

Northern British Columbia Aboriginal Tourism Development
Workshop April 21-22, 2009

University of Northern British Columbia

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1. Overview

Aboriginal tourism has been identified as an industry in British Columbia with considerable potential to grow and offer Aboriginal communities not only an alternative economic development, but also cultural strengthening and sharing (ATBC, 2005). The University of Northern British Columbia and the Tl'azt'en Nation have been working together over the past few years conducting research on the Aboriginal tourism market and potential for aboriginal tourism within the Tl'azt'en Nation area. As part of this work, and other activities at the university, we have connected with some aboriginal communities throughout northern BC who have, are considering, or are planning an Aboriginal tourism business or businesses.

As a result, on April 21st-22nd, representatives of Aboriginal communities in the north currently involved, or interested in, Aboriginal tourism came together and connected with each other to discuss the state and nature of Aboriginal tourism in the north. The notes presented here were taken during the workshop so that they could be shared with the participants as well as with other interested communities after the workshop had concluded.

Thank you very much for your participation and interest!

Mussi cho

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WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Opening prayer and welcome by Paul Michel (UNBC First Nation Center Coordinator): “tourism is more than just tourism... it will be the indigenous (people) that lead tourism in BC”.

Introduction by Pamela Wright (Workshop Co-Host):

Introduction to the Community University Research Alliance (CURA) between UNBC and Tl'azt'en Nation (<http://cura.unbc.ca/>).

Introduction by Amelia Stark (Tl'azt'en Nation CURA Ecotourism Stream leader and Workshop Co-Host):

Six years ago, UNBC approached Tl'azt'en about the community's interest in a potential research partnership between the community and the university. Tl'azt'en Nation has participated in other partnerships in the past and was interested in the community-university research alliance, which would be in place for five years. At the beginning of the project, the community shared their vision and their goals for their community in the next 5 years as well as in regards to the next 20-30 years. Together, UNBC and Tl'azt'en teams committed to the project identified 4 research streams important to Tl'azt'enne. Each stream would be worked on by the researchers and through the aid of UNBC graduate students. The streams were:

- 1) Education: regarding curriculum development linked to traditional and cultural practices;
- 2) Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK): “the most important thing we value is our land” and we have a lot of elders that still carry out our traditional practices, so we (consulted) elders regarding what is important to keep and carry on;
- 3) Improved partnerships: “across Canada and BC, First Nations are not represented or consulted properly (regarding: decision-making); so we wanted a process in which we tell them what's important to us—so co-management;
- 4) Ecotourism: I have been involved in the John Prince Research Forest (JPRF) for the last three years. We identify ecotourism as an important part for Tl'azt'en Nation. We have beautiful scenery and a huge lake, and elders who undertake traditional practices. My dad was a guide, hired by tourists in our territory because there were lodges set up in our territory. So we felt it was important—that there is potential for tourism in our area. Two students approached us. Students need to come to Tl'azt'en Nation and say this is what I am going to be studying; how can it fit into your mandate? We combine what they are studying and the needs of Tl'azt'en Nation.

It's good to have universities doing research in your community but there are protocols; you need products—the end result is that there are products for you to use. So with Diana's study, we now know about tourists (in the area); (about

cultural fit); (about how to manage potential tours). And with Shane's study— (which assesses the impacts of tourism, what people in our community want and their skills). We are also working on identifying and mapping the whole area (for ecotourism); identifying what community members think is important—and potential products for the community.

Recently, we have put together several courses to assist interested community members with acquiring some of the skills needed in the tourism industry. Many community members have participated in the courses, which were titled Introduction to Aboriginal Tourism; Aboriginal Tourism Marketing; Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Product Development.

In regards to tourism development Tl'azt'en Nation has a potential tourism business that could be expanded with Cinnabar Resort, which is a research station that is co-managed by UNBC and Tl'azt'enne. We are hoping to expand and revisit the Cinnabar Resort. Right now it's just fishing and hunting but we want to expand that—we're doing cultural activities and traditional practices— showing them what we have; the skills that we can offer them.

So one of the products that we decided to do is this tourism workshop. Have a great two days... Enjoy it!

Pam Wright

After working on Aboriginal tourism development with Tl'azt'en Nation for several years, everyone involved in the project felt that there was a need to introduce people to each other who are involved in developing aboriginal tourism in the north. After an initial chat with several key contacts from various communities in the north involved and/or interested in tourism to see if there was interest and/or support for a regional gathering, a steering committee formed to set the direction for this gathering. Even those who already have operational tourism felt that it would be useful. They identified a series of themes (they are those in the programs) that they wanted (to work with).

- 1: Aboriginal Tourism Development and Coordination;
2. Marketing the Aboriginal Tourism Product;
- 3: Tourism Tenures (unfortunately was cancelled last minute and we now have a presentation on Trails by representatives of the Min of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts);
- 4: Insurance and Liability;
- 5: Financing Aboriginal Tourism Development.

PANELS: PROFILES OF ABORIGINAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH

Kim Morrison – Nisga'a Commercial Group - Tourism

- Hired 18 months ago
- Community attempted to start tourism... had rough start
- Got there in Dec. and had to have a market ready product by May
- Had worked with Cree in Quebec
- 'Kermodei tourism' pamphlet
- 5 market ready products
- Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Provincial Park: marketing tours
- \$700 for three card brochures; made \$25,000 on these tours
- A lot of people didn't even know about lava bed and cone
- Tradition, culture, history built into tours
- Mushroom herb botanical tour: pine mushrooms for the Japanese market (incl. people from Vancouver); teach you how to harvest the mushrooms; she is the only commercial mushroom harvester that allows people to take away the mushrooms that they find
- Students mapped herbs and plants with elders: (target market): holistic practitioners; people interested in herbs.
- Fishwheel and fishing company: people watch the fish being caught in the wheel; responsible, sustainable fishing especially regarding salmon and salmon stocks; monitoring of salmon; new boat tours up the Nass to take you closer to the fishwheel.
- So yes... culturally and traditionally respectful tourism is possible; we didn't sell ourselves short.
- "Not to be what I call the television Indian" but how to incorporate who we are today with traditional culture and beliefs.
- In each area: Destination Marketing Organization: their role is to help us organize and market ourselves.
- p. 3 of brochure: she paid for that ad, but not for content on p 8, 9, 10. So by partnering (they got more coverage and content).
- (Other partnerships with Northern BC Tourism and RV West for ads and content; the Milepost)
- It's going to be all rubber tire traffic (so how do we best get them off the road, up to us?)
- I got \$28,000 worth of advertising for under \$20,000-- so \$8000 worth of advertising savings is HUGE for us.
- Breaking ground for three backcountry lodges this year.
- Fundraising (has experience for 20 years).
- Next year we start market studies.

Bert Groenenberg - Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council

- Works with four bands.
- We really don't have anything substantial in tourism right now.
- Moving away from big game tours to hiking and backpacking tourism; only one is aboriginal-owned.

- Some lodges are for sale.
- Proposal to build a lodge; depends on a lot of things including a road coming in.
- Trail from Fraser River to Bella Coola (name of trail?)
- Have to be market-ready... really just exploring right now.

Amelia Stark- Tl'azt'en Nation (CURA Ecotourism Stream Leader)

- Our community is located 3 hrs drive northwest from Prince George
- End of the road
- There are 4 communities (1 seasonal lodging)
- No market ready tourism even though we do have Cinnabar resort.... The resort was already up and operating --- and Tl'azt'en and UNBC purchased it. It is more targeted to hunting and fishing. Now looking to expand the resort to get more tourists into the area. Because right now we are going into deficit or breaking even because our hunting season is short. So we need to make it more attractive to tourists to come into the resort; 40km.
- Cinnabar is located up a dirt road but we now have hydro and Internet access.
- Have five cabins; a main house; shower facility; lavatory; cook station; trail development; old mercury mine; beautiful trail to mountain view; tonnes of trails.
- We did a pit house project where a group of students from Tl'azt'en went built two pit houses. Students did the research about pit houses and food storages. And they did a trail that is a potential tourism product to expand Cinnabar resort.
- We are open from May-Nov; short season.
- The community uses it for functions, e.g. education society.
- Education society: traditional practices, e.g. collecting cranberries and making jam; making bannock; hunting for char; trapping and snaring rabbits; spring and summer plant gathering and Indian medicine production.
- So with the resort, the education society and CURA—where we have actual students gathering information for us to use—our goal is to find out how to develop a team from Tl'azt'en Nation..... the students who have been taking the tourism courses will become our tourism planners—to see how we should develop, how we should expand Cinnabar resort.
- Also important: working with the Elders' society, because they are the key to developing tourism in our communities; they have the culture, the knowledge, and the skills about what to pass on to the community.
- We had a workshop... they want to pass on the knowledge... they are slowly developing what they want to share with the tourists... so they are identifying what they want to share... and we are looking at what tourists want And once this information is identified, we bring it to our tourism planners... so it's more collaborative...
- So that's the message that I want to give you—collaboration—if you have an Elders' society, find out what they want to do—they are key to keeping your language and your culture alive. Get a group of community members who have the passion.

