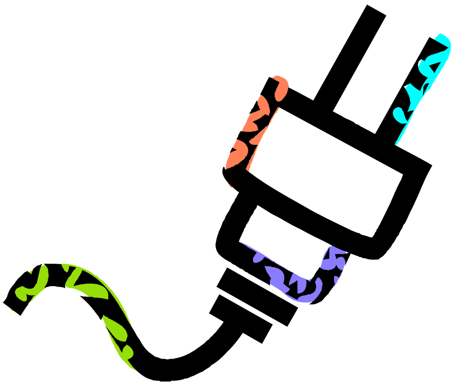
Informed Leisure Practice

Cases as Conduits Between Theory and Practice



Nicole L. Vaugeois, Editor

Volume 2

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Cases as Conduits Between Theory and Practice

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Preface

Case studies are valuable conduits for knowledge mobilization. In the process of researching and writing up a case study, authors learn from, and with those engaged in the reality being captured. For those being profiled in case studies, documentation can validate the approaches being used, while exposure to outside audiences can enhance profile. In the process of reading case studies, learners gain knowledge about issues, approaches and impacts that may later be applied in new contexts.

In this second volume of "Informed Leisure Practices: Cases as Conduits between Theory and Practice" ten more case studies are presented that document a diversity of contexts where research has been used to guide decision-making. Although unintended, there is a clear theme that emerges from the case studies in this volume. Each of the cases presented documents innovative approaches to research within community settings.

Steven Henle's case in Chapter one demonstrates an approach to involving students in tourism research based on his work in Montreal. In Chapter two, David Robinson highlights the approach and results of his efforts to engage in action research with students in Costa Rica. Rick Rolllins, Jeff Ward and Lynn Wilson demonstrate how collaborative research between academic and non academic partners can provide key information for parks planning in Chapter three. Camerson Rauschenberger highlights in chapter five how a historical analysis of an emerging sport can provide insights on how to approach collaboration efforts. In Chapter six, Catherine Moores demonstrates the insightful approach being taken by Oliver, British Columbia to construct tourism based on local expert knowledge. Anne Hardy, in Chapter seven demonstrates how qualitative research methods can be used to gain insight into valuable market segments like the self-drive market. Ruth Jeanes and Tess Kay, in Chapter eight provide thought provoking evidence of the need to incorporate the voices of unheard groups in research results. Chrystal Stone and Richard Giele continue with this trend in Chapter nine by highlighting how emerging approaches such as the rapid rural appraisal method can be used to learn with and about rural communities. Richard Giele continues this message, but in another community, in Chapter 10 as he describes how a community driven research approach is being used to help inform tourism planning.

A number of the cases profiled are taking place in rural communities throughout British Columbia and are written by faculty who are a part of a new knowledge mobilization initiative entitled "Tourism Research Innovation Project" which is intending to enhance the flow of knowledge between academic, community and government partners to enable rural communities to develop sustainable tourism. The cases will be useful to share with other communities so that insights can be gained about how to approach diversification through tourism.

Once again, all the cases provided help to capture the complexity of approaches being used in our communities to engage multiple audiences in leisure management. Many of the cases address some universal challenges faced in recreation, sport and tourism disciplines. On behalf of the authors who have contributed to this volume, I hope that you are able to take away some ideas on how to approach similar cases in your own communities.

In the interest of enhanced knowledge mobilization,
Nicole L. Vaugeois

Experiential Learning:
Montreal: A Tourism Snapshot

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Abstract

The tourism industry is based, in part, on the theory that tourism is comprised of nine sectors. The nine sectors include: transportation, accommodation, food & beverage, attractions, events & conferences, adventure tourism & outdoor recreation, travel trade and tourism services (Nickerson & Kerr, 2004). Each of these sectors is critical to fully understand tourism. The case study presented focuses on the tourist and can be related to some of the tourism sectors. More importantly tourism as a topic for social science research (Berno & Ward, 2005) provides learners with the opportunity to experience tourism-related research and encourages experiential learning (Schlager, Lengfelder, & Groves, 1999).

Learning Outcomes

After reading this case study, learners will be able to:

1. Design and implement experiential learning assignments;
2. Devise an equitable method to divide large groups of students into triads for group work;
3. Write their own research paper based on the data provided by combining the quantitative findings section with the qualitative interpretation section; and
4. Engage in practical research within the scope of their classes with the hope of submitting research findings for publication.

The Assignment

Students enrolled in Tourism in Canada (AHSC 310) in the department of Applied Human Sciences (AHSC) at Concordia University in Montreal are required to participate in a research project that provides rich learning outside of the classroom, resulting in an experiential learning opportunity (Schlager et al., 1999). In order to better understand tourism and to talk to tourists face-to-face, students design and conduct a research project. The class consists of approximately 150 undergraduate students who are taking the class as an elective. For this assignment, students' are randomly divided into 50 groups of three. Students are trained in basic research methods including, designing a survey questionnaire, research ethics involving human subjects, coding data, ethnographic observations, sampling, bias and limitation (Sallant & Dillman, 1994). Basic research information is shared with the class including examples of how quantitative and qualitative data are used in tourism research.

Students design one questionnaire that everyone in the class will use and then divide Montreal into tourist-rich zones and randomly stop people and ask them to complete the survey. Each student group is required to find ten tourists willing to complete the survey. While one student stops potential research participants and asks them to participate, the other two group members make qualitative observations such as, but not limited to, is the research participant nervous or relaxed, pressed for time or leisurely, alone or part of a group, willing to participate, hesitant or not interested. After ten surveys are complete the group writes about their qualitative observations and codes the quantitative data onto an Excel spreadsheet. Each group retains the qualitative observations they made for later, when they write the research report. The coded quantitative data is emailed to the professor. If the data is received on time and in the correct format, each student receives ten percent of their final grade.

The data received by email is harvested from Excel for statistical analysis using the Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS). Students are not required to have statistics training as a prerequisite for this course, therefore simple exploratory statistics are provided so students can use the data to write the research report.

The entire class reviewed the statistics and discussed the sampling errors and various forms or bias introduced into the study. The groups of three were paired-up to form groups of six based on the type of tourist zone surveyed. For example, groups that visited similar places were paired-up, research groups who collected data at special event venues were paired together and groups that collected data at transportation hubs, such as the train station or airport were paired together. Therefore, there were 25 final written projects completed.

The research paper is worth 25 percent of the student's final grade. The 25 student groups (with six students in each group) were free to pick one theme for the final paper based on the quantitative data that was collected. Each group posited a thesis statement or research question and supported their argument with both quantitative data and qualitative observations. Although the student groups were free to pick the theme for their research paper, all papers had to follow the same format. The paper was ordered accordingly: Introduction, methods, findings, interpretation, limitations, and recommendations for future research, followed by references and appendices.

Methods

Class time was used to introduce students to research-related issues, including: survey questionnaire design, research ethics involving human subjects, coding data, qualitative observations, bias and sampling procedures. Each of these issues is discussed in detail.

Survey Questionnaire Design

The class discussed and learned how to write an effective survey questionnaire (Sallant & Dillman, 1994). Students discussed survey length and what style questions illicit the best responses, such as: forced choice questions, close ended questions, Likert-type questions or open ended questions? In small task groups students worked to create appropriate survey questions. In class students shared the questions they considered important and the class created one survey questionnaire, made-up of the best questions as decided by the students. The class agreed on a 14-item questionnaire, with the purpose of gaining information about who the typical Montreal tourist is and why they chose Montreal as their travel destination. Instructions were added to the questionnaire and the questionnaire was reproduced so that each group had ten blank copies to use for data collection.

The questionnaire had a variety of close-ended questions, such as Question 1 (Q1), "What is your primary residence?" Q2, "What is the duration of this trip?" Q3, "The primary purpose of the trip is?" Q4, "Why are you travelling?" Q5, "What attracted you to Montreal?" Seven questions used a Likert-type scale. The scale ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The questions on the scale were Q6, "Montrealer's are friendly" Q7, "Montreal is a safe city" Q8, "I would visit Montreal in the winter" Q9, "I like to travel alone" Q10, "Group travel is enjoyable" Q11, "I have special travel needs" and Q12, "I like meeting different people" Questions about age (Q13) and gender (Q14) were included, and at the end of the survey was one open-ended question, "Is there anything important about your travel that you would like to add?

Research Ethics Involving Human Subjects
Research projects involving human subjects must obtain approval prior to conducting research to protect the rights of research participants and to ensure that the research protocol is adhered to. For undergraduate student research a faculty committee, called the AHSC Ethics Committee, is responsible to review student applications for research. The committee can approve applications, approve applications with revisions, or reject applications and

request that the application be resubmitted after major revisions. Prior to the beginning of the term the application was submitted by the professor and received conditional approval.

Part of the application procedure includes a signed agreement by the students and professor that the students have been trained in issues related to human ethics. Students learn about issues related to coercion, principals of inclusion and exclusion, confidentiality, anonymity, implied consent (and issues of deception), potential harm to candidates, and debriefing research participants. Students are required to give each research participant a postcard after they complete the survey questionnaire. The postcard expresses “thanks” and provides contact information so that research participants can request copies of the research findings, express concerns about the research or how they were treated. Once students completed ethics training they signed the ethics proposal contract and final approval to conduct research was approved by the AHSC Human Ethics Committee.

Coding data

Each student group collected data from ten research participants. The quantitative data was recorded onto the survey questionnaires. Students were trained in class to code the data numerically onto an Excel spreadsheet. Students could access the spreadsheet through the course web page, fill in the appropriate data and send the Excel spreadsheet to the professor by email for analysis. To code the data each question on the survey was re-named so that question number one on the survey, “Where is your primary residence?” was recoded in Excel as Q1, followed by Q2 representing the second question…and Q14 represented the last question. Similarly, the answer choices were coded. Therefore, the column header represented the variables, and the row headers represented the questionnaire identification numbers, the cells had the various answer choices. Table 1 represents the raw data in Excel that student group five submitted and table 2 shows the raw data in SPSS with the value labels displayed. Both tables represent the same data.

Table 1 Group five’s data in Excel

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
41	5	2	1	5	3	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	3	2
42	5	2	1	1	3	4	3	2	5	2	1	5	2	2
43	3e	4	1	5	5	4	4	3	1	4	1	4	4	1
44	4	3	3	5	9	5	5	4	2	3	1	4	4	2
45	3e	2	1	4	5	4	4	3	1	3	1	3	2	2
46	4	3	1	5	9	5	5	3	1	3	1	4	8	2
47	4	2	1	5	9	5	4	4	1	1	1	4	4	1
48	5	4	3	3	3	4	4	5	3	2	1	5	1	2
49	4	2	1	1	3	5	5	3	2	5	5	5	4	1
50	6	2	1	5	3	4	3	4	1	2	1	5	1	2

Table 1 Group five’s raw data input into Excel

Qualitative observations

The assignment provides students the opportunity to collect qualitative data. While one student approaches research participants and completes the survey the other students make qualitative observations. To prepare students, and introduce them to qualitative observation, a short in-class activity was conducted. Through role-play some students pretended to be Montreal tourists while other students rehearsed their role as researchers, this was done in the front of the class so that all the students observed the various interactions. Following the role-play activity students recalled the details they observed. Based on student generated data, such as room setting, body language, facial expressions, and seriousness of the participants, themes surfaced and students were able to relate their observations to project-related ideas. The class then discussed issues of bias and how bias affects the lens through which observations are made.

