

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp

Yukon River, south of Dawson

Started: 1997

Contact: Marge and Peter Kormendy

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp is a cultural eco-tourism camp that provides programs for Yukon youth, custom packages for tourists and salmon barbeques. The owners also organize workshops on topics like traditional medicines, fish smoking or drum making. The two owners run the business full-time with lots of support and help from their extended family. Staff are hired on an as needed basis.



Getting started: Marge and Peter wanted a business that would allow them to live on the land in a meaningful way and share their traditions with others. After buying the Yukon River land, the Kormendys and other helpers spent three months cleaning the land and cabins and opened for business in August 1997. The couple had carefully researched trends and statistics in the tourism industry and developed a detailed business plan which helped them to secure financing from Dana Naye Ventures and Aboriginal Business Canada.



Key to success: Marge and Peter's combined background of working in the tourism industry, working with youth and families in crisis, and living on the land gives the business a strong foundation. Marge's financial experience allows her to keep a tight rein on the venture's revenue and expenses. Guests who stay at the camp experience an inclusive lifestyle that provides them with diverse experiences of living on the land and of First Nation culture. Family support has been critical to this initiative.

Lessons learned: As there are not enough resources to hire people to get all the necessary work done, priorities always need to be set and some things simply left for later.

Future of business: There are no immediate changes planned for the business other than continued growth.