- RV park + culture; fishing; travelling product in your community.
- Back two years ago, we tested a product out at Cinnabar—UNBC hosted Moose conference; attendants participating in the pre-conference trip came to Cinnabar to (learn about importance of moose; use of moose; etc.). Diana did the evaluation of the moose-related trip... did it work? Can we do it again? We hope to do another product test linked to a conference.... The moose conference participants really enjoyed it. It was the first time they met with First Nations; they came from the States... they thought we lived in tepees. But they really enjoyed it....
- If you have an idea in your mind and you want to test a product—just do it; gather the people with the skills and do it.
- That's how we did it --- we have Cinnabar but we also look at the strengths that we have in the community.
- Collaborating with the partners.
- Because it's awesome—so I just want to give you that message.
- That's the only way you'll get tourism—by using what you have in your communities.

Ryan Leighton – Seashore Charters

- Tourism for about ten years now.
- Acquired Seashore Charters (was originally grizzly and bear watching) about X years ago.
- Runs grizzly bear tours in Kutzamateen and whale watching tours; archaeological tours.
- Archaeological tour includes salmon BBQ at longhouse itself.
- Canoe project: been very, very successful; now putting together a package; building a 65ft replica—now using an inland canoe—(not the canoe for the area).
- A lot of canoe tours of the coast that are not Transport Canada certified; many are not; but we need to get it Transport Canada certified.
- New canoe is a large project: \$350,000 for canoe, docking facilities... when they go across in the canoe, elder welcome, trail, back to beach, elders tell stories.
- Acquired Seashore Charters (was originally grizzly and bear watching)—they bought out a person that used to rent their boats; now the tour has a cultural component to it; they give the history of the area.
- Other project—traditional trails; breaking ground this year on a trail—now looking at old growth canopy tours and zip lines.
- We do a lot of rubber tire business but the majority of the business now is cruise ship traffic; that's the bulk of our business right now.

Wed Bennett - Kitselas Canyon National Historic Site Project/Tour Coordinator

- Up Skeena; 'people of the canyon'; toll keepers of the Skeena River.
- Kitselas archaeological sites since 2001. Parks Canada gave us a National Historic Sites designation in 1972. Unfortunate circumstances delayed

- development. Parks Canada had a policy regarding: First Nations signing over their land to participate in Parks Canada project. Multiple times Elders said no.
- In 2001—fisheries and forestry decline impacted community - so looked to tourism as an economic development—little steps, as funding becomes available.
 - When you evaluate your sites—look at your community; the knowledge that they have; the elders; they are the backbone of your community.
 - Visitors used to ask regarding resources in community: I used to say cedar and salmon. Now I say elders and youth.
 - It wasn't only about econ opportunity—it was also about cultural redevelopment in the community: 1) cultural redevelopment, 2) welcoming/hosting of visitors, 3) a little bit of economic opportunity. I think tourism is a natural fit for our community. We have always welcomed people and in line with tradition we should treat visitors as if they were tired and hungry (provided they do the peace dance!).
 - Tourism can be beneficial.
 - We should work together because we are all trying to accomplish the same thing—we can reach that goal faster (if we learn from each other).
 - Kitselas Canyon site: 3 contemporary longhouses; we would like to build 6. One is the technology longhouse: carving; cedar weaving; demonstrations and interactive; crest designs; interactive kiosks. Second longhouse: media presentations on cultural activities; legends and stories. Third: wildlife museum; strong connection to land and animals. Fourth (construct next week): canoe era and our contemporary era; Grand Trunk railway.
 - Cultural features in the canyon.
 - Tours.
 - It's all about looking at what the community has - take inventory of the community- each should have an elders' council or advisory... Look at which elders are available... who has that knowledge... also look at the human resources in the community.
 - I enjoy tour guiding; taking visitors through our lands.
 - I was a labourer on our site; construction, etc—I saw people looking around... so thought we should open it up.
 - Right now we signed an MOU with Parks Canada (last year)—it's taken 37 years for them to get on board but... better late than never... it's about getting our community ready... that's what these development tours are for... which Elders are comfortable demonstrating... for example, one Elder who wasn't a public speaker before (but now she is).
 - So it's about taking your vision, taking inventory of your community and striving for your vision.
 - In our community, we have good leadership—all of our (leaders) have been the same for the last eight years... whether it be tourism, forestry or fishing... leadership is key.
 - Year 2000: physical development plan; survey throughout the community of what they would like to see: Kits Canyon was a key development point that they wanted to see.

- Feasibility study
- Archaeological and environmental impact study
- Business plan
- Our site: close to HWY 16; near Terrace—so I see our site as a catalyst for moving tourists to other sites. Matter of establishing working relationships.
- Partnerships: e.g. he would like to purchase passes to Kim's (Morrison) site--- and giving them to visitors at his site, as free. Because visitors like free things.
- Regional first: community, then neighbours; at the same time you establish relationships.
- We got involved with various organizations incl. Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA)... especially when it comes to training your people to be involved with tourism.
- Vision... looking at resources... working... not straying from vision... partnerships....

Questions to Panel:

Jasmine (regarding access):

- A lot of communities up here don't have easy access off highway; roads.
- How do you deal with old logging roads, etc?

Kim:

They only have old logging road access. They are leaving it inaccessible to add to eco-experience.

Management plan says leave as is.

Hike in—9km trail.

36km of trail.

Hike in to first lodge

Market going to more eco adventure type; pristine environment.

Walk in and leave the land almost the way it was when you walked in.

Provincial trails development funding.

Helicopter to X (guides with first aid training?)

Helicopter materials IN to build lodge (\$80,000 to rent helicopter)

Geotechs; environmental specialists; avalanche specialists

Flying materials in is 'chocking us' (financially).

Comment: North end of Wilson Reservoir

BC Hydro flooded traditional trails and lands

400km N of Mackenzie

Was logging up there... once it disappeared, they forgot about us

Kim: regarding Cree and Great Whale Project

Compensation from BC Hydro? There are supposed to be development dollars to settle.

Benefit to our people?

4 fly in only in Cree Quebec communities—so all were included in our tourism development plan; all have lodges; part was funded by Hydro
Any companies—negotiate tourism into development plan part of settlement BEFORE you enter into agreement.

Same person re comment

Caucasian proposals for tourism development on their land
People already on traditional trap lines
Govt of BC said they could come there

Kim:

Commercial Recreation Tenures
There can be more than one tenure granted
Protocol agreements and best practices put into place
I'm running into them in the Nass
Gasses up in Terrace, brings people up, doesn't stop at (any local businesses and stores)

Same person

No respect for FN peoples
Don't come and respect territory

Kim:

Protocols for operators--- where they will have to give us (something)
Competition is healthy, but we need to benefit from it

Pam:

Heather McRea (Guided Adventure Tourism (GAT) policy specialist for ILMB) was supposed to talk about this (but she can't come)
How you can use the tenure process to get tenure?
How you can deal with people who have tenure?

Ryan:

Those referrals are a huge, huge issue
Container ports; wind generation..... We are to the point now where we are saying no more—we are putting a stop to it.
The more communities that get together and say not to the province...
You just don't have time to respond in that 30 days...
It's not possible....
The province has to recognize that, and they have to say ok- we need to change this system.. and they are actually doing that because of processes going on at the coast. Litigation.

Pam:

Some FN communities are charging for the referrals

Ryan:

It's their responsibility. Companies are now coming direct to the communities and saying 'what can we do for you?'... and it's not their responsibility but they are cutting through the deals... good deals to be had...

Kim:

Economic development wing
I'm there to build infrastructure
Detailed business plans and HR plans are imperative
Economic development corps—if you don't have those already... you are going to need at least a full time person and an assistant, just to build and develop—put the pieces together, before you can even think of making one cent.

Web:

Yes, Development Corp (is important)
Wise to utilize them as best you can
They look after forestry and fisheries
Also for housing... we were looking for construction managers for our contemporary longhouses—so we used the housing manager's expertise to (help with re-design of longhouse).

Kim:

Grants for training and development: regional; provincial; federal
They will be paid to be trained and paid to work

Racelle:

(Appreciates sharing; lessons learned)
Community-run businesses is (most of what we've heard about)
Some fantastic individually-run businesses exist.
You can also start really micro small.
What Kim said: What is readily available? It's US! We know where to turn to find those first steps regarding how to develop tourism.
Do not worry; you still have what it takes; it's right there.
(Some complications, some resources needed but..)
It's still really possible, for all sizes...
Conclusion: a respected former Chief Leya George Wilson: "if we don't tell our story, who will?" e.g. regarding those guys coming in as competition... If we don't tell our story, who will?

END OF INTRODUCTORY SESSION

THEME 1: ABORIGINAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION

Speakers: Cheryl Chapman, Training and Education Coordinator AtBC; Anthony Everett & April Moi, Northern BC Tourism Association

Cheryl Chapman

I've been working in tourism since... I grew up in the US.... Saw Mt Rushmore and other wonderful beautiful places...so I was a tourist from the time I was conceived in PG and then born in Washington... lived in upstate NY, 2 blocks from the Sesame St. set.. and met Buffy St. Marie there.

From Soda Creek band...

