Opinions About Tourism Development on the Fort Belknap

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Opinions About Tourism Development on the Fort Belknap Reservation:

A Survey of Residents

Research Report 44
Opinions About Tourism Development on the Fort Belknap Reservation:

A Survey of Residents

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Introduction

This report summarizes community members' opinions about tourism on the Fort Belknap Reservation based on responses to a survey during spring 1995. The research was conducted to support a broader tourism assessment process being undertaken by a committee composed of reservation and local area residents. Results of the study will be used throughout the remainder of the assessment process to constrain and guide the committee's discussion and decisions.

The Community Tourism Assessment Process

The Fort Belknap tourism assessment committee is participating in a yearlong process. It is a fundamental premise of the process that any individual community or area may or may not have potential for further tourism development. For example, areas or communities may lack necessary infrastructure or attractions or perhaps there is no adequately-sized market for their opportunities. Of equal consideration is the community's goals or vision for their future and the role that tourism may play in that future; communities should not proceed with additional tourism development if they determine that the social, economic, and environmental costs of that development will exceed the associated benefits.

At the conclusion of the assessment process, members of the Fort Belknap assessment committee will decide whether further tourism development is warranted and desired on the Reservation. This decision will be based on consideration of a wide variety of information, including present levels and characteristics of travel, existing travel-related infrastructure and attractions, and the reservation's need for economic development. Resident opinions about tourism development, including its social, economic, and environmental impacts, are also considered in the assessment process.

If the reservation community decides that further tourism development is desirable, the committee can move from assessment to planning and development of possible tourism projects. At that point, information on community member values and concerns regarding tourism development and its impacts can be used to evaluate and modify possible development projects.

Community Members' Opinions About Tourism

Residents of an area may hold a variety of opinions about tourism and tourist activity. They may have certain ideas about the broad nature of tourism as an industry. They may...
also have perceptions of the specific impacts of tourist activity, both positive and negative, and how those impacts affect them personally. Finally, they may have preferences for how tourism is managed for their community's future, including how tourism development relates to other options for economic development.

While facts may be debated as right or wrong, there are no right or wrong opinions. The opinions of community members about tourism, perceived impacts of tourist activity, and future economic development strategies may or may not reflect realities. However, they are important in several ways.

First, opinions are a crucial measure of support for community and industry actions. Developments that directly conflict with expressed concerns and opinions may face substantial opposition.

Second, opinions suggest where tribal and community leaders should focus in their search for real impacts. For example, if opinions suggest traffic congestion is not perceived as a problem but environmental impacts are, then tourism advocates would be wise to expend resources determining and addressing the relationship between environmental impacts and tourism before considering issues related to the impacts of increased tourist traffic.

Finally, in some cases, perceptions or opinions are reality. A good example is the concept of crowding. Crowding cannot be objectively measured because it is a perception; if someone feels crowded, they are crowded.

Survey Purpose and Objectives

A survey of community members' opinions about tourism and tourism development is one step of the yearlong community tourism assessment process. The results are key to determining local receptivity to tourism development and promotion. Three broad questions are answered by the resident survey process:

- How do local people feel about tourism development?
- Are there certain groups within the community that are less supportive?
- What specific issues or concerns do residents have that must be taken into consideration in the community tourism assessment process?

In addition to answering the above questions, the surveying process is the baseline from which a broad network of participation in the tourism assessment, planning, and implementation process may be built. Furthermore, if the assessment committee determines that further tourism development is appropriate, information collected in the survey helps the committee direct any future tourism development into projects that are acceptable to members of the reservation community.

The specific objectives of the resident opinion survey are to:

- determine the level of community support or lack of support for tourism development,
- assess to what extent residents currently perceive the positive or negative impacts of tourism,
- identify specific concerns of residents about tourist activity and tourism development, outline the role that residents see for tourism in the community's future,
- determine resident perceptions of the best opportunities for economic development, and
• identify key characteristics that distinguish between those who support tourism development and those who do not.

Design and Methodology

Resident opinions about tourist activity and tourism development were determined through a printed questionnaire. Tribal residents were contacted by teams of researchers at their homes or workplaces on the reservation during the last week of April 1995. Many completed the questionnaire while the researchers waited; others were given a business reply envelope to return their survey by mail at a later time.

In addition, the names and addresses of 75 off-reservation tribal members was provided by the Tribal Council. These people were mailed a questionnaire seeking their input. Ultimately, ITRR accumulated a total of 197 usable questionnaires from reservation "residents" (including off-reservation community members); this data formed the basis for this analysis.