Table 2 Group five's data in SPSS with value labels displayed

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
41	Europe	one to three days	Pleasure	Other	Montreal Culture	Agree	Neutral/don't know	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	32 to 38	Male
42	Europe	one to three days	Pleasure	See new places	Montreal Culture	Agree	Neutral/don't know	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	25 to 31	Male
43	ONT	Seven or more days	Pleasure	Other	Accessibility	Agree	Agree	Neutral/don't know	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	39 to 45	Female
44	United States	Four to six Days	Pleasure & business	Other	Other	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral/don't know	Strongly Disagree	Agree	39 to 45	Male
45	ONT	one to three days	Pleasure	Get away from my stressful life	Accessibility	Agree	Agree	Neutral/don't know	Strongly Disagree	Neutral/don't know	Strongly Disagree	Neutral/Don't know	25 to 31	Male
46	United States	Four to six Days	Pleasure	Other	Other	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral/don't know	Strongly Disagree	Neutral/don't know	Strongly Disagree	Agree	66 to 72	Male
47	United States	one to three days	Pleasure	Other	Other	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	39 to 45	Female
48	Europe	Seven or more days	Pleasure & business	Learn about new cultures	Montreal Culture	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral/don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	18 to 24	Male
49	United States	one to three days	Pleasure	See new places	Montreal Culture	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral/don't know	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	39 to 45	Female
50	Asia, Pacific Islands	one to three days	Pleasure	Other	Montreal Culture	Agree	Neutral/don't know	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	18 to 24	Male

Bias
Issues related to reducing bias were discussed at four periods during the project, including: questionnaire design, qualitative observation, sampling and after the data was collected in preparation for writing the research paper. During questionnaire design, issues related to sensitive language was discussed, such as, which terms were appropriate to use when designing questions and answer categories, for example, “sex” or “gender”, and “gay” versus “gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender”. Generally, the students had some difficulty creating questions with appropriate language. The first-draft questions displayed ethnographic bias about cultural preferences related to the students’ own cohort (19 to 24 year olds).

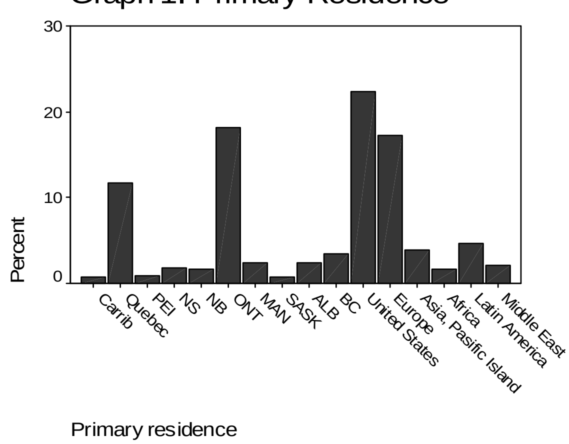
When students practiced qualitative observations additional issues of bias were addressed. The influence of group assignments and grade-related school work is a form of bias, some students expressed that group work was a “hassle” and they wanted to collect the data as quickly as possible. What students did not observe was also addressed. For example, many students acknowledged that research participants may be nervous when approached by three strangers. However, the students did not acknowledge that they were nervous approaching research participants and asking them to volunteer.

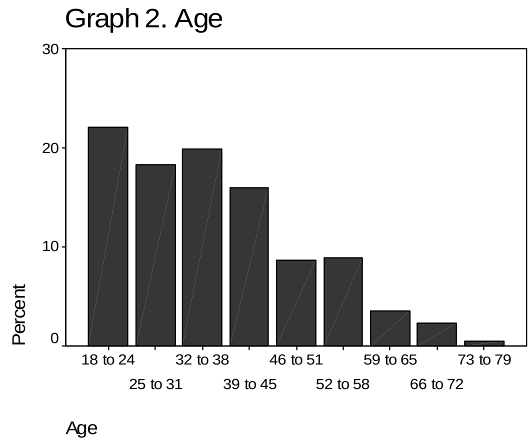
Sampling
Students brainstormed appropriate locations to collect data. The instructions for the brainstorming session were “where are you most likely to find tourists?” Students picked many obvious locations, such as the airport, the tourist information booth, museums, bars that cater to tourists, and popular areas of the city such as shopping on Ste. Catherine Street, sightseeing in Old Montreal, and eating in China Town. Bias was introduced because some “tourist rich” places were ignored, such as places that attract families with young children, and churches, such as, St. Joseph’s Oratory and Notre Dame Basilica.

Findings

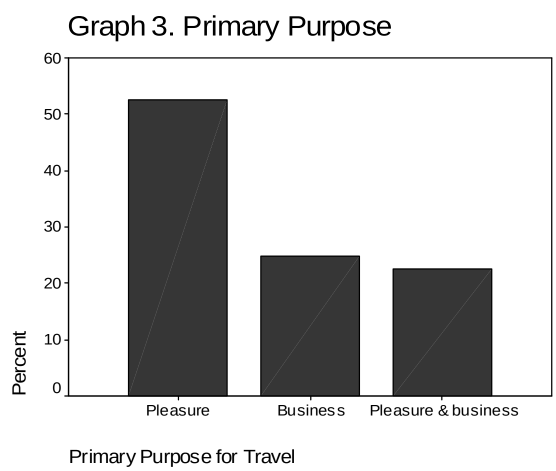
The questionnaire data and qualitative observations provided the students with rich data. The student groups collected 430 completed questionnaires (N = 430) within a one week data collection period. The research participants included 179 female volunteers (42 percent) and 249 male volunteers (58 percent) who self-identified as tourists. To ensure that research participants were not from Montreal question number one, “where is your primary residence?” identified domestic tourists, Canadians travelling within Canada (n = 203) and foreign tourists, people who reside outside of Canada (n = 227). The majority of foreign tourists identified as American (n = 96) followed by European (n = 74), Latin American (n = 20), Asian or Pacific Islander (n = 17) and other (n = 20). These data are shown in graph 1. The respondents ranged from 18 to 79 year olds (graph 2).

Graph 1. Primary Residence





Participants were asked “What is the duration of your trip to Montreal?” Fifty-five percent of the tourists were in Montreal for more than four day. Research participants identified being in Montreal for pleasure (53 percent), for business (25 percent) and for a combination of pleasure and business (22 percent), this data is shown in graph 3.

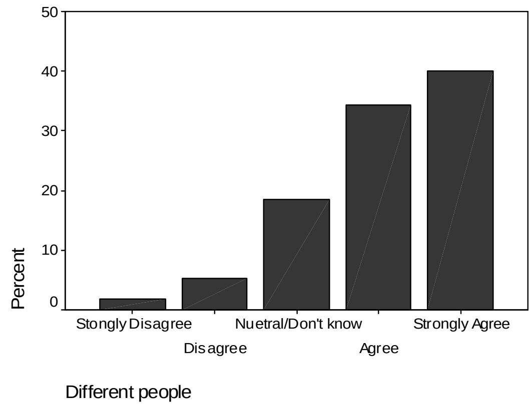


The research participants were asked their opinion about whether Montreal is a friendly city. Overwhelmingly 80 percent of the respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement “Montrealer’s are friendly”. The question was asked “Is Montreal a safe city?” and 77 percent of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed”. However, 19 percent of the respondents were “neutral/did not know” if Montreal was safe.

Research participants were asked if they would visit Montreal in the winter. Many participants were willing to visit in the winter (49 percent), 23 percent of the participants were unsure if they would visit in the winter and 28 percent of respondents would not consider visiting Montreal during the winter. Research participants were asked why they travel in general and 29 percent said that they travel to see new places, relax (19 percent), get away from stressful life (16 percent), and learn about new cultures (11 percent). Many participants (23 percent) picked the other category.

Research participants were asked what attracted them to Montreal, 24 percent of the respondents were attracted because of “Montreal culture” and 16 percent were attracted because of past experience in Montreal. Many participants (37 percent) picked “other”, and the remaining reasons were equally distributed between hotel accommodations, restaurants, word of mouth, good dollar value, and festivals as the primary attractions. Research respondents “strongly agreed" that they like meeting different people (40 percent), and "agreed" (34 percent). Eighteen percent of the respondents felt "neutral" about meeting different people and seven percent did not like to meet different people (graph 4).

Graph 4. Different People



Interpretation

Qualitative Interpretation

The students reported that collecting the data seemed effortless because so many tourists were willing to participate. The following observations were harvested from student papers, and most of the information comes from Tourism Montreal (Tourism Montreal, 2006). In support of their observations and the quantitative data they collected, overwhelmingly this data provides a very positive sign that Montreal is a "healthy" tourist destination.

Montreal is a vibrant North American city that attracts tourists during four seasons. Boreal forests shimmer in the fall and the wonders of nature are revealed as the leaves change from green to red to orange and yellow. Montreal and region attract winter tourists who enjoy skiing, snowmobiling, NHL hockey and the Festival of Lights. During the spring sugaring-off provides a unique and traditional Quebec opportunity to experience the maple syrup industry. During summer the city is host to festivals and special events. The most popular summer festivals include the Jazz Festival, the Comedy Festival, and the International Fireworks Festival. The city also attracts Ferrari owners and auto racing fans during the Grand Prix of Canada. The Formula One race weekend is also the busiest shopping weekends for Montreal retail shopping.

Montreal is a multicultural city with museums, churches, performing arts, green spaces, historic waterfront district and interactive museums such as the Montreal Biodome and Montreal Insectarium. Montreal is a great city for eating and drinking. With restaurants that allow customers to "apportez votre vin" (bring your own wine) tourists can find great food and ambiance at any price point. The city offers "joie de vivre" (joy of life), walking the streets, exploring the city, experiencing Montreal culture, window-shopping and people watching are popular pastimes.

As a business destination the city is a hub in North America for pharmaceutical companies, aerospace, fashion and technology. Montreal has two exhibition halls attracting trade shows, conferences, conventions and business meetings. Montreal has two large French universities and two large English universities that continuously offer academic and professional conferences. The tourist attractions in Montreal are appealing and many business travellers take time to mix business with pleasure. The diversity of the city, the benefit of two official languages and easy access to Montreal via personal car or public transportation add to the success of Montreal's tourism industry, which attracts national and international tourists.

Limitations

Overall this assignment provides a glimpse into research. Many issues are beyond the scope of the class such as sampling procedures and more meaningful statistical analysis. Most critically three issues are discussed, biased results, no pilot testing and absents of reliability and validity data.

Biased results
After the data was collected the class examined the results. Clearly the quality of the research was affected by ageism. The students approached participants they felt comfortable approaching and ignored people who appeared to be older. The data showed that only 24 percent of the sample was greater than 46 year olds and only three percent of the participants surveyed reported being greater than 66 year olds. Although the students were shocked by their bias they also acknowledged seeking out research participants who they could identify with. The lack of time in a thirteen week course was prohibitive and as a result the questionnaire was not pilot tested prior to conducting the research. In addition no studies were conducted to determine the validity or reliability of the questionnaire. Without psychometric data to support the validity and reliability of the questionnaire it is suspect to use the data presented beyond this case study.

