

Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management

Newsletter 3
Fall 2005



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Welcome from Lead Investigators, Gail Fondahl and Susan Grainger

As you will read in this issue, our CURA team had a productive summer. The Education Stream has worked intensively to identify community values regarding education (see pp.4-5). Research on Improved Partnerships continues, both in the field and office (p.2, 3). The Ecotourism Stream initiated its activities this summer (p. 6). We've identified additional funds to expand our research (p. 3). CURA personnel have also been involved in sharing their growing knowledge and expertise with students and researchers, near and far (pp.1 & 6).

We wound the summer up with a Steering Committee meeting, held on the deck of the Cinnabar Resort (a rustic facility on Tezzeron Lake, in the heart of JPRF). Our meetings are open and we encourage Tl'azt'en community members and UNBC researchers to come: this one was attended by 10 Tl'azt'en youth, and 3 UNBC research assistants. The meeting was followed by a delicious barbeque, expertly prepared by Nathan Seymour, then some relaxation time. Several folks took a dip in the lake, some voluntarily, some not! See our web page to view photos of the meeting, and of Aboriginal Day celebrations in Tache.

Future Foresters Learn about Social Science and Tl'azt'en Forest Values *Sarah Parsons and Beverly Leon*

As part of UNBC's *Natural Resources Management Field Camp*, third- and fourth-year forestry and biology students participated in a module on community-based research. The objective was for students to learn how to interact with First Nations community members by learning some social science basics, and developing interviewing skills. Sarah Parsons and Beverly Leon explained some of the principles of qualitative and community-based research approaches, and then students were given the task of designing interview questions, and conducting interviews with Tl'azt'enne and natural resource management professionals. Students analyzed their findings, critiqued their methods, and then presented back to the group. Interviewees reported being very pleased with the students' work, and students told us the exercise gave them better insight into First Nations values, and helped

them to develop their communication skills. Thanks again to our volunteers Veronica Campbell, Phyllis Joseph, Amy Murray, Melanie Karjala, Roy Rea and JPRF staff including Sue Grainger, Dexter Hodder and Johnny Tom: without your participation this would not have been possible.



Photo by Roy Rea

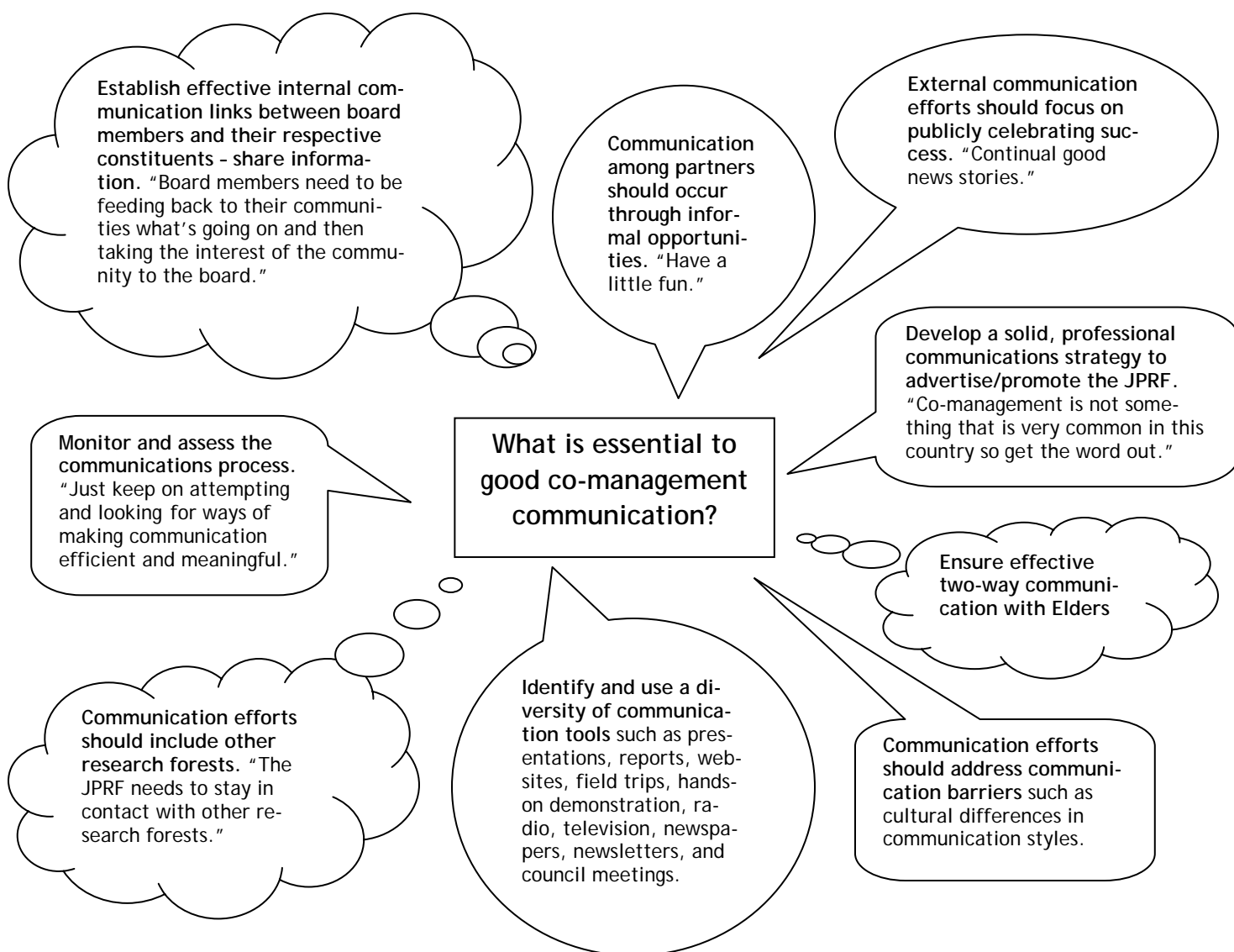
UNBC students Leaf and Cam interviewed Amy Murray of Tl'azt'en Nation to learn about her views on forestry.