Level of Support for Tourism Development

Reservation residents generally agreed or strongly agreed that the overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts (70%); only 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, and 19% had no opinion (Figure 1). The figures for the reservation are comparable to those for the State of Montana as a whole. Statewide data collected on an ongoing basis indicates that consistently 65-80% of Montanans agree that the benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts.

Figure 1. Reservation residents responses to: "The overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts."
Perception of Positive and Negative Impacts

Overall perceptions of tourism are based on a composite of experiences, feelings, and impressions about the many specific positive and negative impacts of tourism and tourist activity. Respondents may or may not have perceived various positive or negative impacts associated with the tourism industry. Thus, in addition to making an overall evaluation of the perceived balance between positive and negative impacts, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with statements suggesting a variety of positive and negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism and tourism development.

Community members perceived some impacts and not others. To the extent that they perceived positive impacts and did not perceive negative impacts, they may be said to have positive opinions about the tourism industry. Conversely, to the extent they perceived negative impacts and not positive ones, they may be said to hold negative opinions regarding the industry.

Reflecting generally positive opinions about tourism, a majority of Fort Belknap residents agreed with the following positively-phrased statements:

- Tourism encourages investment in our local economy (82% agreed).
- The tourism industry provides many worthwhile employment opportunities for Fort Belknap Reservation residents (60% agreed).
- The environmental impacts resulting from tourism are relatively minor (58% agreed).

Also reflecting general support for tourism development, a majority of residents disagreed with the following negatively-phrased statements:

- Tourists are a burden on the Fort Belknap Reservation's services (87% disagreed).
- Ft. Belknap Reservation is becoming overcrowded because of more tourists (86% disagreed).
- Tourism is responsible for too fast a rate of development on the Reservation (81% disagreed).
- Tourists add greatly to traffic problems on the Fort Belknap Reservation (78% disagreed).
- Tourists crowd out local residents in good recreation areas (78% disagreed).
- Tourism has increased the number of crime problems on the Reservation (76% disagreed).
- Tourists do not pay their fair share for the services they use (51% disagreed).

Some opinions were not supportive of tourism. A majority of residents agreed with the following negatively-phrased statement:

- Most of the jobs in the tourism industry are low-paying (55% agreed).

Also reflecting unsupportive opinions, a majority of residents disagreed with the following positively-phrased statement about tourism:

- Our household standard of living is higher because of money tourists spend here (55% disagreed).

2 Percentages given are for those respondents who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with a particular statement. The remaining respondents either (1) "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement or (2) indicated they had "no opinion" about the statement.

3 Percentages given are for those respondents who "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with each statement. The remaining respondents either (1) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement or (2) indicated they had "no opinion" about the statement.
One additional statement, positively-phrased, failed to receive a majority of either agree or disagree responses.

• The quality of life on the Reservation has improved because of tourism (35% disagreed; 32% agreed).

The above information is portrayed in Figure 2 in a way that allows a comparative assessment of the issue of tourism impacts. Statements in the top half of the figure are positively-phrased and those in the bottom half are negatively-phrased. Bars extending to the right of the vertical center line indicate overall agreement with the statement; bars to the left of the line indicate disagreement.

The extent of agreement or disagreement (the mean response) is reflected in the length of the shaded bar. In the top half of the figure, where statements are positively-phrased, it is desirable for respondents to agree with the statements. Below the midpoint, with negatively-phrased statements, it is preferable for the mean response to be in disagreement.

The concept of being positively- or negatively-phrased needs further clarification. The distinction does not reflect whether one is pro-tourism or anti-tourism. Rather, what is indicated is whether a positive or negative impact has been perceived. Regardless of one's position with respect to the industry, one would hope that people and communities enjoyed the positive impacts arising from tourism and not the negative ones. Thus, with a positively-phrased statement, agreement indicates that one either perceives the positive impact or does not perceive the negative impact; either is a "positive" outcome. With negatively-phrased statements, the converse is true; agreement with the statement is a "negative" outcome — either a positive impact is not perceived or a negative impact is.

Reservation residents agreed with four of the six positively-phrased statements of potential tourism impacts. Residents disagreed that their household standard of living had risen as a result of tourism, or that tourism improved their quality of life.

Below the midpoint, where it is preferable if respondents disagree with negatively-phrased statements regarding tourism impacts, respondents disagreed with all but one of eight statements. Community members agreed that most of the jobs in the tourism industry are low-paying.