Recommendations

This assignment has been effective in sparking student interest in tourism-related research beyond traditional classroom learning. It is advantageous to engage students in experiential learning, and you are encouraged to use this case study to create similar assignments. To better benefit from this assignment create the questionnaire for the students, pilot test the survey and study the psychometric properties. By repeating the same assignment professors and students will have a large amount of data that can be studied and research articles based on the findings can be submitted for publication.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel when randomly placed into a group and forced to work with other students for 35 percent of your final grade?
2. Can you devise an equitable methodology for dividing 150 students into 50 groups?
3. What messages need to be conveyed to students about group assignments and working with peers?
4. After reading this case study would you enrol in this class? How do you learn best: by listening, by reading, by seeing or by doing? What are the advantageous/disadvantageous of experiential learning?
5. Based on the information presented what other forms of bias can you identify?
6. Using the quantitative data presented in the findings sections and other sources (journals and government statistics) answer the following questions:
    a. Is Montreal a four season destination?
    b. Who is the “typical” Montreal tourist?
    c. What attracts tourists to Montreal?
    d. What effect does the value of the Canadian dollar have on tourism?
    e. How does the data presented compare with other published reports about Canadian tourism?
7. Create your own questionnaire for your city/town and conduct survey research, back-up your findings with qualitative observations. Good luck and have fun leaning.

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The *Heart of Gold* Costa Rica Community Empowerment Project: A Case Study of a Community-University Research Alliance

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Costa Rica Research Partner Institutions
Earth University
The Rainforest Alliance

Costa Rican Community Organization Partners
The Nubotropica Foundation
Sol Colibri Organic Farmers Association

I want to live, I want to give …
I crossed the ocean for a Heart of Gold
Neil Young

Abstract
Initiated in 2004, the *Heart of Gold* project is a 'mutual learning and research alliance' between Malaspina University College, Canada and the rural Los Santos Region of Costa Rica. The project, undertaken collaboratively with local organic farming families, seeks to identify, implement and disseminate new models of coffee production and agro-tourism in ways that reduce community vulnerability and enhances pro-poor development and environmental health. Student research and work placements in Los Santos gives emphasis to building community capacity and generating small-scale locally owned agro-tourism activities. Skill and knowledge transfer to local residents supports the rights of rural communities to manage their natural resources through shared decision-making processes. The project has enriched the research, teaching methods and curricula at Malaspina University College. Students' education and employability has been enhanced by means of culturally diverse opportunities to build their knowledge, expertise and work skills through applied research and related experiences. It is intended that the *Heart of Gold* project will generate knowledge and information that has applicability for other rural communities in developing countries facing transitional challenges and seeking social equity and local economic restructuring.

Learning Environment. This case study could be used in a variety of classroom situations, as it deals with the concepts of local empowerment, knowledge transfer, participatory research, and 'academics as activists'.

Study Outcomes. Through an examination of this case study, students will be more aware of the following:

1. The importance of using eco-tourism (in this case agro-tourism) as an agent for community empowerment and social equity transformation
2. Challenges facing developing countries seeking to create non-corporate models of production (coffee or tourism)
3. The powerful nature of experiential learning and cross-cultural exchange
4. The role of research in promoting awareness, education and involvement of local peoples

Project History and Background

Initiated in 2004, the *Heart of Gold* project is the central undertaking of a 'mutual learning and research alliance' between Malaspina University College [MUC], Nanaimo, BC, Canada and the rural Los Santos Region of Costa Rica. The project is managed and operated by a small number of highly committed rural tourism students and a faculty member within the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management at MUC. Tied to the department's academic emphasis on sustainable rural development (Vaugeois, 2006) and it's commitment to out-reach support for rural communities-in-transition on Vancouver Island (Robinson, Mazzoni, Morford, Corbett, & Schaiberger, 2005), the *Heart of Gold* project advances the program's community empowerment activities into the international arena.

The *Heart of Gold* project focuses on the profound challenge posed by the globalization of coffee production and its impact on forest, water and human health degradation. The project is field-based and seeks to identify and support the development of viable alternatives models of agricultural production that create environmental, social and economic health for local farming communities. The project goals are to provide practical approaches – focused on organic-in-the-shade coffee production supplemented by community-owned-and-operated agro-tourism economic diversification – for enhancing forest and water supply health, as well as increasing democratic participation and social equity in rural settings. The project's long-term aims are to effect policy change in Costa Rica and neighbouring countries by strengthening community long-term capacities to carry out, manage and disseminate new pro-poor approaches to coffee production that can be supplemented through small-scale locally owned and operated agricultural tourism activity. Our project supports civil society organizations in rural Costa Rica to facilitate community empowerment through public awareness, education and debate, and grassroots involvement on the critical national policy issue of coffee farming and the impacts of globalization. In pursuing these long-term goals, the project also creates exceptionally rich learning and cultural experiences for MUC students and faculty, and a depth and breadth of cross-cultural sharing that is very unique to higher education settings[1].

> *Colten, Kevin and Erin doing great work on the agro-tourism trails and homestays on the farms of Segura and Montero, loved by their homestay families of Myella and Elba. Myella thanks us for sending such beautiful and hard working students, her pleasure and sincerity bring a lovely tear to my eye. Dave*

The project was an outcome of an international field school held in 2004, when Dr. Dave Robinson led a 4-week field study program in Costa Rica for 20 graduating students. The field school critically assessed the 'good, the bad, and the ugly' of tourism development in Costa Rica and successfully linked the 'theory and practice' of community development through small scale, locally owned and operated ecotourism development. During the field school, home-stay programs led to an affiliation with social equity activists in the Los Santos Region of central Costa Rica. The Los Santos Region is a rural coffee farming area and, due in large part to existing corporate coffee production models (including the much lauded 'Fair Trade' models of coffee production), the Los Santos communities struggle with the challenge of rural poverty and related social and economic challenges. Even though coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world, the dominant corporate coffee production model creates poverty and social inequity through economic disenfranchisement (e.g., it denies farmers access to the value-added processing of coffee beans, and provides below subsistence level income) and harmful

[1] In an attempt to illustrate the very important experiential aspect of the project, box texts will provide email and personal communication quotes from Costa Rica between project members over the past two-year.

environmental practices on traditional plantations (e.g., forest wildlife habitat destruction and chemical based farming that creates extensive drinking water contamination).

> *It makes it difficult to get homesick when everywhere you go you feel at home. Mayela's is great as well. We have been here two nights and are already a part of the family 'our house is your house'. Last night we went to Rafa's for dinner and Mayela called there wondering where her 'kids' where. Vicki*

Current community capacity to bring about social and economic restructuring in the Los Santos region is very limited. Local planning and the provision of planning support from applied research teams take on a new importance when small communities with limited local capacities are confronted with socio-economic change and power structures that they cannot significantly influence (Scheyvens, 1999). Local community leaders and activists, looking to generate socio-economic change within their region, requested MUC's research and outreach skills to support their community empowerment efforts. Specifically, MUC support through faculty and student research involvement seeks to create:

1. economic diversification through community owned-and-managed ecotourism initiatives with emphases on agricultural tourism, ecotourism and intercultural-based tourism initiatives, and

2. Radical change in the coffee productions models currently practiced in Central and South America. This long-term initiative seeks to move coffee production beyond the severe shortcomings of 'Fair Trade' to a '*Direct Trade'* model of coffee production that creates economic equity and social and environmental well-being for rural farming communities.

Direct Trade coffee is coffee that is (a) grown in-the-shade of a natural forest canopy, (b) utilizes only organic fertilizers, and (c) supports the farmer in conducting all value-added aspects of coffee production (i.e., roasting, packaging and direct marketing to the consumer). These criteria promote environmental, social and economic health for coffee producing communities.

> *We are currently taking inventory of what the six farms have and what they might need to add some comfort to tourists. The bonus to all this is that these are authentic people working hard to make a life and trying to help conserve and reclaim the land through organics--coffee, fruit, vegetables and providing food for birds and other wildlife. We do not want to change anything just add some value to them through tourism. I have to run, I am helping teach English at the local University. Richard*

Figure 1: *Students working with remote coffee farmers on eco-agricultural tourism initiatives.*

During 2004-2005 strong relationships were formed with our two major research communities (Santa Maria de Dota [pop. 3,000] and San Marcos [pop. 5,000]), community organizations (the Nubotropica Foundation and Sol Colibri Organic Farmers Association), and our academic research partnerships (Earth University and the Rainforest Alliance of Costa Rica).

As will be described in the following sections, the project now collaboratively runs agro-tourism and community education activities in Costa Rica but also has *Direct Trade* coffee import/promotions/sales and educational components in Canada. Student and faculty involvement in Costa Rica is premised upon a healthy commitment to the project's activities in Canada; that is, every student must 'earn' their experiential learning ticket in Canada before they go to Costa Rica. Simply put, the project members are those who '*want to live, want to give, want to cross the ocean for a Heart of Gold*": the project attracts a small number of alternatively minded individuals who are highly committed to 'giving service' and in return gaining rich cross-cultural experiences.

> *Doing well here, although it is and has been raining for so long we are building an Ark. Then again we are in the middle of a Rainforest in the wet season. Richard*

Participatory Action Research Foci, Outcomes and Benefits

Research Methods and Outcomes The project's model of participatory action research is focused application and knowledge transfer. Our methods are based upon the principles of (a) *participation*: building trust and respect with families and communities, and then (b) working with families and communities to identify actions or *solutions* to their community challenges and issues. Integral to the *solutions* aspect is the transfer of knowledge and skills from our students and faculty *to the farmers*. In return, the farmers and their families share their knowledge of organic and integrated farming with faculty and students. This latter point – that of two-way knowledge transfer **-** is critical to the project's theme of empowerment.

> *We revision with the key farmer activists and families the project´´s ethic, goals and objectives for the next year ... the project is a lovely changing moving living being that thrives on ´participation´´ and then áction´´ .... we mingle and we reinforce the trust then we share and then we identify solutions ... it feeds and reciprocates ... daily messages of thanks from Ticos and Canadians.*
> *Dave*

The pivotal aspect of the project's success is the creation of healthy relationships between MUC faculty and students and the individuals and families with whom we work in Costa Rica. The *Heart of Gold* project is a volunteer based project: for individuals, either Costa Rican or Canadian, to sustain a long-term time and energy commitment, the project's activities and relationships must be enjoyable and satisfying; if they are not, then logically the project fades and possible dies. Healthy relationships have been central to our beautiful project, and we foreseen no changes in this regard. Trust and mutual respect – based on the project's ethic of authentic relationships and the *'giving and sharing of our time, talents and treasure'* – has, fortunately, been a very natural element of the project's unfolding.

Minor and I walked the new trail a few days before and I pointed out improvements that would have to be made i.e. steps in steep areas, some areas would have to be wider, rope handrails installed for safety. I also thought it would be a good idea to provide walking sticks and one of our organic farmers Carlos made us 20 bamboo ones--perfect! We will eventually spread them to the other farms. I believe we are moving in the right direction. Richard

Figure 2: *The organic farmer Minor Montero with six of his ten brothers and sisters. Cooperative education students live with Minor's family while in Costa Rica.*

Faculty and student research involvement - regular face-to-face contact - in Costa Rica is essential for the purpose of strengthening the relationships with our research communities and families, as well as with our research partners - Earth University and The Rainforest Alliance. Collaborating on identifying project goals, research methods, research outcomes, transfer of knowledge, and shared decision-making builds trust and enhances sharing. Our institution's role is not that of 'expert' (which characterizes many developed-developing world projects), rather we seek to be a 'research resource' to the communities in need: 'tell us your issues, then let's together work on solutions that we can help assist you to achieve'.