Started working in the tourism industry as a carhop.. on roller skates when I was 15 years old... somewhere along the line, decided that I needed to be a 'responsible adult' and went back to school; Native Youth Job Corps basic skill development to find out what I'd be good at... upgrading in computers etc and worked at Native Fishing Association in Vancouver. I hated the city and came back to Williams Lake where I applied for secretarial position for Band. They said I was overqualified.

Uncle George is president of Friendship Centre in William's Lake... (encouraged her to apply for alcohol and drug program).. I found my empathy and passion for working with people and decided to go back to work to save the world. I wanted to do clinical psychological and social work. I was at the Cariboo College for two years taking psychology, then was redirected by a professor and did archaeology and land use planning. This got interested in Mother Earth—who she is and how she provides for us...

So Soda Creek decided they could use me. I started in the office (consulting with community members, talking to elders, getting stories, doing research about archaeology impacted by highway construction...the gold rush trail. "Lots of people have been coming through here for a lot of time"... all the routes slice through the community of Soda Creek (1 mile sq).

I had so much fun working with the elders... (later) developing and working for our tourism... people come for our gold, our fish, our medicines...shouldn't we be the ones guiding them through there... and reminding them to (pack in, pack out). We have a National Award Winning Heritage Village at Soda Creek, on the Fraser River

Our best tour guide is 78 years old this year. (His hands are shown on a bookmark we were handed as part of our Aboriginal Tourism BC (AtBC) package)

Tourism became a part of my life (via) community development and land-use planning and treaty negotiation. I also got to learn what it takes for us as Aboriginal people to get the education and training that we need to welcome people to our communities in a respectful way.. what are the tourists looking for? One of the mistakes that we made was to ask: what do they want from us? Like tepees.... (tourists smoking themselves out; 'smudged tourists')...

We were looking at 'what does the tourist want'? That's the wrong angle--- we have to ask: what do we want to share? Who are we? 231? Communities in this province... We all look alike? We are all beautiful, talented individual... fabulous

traditions, stories, ways of doing things.... We have to demand that they be respectful of those things.... If we're not telling the story, whose telling it? ... I can't even tell your story; I can tell my story.

I can share them with you because I have been allowed to tell you but there are certain things that I can't tell you about. (We probably won't get to the actual presentation but you can get it from Pam)

Protocols

We have to look at protocols from both sides. We are the northern most community...we protect... we look after the northern part of our territory. Our neighbours are the Carrier. We work together with them; we already have a protocol, and we know what that looks like (e.g. berry picking). That protocol is already there. We know that we are there to collect the berries to sustain our families, not to fight over them. What Aboriginal Tourism does is collect those protocols—what do you want done (or not) on your territory?

So what is going to come out of our discussions is a checklist. You have to decide what those are for yourself; easy to follow... just contact the neighbours and the families.... And that can lead to an MOU or a letter of agreement of how you are going to work together....

I would never pretend to be able to tell you what your protocols are. All we can develop for you is those tools... checklists... just so you don't forget things... because we don't want to offend you... and it's about taking care of our communities and our families and our stories.

Even the smallest business... I told this lady in Port Alberney... she is the cook by campsite... they always ask me what the Indians do around here, so I tell them... but how can we enhance this? Get a lean-to; get some traditional dress; just sit there and they'll stop and ask you; and have a tin cup available for them—don't forget to let them pay you.

The older gentleman, rest his soul, who would stand on the dock and tell the story of Bella Coola (separated town; mtns; cannery; etc.).... And point people to (the artists' shed, etc.)...and of course they tipped him, and he made a great living, and he loved doing it—he got to do what he loved to do, and it put rice on his table, with his salmon and his bannock.

Tourism isn't about making millions of dollars but it allows you to live at home, be on your traditional territory, be with your family and your grandparents and your kids, and (to practice traditional things). It's like having your cake and eating it too, as far as I'm concerned.

So that's the thing with the protocols and the small businesses.

One of the things we need to do is to....(trust that it's the right time and the Creator and the ancestors are watching over you, and will only give you what you can handle)... (avoid building a big cultural centre that no one wants to work in.. or that no one knows the stories for...)

Developing those tourist products and services, right from the community level, is a really good way to do it—from our grassroots; from our communities up.... How do we help the communities and the individuals become market ready?

You can slap up a sign but if there's no one there to greet them, they're going to run wild on (your land)...

Got to build it from the community-level up...

Trailblazers' initiative; working with LinkBC and colleges and universities on accreditation. Train the trainer and the participant... training aboriginal people to train aboriginal people... (e.g. using Terrace people in Terrace)

(Yes, we are going to communities; pilot training in Ft St John)

2 week pilot in Bell Coola; tested some materials

We took it back; we expanded it to include things that were missing: special events management; First Host; SuperHost; First Aid

Special events management is critical because we (have so many special events).

(e.g. protocols regarding taking photos of individuals at events, e.g. dancers).

(Question about AtBC's current situation)

In the beginning of 2009, the tourism industry took a good little hit and the funding was decreased by 38%, TBC is a major sponsor and we happily accept their contribution - so they had to stretch the \$5 million funding over 4 years rather than 2 years (beyond 2012 now because revenues from hotel taxes decreased).

The Aboriginal Blueprint Strategy was put together to assist increasing Aboriginal tourism in BC. We recognize the need for staff and a good crew at Aboriginal tourism BC... so we hired people for development... we had 11 staff... and as of Feb 09, we are now 5. So the challenge becomes: how do we (get done the things that we need to do, and do them well?).

.... First 16 months (produced good work) from our marketing director, like the little pins that we handed out, our brochures, our corporate look, all of the things our marketing director did before she was let go (Racelle)... As the Rez turns, Aboriginal Tourism BC is a 'lean mean fighting machine'-- our director (Keith Henry) is great at business.... Not the greatest in tourism but he is learning (others are Paula Amos, Linda Calla, John Dago). Our board of directors is taking a larger role within the regions.

(Now sending cheques rather than people to regions)

....

Our regional representatives are going to be able to do some of this work for us...

It's always better if someone from the territory talks about the territory...

One of the other things that is happening in our world is recognition—it's good to be Aboriginal--- we want to know who you are...and holy smokes did we ever make some mistakes (like residential schools; and appropriation of masks etc for museums; repatriation of cultural goods to communities—Elders incorporated returned pole into tours).

Best practices: Alert Bay—the Mystic Cultural Centre

Q: how did they get their pole back?

A: Repatriation Act

C: a museum contacted us--- to say that they had a lot of our artefacts.

C: a lot in Victoria.

Cheryl: we had a rock bowl from Soda Creek in Germany—we don't have a museum so we can't bring it home, because we can't take care of it. We were contacted after many years--- we have some of your masks and regalia. Tools from your community that were taken during potlatches and residential school construction - to get them back you have to have a museum to house them, with proper temperature control etc. this launched Alert Bay into creating their own cultural centre. People calling who wanted to come and see them—that's tourism! That was the other piece that they had thought about--- but they were interested in getting their artefacts back... but (now it snowballed into tourism). Alert Bay cultural centre was built right in front of residential school. Talk about a process of putting the house to hold the (things) sacred to your community right in front of the residential school—the place that tried to wipe a lot of that out. And now, they've extended their tour to the residential school—so they are telling all about their history to the community... there was a lot of healing... and that's why it has to come from the community... I've refused to tell communities how to develop their tourism industry until they are prepared (to deal with the impacts).. because the impacts we have had in our communities over the last 150 years were because of tourists—we fed them, we (sheltered them) and then—remember what happened...

C (Vincent):

Xay'tem - Got local artists to duplicate their artefacts—so then they can house them without proper museum conditions--- so they have (exact replicas) of what was taken from the community

Cheryl: and that's my other best practices example

...

There is funding available for developing cultural centres.

Q: How can Aboriginal Tourism help our communities, as we prepare studies, look at different things, etc.?

AtBC is in the process of rolling out the 09-10 training initiatives.... We had to take a step back, downsize, etc. and figure out how to get services and tools out to communities...

We need to do a training initiative in Northern BC, Cariboo-Chilcotin, and the Rockies

Basic entry level training for cultural interpretation: 'our story, your experience'- 5 day workshop (to teach people the basics of this; can be tailored for different community needs—e.g. some need First Aid, some don't; vs. communities that need to re-learn how to make hand drums).

Four Host First Nations 2010 games—less than 2 years—all of these people coming to their front yards and they have to represent ALL of Aboriginal Canada.... So what we're doing is taking the cultural interpretation 6 week program to work with the Four Host First Nations peoples to train people for the First Nations cultural pavilion. At the Olympics—what skills do they require for the pavilion? Training in the fall.

Cheryl: map of 9 tourism regions for AtBC. Black dots are members. Top half of province....a BIG blank in Northern BC... take responsibility for your communities and put black dots on the map. The membership costs for AtBC have gone down from \$250 to \$200.

NORTHERN BC TOURISM

Speakers: Anthony Everett & April Moi

Anthony: We are here to help you. We can provide you with any advice you need—April Moi has a lot of experience working in the tourism industry in the north--- tell us what/which stories you want us to help you tell, I should say...

What's important is that we're a resource for you... we're here.. our advice is free.. we are here to help you.. I'm hearing a lot of neat things from you today that are also frustrations for me...

Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA) is us. The hierarchy of the tourism organizations in BC is: Tourism BC (TBC), NBCTA and AtBC-DMOs or Tourism Communities- Stakeholders & Operations

(People asking Anthony for more information regarding how things work and how the money moves around in this system).

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC): provides funding at federal level

TBC: funds NBCTA

NBCTA: our mandate is about elevating tourism; trying to make elbowroom with forestry, etc.; it's happening in our region now and there's potential but it takes all of your help to get it off the ground

We are a DMO—to work with you, get you what you need, and to put it all together in the region, and the province. We are an agent of TBC in the north.

Tourism BC: is a Crown corporation funded through an (8%) hotel tax—a small portion funds TBC. This year, given economic trends, the forecast is down... and budgets are reduced, etc.

One of the things that have not been a part of our mandate is working with visitor centres... so tell us what you are working on, and tell visitors' centres.... They are a key point.... Go into them... they are fabulous resources... TBC also does publications to help people with their trip planning.

TBC regions formed from a visitor's point of view.... And maybe political reasons too. NBC: represents 51% of province.

NBCT core activities: community development; marketing programs; stakeholder & partner programs.

We can help you get exposure; more than paid marketing.

(**Kim:** example regarding Billy Connelly documentary on lava beds as great free marketing abroad)

Media is great.

We're here to serve you so tell us what you're doing and we can tell other people...

Additional offices to meet needs across the region: Prince George; Prince Rupert; Fort St John.

Tourism: \$11 billion in province; provincial govt goal to double annual T revenues to \$18 billion in 2015 (check slides for this number)

Tourism performance tracking

Northern BC tourism (BC Accommodation Revenue) contributes 8% to annual provincial tourism performance.

With NBCTA merging—it has increased the local budget by about \$150,000/yr

It's ok that it's going to take 10-15 years—tourism is not a silver bullet. Wherever you're at, it's ok—put it on a longer timeline.... We are not part of the Ministry—there is good distance for us...

Tourism in the North (Slide)

(Slide on indicators and visitor markets): NBC tourism seems somewhat insulated from econ changes effects on tourism, e.g. RV tourism is not affected the same way as in the south.

Operators are busier earlier in the season.

Less US visitors than before.

Increase in German, UK, Aus, & NZ FITs (Fully Independent Traveler OR Free and Independent Travelers) visitors

Less bus tourism

Strong BC and AB tourism (within region or adjacent)

BC Ferries Inside Passage (new ferry)

Most traveled corridors (Slide)

Coastal corridor and HWY 16 from coast= major corridors to NBC

Spending one night map (Slide)

Prince George and Prince Rupert biggest hubs; Smithers, Terrace slightly less

Program and opportunities (Slide)

Q: re (we don't get the resources that the urban communities have--- if you are closer to centres, you get more of the regional opportunities; communities further

north get left out more.... Regarding difficulty of getting an interpretive centre off the ground taking a long time, with little money available...)

A (Racelle): I'm giving back to my community by (doing a Master's) on jurisdiction, etc.

Re: being outside jurisdictional lines... we get creative in getting that help... like what Pamela Wright is doing today with this workshop... a lot of work that my community would never be able to afford, I give back to in my Master's.... (students' work can be put to use)... at a smaller level as a single community, you kind of feel like a one-woman band—so bring it up to the tribal level so that you can get the whole area covered.... So you can work on corridors between communities; innovative partnerships; students; fostering interest; getting research grants and partnerships in unconventional ways; e.g. the work done by Diana—regarding rubber tire RV traffic—so pitching work to students is important; I will also be talking about how to put your place on the map.

April Moi

I have been working with folks along the Alaska HWY—working with rural and small communities is my passion---

Community Tourism Foundations (CTF)

An opportunity for TBC to work with a regional organization to determine the unique needs of the community; there is an application process that communities go through; we take a look at each community to determine what type of 'hand holding' they need, or as I like to say—nurturing.....

TBC provides a facilitator to help the community go through the planning--- end result: full blown tourism plan, e.g. Tumbler Ridge just completed. No matter who changes, the plan (exists) as a 'living document'.

Atland (-38)—the workshop we did in our parkas because it was so cold...

Co-operative funding available—completed projects worth \$150,000 in first year of program.

Tourism opportunities program: e.g. driving tour

Kim: CTF finishing up in her community—it's a step by step process -map story of the volcano, with help of elders, and NBCT is being re-done

Anthony:

-we only have money to spend in partnership

-I have some ideas that will cost you nothing or \$100 to help your community start out

-tourism marketing

-cooperative marketing (all subsidized)

HelloBC.com: official provincial website; 7mil users/yr

- social media is how people are learning about what you have, and where they might want to go: e.g. blog or video blog; we can help you with that
- we have a way of connecting the blogs and community websites to the Olympics—through widgets
- B-Roll project (films shot in region, including K'san)

LUNCH BREAK - DAY 1

THEME 2: MARKETING THE ABORIGINAL TOURISM PRODUCT

Presenters: Racelle Kooy, Aboriginal Tourism Marketing Specialist; Diana Kutzner, UNBC

Racelle Kooy, Aboriginal Tourism Marketing

Racelle Kooy is the former marketing director of AtBC. I have a degree from a French-speaking university because they were associated with the World Tourism Organization.

I would like to briefly analyze an advertisement for Alberta Aboriginal Tourism. When you look at it, you can see that (font too small; ad too bland; unhappy face; 'find the missing pieces in Aboriginal Alberta'). They paid a lot for this prime real estate (back of UP! Magazine) and they blew it.

Re ad: what is wrong? What did they miss? Incongruent messages. Example of what not to do in marketing.

(handing out cheat sheet)

Tourist types:

FIT- Fully Independent Travelers

VFR- Visiting Friends and Relatives (easy market to break into)

MICE- Meetings Incentives Conferences and Events

MICE- a lot of work—e.g. Olympic Big Book – Aboriginal peoples' work really went into to making the Olympic BB stand out

Who is the Aboriginal tourism traveler?

I have been involved in most studies of the BC (aboriginal) cultural tourism traveler since the 1990s. Also Diana will be presenting 'hot off the presses' work on these tourists in NBC...

If you want to get dollars from the govt, you have to throw around numbers and statistics based in something... and Aboriginal Tourism BC did it well—(tangent re primary vs. secondary research, e.g. hiring a grad student and getting them to do a literature review on what has already been published on a subject, so that you don't have to do that work; they will pick the most pertinent information).

Aboriginal Tourism BC 2005

New studies in 2007—a primary European market

Recent studies:

-Are people interested? Yes.

-Are they interested in multi-day trips e.g. to different Aboriginal tourism communities? What is the market? The broader market.... They have seen images of us, but they haven't heard our voice—they want to feel like they are

hearing from us; like we're inviting them into our home... in Mother Earth—the same person who is willing to travel here and learn about what we do is the same person willing to go to Africa, Thailand, Australia... in other places where our Indigenous brothers and sisters still haven't found their voices... they are (putting up with tourism) but the tourists (must be noticing it on some level)... but the tourists here are amazed by the connections that we still have with our environment—they want to learn about that connection; they want to go to a place where they feel invited; they want to go somewhere AUTHENTIC. They want to have an authentic experience; they want to feel invited by us... applies to German travelers and village next door. They might get grumpy about certain elements of that connection (e.g. fishing rights; treaty rights) but they want to be invited

So who are the Aboriginal Tourism tourists?

- Baby boomers
- Higher education
- Higher income

We have a strong voice; we want to be heard. What do we want to share?

Product market match: We understand why we're in tourism; we're in it to make a buck, to honour our tradition; and to be loud and proud...to open doors.

Product-market matching: not just if you build it, they will come... if you haven't done your research to see what's around... you're setting yourself up for failure.

This takes us back to benchmarking.... What is out there? What do you want to share? What gets your juices going? What is readily available? What is unique? What is going on around you?

I had the privilege of experiencing every single one of BC's aboriginal tourism products... I got to see them and... at least 3-4 people said 'we should build a pithouse village' (but there are a lot of them; sometimes neighbours have them) - (so it's important to talk to your neighbours).

Canoe experience: 4-5 canoe journey experiences in BC right now. Is there room for more? Hell ya! (Because different territories, different canoes, different guides will create different experiences).

Fundamentals: traditional knowledge and protocols: what's 'sacred and secret' and what's 'sacred and public'? And these things can shift over time...

(e.g. Sto:lo sacred site longhouse: secret transformer stone and sacred fishing village.... A developer bought the land and was going to develop it—so the secret was let out, to (rally community for action) - (it was used as a bridge to other places).

(It's good that Kitselas Canyon took a) deep breath and thought about how they wanted to develop.

When I started off in aboriginal tourism in the 1990s, it was a sell out—and it was an uphill battle—and we took it over and...

WOM- word of mouth and VFR are your best friends

WOM can make or break your business

An evaluation is what is going to keep you in business; you can make it a fun thing to get input from people who leave your business (e.g. exit survey).

As a marketing expert, I was evaluating the product that was out there and (bringing the media along).

Marketing resources/services available... (see sheet).

Post Secondary Institutes—fresh meat... fresh blood.

Your local gas station crew... whoever is going to be making your recommendations... Because gas stations are the informal visitor centre...