To further characterize the importance of various impacts to residents, we asked respondents to rank possible advantages and disadvantages that they or the Fort Belknap Reservation as a whole may experience as a result of increased tourism (Figures 3 and 4). Clearly, employment opportunities are the biggest advantage, while higher prices for goods and services are seen as the biggest disadvantage. In the reservation setting, the price (or value) of real estate is of little concern.

An open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire also solicited residents' concerns regarding tourism development. The question was phrased: "Do you have any other concerns related to tourists or tourism development that were not addressed in this questionnaire? For example, are there places or events on the Fort Belknap Reservation that you would or would not want promoted as tourist attractions?"
Figure 2. Reservation responses to statements regarding potential positive and negative impacts of tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Tourism encourages investment in our local economy.</td>
<td>▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ The overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts.</td>
<td>▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>▶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ The environmental impacts resulting from tourism are relatively minor.</td>
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<td>▶ Our household standard of living is higher because of money tourists spend here.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Most of the jobs in the tourism industry are low-paying.</td>
<td>▶</td>
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</tbody>
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Respondents offered approximately equal numbers of ideas for promotion as for things they would not like to see promoted. (In addition, five comments mentioned Mission Canyon, but not in such a way that it could be determined whether the respondents were offering the canyon as something that should or should not be promoted.) These and other comments are listed on the following pages.
Figure 3. Possible disadvantages of increased tourism, ranked by Reservation respondents.

- Higher prices for goods and services
- Environmental impacts
- More crime
- Crowded recreation areas and facilities
- Too many out-of-state hunters
- Out-of-staters relocating to the area
- Traffic congestion
- Overdevelopment
- Higher taxes
- An increase in the cost of real estate

Index (larger values indicate greater disadvantages)

Figure 4. Possible advantages of increased tourism, ranked by Reservation respondents.

- Employment opportunities
- A more vital and active local economy
- More or better parks and recr. facilities
- The overall appearance of Ft. Belknap
- Social or cultural interaction with others
- The overall quality of life on Fort Belknap
- An increase in the value of real estate

Index (larger values indicate greater advantages)
Promote

- Promote both powwows.
- A museum, art gallery, camp with Indians aimed at the foreign population to understand our culture better.
- More cultural places to see.
- The fishing!
- Make a water slide. People come from other states to the water slide I went to.
- Water quality needs to be updated. Also, something needs to be added for teenagers – maybe have weekend rodeos or bike races.
- Rodeos.
- Big Warm swimming pool – leasing it or buying it for recreation or tourist attraction; fixing it up for campgrounds with water slides, etc. It would be a perfect place for tourists.
- I believe if we are to attract tourists, we should not only have RV hookups, but a motel, such as a bed and breakfast type and/or a large motel, such as a Motel 6.
- I feel that tourists would help develop jobs for local people if more businesses or tourist attractions were available, for example: a motel, a bigger gift shop of Indian made items, and more restaurants.
- Promote buffalo jumps (none of the spiritual-cultural activities), pictographs, hunting and fishing, summer powwows.
- Suggest listing the types of services/products most commonly used by tourists: motels, bingo, food, gifts, and souvenirs. Trespassing could be controlled by mapping.
- Bridle path for horseback riders, cross-country skiing routes, buy and develop old Kern’s site; seasonal activities should be emphasized.
- There are a lot of sites or points of interest that only locals know about, which might interest non-locals.
- The mountains should be developed for tourist attractions.
- It would be nice to have picnic areas and places to cook out at Snake Butte and along the river by the bridge (between Harlem and the Agency).
- Why not use what little bit of the mountains that we still own for tourist attractions and let this end of the rez (meaning Lodgepole and Hays) get in on something for a change!?
- Bring some attention to the Lodgepole community.
- Lodgepole, near the mountains.
- I would promote Hays more. The Mission Canyon is more beautiful than the Agency.
- I feel there are many tourist attractions in the Hays and Lodgepole areas that are not being developed.
- Our canyons are all very pretty.
- We need post cards of our Fort Belknap reservation “sights”, i.e., Mission Canyon, the Natural Bridge, Snake Butte, Little Rockies mountains, buffalo herds, powwows, beadwork, elders.
- Would like to see development of the Snake Butte fishing area for picnicking and camping. Kwik Stop’s colors should be changed to reflect a more traditional look.
- Create more tourist area picnic areas other than Mission Canyon (Lodgepole area).
- Little Rockies mountains and canyons, Snake Butte, hunting, fishing, powwows.
Don't Promote

▷ Indian rituals.