The project is progressing well . All of the organic farmers are very happy to be involved in sharing their farms and homes, they are proud that we want to share what they do with others. Richard

Research Foci and Project Phases Designed in collaboration with local community leaders, the long-term project has three major research foci:

1. Agro-tourism design and implementation and its link with *Direct Trade* models of coffee production;
2. Sustainable ecotourism development models in rural farming communities, and
3. Forest protection-based models of educational tourism development.

To date the project has had two quite distinct phases*: 'Phase I 2004-2005 Initiating a Community-University Research Alliance',* and '*Phase II 2006-2007 Solidifying and Expanding the Alliance'.* Through out both phases, the project has received very strong support from the International Education and Cooperative Education programs at MUC.

During '*Phase I 2004-2005 Initiating a Community-University Research Alliance',* the project created a community-university research alliance between the rural agricultural community of Santa Maria del Dota in the Los Santos Region of Costa Rica and MUC. Employing a participatory action research approach, this collaborative research alliance focuses on planning and policy development for rural agricultural communities in economic transition, and seeks to help fill the community development planning gap that exists in many rural communities around the world (Burby, 2003; Swarbrooke, 1999).

Phase I 2004-2005 of the project succeeded in setting up collaborative participation action research partnerships between MUC, the Los Santos communities (the Nubotropica Foundation of Los Santos, and the Sol Colibri Organic Farmers Association) and our Costa Rica research partners (Earth University, and The Rainforest Alliance of Costa Rica) The relationships with Earth University and the Rainforest Alliance are formalized: Earth University will provide integrated farming expertise in the Los Santos Region, while our institution will provide tourism development/management expertise for the communities with whom Earth University are working in northern Costa Rica. The Rainforest Alliance will provide support in the delivery of community workshops and educational conferences in the Los Santos Region on sustainable agriculture, tourism and forestry. We have also created a working relationship with Lily Edgerton, the Public Affairs Officer and Political Economic Assistant at the Canadian Embassy in San Jose. The embassy provides administrative and clerical support for the project with an emphasis on the creation of a 'Community Empowerment Handbook' that will have application in the embassy's other major countries of concern in Central America (Honduras and Nicaragua).

During Phase I, our first two teams of students (team #1 in spring/summer 2005, and team #2 in fall 2005) developed project policies for volunteer placements, student placements, student home-stays, and tourist home-stays. They also created a full risk management plan for operation of the project in Costa Rica, initiated agro-tourism farm inventories, and assisted faculty in running community education workshops.

During the current '*Phase II 2006-2007 Solidifying and Expanding the Alliance',* the project has advanced the alliance and is seeking external federal funding from federal and foundation granting agencies for a 5-year period. The research questions guiding Phase II are:

1. How can 'tourism' and 'agriculture' be combined to create models of empowerment for rural farmers in Costa Rica that have potential application in other Latin American countries?
2. In Costa Rica, what are the most effective models of sustainable value-added agro-tourism to support economic and social empowerment of small scale organic coffee farmers?
3. In Canada, what are the most effective 'educational and awareness' activities to promote *Direct Trade* coffee production models.
4. Are there similar activism-based research projects in operation in other Latin American countries with whom we can collaborate and expand our alliance?

Project Outcomes and Deliverables

To date the project has generated a number of tangible outcomes with regards to project management, coffee production and agro-tourism development. However, as the project unfolds and working relationships mature, it becomes more and more apparent that the non-tangibles – especially those of cross-cultural exchange – are becoming increasingly significant.

Overview of Tangible Outcomes

To date, our work in Costa Rica has resulted in regional awareness of the empowerment project, linked local communities through workshop and educational gatherings, generated educational materials for local residents on alternative coffee production models and community-driven tourism initiatives, built interpretation trails on one organic farm, initiated agro-tourism educational tours and home-stay accommodation on local organic-in-the-shade coffee farms, generated forest based economic activities data for the Nubotropica Foundation's rainforest protection campaign, and initiated an ecotourism network for local businesses and home-stay families[2]. All of these outcomes are 'on-going' during the current Phase II 2006-2007.

> *We have started the brochure with a map, started a risk management plan, developed a distance chart with map, and contact lis. Oh yeah, we sanded and painted the two wardrobes, one for the new cabina and one for the room in the house--possibly for tourists as well. Minor even bought a new toilet seat for the bano. Richard*
>
> *It was very special getting to create something with locals. It is very cool working with the land. The land gives you a large rock, so we would take it and use it for the trail and take the extra earth to fill it in. Colten*

A major achievement of the project occurred In May, 2005, when a regional workshop was held in Santa Maria de Dota to involve local farming families in identifying project goals and priorities. This very successful initiative – organized collaboratively by the Nubotropica Foundation, the Rainforest Alliance, MUC faculty and students, and the Canadian Embassy - attracted 60 very passionate individuals from throughout the region and began the first ever 'regional community conversation' on coordinated regional development. The meeting was a very positive but intense and emotional event: for the region to come together for the first time in its history generated a significant amount of 'latin' passion. The experiential learning benefits created by this gathering were very rich for both students and faculty. The workshop focused on the theme of local empowerment in community planning and development, and explored three critical questions: 1. who should make decisions in and for a collective/ community of people and how representative are they in terms of those they are making decisions for? 2. what are the best planning processes by which decisions should be made? and 3. which policies/regulations are available to best implement and apply the planning and development decisions made? The discussion based outcomes of this gathering have directed our project over the past year; a second regional community gathering will be held in spring 2007.

Relationship Based Outcomes

The relationships with the Santa Maria and San Marcos communities are now well established. We have built good working relationships and trust with the key community representatives (Arturo Segura and Minor Montero of the Sol Colibri Farmers Association, and Pablo Balanos, the director of The Nubotropica Foundation) and our two main home-stay families (the Mata family, whose mother Myella has five children, and the Montero family, whose mother Elba has 10 children). Home-stays have proven to be an incredibly rich source of cross-cultural sharing-and-learning for both students and faculty, and have created what will likely prove to be life-long linkages. This very endearing aspect of the *Heart of Gold* project cannot be over-stated.

> *Erin has decided to stay on an extra week. Her impact on the Montero daughters is huge, cross'cultural knowledge transfer and sharing is a beautiful thing . Her independence as a woman is stunning to them, they come from a very traditional catholic family, lovely and open and embracing of difference. They talk of coming to Canada one day, perhaps to MUC to study English. Dave*

[2] MUC students in Los Santos have also roasted the green coffee bean to create a special Malaspina dark roast coffee that they have packaged, exported to, and then sold on Vancouver Island.

I come to love the students like my own children. I cry when they leave. Myella Mata, home-stay mother

I know you said to have fun and I am, but mainly I like being around the families and doing everyday things. Richard

What started as a volunteer job has turned into a labour of love. Steve

During the period May 2005 to May 2006, the project has created 3-to-5 month positions for eight students on credit-based cooperative education work placements as well as two volunteer student placements for 3-month periods. In addition, the project also hired a graduate student (and former citizen of Costa Rica) from our program to work for 4–months as a student coordinator in Costa Rica. A recent graduate of our program also spent one-month in Los Santos creating a video documentary of the project for educational and project promotions purposes. During their project placements, all students live with their home-stay families (usually two families over 3-months), learn Spanish through home-stay immersion, and have the opportunity of trading their skills in conversational English for formal Spanish lessons in the local community college.

MUC faculty have traveled to Costa Rica on four occasions during 2004-2006 for project development and management, and two volunteers (one a carpenter and one an educational tourism operator) from our local community on Vancouver Island have also traveled to the Los Santos Region to share their skill sets. Our Costa Rican counter-parts have also traveled to Canada on three occasions to learn about our institution and local communities, to share their knowledge and real world experiences in the MUC classrooms, and to help our student volunteers to market and promote *Direct Trade* coffee on Vancouver Island.

Figure 3: Student Richard Crowley working on the organic-in-the-shade coffee farm of Arturo Segura.

Gender Equity: A Growing Role

Gender equity gradually takes on a significant role within the project. While Costa Rican is a patriarchal society, the Los Santos communities involved in our project are seeking to empower women and encourage them to participate and take lead roles in creating change within their region. Consequently, our project directly supports the important social equity activism roles that women are adopting in their communities. The women (both mothers and daughters) of the organic farming families in Los Santos play lead roles in both the Nubotropica Foundation steering committee and the Sol Solibri Organic Farmers Association. The project's community conferences attract an approximately equal number of men and women from across the region, and our mixed-gender teams of visiting faculty and students also provide models of gender equity. Our lead partner researchers from Earth University (Karla Perez Fonseca) and the Rainforest Alliance (Silvia Rioja) are also women. In 2005, two young women from Santa Maria were supported by our project during a six month study period in Canada for the purpose of creating local entrepreneurship in their home towns. These young two young women and the other activist women involved in our project are role models for gender change within their communities. Our project activities seek to foster gender equity and in 2007 this will be further enhanced by the creation of scholarships for young Costa Rican women to study at MUC.

Project Activity in Canada Student and faculty volunteers ‘earn’ their Costa Rican field placement through committed volunteer activity on the project in Canada. Supported by the Cooperative Education and International Education program at MUC, students and faculty volunteers at MUC have:

1. Created and implemented a ‘*promotions and education’* campaign in Canada aimed at moving Fair Trade models of coffee production to *Direct Trade* models that empower farmers and farming communities, and

2. Initiated project fund raising activity in Canada via organic-in-the-shade *Direct Trade* coffee sales. Our project currently provides the only existing outlet for *Direct Trade* coffee in Nanaimo and across BC. This fund-raising activity in Canada provides the farmers in Costa Rica with a profit margin that is 600% greater than any existing Fair Trade coffee production model. Over the period of spring 2005 to spring 2006, student driven marketing initiatives in Canada resulted in over $15,000 worth of coffee sales for the Sol Colibri Organic Farmers Association in Costa Rica. The fund raising activity also supports student cooperative education placements in Costa Rica.

Institutional Benefits
Experiential learning, especially when conducted in developing countries, is often a controversial undertaking in higher education settings. It is usually significantly more costly than traditional classroom based learning in terms of both financial delivery and personal risk to participants. The benefits of field based learning, however, when supported by well researched risk management planning and pedagogical rigor, can be invaluable. Field based projects such as the *Heart of Gold* provide opportunities for significant real-world learning and the application of skill sets, but often may also change the life course of a given student or the life of a person in the host country. The *Heart of Gold* project has fortunately received healthy institutional support from MUC, and in return the project has benefited the institution in a variety of ways, including:

The creation of multiple opportunities for student involvement: The project provides research, educational and employment benefits for undergraduate and graduate students at MUC and affiliated institutions. The project provides an excellent experiential vehicle for student learning: as a real world case study, the project involves Costa Rican community activists visiting Canada and sharing global realities in the classroom, as well providing opportunities for 3-month student applied research placements in Costa Rica.