Local Perspectives on Communication Processes in Co-management

Donna Atkinson and Erin Sherry

Forest co-management involves the sharing of power, management responsibility, and benefits between two or more groups with interests and values related to a common area or resource. It encourages partnership and cooperation between various resource user groups, including First Nations, government, non-governmental organizations, and industry. The growing popularity of such arrangements necessitates further examination into the process - or the day-to-day operation and structure - required for a successful co-management partnership. To add to our understanding of effective co-management processes

and, more specifically, to articulate local perspectives on co-management of the JPRF, the *Improved Partnership Stream* conducted interviews with 56 local forest experts from the TI'azt'en Nation, UNBC, Fort St. James, and the Nak'azdli First Nation on how forest co-management should work. Research participants addressed numerous elements critical to co-management success, including the key components of good co-management communication. Some of the participants' ideas about effective communication processes are captured in the statements below.



Student View *Stevie Anatole* Improving Partnerships Stream

Hello. My name is Stevie Anatole and I am a Tl'azt'en Nation post-secondary student. I was hired by CURA to work for the summer as a research assistant in the Improved Partnerships stream out of UNBC. It is hard to believe that the summer is coming to an end already. In September I am returning to the College of New Caledonia to complete the first half of my Social Work Program. After that I'm hoping to transfer to the University of Victoria to complete the rest of my program. In the past three months here I have met and worked with some great people and have learned a lot along the way. On only my second day of work, June 21st, we traveled to Tache to enjoy Aboriginal Day games and activities at Eugene Joseph Elementary School. When we returned I started out by transcribing interviews which helped me get a better understanding of the JPRF, how people were involved in it, and what people thought and expect of it. After that, I completed a huge forestry measures database on Microsoft Excel which contains over 2300 rows of information. This data-



base will help others in the future who are conducting the same kind of research. Donna Atkinson and I archived all of the IP interviews conducted in 2003 for UNBC and Tl'azt'en Nation. Following that, I gathered and summarized information on "Public Involvement through Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation" and had a lot of fun creating a poster to be presented at the NRES Research Colloquium. My final task was completing on a paper for the same topic to present to Tl'azt'en Nation.