▷ Indian burials and funerals.

▷ The sundance grounds, burial grounds.

▷ Sweats, sundances.

▷ Don't promote sundances.

▷ Sundances.

▷ Sundances.

▷ Sundances.

▷ Don't promote spiritual fasting areas, sundances, sweats.

▷ Spiritual ceremonies should be off limits.

▷ I don't think tourists should attend the sundance. I think that areas around Lodgepole and the canyon area (right below the Little Rockies) should be left alone. I have many family members who in my heart still live there.

▷ Lodgepole - do not promote spiritual ceremonies.

▷ Not to show our holy sites.

▷ Religious sites.

▷ Don't give them any more sacred places to visit, next we'll have to be giving those up.

▷ Don't show points where cloth are offered. People that are seeking the red road ways, find it. Our sundances shouldn't be exploited by tourism; our overall spirituality shouldn't be.

▷ I think that there are caverns in Little Rockies, similar to the Black Hills (that should not be promoted). I think the mountains have great possibility for economic development.

▷ I heard the pictographs or ancient Indian drawings at Snake Butte had been chiseled off. Someone stole the ancient drawings. I think burial sites should not be developed because there will probably be archaeological thievery.

▷ Sundances and Eagle Child mountain.

▷ It's fine. But leave the Mission Canyon the way it is now.

▷ Do not develop the Mission Canyon.

Other Comments and Concerns

▷ Tourism is a great idea, as long as it is beneficial to the community. Extra income for local merchants is excellent.

▷ I think that the European market of tourists needs some serious consideration. I think not only tourism but also travel and accommodations for tourism should be considered.

▷ It's good if we could more readily open up to the non-Indian community in order to form better relationships, understanding, etc.

▷ I feel tourism is good for all people on the reservation. Not only for the economy, but to let our young people meet people from back east and other faraway places.
It should be left up to the people to decide how and when tourist activities should be restricted.

I feel local people should be able to sell their crafts for tourist center before outsiders can, or sell them on the side for personal money on a certain day or so.

Hire personable, professional people or you are defeating the purpose.

Maybe child abductions are a concern — because of too many tourists.

Drugs.

Housing projects.

We need to enforce laws that require people to clean-up waste, litter, etc. Not just on cleanup day, everyday; recycle now!

Garbage should be cleaned up by community members. There are too many stray dogs; Fort Belknap needs to be more responsible concerning these.

This idea of tourism has been talked about for many years, but there has been no action.

Why is tourism not developed in a big way?

Don't change.

I think tourism is a good thing and nothing should be done about it.

Well, according to our elders, they didn't want our sacred places disturbed and have respect for plants, animals, trees, rocks, everything in nature. But I sure wouldn't mind seeing our creeks developed for fishing, small dams, and picnic areas all around them.

Reservation needs large dam on Peoples Creek in unit 8 for recreation, boating, fishing, and camping.

Off-road vehicles ruining the natural prairie. Overhunting or poaching.

Range units leased by Indian operators are trespassed by white hunters that the Tribe has sold permits to. The rancher should at least get paid for the bullshit he has to put up with (cattle shot, gates left open, cut fences).

Tourism and the Economic Future of the Fort Belknap Reservation

Communities pursue tourism development primarily as an economic development strategy. Obviously, there are other options for economic development; some communities may be able to expand their retail or business services sectors, others may see options in certain natural resource-based industries or in manufacturing.

Since the mid-1980s, tourism development has been a popular economic development strategy for many Montana communities as well as the state as a whole. It is popular because travel activity has been expanding worldwide and thus there are opportunities to become established in the tourism sector. In addition, tourism development has been a natural strategy for Montanans, as we are able to capitalize on the attractiveness of our natural resources in the midst of declines in many of our traditional extractive industries. For tribal peoples, their cultural heritage can be seen as a tourism resource as well.

When communities consider the industrial mix within their economic base, all local opportunities must be considered and balanced with one another. Some communities will have more limited opportunities due to various constraints, and will have an eco-
Economic base that emphasizes one or two major industries. However, other communities may be able to diversify their economic base, perhaps providing for greater economic stability over the long run.

While the assessment process focuses on tourism as an economic development strategy, two questions on the resident survey solicited input as to the desired role of tourism within the local economy (Figure 5) and perceptions of sectors with the greatest potential for local economic development (Figure 6).