(Takes time to get word of mouth going with 'those Germans')

So what are you going to do in the meantime?

Go after your local minority communities—build bridges to those communities; their relatives will come to visit... 1) it will do a hell of a lot for community, 2) it will keep your business strong, 3) it will keep people coming because word spreads in those communities

Market-readiness and export-readiness

MR: you know that once you've opened your doors, you can be ready to answer people in a timely fashion (24 - 48 hrs needed for response); (re readiness to have a reliable phone number for tourists to call and get information; dedicated email and website for business; separate website for tourism businesses and bands)

Partners

Aboriginal Tourism Canada - a project with the 'national tourism voice' DMO...

Canada is fifth in world tourism rankings (pre Olympics). Aboriginal Tourism

Association of Canada: here to promote Aboriginal Tourism Canada-wide:

SIGNIFICANT 28 experiences across Canada (export-ready: trained staff; going to trade shows; prices sent out 18 months to 2 years in advance, for tour operators to put together catalogues...)

SIGNIFICANT 28 are 'already there' in Aboriginal Tourism:

- talk to them if you have a beef with who is included in this list

- they can expand it out (6 from BC; despite 40 co-op paying members in BC)

We are not in a bubble; we have to operate in the mainstream—we might not like it, and we are making changes, but some things are not going to change—so we have to stick to the rules... the best people who understand tourism, getting the word out etc. is your DMO—they will plug you in; offer workshops; offer subsidized marketing... what's out there? What's going on? We know, for example, that there is this dip—people aren't travelling as much—so what can they do to help you with this? How can you attract the local/regional visitors? What about those just crossing borders? How can you tap into that?

- Your local Chamber of Commerce... it's all about networking...
- Maybe you're going to find some unusual business partnerships...
- Maybe there is something to (help you) expand your product out...
- Maybe it's slipping a coupon in?
- Maybe it's about (linking into hubs)?
- Maybe it's communities linking to each other?
- How do we get past this us and them part?

Local visitor info centres: they do familiarization tours (fam tours); they do awareness; (tell them that you exist); they are a wealth of information and people do go there—particularly if they are from further away.

** People are reluctant to book their aboriginal tourism experience through a tour operator from overseas, because they are not sure we want them, so... they wait to book in country, to make sure.... So, if your brochure is on a ferry, in a gas station, in an art gallery... it makes a difference... because if they are interested in buying the art, they are probably interested in learning the story.

Post-secondary institutes: a lot of businesses stay in business through school tours... what a way to change a whole generation... and they bring future customers as well.

DIY stuff (Do It Yourself):

Facebook (FB): costs nothing; nothing to do special event listings

How are you keeping it fresh? FB and websites require maintenance time; e.g. website changes: 3 hours once a week to update.

Content Management Systems: maintain your website (with easy-to-use software)

Cheaper Content Mgmt System: use a blog (e.g. use WordPress)

Google Maps: Who doesn't love Google Maps? People who travel love them, and use them to research... Put pins there! Pin your stuff in there... and share

Fam tours (familiarization trip with a travel trade representative; with a DMO rep; VICs; Chamber of Commerce members): will help tour operators and other actors know your product(s)

Community Days: you need to give back; you need to foster champions: how are you creating these? (Are you letting champions) speak freely and loudly? Give them the information and experience to let them be champions. Maybe you're even nurturing future visitors or employees?

Presentations: never say no to presentations; a bit of (excitement) and hands-on makes a big difference.

UNBC: what are they doing there? Do they have an international student program? (Comment by Zoe Meletis: send us an email—if we can help you, we will—e.g. classes looking for fieldtrips are also classes of free labour if you need something done).

- Use young marketing students; young communication students; (they can help you save time and money, and contribute original ideas; a new set of eyes will spot new things that you might not have seen).

C (Kim):

There are website-related grants for building your websites too.

I got a grant for someone to help me set it up, but now I can maintain it because it's easy to maintain (Microsoft Word). Those resources are out there.... Building a website takes time and money but make sure that you can update it.

Racelle: to Rudy regarding updating websites

Flashy is not important now; FB/Twitter is (what people want now); they want chunks of information; they want information now—then they want background information, also known as extra backgrounder pages, to your website—about the history of guide outfitting and guides... you will go higher up in the ranking of Web-based searches; you are going to pop up way quicker... and that stuff stays...

Diana Kutzner-UNBC: Aboriginal tourism product preference by visitors to northern British Columbia

- CURA Ecotourism stream
- Thanks to Tl'azt'en community for warm and welcome (and learning opportunity)
- (PDFs will be available as part of the workshop proceedings; slides will be there)
- CURA: Community University Research Alliance funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
- To identify tourists' aboriginal tourism preferences and potential markets
- To test 4 potential products (described in written form) with tourists
- Surveyed 337 visitors at PG VIC in summer of 2007
- Mature; higher educated; well off

- Sample skewed towards older people
- Demographics (see slides)
- 4 products: Tl'azt'en Traditional Feast; Family Cultural Camp; Carrier Rock Paintings; Tl'azt'en Nature Hike; products that ranged from 3 hrs to a day and a half
- Visitors were most interested in Carrier Rock Paintings (three hour) and Tl'azt'en Territory Nature Hike (2 hrs). Both were the shortest and both had a nature component.
- Top-ranked product features: activities; topics; experiences (see slides for details): top choices were woodcarving; animal and plant life; taking photos of scenic landscapes. Interesting because nature ranks higher than Aboriginal culture, although Aboriginal culture ranks second and is related to (their desire to see nature).

C (Racelle): very similar results to Primary European Markets survey. BC has done a fantastic job of marketing Super Natural BC... and people want those experiences.

Q: did you consider the price of the products in your study?

A: no, because it would make more sense to test pricing with real products; willingness to pay statements (are often not very representative) of what people are willing to pay.

(Diana continues with presentation)

- Respondents with prior Aboriginal tourism experience were significantly more likely to be interested in the Tl'azt'en Traditional Feast and Family Cultural Camp.
- Respondents were also more interested if they had: purchased Aboriginal crafts or arts; attended Aboriginal performances; or had similar experiences.

Also explored visitor level of comfort regarding visitors' enthusiasm in interacting with Aboriginal community members:

- 36% were interested in active and involved experience (ACTIVE) vs. 15% wanted relaxed and observational activities
- Visitors were somewhat reluctant regarding: doing hands-on, interactive activities, probably because they are not really sure what to do about it
- This fits with other studies that suggest that people are interested but still consuming aboriginal culture in a somewhat superficial way

As part of the study, we identified target markets using cluster analysis. Three clusters identified:

1. The Culture Seekers
2. The Nature-Culture Observers
3. The Sightseers

(Two fact sheets on her research were in your package).

1. Culture Seekers

- highest interest level re aboriginal tourism, including re overnight stays
- similar to other high-interest segments
- High percentage of Canadian travelers (despite other research that suggests that Europeans are the ones with high interest; BC visitors may be a new target)
- results suggest market for culture focused products
- generally younger visitors (despite older-skewed sample)
- Nature still plays role in product appeal (eg Aboriginal ways of living off the land)

2. Nature-Culture Observers

- interest in variety of Aboriginal topics
- not interested in multi-day camps or hands-on
- Appear to match the ‘dual-track’ market (nature-culture0)
- would best be served with nature-culture offerings

3. Sightseers

- primary interest was in taking pictures of scenic landscapes
- therefore may require an introduction to Aboriginal tourism in order to spark their interest
- market for families? They wanted to take their children... some couldn't find experiences suitable for children.

Culture Seekers and Nature-Culture Observers seem the most promising for Tl'azt'en Nation.

Conclusion:

- Aboriginal tourism is of interest to a portion of travelers to northern BC
- Nature experiences were preferred
- A smaller market for Aboriginal cultural tourism products

Q (Kim): question re: how current and future trends might affect these tourist types? E.g. they will be focusing on campers; families looking to travel more cheaply with kids.

(Diana: I did not consider travel trends in my research)

Racelle: (WOM is important; local and regional visitors are your bread and butter... also focus on cultural camps; also focus on recruiting regional short meetings, e.g. for team building trips to your venue).

April: when we refer to VICs, NBCT is developing an information-sharing program to improve info sharing and relationships between (actors); also including social marketing so (that we don't hear about events after they happen); we start gathering information in July and August. We are also building

content on the HelloBC website; the regional websites no longer exist; so your content will now be linked to the HelloBC website, including event listing... so direct event listings to NBCT and HelloBC.

(Discussion of \$90 as too expensive for a listing).

Racelle: TBC is the giant in the field and that's their job... and HelloBC is being translated etc....).

April: description has been increased to 100 words.

Kim: and a photo; and she uses it to tag the Nass Valley (so it now includes blogs from her 4 communities).

Racelle: (reading off what you get for **\$95** on HelloBC)

Question: if there are a lot of sightseers, how do we get them? How do we reach out to those who don't want a highly interactive experience? How do you go to your resource people to say 'what can you produce so we can get some of these dollars?'

Diana- sightseers were about 10% of my sample. So yeah—small things, like the antler key chains are a great idea- a good way (to get some of those sightseer dollars)... (another arts stand example too).