Applied research impact that has significance in the global context: The project focuses on diverse aspects of community and ecotourism planning and policy development for rural communities in economic transition; this is an important area of research in Canada (hence the federal CIDA tourism models) and international settings (hence the United Nation’s ecotourism development models). The dissemination of research findings will have impacts on and significance for other rural communities in economic transition.

Enhancement of the institution’s reputation: This project expands our institutional research and outreach activities into the international arena. The Los Santos Region of Costa Rica is attracting international media attention due to it’s critical role in challenging the major environmental and socio-economic degradation that ‘Fair Trade’ coffee production creates for communities in both Central and South America.

Early morning here at Arturo´s place, the tico children walk by nosily, gleeful, giddy on their way to school. We feel the same perhaps, we´re going to school again down here also and we feel similarly giddy with the learning and the joy of relationships. Very humbling, I see this in our students and yes we are on track and it is all very lovely. Dave
This is a very beautiful experience: all of it. We are really enjoying ourselves down here and are learning many life skills and new attitudes. Kevin

Conclusions

To date, the project has been supported by two small grants from the federal government, and institutional grant support for faculty and students over two years has tallied approximately $25,000. Institutional support – both financial support and ethical support - has been critical during the set up phases of the project. Students and faculty have also been required to contribute personal monies to the project: hence the project has attracted involvement from unique individuals willing to give their 'time, talent and treasure' to an ethics-driven project: and so we cross the ocean for a *Heart of Gold*. In return for their service contributions, students and faculty gleam wonderful life-enhancing cross-cultural experiences with similarly motivated Costa Rican activists and farming families.
This long-term 'mutual learning and research alliance' continues to explore ways to promote the sharing of knowledge, resources and expertise between Malaspina University College and the communities of the Los Santos Region of Costa Rica. In providing community capacity building support to the Los Santos communities, the project has enriched the research, teaching methods and curricula in Malaspina University College. Students' education and employability has been enhanced by means of diverse opportunities to build their knowledge, expertise and work skills through hands-on research and related experience. It is hoped that the *Heart of Gold* project will generate knowledge and information that has applicability for other rural communities facing transitional challenges and seeking social and economic restructuring.

Study Questions

1. Outline how the project was initiated and its main goals.
2. Explain what *direct trade* is and how it differs from fair trade.
3. The project is centred upon healthy relationships. Explain why good participatory research is necessarily focused on human relationships.
4. Describe the project's major outcomes and achievements to date in both Costa Rica and Canada.

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The Heart of Gold Students

Team #1 Spring/Summer May-August 2005

- Student Coordinator: Silvio Caldera
- Cooperative Education Student Placements: Randy Byman, Blake Hunter, Vicki Van Damme, Acrasia Robbins
- Student Volunteer: Laura Gainey

Team #2 Fall September-December 2005

- Cooperative Education Student Placements: Richard (Ricardo) Crowley, Steve Didyk

Team #3 Winter February-June 2006

- Cooperative Education Student Placements: Colten Vandermolen, Steve Didyk
- Student Volunteer: Kevin Bell
- Directed Studies Video Production Student: Erin Shaw

Innovation in Parks: A Case Study Examining Strategies To Increase Funding For New Parks

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Abstract: Regional Parks are an important component to the parks system in British Columbia, contributing to ecosystem value, scenic quality, recreational opportunities, and enhanced property values. This case study reports on the situation in Victoria, where gaps in the regional parks system were evident. Funds to acquire these missing components were not available, so alternative approaches were considered, including an increase in property taxes of $10 per household. In order to determine public support for this strategy, mail survey research was undertaken with a random sample of 3560 residents of the region. The results revealed strong public support for regional parks, and moderately strong support for the proposed parks tax from 65% of the sample, even from those who had not visited a regional park in the previous 12 months (55% support). The case study concludes with an outline of how this tax was implemented, and subsequent successes in acquiring new parks.

Learning Environment. This case study could be used in a variety of classroom situations, as it deals with a number of types of leisure education, including: park planning and management, facilities management, financial management, or research methods.

Study Outcomes. Through an examination of this case study, students will be more aware of the following:

1. The role of regional parks in the spectrum of types of parks;
2. Challenges faced when acquiring new parks in the near urban environment;
3. The role of public opinion in shaping leisure policy;
4. The role of research in assessing public support for proposed policies.

Introduction

Parks and protected areas play an important role in the urban and rural landscape in Canada, providing many benefits, including outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic vistas, habitat protection, and places for wildlife to exist. In order to provide these benefits, parks must be located in the right places, and be of the right size and configuration. However, most park agencies struggle to locate the financial resources needed to acquire the lands desired for park protection. This case study describes how Capital Region Parks (CRD Parks), a park agency located in Victoria, British Columbia, confronted this challenge through innovative planning and applied research.

To provide some context, the role of CRD Parks needs to be compared with the role of other park agencies in the province. National parks, such as Banff or Pacific Rim, tend to be large and located in remote areas of the country where wildlife and natural processes can exist and function with minimal interference from human activity, and where visitors can hope to find backcountry wilderness type recreation experiences or car accessible front county experiences (Dearden & Rollins, 2002). National Parks are intended to protect *nationally significant* environments. Provincial Parks, such as Strathcona or Mount Robson, are intended to represent *provincially significant* environments, and are similar to National Parks in being remote (although varying is size), and providing wilderness experiences (BC Ministry of Lands and Parks, 1991). For both these park agencies, some tension exists between the protection mandate, and the human use mandate (outdoor recreation and tourism).

At the other extreme, municipal parks are imbedded in the urban landscape and are much smaller than National Parks or Provincial Parks. Although providing some ecological benefits, municipal parks cater more to visual and recreational benefits. Types of municipal parks include ornamental gardens, playing fields, and small patches of green space. Until recently, many observers agreed that municipal park systems were meeting the recreation and conservation objectives needed within an urban environment.

However, by the mid 1960’s it became apparent that a number of changes in the landscape necessitated the creation of another type of park system – Regional Parks. Why were regional parks needed? One reason was that National and Provincial Parks were able to protect much, but not all of the biodiversity in the province. There emerged a need for larger protected areas located near to urban areas, where important ecosystems, such as Garry Oak meadows, were at risk. From a recreational perspective, many urban dwellers coveted the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities near to home – to be able to hike, cycle, canoe or swim, without travelling long distances to visit a National or Provincial Park. Others treasured the scenic value of undeveloped forest lands, beaches and other natural features located close to the urban core, and wanted to see these scenic resources protected from development. With population increases and growing pressures for development and urban sprawl throughout the province, it became apparent that Regional Parks were needed, to complement the National, Provincial and Municipal Park systems. Hence, in 1965, the regional park system came into being with the passing of the Regional Park Act.

In the Victoria area, the Regional Park system is administered by the Capital Regional District (CRD), a federation of municipalities that work together to provide regional services such as solid waste deposal, water, sewers, regional planning, and regional parks. The CRD Regional Parks function came into being in 1966 and is charged with two responsibilities: to protect regionally significant natural environments; and, to create a range of opportunities for outdoor recreation that foster an appreciation and respect for the region’s natural environment.

The CRD is one of the most spectacular natural areas of the world. It has a varied landscape, a rich natural environment and a mild climate. The combination of forests, mountains, rocky hilltops, ocean, rivers, creeks, and lakes makes this one of the most ecologically diverse regions in Canada. These natural features contributed to urban growth in the period between 1966 and 1998, as more people moved to the area to experience a unique lifestyle not found in many metropolitan areas. By 1998, the population of the CRD had reached 333,205.

Historically, there has been plenty of room for people and nature to co-exist in this region, but the urban expansion in the period leading up to 1998 made the region’s natural environment one of the most at-risk areas in Canada. Many prominent natural areas once assumed to be unchangeable features of the landscape had already been developed, or proposals for development were underway. In addition, the cumulative loss of smaller habitat remnants was eroding the biological diversity of the region.

It became apparent to CRD Parks that a number of areas needed to be added to complete the Regional Park system, in order to meet the twin goals of representing ecosystem diversity and providing a range of recreation opportunities. The estimated cost to acquire these missing pieces of the park system was $25 million. This situation presented a number of challenges. First, many proposed parks were at risk of being developed for other purposes if not acquired soon. Proposed new developments included housing, golf courses, and malls. A second related challenge was the rising price of land, fuelled by population growth and other pressures for new developments. Much of the land earmarked for new Regional Parks was held as private property and therefore tied to rising real estate values. This situation differs from Provincial Parks and National Parks, which are usually created from Crown Land, not subject to the same real estate pressures. A third concern for CRD Parks was the lack of funding to acquire new parks. Previously, new parks were added to the system by incurring debt, but this approach was no longer feasible.

In 1998, CRD Parks staff decided on an ambitious strategy to complete the Regional Park system. This strategy involved a proposal to increase property taxes by $10.00 per household in the Regional District, in order to create funds to acquire new regional parks. A second part of the strategy proposed that funds collected from the property tax would be matched through other funding sources.

The key to this strategy was to get public (and political) support for the special tax. To determine level of public support for a special tax for park acquisition, the public were engaged in a variety of ways: a public advisory group to CRD was created; other park agencies were consulted, input from other local parks and recreation commissions was sought, and open public forums were conducted. Based on the generally positive feedback obtained from these consultations, a decision was made to seek a broader measure of public support, by conducting a household survey of residents of the Capital Regional District, as described in the next section.

The Household Survey

A household survey was planned in order to measure support for a special tax to be used to acquire new regional parks. The survey also measured use of regional parks, perceived importance of regional parks, and support for various management actions. The approach used was a mail survey. Although telephone and face-to-face interviews have many advantages, the mail survey approach was used for the following reasons: less expensive than other approaches, less intrusive than other approaches, and allows respondents more time to consider their responses.

The primary challenge of a mail survey is achieving high response rates, particularly since an interviewer is not present to encourage responses or provide clarification when required. In order to address these possible concerns, the “total design method” (Dillman, 1978; Salant & Dillman, 1994) was used. This approach is based on the notion of “exchange theory”, whereby people are more likely to respond and provide thoughtful responses if they feel that the benefits of so doing outweigh the hassle. In this study, the hassle factor was minimized in a number of ways:

- Providing return envelopes with postage provided.
- Personally addressing the mail-out package (to reduce the impersonal nature of mail surveys).
- Using real postage, rather than bulk mailing options (this makes the survey appear less like junk mail).
- Carefully designing the questionnaire. This involved using a booklet format (pleasant to read), using simple questions with easy response formats, making the questions as interesting as possible to the respondent, and keeping the questionnaire short (less than 10 minutes to complete).