Fully 40% of residents felt tourism should play a major role in the reservation's economy; 47% felt it should play a comparable role, and 13% thought it should play only a minor role. These responses indicate the acceptability of tourism development to tribal people as well as reflect the limited economic development options available to the tribe.

Figure 5. Preferred role of tourism in Fort Belknap's economy.

Figure 6. Best opportunities for future economic development, ranked by Fort Belknap community members.
When asked to rank the potential for economic development through tourism compared to other options, tourism ranked a clear first, followed by agriculture and manufacturing, as the best perceived opportunities for future economic development on the reservation. Wood products and mining were ranked lowest in terms of economic development opportunity.

There is strong community support for increased tourism in the local economy. Most residents (74%) agreed with a statement that increased tourism would help the reservation grow in the "right" direction (11% disagreed; the balance, 15%, offered no opinion).

Other questionnaire responses indicated the level of support residents gave to various aspects of managing future tourism development on the reservation. Residents felt tourism should be managed, though not restricted; with resident involvement in the planning process, rather than leaving decisions to the private sector; and with both quality of life and the number of jobs created as measures of success. Reservation residents felt that tourists should visit the area but not become residents themselves.

- Increased tourism would help Fort Belknap Reservation grow in the "right" direction (74% agreed; 11% disagreed).
- Fort Belknap Reservation should develop plans to manage the growth of tourism (87% agreed; 8% disagreed).
- The Reservation should take steps to restrict tourism development (66% disagreed; 20% agreed).
- It is important that Reservation residents be involved in decisions about tourism (88% agreed; 6% disagreed).
- Decisions about how much tourism we should have on the Reservation are best left to the private sector (51% disagreed; 32% agreed).
- The most important factor in determining how much tourism to have on the Reservation is the impact on local quality of life (59% agreed; 17% disagreed).
- The number of jobs produced by tourism is the best measure of success for the Fort Belknap Reservation (62% agreed; 21% disagreed).
- I would prefer that tourists visit our area but not move here (78% agreed; 13% disagreed).

Vision of the Future

To plan for the future of tourism on the Fort Belknap Reservation, assessment committee members must consider the current tourism situation in the area as well as the vision of where they want to be at some future date. To provide one opportunity for community members' input into the visioning process, we asked respondents for their vision of the reservation's future and for their thoughts on what role tourism should have in that future. Those comments, presented below, offered views of preferred futures toward which tribal leaders might manage.

- Tourism should be advertised more and they should open a laundromat, outside swimming pool, and tennis courts.
- I think Fort Belknap will have role in tourism development. The tourism goals should specifically target areas it can develop. Develop Snake Butte recreational facilities. Develop specific tours and market them (annual spring and fall buffalo roundup – things tourists can watch).
- It should play a part in the Old West Trail.
- Need more camp areas with water and sewer available. I think Snake Butte could be developed a lot.
Develop fishing areas, RV campsites around the mountains, trail rides (horse), and walking trails.

To have full recreation areas, parks in our canyons, etc.

Productive individual enterprises, as well as tribal. Mini-mall or industrial block at Hays with developed fishing pond, laundromat, beauty salon, and shopping center at old Kern's store site. Convention center which can be leased to others, but for use primarily of locals.

I feel that tourism will help develop communities such as Hays. Some will stay and put their knowledge and professionalism into the community. It will also give ambitious people on the reservation a chance to make money.

We have a great potential to have a beautiful museum and gallery that would put Browning's "to shame." The money from art sold there at a commission would keep the doors open and pay a curator's wages. The Little Rockies offer a great opportunity for a guest ranch also.

Help us develop our natural streams and make a lot of reservoirs out of our water for swimming, fishing, hunting, livestock, and just to look at and enjoy. I do appreciate your concerns and help, and if I can help I sure will. I just hope this doesn't turn out bad.

Tourism would have a positive role on the reservation. You could hire people to clean-up the area and pick up trash on a regular basis. This would make it an appealing place for people to visit. If the community does decide to try to increase tourism, you should advertise and have specials and tell about what Fort Belknap has to offer. Good luck.

In order to make tourism work, I think we have to have a reservation-wide cleanup on all the junk and junk cars around the homes, which are an eyesore.

The people, since the tourism office started, have had more pride and have started to keep the reservation more clean. But we have a long way to go.

Everyone here is proud of our town. It can be a nice place to be.

Future: improvement. Tourism will let us welcome people to see what we have and are proud of.