C (Francois C. Prince): (key chain maker in room) about using tourism to (gain other contracts for sales).

THEME 3: TOURISM TENURES AND TRAILS - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Speakers: Mikel Leclerc (District Recreation Officer) and April Bilawchuk (District Recreation Technician)

- recap of present participants
- Question to participants - What were your expectations of the workshop?
 - o **Vince** – One of the presenters originally scheduled was going to be talking about land tenures, etc.
 - o **Pam** – Recap for presenters that there is a wide spectrum of stages tourism development present: some who are in the beginning stages of tourism development up to those who have already been engaged in tourism for many years.

Handout – Overview of MOTCA – Mandates, mission statements, recreation sites and trails. Website: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/tca/>

April Moi – overarching trail strategy but little implementation of management and conflicting trail management strategies

- Answer – very complex, so many other factors that can limit, prevent, hinder any moves forward. There are still tools and resources available (even though they aren't perfect).
- Keeping access to land is key (recreation); otherwise it runs the risk of falling into the hands of extractive practices (logging etc).

Kim – Nisga'a jointly manage a park – outside of that there are trail systems, 3 questions:

1) How closely is the MOTCA working with BC Parks and First Nations to achieve the extensions of the trail systems?

- Response – We are a small program, only two of them for this whole district. Very small budget but they can push very hard for tenures if they have the backup. Their relationship with BC Parks is good since they really rely on BC Parks for help. But this creates challenges as BC Parks is already well established and developed and MOTCA is still in the developing stages. They are busy with their own projects but any help from BC Parks is welcomed. Ultimately they want to put as many recreational tenures out for access to these areas before they are lost to other extractive industries. They feel blessed to have the First Nations around as they share the environmentalist vision of conservation of these lands. So any help that is going towards this big goal is welcome.

2) Are you looking at implementing protocols concerning First Nations involvement when it comes to trail development strategies?

- Response – We have our own strategy -> direct contact, face to face with the band, really helping each other is the main focus. This works more effectively as opposed to just sending a piece of paper for consultation.

- Excessive planning can lessen the feeling of urgency and while larger areas obviously should have a bit more planning in the process, other smaller areas may be better served by a shorter time period.
- Issue with dealing with people in Victoria is that there is often disconnect with the north, whereas Mikel and April work within this district, better know the area as well as the unique challenges within the area.

3) Are there are cross tenures across the tenures on traditional lands and these tenures are being held by 'outsiders,' when you are developing these trails and doing site selection, how can you help us deal with some of these cross tenure items, to eliminate that non-aboriginal tenure holder so that property or land comes back to the aboriginal people and is that something that you are in the position to help us with?

- Response – Tenures shouldn't be overlapped as they obviously can create conflict. One of the regulations is that there is no industrial activities cannot occur on a designated trail or recreational site. This is one of the methods of protecting an area. It isn't a decision made only by them, often it is in the form of an agreement with users, if there is no agreement, then he does all he can to assess the issue.
- Admittance by some that participants tenures do not factor into their land use.

Pat Maher - Question – can you explain how your tenures relate to other tenures (adventure tourism operations etc)?

- o Response - three division - resort, commercial and other (non-commercial)
- o For the commercial side (eg. Heli-skiing) of it, they would apply for a tenure through the other ministry and go through their referral process and in the end would get a tenure that they could do commercial ventures on but we do not really have any impact on this.
- Question/Comment - Seems like we are in a race. Does it not make more sense for the government to stop and change the way they do business right now? If there are tenures going out everyday, and if everyone is in this race, it doesn't make sense that we should be doing things like this? It makes sense that they should revamp, because we get to the point where we don't want to do it anymore.
 - o Response – (Mikel) - Government is trying to change their business: MOE, and everyone else is trying to get together and do business which is different then how they did things before. There is pressure mounting now so they are starting to change their acts. We think we can gain a lot more through our strategies. He has risked his job before to make things happen (usually by involving

the public and community involvement) and thus some big changes have occurred.

- April - What they are proposing to give to the First Nations is so minuscule, it is very disheartening. The traditional trails are much more immense than what is being offered and so what is going to happen to those trails and areas that are outside of the signed treaty agreements? Who will protect those areas if you've signed a treaty that doesn't include those areas within the agreement? Unfortunately there will continue to be pressure to sign treaties like this.
- They have had to make it much more awareness about what trails are theirs (to industry and other users) to try to prevent negative impacts.

Kim – part of your passion is until treaty negotiations have gone through for First Nations in your area (assuming they go through) you are saying that you can help protect areas through writing proposals for designated recreational sites which will help protect the area. If these lands go into treaties, will there be something that will give that designated recreational site to the people?

- Response (April) – The treaty wipes out our designated recreational site, so yes.
- Looking at larger areas, our largest opponent is the Ministry of Forests because they would have to come to us to have authorization to do work within our sites.

Any groups that want to put some stuff together that have reasons to put areas aside for “recreational” purposes, they welcome as it slows down the industrial extraction processes that are occurring.

THEME 4: INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

Presenters: Jesse Ronahan and Jacques Fournier (Western Financial Group)

Jesse Ronahan

- lots of buying power due to our size; connected with Aon and their FN insurance program; they write 50% of all Native bands across Canada
- our program is one of the only programs that can do everything that you need (without selling you extra programs on top). It covers gaming, mining... tourism... ecotourism... the list of activities covered listed in the folder provided. Mr. Jacques Fournier, and Mr. X also along... all specialize in band insurance... the only thing we haven't insured yet is airlines...
- commercial insurance is always (a tailored fit)

Jacques Fournier

- thanks
- basics of insurance, especially for liability regarding tourism development on and off Reserve
- why insurance? Things happen; accidents happen; (thefts); accidents on trails (and claims against the operator); forest fires from (dropped cigarettes)
- Two main components:
 - 1) Property insurance to protect your assets: equipment; office; fire/theft/vandalism/storms; usually a cost based on the value, and your fire protection, etc.
 - 2) Liability side: legal liability from a third party point of view; if someone who uses your services gets hurt (e.g. tripping on a trail; someone gets hurt on boat ride)
 - courts in BC are fairly lenient towards the injured party; we are called the California of Canada.
- AND
- 3) transportation-related insurance: ICBC rating has to be right; proper business use; proper rating
- AND LIABILITY WAIVER: generally used for tourism operators with risks involved. The important thing with a waiver is that it must be used all the time; must be explained to user; risks must be explained, e.g. regarding ATV use.
- Insurance company will be looking at your operations and your loss prevention practices (e.g. how will you prevent tourists from taking pictures with grizzly bears).
- (C (Kim): some kind of release form needed for photos taken on the trail—you should have a form to cover you if you want to use those photos in advertising).

Q regarding horses and carriages

A from Jesse: case in ON regarding scuba diving; man signed waiver for scuba dive so he didn't get any settlement because he signed that he knew the risks (and he died because he panicked).

Q what about unsigned waivers- like on the backs of ski tickets.

A: signing is better; otherwise no proof they've read it

Fournier: Also, you can't sign away the rights of an under 19 (+ two years) children.

-Pay attention to questions asked on the application form; detail all uses (e.g. horses, ATVs, etc). They will be really concerned re what your loss prevention practices are—and these will help determine your insurance costs: What have you done to prevent claims?

-your waiver may or may not work (in court) regarding: children (under 19)

-waivers give the insurance companies something to fight with in court

-waivers help to protect you the way cleaning logs do; (they log your efforts to minimize your losses)

-children = always equal high risk; (hockey nets in rinks example: girl killed by puck to the head in Florida; court said their back-of-ticket waiver wasn't good enough—so NHL had to pay family, and now we have nets to protect people from pucks)

-they are looking at you: Have you instructed these people properly?

-the best thing to do: get legal advice on the proper waiver that will work for you; it's all part of your loss prevention strategy

-people will show up in high heels to walk on trails (so preventing people from walking on trails in heels is part of your loss prevention)

Q Kim: is there a reduction in premiums if your company is registered a 'safe company' with WCB?

A: yes. They will be looking at your problems in the past and what you have done to correct these problems?

-WCB for your employees—that is something that needs to be done

-the liability in premium will be based on that: your experience; your loss prevention; your expected revenues; your employee numbers; there are usually min. premiums

-if you were operating under the guise of Chief and Council and/or sponsored by Band, you can easily be tied to Band insurance- sometimes for nothing; go to your financial officer and ask for permission to tag along—that's the cheapest way to go

-there are other programs out there: COTA Council of Tourism Associations of BC -It's not our product so I don't know what their criteria are, or how effective they are for First Nations.

Comment: everyone is going to come across 'geniuses' like doctors and lawyers who won't sign your waiver.... So (make it so that they have to go home if they don't sign the waiver).

-that's a good loss prevention strategy; you are not going to get bullied by someone who won't sign.

Q: Kim: Can you create an alternative form for those who still want to participate but don't want to sign the waiver?

A: (don't do that), e.g. 'slip and fall' claims are the number one growing type of claim in Canada—now up to 25,000-75,000\$ per claim.

-another good reason to have insurance is because you can advertise it and say 'we're insured'; (it may influence tourists' decisions)
-our program is designed for First Nations, it's flexible
-the other area to consider is cost. There are min. charges. The smallest business is a minimum of 1000\$. You can reduce your costs by signing up for a higher deductible.