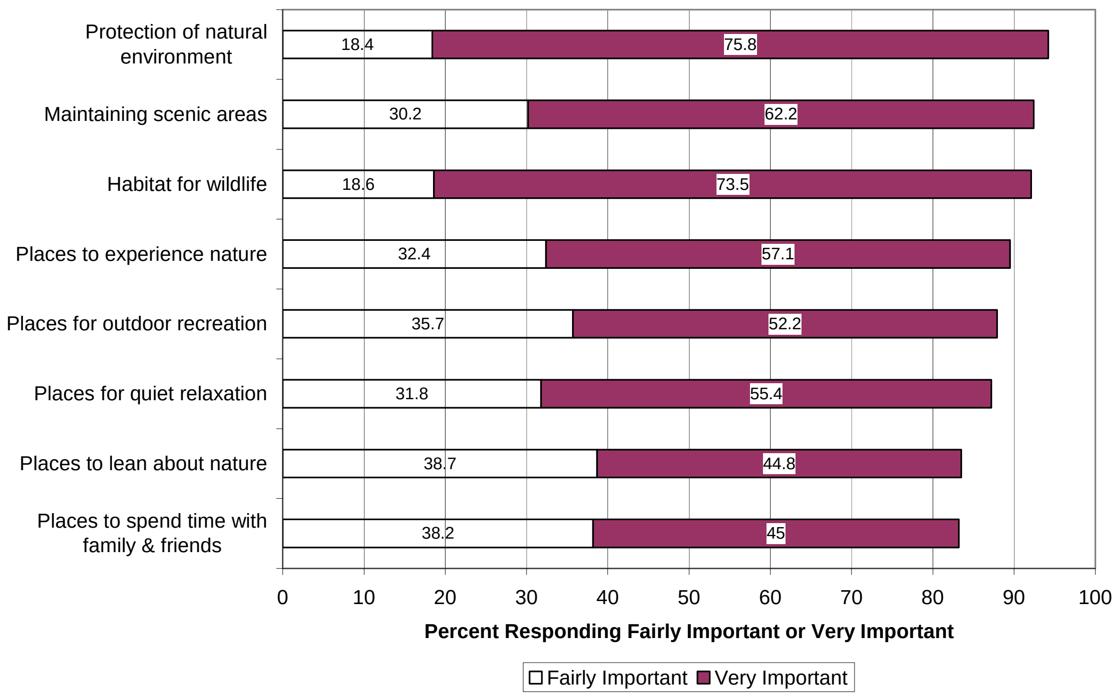
Benefits of responding were emphasized by including a cover letter that stressed the importance of the survey, and intended practical use of the findings. This thinking was paralleled throughout the questionnaire, where the practical importance of the survey was mentioned in several places.

A sample of 3560 households was randomly selected. One person from each selected household received the mail-out package April of 1998. After 1 week, a reminder card was sent to the entire sample. Two weeks later, non-respondents received a final reminder, this time with a replacement questionnaire and return envelop, as in the original mailing. Using these approaches a total of 1467 completed questionnaires were returned (41.2%). This is a reasonably high number of responses, but still there remains a concern that those people who responded may not be the same as those people who did not respond. In order to estimate this potential non-response bias, demographic characteristics of the sample were included in the questionnaire (gender, age, and income) and compared with 1998 census data. Differences between the sample and the population regarding these demographic variables were minimal, suggesting that the sample was a reasonable approximation of the population.

Even if the response rate had been 100%, there remains the possibility that through bad luck, the random sample may not actually be typical of the population. The chances of this "random sampling effect" are related to sample size – the larger the sample, the smaller the chance of random sampling effects. With a sample of 1467, it is possible to estimate the possible error due to sample size (known as margin of error). In this case, the margin of error was computed to be plus or minus 2.5% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that the responses received from the sample are within 2.5% of true values (Salant & Dillman, 1994).

The results of the survey were very useful in demonstrating public support for acquiring new parks. Regional Parks were viewed as fairly or very important by 81% of respondents. Perceived benefits of regional parks reflected strong support for conservation values (protection of natural environments, provide habitat for wildlife) as well as recreational values (maintaining scenic areas, places to experience nature, outdoor recreation, etc), with at least 80% of respondents rating each of these benefits as fairly important or very important (Figure 1).

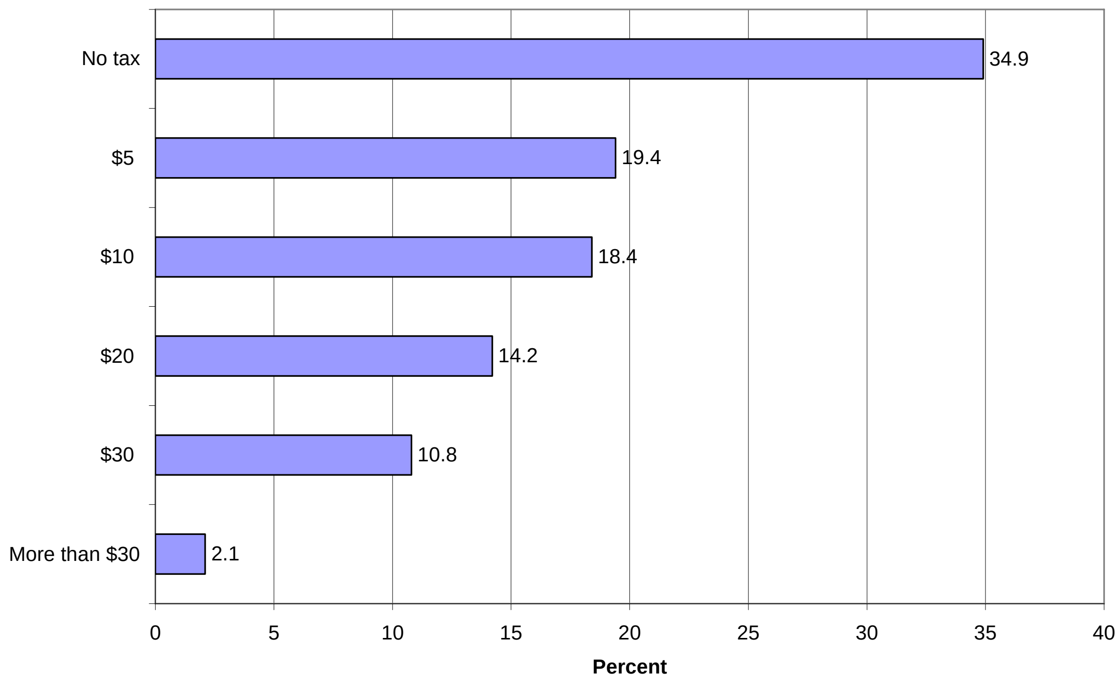
Figure 1. Perceived Benefits of Regional Parks



Respondents showed a generally positive willingness to pay the proposed property tax to acquire new park lands (Figure 2), with 65% willing to pay at least $5. When these findings were analyzed by income level no significant differences were noted. The sample contained people who had not used a regional park in the previous year, but many of these non-users (55%) still supported this tax proposal.

It is important to consider the accuracy of findings obtained from this type of question. Two types of measurement issues have been identified by researchers attempting to use this method: hypothetical bias, and strategic bias (Bishop & Heberlein, 1990; Johnson, Bregenzer, & Shelby, 1990; Knetsch, 1996). Hypothetical bias states that some people may have difficulty deciding how much is fair or reasonable for such a tax, because they may have had no experience in this type of transaction. Under this condition, respondents may provide a response, but it may not be very thoughtful or informed. On the other hand, strategic bias refers to a deliberate strategy by respondents to provide misleading information by overstating or understating their true willingness to pay.

Figure 2. Willingness to Pay Increased Property Taxes To Acquire New Parks



This study attempted to minimize hypothetical and strategic bias through the wording in the questionnaire. Hypothetical bias was addressed by providing an indication in the questionnaire about the total amount of money that would be raised for parks acquisition with each level of new tax. Strategic bias was addressed by making the tax options rather low, between $5 and $30.

The Outcome

The results of this study were made available in a final reporting presented in July of 1998 (Rollins, 1998). These results were instrumental in moving the debate into the political arena, where decision makers could consider these survey results as a measure of public support for the proposed tax for parks. Even with these survey results in hand, some were sceptical of the findings. For example the CRD chairperson was quoted as saying “”the survey results were skewed because people responding to a parks survey are likely to support more parks” (Times Colonist, 1999). This is a legitimate concern. As outlined earlier, the response rate for this survey was 41.2%, so non-response bias is possible. Although the demographic profile of respondents closely matched that of the census, such a comparison *suggests* that the sample was representative, but does not *prove* this.

In November of the same year, a decision was made to hold a referendum on this issue, as part of civic elections held throughout the Capital Regional District. A referendum is a vote in which all members of the public of legal age have an opportunity to express their opinion. This contrasts with the methods used in the survey research, which used a sample of residents of the area. Proponents of survey research argue that samples can be used because they very accurately predict the opinions of entire populations, can be done at a fraction of the cost, and are much easier to conduct, compared to a referendum. A referendum, however, is more democratic, allowing all members of the general public to participate.

Leading up to the referendum, much lobbying took place in the media, with the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, and Tourism Victoria supporting the tax proposal, but opposition coming from the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, wanting to reduce taxes to businesses in the area. However, the referendum, which took place after the random survey, produced similar results, with 72% supporting the tax. The slight difference between the two findings (6%) could be due to shifting attitudes as a consequence of the public debate that took place in the six months between the survey and the referendum. Alternatively, the survey may have experienced a non response bias, but in the opposite direction than was predicted, with non park supporters responding in greater numbers to the survey compared to park supporters.

As a result of the survey research and subsequent referendum, a decision was made in 2000 to establish the CRD Parks Land Acquisition Fund. The fund was set up for a ten year period, during which time a flat tax of $10 per household was added to property taxes collected each year to be used for acquiring new parks. By January 2006, this fund had raised $10, 699,400 for acquiring new parks. With these resources, CRD Parks were able to approach other funding partners, such as the Land Conservancy of British Columbia, to raise an additional $5,472.050, bringing the park acquisition fund up to a total of $16, 171,450. To date this fund has been used to acquire 15 parcels of land, which includes 2 new parks and 13 additions to existing parks.

In a more recent public opinion survey conducted in 2005, Regional Parks continue to be rated high by citizens of the Capital Regional District, by users and non-users alike. When asked to indicate the top three management priorities from a list of 21 possible management actions, "acquiring more park lands" was rated second, behind"protecting and maintaining existing parks". Clearly, strong support for Regional Parks has been sustained, and this translates into support for acquiring new parks. Various editorials appearing in the Daily Colonist have also endorsed the tax, and how it has been used (Times Colonist, January 13, 2001).

Study Questions

1. Contrast the role of regional parks, compared to national parks, provincial parks, and municipal parks.
2. In Canada, public support for parks is high, as in this case study. Discuss why it is so difficult in most cases to protect enough parks.
3. This case study describes two methods used to measure public support for a new tax to purchase land for parks: a random household survey, and a referendum. Discuss strengths and weaknesses of each approach.
4. Although this case study describes how a tax increase was used to create more funds for park creation, another approach would be to divert funds from other sources, such as schools or hospitals, to use for parks. Comment on strengths and weaknesses of this approach.
5. The Victoria Chamber of Commerce was opposed to this tax. Describe the position of the Chamber of Commerce, and present arguments that could be used to challenge their position.

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Blazing New Trails:
Mountain Biking in Williams Lake, British Columbia

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Learning Objectives:
After analysing this case study, learners will be able to:

1. Articulate the importance of leadership and collective capacity to the introduction of a new tourism product in a rural region;
2. Discuss the elements of successful partnership development and maintenance;
3. Understand the complexity of initiatives where multiple stakeholders are present;
4. Clarify the need for ample local involvement and consultation when establishing facility standards;

Introduction
Mountain biking in Williams Lake, British Columbia has developed from a few trails blazed by motorcycles in recent years to a current network of over 100 trails. As the bikes developed, so did the riding and many mountain bike films have used the trails surrounding Williams Lake as a backdrop for their extreme stunts. The quality and variety of riding also attracts visitors from the nearby towns of Quesnel and Prince George and for some, has even influenced decision to relocate because of the quality of riding. The increasing number of users has created a myriad of problems for local stakeholders. Ranchers have seen their herds disrupted and harassed, government officials have liability concerns, and residents are concerned for their children's safety. Most of the trail system is built on crown land, with patches on private and city land. This case will attempt to outline the development of mountain biking in Williams Lake from the mid-1980's to present, documenting what actions each of the various stakeholders has taken.