To have a reservation that its members can be proud of and be willing to show it, but not in a way that's too "touristy".

Expand as one of the major tourism places; without tourism, that is not possible.

To see it grow as one of the major tourist attraction sites in the state of Montana.

To become a beautiful tourist attraction, one of the highest-rated in Montana.

Fort Belknap has been recognized as a leader in economic development, education, and now in tourism. Let's not change that tradition.

I hope that Fort Belknap becomes a very well-established reservation in the years to come, and tourism should be a major role here.

I think Fort Belknap is a friendly and safe place. Other people have said the people on the reservation are friendly.

I believe this is a step in the right direction. Tourism can have a major role in the future of Fort Belknap.

Good vision of the future; and tourism should have a big role.
I believe tourism should play a big role in the future.

I like tourists.

I would promote any tourism or business that would benefit the Fort Belknap Reservation.

It has improved over the past few years and tourism has and should play somewhat of a role in it.

I think we should have a lot more tourism, present and future.

It should be part of everyday life.

It would help a lot.

Tourism should be here. Tourism is big business.

Tourism should have a role in the future and I envision the future as positive in all aspects, providing the people themselves find positive things in their own lives and want to have a positive community.

My vision is of success in many areas, providing: (1) we have honest managers, (2) good laws for all to abide by, (3) get rid of our dishonest judge so others can have a chance to succeed instead of going bankrupt and backwards, and (4) involve everyone and treat everyone with respect and pride.

Respect.

For our people helping each other.

I think it’s OK for tourists to come to our reservation, as long as they don’t start any fires or destroy anything.

I feel tourism should be limited due to vandalism and desecration of spiritual or holy places on other reservations which I have seen first hand.

Tourism doesn’t harm the land if done right.

It surely is too bad that our Indian designs, especially the star quilt, are being commercialized. If only our ancestors or the Indians of later years could have patented or kept their designs so that no one could use them. One reason: a star quilt was only given for a special person, also the eagle feather. You earned it doing something honorable; but people even sell them nowadays. You had to be honored to receive an eagle feather. Now the designs and star quilts are being sold in other stores by non-Indians.

Promote better trade with other countries. Industrial and Indian arts and crafts.

Find more attractions to attract tourists.

Fort Belknap has natural resources that would proudly be shared if utilized. I don’t believe in corralling our buffalo, but believe in sharing their beauty. The future of tourism to Fort Belknap could be very beneficial overall, but with the input of our enrolled members.

I vision more growth and development because Fort Belknap could offer much more to people, not only local but tourists, by developing and using what resources they have. Fort Belknap is so far behind on today’s technology. This place could become more than what it is.

Unity for all. Educate the public about how the Indian people are on reservations not by choice. We just want respect.

I think cross-cultural experiences are invaluable, especially to those on the reservation who are racist. Our children need to exist in the non-res environment in order to grow, so tourism could play a role in exposing our young teens to these other cultures — positively.
We need to expand all areas of business. Right now, our local bingo hall is supported by local people who can't afford the habit. Tourists are looking to purchase Indian-made articles. There are many ways to promote tourism here on the reservation for the good of the reservation.

You're doing fine now, doing more for us (improving).

It could be a positive move toward the future. I can't see yet how this will bring more employment though.

I think it would be all right if there were more jobs for the people that cannot get jobs, because of lack of education.

More jobs, education, cultural preservation.

Hopefully someday it will get bigger, providing more jobs for the young people.

Provide more job opportunities for local people.

Jobs for more people than just a few.

To employ more people that are enrolled on the Fort Belknap Reservation.

Employment for everybody.

Tourism for everyone.

It should help the local economy and make more jobs for our future generations.

Vision: more job opportunities. Tourism needs to be expanded to a wider area (in the form of advertising).

I think tourism should play a big role on the future of Fort Belknap but unsure how - more jobs, better economy, etc.

It seems positive for the economy.

Increase in economic growth, where tourism could play a major role.

Economics and employment should be considered in the future. Tourism should have a major role.

Economic development.

Tourism is a way of economic enhancement. Mining is destroying future life in years to come in surrounding areas.

People should promote companies to bring their manufacturing plants to the reservation. Give them an incentive, such as tax breaks.

I think that tourism could help with the economic development of Fort Belknap. I would hate to see some things exploited, e.g., religious/spiritual ceremonies, but I think that the white culture is curious to learn some things - but not ready to know all.

Economic stability, a clean environment, a friendlier visiting place for tourists. To be honest, all the places such as IGA, Qwik Stop, etc., could all stand classes in customer service.