Q: are there benefits to getting a group of tour operators together and getting a group policy?

A: yes, there is a program through COTA.

Q: Pam: Many folks won't have obtained (commercial insurance) before... so how do I shop for insurance to get the best deal?

A: that's our job as brokers. You can also go directly to the association (COTA <http://www.cotabc.com/>). The guide and outfitters association has a program too.

Q: so will you hunt for all of those too?

A: yes... we won't be able to get to some speciality programs but ... we have access to all of the best ones in Canada... because of the size of our company... and we have so many offices...

Q: so (could I get two quotes), one from COTA's broker and one from you?

A: yes, our job as a broker is to (get the best offers for you)

A: also (watch for gaps in coverage; read the fine print when shopping for packages)

Q (Vince): I ran into two different problems when I was operating my business: 1) my unwillingness to expand (as my insurance increased), and as of 2001, I was

insured by Llyods of London—the only people who would insure my business.... (regarding asterisks on the form)—my business fit into nearly every one of those *... so it wasn't worth it to operate and be insured, 2) the inherent inability of insurance companies to recognize our rights to the land and water, eg I didn't have proper licensing for docks and boats; I didn't have permits for water use rights... so it wasn't worth it to get all of the permits etc. – to hell with you, we own this land... I remember coming here as a young child... so there is no way I am going to jump through a million hoops to (do these things)...

A that's why the Nations Plus application is different... our application is very very simple.... If you are part of the Band...

Comment: but I prefer to run my own business...

A that's where the other program for independent businesses works.. because you're still on Reserve land... so they understand what the special needs are... also, you hit the really bad time—Sept 11, 2001—insurance companies went crazy because it was the single largest insurance claim ever... (because of layered insurance and re-insurance processes—some of the steps in the system went bankrupt after 2001).

Comment: another problem that I hit is that I live on a very dangerous lake... 6 people have died in recent years....but we actually saved 2 people too.. so that's significant when you think about one little community losing that many people... (like boat tours on the Nass)... there was a lot of things that led to the insurance going up and up and up... (e.g. people dying in fishing derbies)...

A increasing your buying power (e.g. by going in with a group) reduces your costs

- (something re Band-owned company being involved)

Q re recommending extra travel insurance to tour operators and tourists from overseas—

A yes, recommend the extra travel insurance that includes airlifts etc

- also your First Aid training adds to loss prevention

C also handing out a body bag...

-it's all about loss prevention

-the cost is based on the size of the operation

C my insurance kept going up and the only advice I got was to take a higher deductible, of \$5000.... For me it was about sharing my culture with people... so

it's unfair for small operators (because they can't compete with places like Ft St James, who can compete with activities and be insured)

Q re recognizing less formal safety features like volunteer firefighters...

A yes, our program recognizes them

Q re children's waivers

A the children's waivers have to be signed by parents; also (usually schools have waivers and insurance)

C re chance encounters with grizzlies

C Kim: I use the Girl Guides form for children because our current insurer wouldn't cover the school's general form—so our waiver specifically covers our risks (e.g., sinkholes and bears)

A you could add your waiver and send it to the schools; have them sign both

C some hikes require guns on the tours; (necessary but increased insurance)

C Kim: COTA's insurance is requesting that guides have guns in areas where certain wildlife encounters are possible

A as long as the underwriter accepts it, it's ok (eg re guns)

Q would you request (firearm training)?

C I would like to see the mushroom tour waiver... you don't know what people's reactions will be (to the mushrooms)

C Kim: 3 guides with each group to watch picking; they are under 24 surveillance; we are not responsible for eating poisonous mushrooms; we have training before they go out; each person gets a First Aid pack; all guides have bear bangers and flare guns; all trained re falls; all use whistles. For the botanical tour—they are given collection bags; they are tagged; they are inventoried; we check their bags; if they harvested poisonous herbs (some ok earlier in season, some poisonous later on), we remove those. We had to get three levels of govt and (various lawyers) to check it, and (special permit for Nisga'a land). They are supposed to know what their reaction is going to be before they eat it.

Kim: other issue re lava bed tour—lava berries that elders still eat... but we had people eating the lava berries and I didn't know if we were covered for this... I had to go back to the insurance company and say are we covered for this...

Fournier: loss prevention is your biggest worry; 45 minutes of training for guests is not unusual; have a really good routine too—that is what the courts are going to look for—did you follow the routine? Do you have a set waiver?

Kim: re trails: we are going to have people going in on their own—public trails?

Fournier: whoever owns the land is responsible

Q I don't know too many businesses that are 'on Reserve'...

A if you are on Reserve Land, it falls within that policy...

Comment: very few tour stay on Reserve only because Reserves are too small... so (many are in traditional territory but not all on Reserve)

A as long as it's FN owned or sponsored, it's covered

Comment: from Abor T rep: we have a 51% ownership requirement. Is yours?

A Our policy is majority owned (incl Metis, etc). So you can tap into this buying power of the group.

Q (there are specific individual issues...) is it free for me to come and consult with you?

A Yes. Brokers (do not charge) for advice. But eventually, we get a commission (if we make a sale).

Fournier: every single policy or client has its own needs so we have to tailor the program to your own needs...

Comment: re Rocky Mtn Foothills trail tours on Reserve—could I run that through the Reserve policy?

A yes

Comment: from Abor T Devel: Risk management planning is part of what we do; do you do guest appearances for explaining such things?

A yes, we do that. And if it's a big enough session... we can do something; this is very informal...

Comment: Vince: I'm pretty sure it was our lake that did me in (insurance wise)... and we took on extra liability because we were out there searching for bodies...those risks are there and the they are high...prices started going up so I had to start shopping around...

A we are a bigger network now...

Comment: Vince: I won't operate without insurance but I didn't want to grow big enough to be able to afford the insurance.... The risk wasn't too high, but the cost was too high... I would have had to expand to cover the costs...

Comment: Kim: our insurance is reasonable given the price and the tours that we're offering. Last year we had a grizzly attack on a dog—(and we needed the insurance). Maybe spending the money (up front) is worth it...

Fournier: cost of liability coverage includes the costs of defense—so the insurance co defends you

Comment: re pets: people take their dogs along; what do you do about it?

A The owners can sign a waiver; put it in your waiver; the owners are responsible for their dogs (if they bite someone)

Q re language as a factor?

A no—just what was your procedure? Did you do what a normal ecotourism operation will do? (the courts define normal), they are looking for an industry average; what would (the standard) be?

Q re application form: why do you ask what salary bases for employees?

A some insurance policies are calculated on revenues, some on payroll.

THEME 5: FINANCING ABORIGINAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Presenters: Ray Gerow and Vince Prince (Aboriginal Business Development Corporation)

Ray Gerow (President and CEO for Aboriginal Business Development Corporation)

Ray- How Financing Can Work in a Perfect World

-‘we have no money’; we are like a broker—we are brokers on your behalf to find the best source of funds for you

-we work with you to help you flush out your business idea; to help you make sure that it’s viable, and find funding

Vince - why we’re in this situation.. in 1994, the Min of Small Bus, Tourism and Culture (then) funded an internship for Vince and another man to become business analysts—trying on how to help people start and run their businesses... run out of a basement

-no funding; 2 people with very little experience other than college training.. and we worked our butts off, and with (Ray’s help), we built the organization into what it is today... we work with about 500 businesses and have had about 200 business starts...

-a very hard fought battle on our part

-we finally got some core funding out of the Fed and Prov govts last year

-a hard battle to make these services available

-Cranbrook and Ft St John offices started and they got core funding right away, despite us still struggling here...

-why I’m here.. I learned over those 7 years what it takes to get money out of the financial agencies that have the money—that’s where my skill set becomes valuable...

-(we know) the processes to go through to get funding

-I have never had a problem finding funding for a good business idea.

Sometimes we had to change the people, or how long it took to do it but if we can prove that it’s good and solid, we can (get it funded).

Ray - where Vince’s experience comes in is that he ran a tourism business—he knows the ins and outs of funding, and running a business. Plan a minimum of two years down the road (when starting a tourism business). You need probably a year to really devote to your business planning and research. Vince probably did 2-3 years to get his started. After a year of planning, you will have to give yourself min. another year to get the financing in place--- it might not take a year, but plan for it, so that the financing doesn’t come in during the wrong season. It will take you a min. of 6 months to run through the funding you will need.

100,000\$ funding application example:

- Independent owner operator has 2 Aboriginal-specific funding sources:

1) Aboriginal Business Canada: up to 100,000\$ as a grant; anything over will become a repayable loan.

Statement of intent

Bus plan

(answers back after each stage)

2-3 month process (supposedly)

(Example of guide operator business who handed in statement of intent with no response in two months....) so these are standard bureaucratic processes that are out of our control... so build that into your planning process. Now his application is at All Nations Trust, and the guy on his file is going on vacation for three weeks so... (there are just facts of life) that our clients need to understand.

Standard \$100,000 bus.