JPRF History Project

Gail Fondahl and Donna Atkinson

Although the John Prince Research Forest is new (officially established in 1999) the history of its evolution from idea to reality, and the historical geography of its territory prior to its foundation, are of great interest to both Tl'azt'en Nation and UNBC. As the JPRF is the only research forest co-managed by a First Nation and a university, it is worth recording how this partnership evolved, including what obstacles the forest's establishment met and how these were overcome. This information could be highly instructive to future organizers of similar partnerships. Previous land use practices on the forest's territory influence its current landscapes and future management practices in a multiplicity of ways, from ecological to political: we thus also want to develop a more complete understanding of the varied uses and users of this landbase over the past several decades. To this end, Gail Fondahl, Erin Sherry,

and Donna Atkinson have pursued resources supplementary to the CURA project's funding. We recently were awarded a grant to carry out the above research, from the Real Estate Foundation BC Partnering Fund. Erin, Sue Grainger, Dexter Hodder, and Bev Leon will all be involved in supporting this research, while financial support and in-kind assistance will also be provided by the JPRF (Chuzghun Resources Corporation), the Chuntoh Education Society, the District of Fort St. James, and Tl'azt'en Nation. Donna, a recent graduate of UNBC (MA History, 2005) who has been working as a CURA Research Assistant on the *Improved Partnership Stream*, will begin this research in early November and will be assisted, in part, by a Tl'azt'en community researcher. Project information will be shared with both academic and community audiences.

Research in the Community: The Science/Environmental Education Stream Focus Groups

Christine Jackson and Sophia Raby

The Science/Environmental Education Stream's work stems from TI'azt'en Nation's desire to have economic, ecological and social sustainability in natural resource management. TI'azt'en Nation has identified the need to utilize all available knowledge in their decision making. They perceive that community members who are literate in both their own traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and contemporary science can most effectively manage their communities and natural resources. The work of the various CURA project Streams is brought together by this desire. The Education Stream's project *Strengthening Science Literacy through TEK* is working to develop integrated science and TEK backgrounds and skills in TI'azt'en youth and children, so future management utilizes these perspectives for the benefit of the community.

A central objective for *Strengthening Science Literacy through TEK* is to obtain an understanding of TI'azt'en educational philosophy, values and goals. This forms a foundation for the Education Stream work, so that educational TEK/Science programs designed for TI'azt'enne:

- are supported by the TI'azt'en community,
- enhance youth retention and interest in science,
- incorporate TI'azt'en culture and DakeIh language development, and
- build capacity in resource management.

This summer we commenced focus group work in the community as a first step towards achieving this project goal. We have been meeting with community members involved with or interested in education to collect information that:

- indicates participants' vision and philosophy for TI'azt'en science education,
- identifies perceived barriers to attaining this vision, and
- identifies community members' potential solutions for removing these barriers

This information will be gathered, synthesized, and presented at a public community meeting for further discussion so that a TI'azt'en consensus on the goals and philosophy behind developing an integrated TEK and science curriculum are clear.

We felt that focus groups are ideal ways to gather this information as they allow:

- direct communication with a large number of participants
- dialogue amongst participants which can be important in generating a consensus when differing views emerge. Dialogue also allows participants to express deeper levels of meaning, make connections between ideas, and trigger new thoughts during discussion. Focus groups are known for their "synergizing" effect, where participants can react to and build upon ideas and responses made by other respondents. Deeper meanings and ideas feed and grow across participants as a result.
- oral and graphic communication which is particularly useful when working with children, youth, and second language participants, who may find these approaches allow better self expression
- both community and non-community members of the Education Stream to meet and get to know community members in a less intimidating way