Fort Belknap could use its land more for making money, like raising buffalo to sell the meat and process the hides, etc., to make products to sell. Develop a specialty crop to market such as flax or hemp, and develop industries to use those crops.

We have a great start for our economy but this isn't even the tip of the iceberg. We need a stronger development program for more jobs and better understanding of our sacred beliefs.

More economic development projects; more emphasis on the quality and appearance of our reservation.

I would like to see Fort Belknap become a big tourist place and bring some income in to help everyone.
“Casino – 10 miles south of here. Flashing lights, have fun. Come to the Big Sky Country.”

A beautiful place to visit! A thriving economy so more people can live here and be successful.

Tourism can play a major part in the economy of Fort Belknap with proper management.

I see the future of Fort Belknap as being solely dependent on our current administration (tribal council) in terms of what will or will not be done, or maybe what can or cannot be done, one should say. As for tourism, well I guess that is also up to the council and anyone else involved.

I think if we are not prepared for the future, with a good sense of the business world, that this reservation is headed for termination, with a final result of social and economic failure of society. I also think that if and when the tourism of the Fort Belknap Reservation and other Montana reservations are developed, my biggest concern is that a non-Indian entity will come in and benefit from the dollars accrued from tourism. I think very strongly that Fort Belknap tourism should be headed, worked, and administered by enrolled members only.

Anything that attracts money to our home, because we have very little coming in.

Without the opportunity to attract outside “tourist” dollars to Fort Belknap, our dependency on federal money will continue to grow.

Tourism can certainly help the reservation’s future and economic independence; however, we must be careful that greed does not allow our land to be ruined. Without the land intact, there is nothing.

Tourism should emphasize social and education aspects, so people are aware how much Indian Country is in poverty due to government cutbacks and the state trying to dictate what Indian Country needs or not.

Fort Belknap should be self-governed and not dependent on the government for financial assistance. The only tourist attraction should be a casino, so that we would have a continuing source of revenue coming in and jobs for our people.

Less dependent on federal government, relying more on self-government, etc.

I would like to see more individuals obtaining their own business and Fort Belknap to become less dependent on the federal government. I feel tourism plays a vital role in this growth.

I see a rather bleak future considering government cutbacks. Tourism would provide honest employment.

I'm very disappointed in the gift shop; it needs to be better stocked with a large variety of Native American crafts.

I think that Fort Belknap will be in a disaster and tourism will take over.

If Fort Belknap can’t work as a team, I don’t see any future.

If people would work together it would be good. It would not work otherwise because a chosen few are greedy.

Not very good. Same as any other place.

Lots of violence.

No future role for tourism.

Don’t have a future!
Fort Belknap has nothing else going for it. We have no natural resources, so tourism is the only thing we have. Even that, tourism, is not that big of a thing on Fort Belknap.

They should do something before we lose it all.

Very limited.

I see no increase in future of Fort Belknap unless you build a big dam.

Do future development, but monitor future development so it does not get out-of-hand.

Organization is everything. Good management in tourism will be the success of it. Cooperation and fairness with Indian landowners and leasees is a key issue.

Choosing What to Share with Visitors

Tribal peoples have little left of their land and culture today, as compared to the wealth with which they were blessed prior to European contact. While the people on Fort Belknap Reservation support tourism development, there may be some aspects of the people's lives, places, culture, and spirituality which should not be shared.

We asked residents how much of their history, living culture, education and society, sundances, sweats, spirituality, and powwows they felt should be shared with non-tribal visitors (Figure 7). Clearly, powwows are appropriately open to non-tribal visitors (at least as spectators); however, respondents

Figure 7. Amount of tribal culture that should be shared with non-tribal visitors to the Fort Belknap Reservation.
indicated that none or only some of tribal spirituality, sweats, and sundances be shared with visitors.

While deferring somewhat to tribal elders on matters of what should be shared, survey respondents offered several additional comments on specific aspects of tribal culture which they felt should or should not be shared with visitors. Their comments follow.

▷ History and powwows should be shared; sweats and sundances, probably not.

▷ Sundances – the holiness of it is important to those who participate. Healing sweats – based on who is running it, their choice. I have problems with how much to share our spirituality for others, hard to express my opinion.

▷ Sweats, sundances and other Indian beliefs should not be shared with non-tribal visitors. Also selling of sweetgrass and Indian medicines used by Indians is wrong.