-applicant needs to have 15% cash equity (in addition to equity in vehicles etc)

15,000\$

-you need to find 85,000\$ (Aboriginal Bus. Canada ABC might give you 40,000\$, if you make it through their process, with strings attached)

-so you still need 45,000\$ (First Citizens' fund FCF—loan with a 40% grant built in by provincial govt—so 18,000\$ is the grant portion (FCF 75,000\$ lifetime limit)

(so you would end up with about 50,000\$ out of the 100,000\$ being a grant)

-but it is a horrendous, slow, tedious process

-paperwork

-this is the kind of traditional package that we would help our clients put together

For Band businesses or larger ones for eg 1 million \$ business

-don't worry about FCF

-ABC still worth it

-we help clients source out most realistic funding sources

Q re partnership--- with Band members and they all applied for the same lifetime FCF funding (for use in the business)

A you can do it but it (won't be allowed in some cases)

Q what if you partnered up with your Band: you invest X and your Band invests X

A each partner has to come up with their portion of the \$

Q so the 15% that you have to have as cash equity... what if your Band gives it to you..

A who cares?! No one wants to know where the cash comes from..

Ray: they also help clients find the 15% cash need; help them get this \$ without hurting their chances for finding additional money; you have to have this money before your ABC statement is submitted; you need a statement re this 15% being in your (hands) from the bank

Ray: every partnership is different: depends on type of business; type of partnership

Vince: re partnerships.... He and his girlfriend starting a business... they can't each access 75,000\$ FCF for a business that they would start together

Ray: family who wanted to expand their farm; applied for 75,000\$ FCF to expand their farm—so now all of the family members have used their 75,000\$ because of one loan.. (so FCF seems to be a per household loan limit). So we would have advised them to start three separate cow-calf businesses and share property instead.

100,000\$ FCF grant cap; no limit on loans

Ray: ABC will not waste time on processes without the 15% available from the start

Q re settlement money: can you use it as your 15% start up funds.

A yes—it makes no difference where your money comes from

Vince: when I started my 131,000\$ project. They required me to have 15%-- I borrowed some from a friend, put it into my account..... and then gave it back after getting back statement.

Ray: They will take certain investments, but not RRSPs

Q Kim: When you are doing the ABC application, do they look at your personal debt/asset ratio and your credit rating?

Ray: ABC isn't very concerned but.. they will only give you the money if you are also going for financing...

Vince: ABC money only becomes a grant after a certain point... if you buy a logging truck using a grant and then sell it, you have to pay it back...

Ray: They won't give you money on assets that you could sell and use to put money in your pocket... they will only contribute to assets that will depreciate... They will also only put money into a business that uses it as leverage to get other

financing... The rule of thumb is that the amount that you are getting from ABC should be relatively equal to the amount you get from elsewhere (eg a bank). 40% is the average but they will only put in the amount that they need to put in for you to leverage a loan.... Their money is always contingent on your being able to get additional (lender) funding; so the lenders will (check your credit etc)—they depend on the lenders' due diligence.

Ray: also FCF needs you to have (80,000 of 100,000, for 40,000 grant) 80,000 in 'hard security' before they lend to you. So your credit rating, the strength of your business, etc is important but.... They want security... they would be looking for at least 40,000 out of the 80,000...

Ray: the nature of the assets matter too—so they want things that can't 'walk away'... because if the business goes sideways, people will start selling off assets for cash...

Ray: we need to make sure that the client will live up to their end of the bargain.. because we are putting our reputation is on the line too... because the next client we work with will have to pay the price (if something goes wrong with the previous one).

Vince: I had almost 9000\$ in cash flow to get us through the first (risky tourism-based business) year. I have helped other people to get that first statement together for other people too... but I would only do it if I thought they could do it...

Ray: we go to bat way and above the call of duty for our clients (eg threatening ABC with a lawsuit) but only if they deserve it. When we're doing it, we do it on behalf of the clients that deserve it.

Ray: ABC will water down the amount they will give you as a business loan (if you have a white spouse). They are not going to put money into the non-Aboriginal part of the business.

Ray: our job is to be the gatekeeper on your behalf so that you don't do those stupid things to prevent you from getting money...

Vince: quick example: why it was worth it to me.... I was working in PG and wanted to do this business.. my kids are losing touch with their culture.. my dad is up there... I wanted to be closer to them and my territory.... But they were all worth it to me... I knew that I could save 13,000\$ in one year.. but I wasn't willing to give up my RRSPs... so we consciously made up our minds to do it.. but it took at hard year of living to get 13,000\$... so we got 69,000\$ of money for the 13,000\$ we raised... and (it would have taken too long and the opportunity to start the business would have taken too long)

C: can it be irrevocable credit (e.g., RRSPs not cashed but payable to ABC if needed; cashable by them)?

A: it depends on the plan

Ray: we've had clients build up a lot of equity into their house... but that's not credit to ABC...

Q: how do you deal with Aboriginal clients on Reserve, because they have no equity? They don't have assets...

A: the Band might be able to sign a guarantee.. there are hurdles that you face... but there are also opportunities that you have that others don't....

Q Amelia: re comment about registering your business before trying to get financing... does it make it harder to get \$ if you have registered first...

A: each lender has its own criteria.. with ABC (Fed govt bureaucrats), we assume that the bureaucrats are going to try and find the easiest way to say no... because they can see your license and say 'you've already started your business'... if someone makes the mistake of registering their businesses first...

A: Aboriginal businesses have a higher success rate than non-Aboriginal businesses.... Rednecks will say it's because of free money etc.... but it's not true.. it's because of the two years of planning and (all of the extra due diligence needed to get credit; to get businesses off the ground... eg some people give up before they get the business off the ground, rather than afterwards..). Our job is to assist you to do the due diligence; to do everything that you need to do--- so a lot of clients make the decision not to start along the way... so (less fail after the fact; those who pursue it have really thought it out).

(missed question from Shane, and answer re tax-free benefits and starting businesses)

Q sole-proprietor businesses have to be on-Reserve and operate there to be tax-free.

A those benefits are gone. Rev Canada nailed a lot of people; they are paying a lot back.

C there used to be 3 qualifiers and now there are 5, and they change all the time, re tax-free Aboriginal owned businesses.

(missed question/answer re written rulings....)

A we don't have a package; we have a generalized business plan (that we will hand out) but each client is different... there is not such thing as a standard package...

Q Amelia re policies and procedures needed for Econ Devel planning in FN communities- does your organization help with this too?

A no. we deal with individuals. I can deal with you as an individual, and you can talk to your Band, but we won't work with the Band... bureaucratically etc., it's a nightmare...

Q does age matter re how much you can borrow?

A there are some funding streams that deal with Aboriginal Youth. ABC has now opened the doors again.... So even with tourism, you had to be a tourism destination to get funding.. at one time you had to be a 'youth'- under 35- but now you don't. Although there are various funds with various requirements... so it depends...

Q re borrowing and borrowing extra 20,000\$ and if you are under 27, you don't have to pay the extra back—does that still exist?

A (different programs come and go). We are also trying to get another Abor. Youth Bus. Fund established, with the Fed govt.

Q Zoë: re extra advantages in ABC or FCF funds, eg re leniency, int. rates, etc.

FCF \$ comes with a price. So if you can just borrow from the bank, we would recommend that most times..... because bank int. rate will be lower... so really, FCF is just like an interest free loan (because you get a 40% grant but you pay a higher int. rate)

FCF= from Aboriginal Capital Association? Also, you can adjust/argue for certain special repayment schemes with FCF that you can't get with banks... So... 9/10 times, we would probably point you to the banks if you can go to them...

But.. business is hard work so the hard work you do with us (is like the overall hard work); you have to do everything that you are capable of doing.... we will do everything that we are capable to do... but you still have to come up with the business plan...and you still have (to be able to do what you need) for your business...

For us, we don't have any boundaries re where we work; we can't go everywhere but (we will work with people from everywhere). Originally, we were supposed to stay in PG, but that lasted about 2 days..... we operate the way we would in our house; we as human beings don't have the right to say no to people asking for help... we have non-Aboriginal clients that we help too...

Vince: I had one woman come in to bitch about Welfare not giving her the check... so we went to see them, I put on my suit and told her to say 'this is Vince, and he is just here to sit in on the meeting'... and they said the check would be ready at 2

Ray: (one client whose business he laughed at) FN escort service!

Thank you! (offer of basic business plan for the taking; it offers the basic things that you will have to do; a quick introduction to what you have to do). Also offer of ABC information, and business cards too.

Amelia: if you are EI eligible, you can go into 'self-employment EI' for up to eight weeks to do your business development; after 8 weeks, the committee will review your business plan—if they feel that it's viable, they will continue your EI up to another eight months... (so 12 months to start up your business). That's free money (to help you start up your business).

Ray: we also delivery a self-employment benefit out of our office. Not only if you are on an active EI claim, but also if you have been active on EI in the last three years... 430\$/wk in your pocket while you run your business so that you can at least feed your family, etc during the first year. We are trying to create a suite of services so that you don't have to run all over the country (piecing) services together. We are able to offer that service up into Ft St James....

Cheryl: You can also access funding for summer students, training-on-the-job, etc after the first year of running your business.

Closing remarks

On behalf of TI'azt'en nation...

Thanks to all presenters...

Thanks to Diana...

Thanks to committee...