Source:
*http://bccommunities.ca/williamslake/*index.php

Background
Williams Lake is a community of approximately 11,000, serving as a main centre for 22,500 people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of central BC. The area is hilly and carpeted in forest, making for prime mountain biking. It is approximately 6 hours Northeast of Vancouver through the Fraser Canyon and along the Gold Rush Trail. The area has been settled since the mid 1800's and Williams Lake itself was founded in 1929 as a ranching community. There continues to be strong ties to ranching in the area and the city contains BC's most active stockyards. Forestry and mining also play important roles in the local economy. In the late 1990's and early 2000's there was an economic downturn in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. Two mines ceased operations putting hundreds of people out of work, at the same time the forest industry faced the softwood lumber crisis and the ranching industry was hit with import restrictions by the USA. Like many communities before, Williams Lake began to see tourism as a viable option to the resource dependent industries it traditionally relied upon. There were already many visitors coming to the region for

hunting and fishing in the fall. Companies were operating white-water rafting on the Chilcotin River, and the Williams Lake Stampede is the largest rodeo in Canada outside of Calgary. To support and improve upon existing tourism the community joined initiatives such as Communities in Bloom, improved roads and traffic flow, invested in cleaning the streets, and began encouraging visitors to stay longer. A main priority of the city council at this time was economic development and diversification. They saw mountain biking as a natural product offering and another way to attract visitors to the region. This influenced staff to begin including it in advertising and promotional materials.

Guest books on some of the trails have averaged 200-300 signatures per week, and estimates from bike shops and the WLCC place local riders around 600-700. There is also strong anecdotal evidence for the impact of mountain biking as a tourism draw. Staff at the Visitor's Centre handle 12-15 requests per day for trail and riding information while out of town riders also frequent the bike shop looking for rides to join or information on trails.

Problem/Opportunity

Mountain biking first began to take hold in Williams Lake in the 1980's. The first riders used existing motorcycle trails as their terrain, but that soon wasn't enough to handle the increased demand from residents and visitors. Trail development began rather organically with a few riders cutting new trails and building "enhanced" features, which are basically ramps over or around natural obstacles using whatever materials are on hand. Over the next decade and a half, the bikes developed at a rapid pace, and as the bikes developed so did the demand for more technical trails and features. The North Shore of Vancouver then saw the emergence of free-riding which involves jumps, ramps, and technical trail features requiring a high degree of skill to negotiate. The Williams Lake Cycling club was formed in the 1980's and focussed mainly on organizing events such as group rides or races. During this time there were no coordinated plans for the development of cycling, and communication was kept very informal. This lack of formal planning and communication has resulted in the haphazard development of trails and conflict between many of the stakeholders.

The Order of Events

The situation first began to escalate in 2002 when the Ministry of Forests (M of F) approached the Williams Lake Cycling Club (WLCC) about getting the trails legalized, and asked for WLCC's involvement in doing so. The then-leadership of the club was not willing to enter such a formalized partnership, and situation remained informal over the next couple of years. In 2004 the M of F began to receive complaints about some of the trails. Local ranchers were experiencing problems where riders were disrupting their herds and damaging their breeding programs, while some residents were concerned about the safety of features that were constructed in many cases by kids after school or on weekends. The Ministry responded to the complaints about safety on the "Hillbilly Deluxe" trail by sending a Compliance Officer to investigate the structures. Because many of structures used rotten boards, widely spaced boards, poor fastening techniques, and generally low standards of construction they were deemed unsafe. In making the determination the features were measured against outside standards from the resort community of Whistler. Concerned about liability now that they were aware of the structures the M of F decided to remove them. Though the Ministry contacted the Williams Lake Cycling Club (WLCC) prior to dismantling the trails, there was no meaningful discussion between the two parties.

When it was discovered that the structures had been dismantled, it resulted in a lot of anger and frustration on the part of the biking community. There was a sense of disappointment that no attempt had been made to rectify the safety deficiencies and instead the manpower and money was used to tear down the features. In response to this, the WLCC wrote a letter to the editor of a local paper, the Williams Lake Tribune condemning the MoF and their actions. The frustration experienced by residents is clear in other letters to the editor: "Everytime something good happens around here, somebody wants to destroy it", "Stop bullying our children" and "It appears that some bikers have not even been consulted". While there was a lack of communication between riders and the MoF prior to dismantling the features, the WLCC did not contact the MoF afterwards and simply wrote the paper, which caused some public outcry against the MoF's actions. This resulted in some hard feelings at the MoF as they felt they were made out to be the "bad guys" though they were just doing their jobs.

The MoF, when deciding whether to dismantle the features, compared what was there to the Whistler Standards, which are widely accepted standards to use when constructing features. They cover such things as board spacing, quality of wood, and fastening techniques to be used. MoF was also concerned that the trails were unmanaged and there was no overall plan for trail development and maintenance. The only maintenance being done was through uncoordinated volunteers. After the "Hillbilly Deluxe" features were dismantled, the MoF approached WLCC about forming a partnership to ensure maintenance of the trails. To make a partnership work however, the WLCC would have to be a registered non-profit organization. This was something the leadership of the WLCC was not willing to undertake at that time, and as such the WLCC folded.

Late in 2004 after the WLCC folded, the City of Williams Lake organized a series of public meetings about the issue of mountain biking. There were no mountain bikers on city staff however, and as a result they were largely unaware of the issues facing the sport such as liability and land access. Staff did not know that the trails were illegal according to legislation. Because of the rough economic times city councillors had been looking for economic development opportunities and as such had, through advertising and printing maps, been unofficially supporting mountain biking as a way to draw visitors into the town. The efforts of the city were not directly measured, but during a visit in June of 2006 Visitor Centre staff quoted 10-15 requests for trail information per day during summer months, representing significant economic activity for a community in recession and there is also a commercial adventure operator using the trail system that has obtained tenure. The operator quotes 60% of business is from regional and international travellers and does approximately 500 rider days per season, which represents the bulk of revenue.

The 2004 public forums were attended by over 300 people per session, and had presentations from the MoF, the Cattlemen's Association which represents ranchers, as well as representatives from other communities which have faced similar issues such as Merritt and Whistler. Each of the parties made presentations on their concerns about mountain biking, and in the case of Whistler and Merritt on how some of the challenges had been overcome. In the face of such huge public support and after much discussion, the decision was made to resurrect the WLCC under new leadership and to incorporate it as a non-profit society.

In the spring of 2005 WLCC reformed with 8 directors, a president, and a paid secretary to help with the administrative tasks associated with becoming a formal association. They affiliated with the International Mountain Biking Association, which is a US-based non-profit group that advocates for the mountain biking industry while providing support and information to members (IMBA, 2006). The now better-organized WLCC provided the MoF with the stable, accountable entity they needed to work with. The WLCC received permission soon after it reformed to rebuild the features taken down by the MoF in the previous year. There was immense community support for this project and materials were donated from local mills and the MoF, volunteers were secured to do the work, and the club also helped to clean up dead wood around the trails. A rider guest book was placed at the end of "Hillbilly" and in the year since being rebuilt it has received 200-300 riders per week.

Now that the MoF had a legal entity to deal with discussions began on developing a management plan for the trails. The MoF was still concerned about liability if someone was to get seriously injured on a feature and decide to sue. One of the first steps in developing a plan was to determine exactly what trails were being used, and to determine what features were on each trail. During the summer of 2005 the MoF hired a coop university student to conduct a GIS survey of the trail system surrounding Williams Lake. The survey covered three areas: Fox Mountain (27 trails), South Lakeside (26 trails), and Westsyde (52 trails). The student physically travelled over each of the trails documenting terrain and features. The student also evaluated the construction quality of each of the features against the Whistler standards and prepared a report with supporting photos. This inventory was to be shared with the WLCC, but has not yet been shared because there is no agreement between the WLCC and the MoF. The MoF was also planning a workshop facilitated by the International Mountain Biking Association that covers trail building basics to educate enthusiasts on how to safely and sustainably build trails.

There also began talks regarding the content of an agreement. Discussions included an offer of the MoF providing liability insurance for the WLCC, which was one of the major selling points for the club since insurance represents such a large cost to a volunteer organization with limited resources. A similar agreement had been tried previously in Merritt, and was intended to be a template of sorts for other communities with similar situations. Near the end of 2005 the Liberal government announced a reorganization that moved the responsibility for recreation from the MoF to the newly formed Ministry of Tourism, Sport, and the Arts (MTSA). When this shifting of responsibilities was announced, it threw the budding relationship between MoF and WLCC into a tailspin.

Once it was known that MoF would no longer have responsibility for dealing with the trail system they more or less ceased communication with the WLCC. The real problem arose when no person was immediately assigned to MTSA in Williams Lake, basically stopping the whole process in its tracks. The MoF was no longer responsible for the trails, MTSA had no one in Williams Lake to deal with it, and the WLCC was left with no one to talk to.

The lack of a smooth transfer of responsibilities has stalled the development process for nearly a year, and in the meantime things in the mountain biking community have pretty much returned to the way they were before the initial involvement of the MoF. The WLCC is in a holding pattern organizing rides and events until such time as the MTSA representative is in a position to re-open communication on a meaningful level. Trail building and maintenance is back to being led by a few champions from the community, but the word is out to mountain bikers that stunts needed to be built to a certain standard to avoid serious problems such as that on “Hillbilly”.

Problems and Successes
Like many developing sports, mountain biking in Williams Lake began with just a few pioneers and has expanded today to estimated 600-700 local riders while also drawing in visitors from across BC. The mountain biking community began to organize themselves early on with the first iteration of the WLCC, however it was very informal and focussed more on organizing rides and events. A catalyst, in the form of the MoF, was needed to bring the WLCC into the realm of trail advocacy and management. It is interesting to note that with the changeover of recreation responsibilities to the MTSA the mountain bike community feels somewhat less threatened and that there isn’t such an urgent need to be formalized. The WLCC does recognize that need however, and is remaining ready to deal with the MTSA.

This case study shows quite clearly how difficult it can be to get many different parties to communicate effectively. The MoF and WLCC were not communicating effectively leading up to the removal of features from “Hillbilly Deluxe”, and as a result there were some hard feelings and attempts to show each other up via public media. Local ranchers also feel like they aren’t being included in the process. One local rancher expressed the feeling that mountain bikers simply don’t believe their concerns are legitimate, or that they don’t understand the damage being done to their business (one breeding program went from 95% effective to 60% effective over the past 6 years). The ranching community also feels that better communication with the general mountain bike public is needed about trail etiquette and the issues facing the various stakeholders. The public forums organized by the City of Williams Lake were clearly effective tools in building communication and a continuation of them would be helpful as an agreement is drafted. A local commercial operator has also gone through the process of obtaining tenure for the area, and having someone go through that process helped to build trust and communication between all parties.