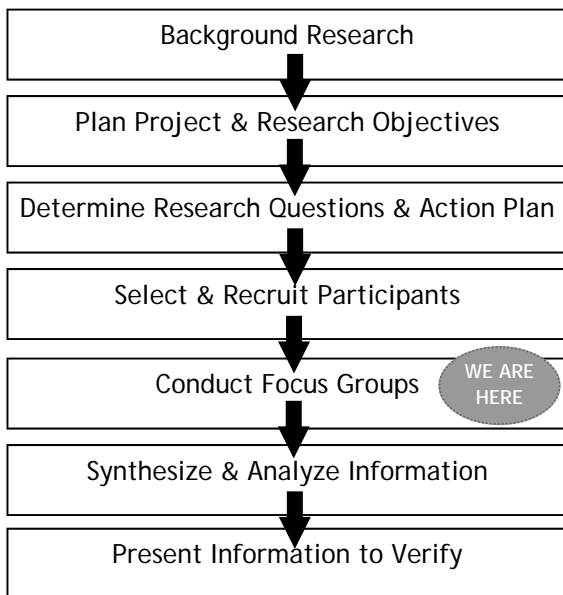
Photo by Amelia Stark



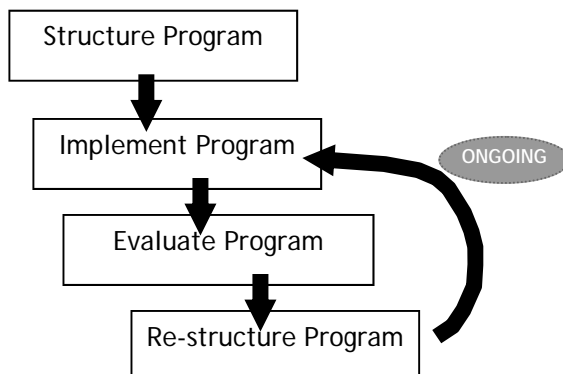
Photo by Beverly Leon

Education Stream Research Process

Phase 1: Understanding the Tl'azt'en Educational Philosophy



Phase 2: Developing Science/TEK Program



As of the end of August, we had completed four of the five proposed target focus groups. We have met with groups of Tl'azt'en parents/guardians, Tl'azt'en youth, Tl'azt'en children, and Educational Professionals who work with and within the community. During the fall we plan to meet with community Elders. Participants were invited through a combined process of nomination by community members, and ranking by a committee of Tl'azt'en community/educational leaders. We would like to gratefully acknowledge all those who voluntarily contributed to our focus groups.

The quality of the data obtained to date is both rich and informative. It has provided us with a sense of the similarities and common ideas amongst participants and also indicated some unique perspectives, which largely reflect participants' roles in the community. We anticipate our final focus group with Elders will be crucial for understanding and communicating Tl'azt'en educational goals and vision.

Following data collection, analysis of the collected materials will be done by a team of UNBC and Tl'azt'en researchers who will synthesize the information so it can be presented for discussion at community meeting. This will provide an opportunity for both participants and community members to revise and/or validate our information, and form a community consensus about the vision, goals, and philosophy for a Tl'azt'en TEK and Science learning. This vision will form the foundation for TEK/Science education programs and other curriculum in the community.

Digging into the Eco and Indigenous Tourism Literature

Pamela Wright and Kate Reade

With the start of the ecotourism stream earlier this summer, we were busy gathering and cataloging literature and resources on indigenous tourism. We also sifted through the existing information pertaining to our stream, including the critical local values for tourism and recreation generated from the CURA Improved Partnership stream and previous reports on ecotourism in Tl'azt'en territory.

Our newfound knowledge is being used this fall as part of a new class being taught by Pam Wright entitled "Aboriginal and Cultural Tourism and Recreation". The course focuses on issues relating to cultural and indigenous perspectives on tourism and recreation, including: indigenous tourism, cultural tourism and recreation; co-management of protected areas and conservation and

tourism development opportunities in indigenous territories. We will be looking at examples from around the world with a particular focus on Northern British Columbia.



This fall we will work with the community to develop the research questions and begin to develop study methods. We look forward to hearing the perspectives of Tl'azt'enne on possibilities for eco/indigenous tourism as well as touring the existing recreation and tourism resources in the JPRF and Tl'azt'en territory.

Taking CURA to Siberia

Gail Fondahl

While most of our CURA team were intensively involved in field work during these past summer months, I spent three weeks in eastern Siberia on another research project, to look at local views (in mostly aboriginal communities) regarding the proposed construction of an oil pipeline. A Russian colleague and I interviewed community members to assess their knowledge, concerns, fears and aspirations regarding this mega-project. The trip provided an opportunity to describe the SSHRC CURA initiative generally (the philosophy and objectives of community-university research

partnerships), and to describe our specific CURA's work, especially that on methodologies for identifying local community values regarding sustainable forest management. Talking to faculty and students was not always in the most auspicious conditions - we spent a night at an archeology camp where the density and ferocity of mosquitoes rivaled anything I've experienced! Local aboriginal leaders, as well as faculty members and village administrators showed considerable interest in models of indigenous-researcher collaboration that are developing in Canada.