▷ Sundances are a private, spiritual ritual for individuals only, and I feel should not be studied.

▷ Sundances and sweats should never become a business. They also should never be advertised.

▷ Sundances should not be shared; this is our religion, you do not sell it to make money!

▷ I feel that ceremonies should not be shared with tourists.

▷ Shouldn’t let whites go to our sundances. Already, they know more than our own people.

▷ White people should not be allowed around sundances because it is sacred.

▷ No sundances should be shared; unless you do some type of “mock” sundance. Only sweats that are “specifically” for tourists should be shared. Most powwows should be shared, except for the special “give-away” types. Tourists like to see dancing and maybe a small give-away.

▷ Do not share locations of sacred sites. I don’t think sundances should be commercialized like powwows.

▷ We should not give all secrets away.

▷ Our visitor’s center should provide religious ceremonies, etc., through visual aid presentations. Use tour guides throughout reservation.

▷ I feel we should be able to educate, and only our respected should be able to share some of the procedures/actions of our sweats, sundances, etc. I strongly believe the tourists should not participate.

▷ I strongly believe everyone should have the chance to understand tribal culture.

▷ Documentation and education of native culture and history improves awareness. Any spiritual practices cannot be commercialized.

▷ Talk with the spiritual leaders such as John Allen, Jr., as to how much to share about the sundance, sweats, etc.

▷ Sundances, sweats, and spirituality have been adopted from other tribes. The Gros Ventre and Assiniboine don’t really have any of their own.

▷ The sundance at one time was a very spiritual dance – where no cameras were allowed. No children were allowed around the sundance. But now everything about the sweats and sundances has changed; too bad.
If a man or a woman is serious, and wants to worship the creator the Indian way, how can anyone say no? But if they are doing it out of curiosity and disrespect, I don't think so. But who am I to say.

We need a strong leader to further develop our ability to be self-sufficient and self-governing. This current council is incompetent.

Distinguishing Supporters from Advocates

Earlier, when discussing resident perceptions of positive and negative impacts, we said that those residents who perceive positive impacts and not negative ones may be said to be positive about the industry. Conversely, those who perceive negative impacts but not the positive ones, were said to be negative about the industry.

In our survey of Fort Belknap residents, unlike in other Montana communities, we did not find an identifiable group that was negative about tourism development and its impacts. Instead, we were able to distinguish two groups, one being quite positive about tourism and the other being even more positive; for lack of a better term, we've called this latter group "advocates".

Members of the two groups – those who held relatively positive opinions about the industry ("Positives") and those who held even more positive opinions ("Advocates") – were identified through statistical analysis. As might be expected, Advocates were more likely to prefer that tourism play a dominant role in the reservation's economy (Figure 8). Figure 9 compares the responses of the two groups.

* Through cluster analysis, we grouped those who had similar patterns of responses to the twenty-two opinion statements regarding tourism impacts and management. While differences between groups are more important than relative size of the groups, 72% of respondents were placed in the "Positive" group and 28% in the "Advocates" group.

Figure 8. Preferred role of tourism in the Fort Belknap Reservation economy, by whether respondents had generally positive or very positive ("Advocates") opinions about the industry.
groups to the statement that the overall benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts.

Members of the two groups did not differ with regard to several standard demographic variables, including gender, age, and education. They also did not differ based on how long (either in years or as a percentage of their life) they had lived either in Montana or on the reservation. Advocates did have a higher household income than Positives and were more likely to have been born outside Montana.

In other communities, those who are most positive about tourism are generally those who perceive that they gain the most personally from the industry — overall as well as in terms of economic, cultural, and recreational benefits. We did not see this pattern in the Fort Belknap responses, perhaps reflecting cultural differences or simply due to the limited amount of tourism currently occurring on the reservation.

Almost half (49%) of survey respondents felt they were not affected by tourism overall. (Responses for the specific components — economics, culture, and recreation — were similar to the response for "overall" personal impacts.) Only 9% felt they were either somewhat or very negatively affected by tourism; 31% were somewhat positively affected and 12% were very positively affected. While those who were "advocates" for tourism did not perceive any greater personal benefits from tourism, those with more formal education were more likely to perceive personal benefits from tourism and tourist activity.
### APPENDIX: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

To allow comparison to other surveys at Fort Belknap and to further define our sample for the benefit of our readers, we provide the following outline of the demographic characteristics of our sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 and greater</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate study</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income (1994, before taxes)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
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<td>$60,000 or more</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Born in Montana</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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