, D. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.
- Ingebrigtsen, M. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.
- Lower Churchill River Water Level Enhancement Weir Project: Environmental Impact Statement Executive Summary. (December 1997). Winnipeg: Manitoba Hydro and the Town of Churchill.
- Macri, M. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.
- Natural Resources Canada (2001) *Map of Manitoba*. <http://www.shiningfallsdodge.com/images/manitobamaplarge.jpg>
- Spence, M. (August, 2005) Personal Communication.