This case highlights the tension experienced when different cultures clash. On the one hand, government regulation could be viewed as a key instigator in this situation. Though sparked by public complaint, the government regulations and method of introducing them to the rural community of Williams Lake caused tension to emerge. The MoF was regarded by some people in Williams Lake as the incorrect agency to be dealing with the issue. The perception held by some was that the agency “didn’t know anything about mountain biking”, and for example adopted the Whistler standards for trail building because they were the only standards accessible. There is a question of how applicable are the trail building standards of a world-class resort with millions of visitors each year to a small town with a few hundred riders. Government agencies are often accused of proceeding through a lot of red tape and regulation. On the other hand, the informal organization of a recreation group, in this case the Williams Lake Cycling Club was being expected to plan and manage the trail system they were accustomed to using. Mountain bikers are not really known for their willingness to play by the rules, and are likely perceived by many to be unconcerned about public safety. The organic emergence of a new sport, coupled with the lack of clarity of who was responsible for building and maintaining the trail system was also a contributor to the tension experienced in Williams Lake.

Some of the promising practices gleaned from this case may be useful for other communities developing new outdoor products to consider. For example, the MoF began to support the achievement of an agreement by pledging resources in the form of the co-op student who was hired to perform an inventory of the trail system. This document will likely prove very useful in the process as all stakeholders will be able to see exactly where the trails are, and what features are on the trails. At this point in time, the reorganization of government has resulted in great uncertainty and the WLCC does not yet have access to the final report. The WLCC is also still active in organizing rides and events, which are well attended. This keeps the sport active and can help keep local kids from getting into trouble. There is still an amazing willingness for all parties to work together to find a solution to trail access and safety. In addition, there is an air of optimism surrounding the mountain bike community because they feel that dealing with the MTSA will result in less of a “profit protection” view and more of a “product development” view.

Discussion

There are some useful “lessons learned” from this case. This case exemplifies the importance of communication as a way to bring multiple stakeholders to the table to establish common ground and working agreements. Before clear communication channels can exist, stable, accountable organizations must be present, and all stakeholders need to be identified and invited to provide input to planning decisions. Another important point to recognize is how much of an effect government restructuring can have on development. The MoF and local government were trying to direct the development of the sport in Williams Lake without the necessary knowledge and expertise to help them make informed and locally acceptable decisions. Soliciting the input from sport organizations with expertise in development issues might keep groups from reinventing the wheel, and streamlining efforts for the smoother introduction of new tourism products.

Discussion Questions

1. Who is responsible for developing and maintaining trail systems for mountain biking?
2. Who are the stakeholders that you would invite to a meeting to ensure that the sport of mountain biking was developed using a collaborative approach?
3. Knowing that government agencies are vulnerable to change, what strategies can community groups and organizations employ to maintain relationships with key bureaucrats?
4. If you were planning the next steps for mountain biking as a tourism product in Williams Lake, what would you do?

Resources

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Incorporating Tourism Into the Local Economy Without Sacrificing the Character of the Community: Case Study of Oliver, British Columbia

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Learning Objectives:
After analysing this case study, learners will be able to:

1. Articulate reasons for communities to use tourism as a form for economic diversification;
2. Discuss strategies to link tourism to traditional resource based industries to create viable, sustainable tourism products;
3. Identify the pros and cons of using techniques such as the Charrette to influence tourism planning;

Abstract

This case study explores how a community can incorporate tourism development to help diversify the economy without losing the community's rural character. Oliver, in the lower Okanagan Valley, is well known for wine tourism and other forms of agricultural tourism are also increasing. Oliver, like most communities, must manage its land carefully as tourism development has placed pressure on the existing land base. How can visitor services be of high quality without infringing upon Oliver's working farmlands? Can tourism be developed without significant land development?

In order to address these questions, Oliver formed an economic development society, which was responsible for creating a branding image for the community. Once Oliver's image as the "Wine Capital of Canada" was established, the economic development society began to create tourism economic development strategies that complemented the town's rural, agricultural character. It was understood that tourism was not to overshadow Oliver's existing nature, but rather to highlight it. Tourism has been used as a vehicle to allow visitors to experience Oliver as the community it has always been: one based on farming and agriculture.

By using tourism development to complement Oliver's rural character, the community has not been overtaken by stereotypical tourism services such as expensive souvenir shops. Oliver has found a way to increase visitor revenue without land being used for condominiums, time-shares, or shops that are out of character for the community. Tourism has helped increase the importance of farming and agriculture because this is what has been marketed to visitors – without these industries, tourism in Oliver would suffer.

This case study will be useful for communities who are interested in tourism development but have reservations about how tourism may affect the community's character and the established local economy. While the example in this case study is about farming and agriculture, the principle is applicable to other industries. Agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, and industrial

tourism are just a few examples of the growing niche markets of the tourism industry. Whether a community is known for its art, its forestry or mining activities, or its ability to produce top-quality athletes, these are all attributes that many visitors look for when deciding where to go. Rural tourism development does not have to mean abandoning traditional values and ways of life. It is very possible for a community to incorporate tourism simply to support and highlight the community's rural character.

Introduction / Issue

Oliver recognizes the need for tourism to support its agricultural industries. Many visitors look to Oliver to provide an authentic, rural tourism experience that includes agriculture. However, the more popular Oliver becomes, the more pressure there is on its land base and water supply. As the number of visitors to a region increases, so too does the need for accommodation, infrastructure, and human resources. These needs can put pressure on the land base where competition for scarce resources can mean a win for some industries and a loss for others. In the case of Oliver, the concern was that the appeal of developing tourism would overshadow the land use needs for farming. Unfortunately, once the land is developed for tourism needs, many tourists will not visit because the rural, agricultural ambiance is lessened. In addition, developing tourism services can cause friction between visitors and locals. It can be difficult for locals to accept why the community is being changed to serve visitors.

In Oliver, several groups including the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Office have identified the need for a planned approach to tourism development. This need emerged based on dual concerns over a sluggish economy and potential land use conflicts. Consequently, groups in Oliver have undertaken several initiatives to address the relationship between tourism and agriculture.

Background / Context of the Case

At the northern edge of the Sonora Desert in the southern Okanagan Valley, Oliver lies a short distance north of the resort town of Osoyoos (Figure 1). Like many communities in western Canada, Oliver's beginnings lie in gold mining. The original town site, Fairview, was established in 1890 to the west of present day Oliver. As a community, Fairview was short-lived; when the gold rush in the area died, so did the town. The area to the east of Fairview began to be settled in the 1910s. The BC premier at the time, John Oliver, (whom the town is named after) suggested an irrigation canal be built through the desert region. This would allow for agricultural activities to take place, which along with the canal-building would provide long-term work opportunities. The provincial government purchased 22,000 acres of land and transformed it into usable agricultural property which was then sold to soldiers returning from World War I (History, 2003).

Figure 1: Map of Oliver
Map source: http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/RegionsCities/Oliver.htm

From the mid 1920s to the mid 1930s, Oliver's population more than tripled in size from 500 to 1,800. Orchards grew in numbers, and the community developed the reputation of being the "Cantaloupe Capital of Canada". The next decade a sawmill was built. This improved the fruit-packing capabilities of the community and provided more economic opportunities. Oliver incorporated as a village in 1945, and fruit growing continued to be the main economic power well into the 1970s. The economy began to diversify in the 1970s with an RV manufacturer establishing roots in the area – along with retirees. Around the same time, wine grape vineyards began to be planted (History, 2003).

Oliver's population in 2006 is 4,500. Agriculture remains the main industry and the original irrigation canal still supplies the water to the agricultural activities in the valley (History, 2003). Many service industries are based in Oliver as it is the service centre for the surrounding areas. More and more retirees are settling in the area for its warm sunny climate and as such approximately one third of Oliver's income is derived from pensions and retirement funds (Economy, 2003). Grape growing (and tasting) is expanding rapidly; the area is experiencing a significant growth in tourism with an emphasis on wine tourism.

Problem / Opportunity

Oliver, like many rural communities, has found it challenging to encourage young people to stay in the community. Whether to go away for school, work, or a different lifestyle, the impact of losing young adults can make it difficult for the economy to sustain itself. Oliver has always had a strong agricultural economy, but it was becoming evident that this was not enough to keep the community healthy. As more young people left, the need for services lessened. This in turn caused the economy to slow down which meant less opportunity for those choosing to stay in Oliver. A sluggish economic cycle can be difficult to break out of. Oliver's regional district (Okanagan-Similkameen) ranks highly among BC regions suffering from economic hardship in terms of employment rates, wage rates, education levels, and employment insurance use. (Economic Hardship Indices, 2005). According to a bed and breakfast owner, Oliver's wage average is approximately 40% lower than the provincial average. For a time, Oliver was the most economically dependent community in BC (Murphy, J., Deaking, P., 2004).

When it was noticed that more and more visitors were spending time in Oliver because of its wine, agriculture and climate, it was thought that tourism could be a way to diversify the economy and gain back some economic independence. Although on the surface developing tourism can seem like an easy solution, in reality it can be a complex process that requires the efforts of the entire community. The more tourism was to be embraced in Oliver, the greater the need for land, amenities, and services to accommodate visitors. Using land to build hotels and other amenities could take away land needed for agricultural purposes. The challenge for Oliver was attracting more visitors without destroying what visitors were coming to see: the rural landscape. This became an opportunity for community members to work together to brainstorm solutions. At this point, it was no longer a question of whether tourism was a viable opportunity, but rather how tourism could complement Oliver's rural character.

Even once a community such as Oliver decides to actively pursue tourism development community members may be unaware of the many resources available to develop or enhance tourism opportunities. For example, there are many government programs aimed at increasing a community's development efforts by sharing costs and expertise. Unfortunately, if the community lacks individuals with the skills and knowledge to leverage these opportunities, the opportunities may be missed. Community members may lack the skills needed to write proposals or orchestrate projects from beginning to end. So while the programs are an integral part of getting initiatives off the ground, so are the people who know how to use those programs. During one interview, a business owner spoke about the "lack of expertise in Oliver... [we] miss out on a lot of opportunities because we don't know about the programs or the necessary language [to apply for those programs]."

The Approach Taken / Methodology

Several initiatives in Oliver are being used in conjunction with one another to develop controlled, sustainable tourism. Each organization spearheading an initiative is aware of other initiatives. Often individuals involved with one initiative are also involved in another. This cross-involvement greatly enhances communication and coordination between the various groups. This is common in rural communities that draw upon a very limited pool of volunteer but while there are often very few leaders, those leaders are actively involved in many projects. This case study will review the development of the Economic Development Society, the Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan, the Wine Village Accord, the Rural Oliver Determination, the Agricultural Resort Area and the Smart Growth on the Ground initiatives.

In the spring of 2000, the Oliver and District Community Economic Development Society (ODCEDS) were formed (Oliver & District Community, n.d.). This is a partnership between the Town of Oliver and the Rural District where funding is provided by both entities. The ODCEDS believes “that with well constructed plans development and economic prosperity [will] grow in an orderly fashion without having to sacrifice the agriculture base of the community” (Oliver & District Community, n.d.). Since 2000, the ODCEDS has been working on a number of initiatives with that mandate in mind. An Economic Development Officer (EDO) was hired; his enthusiasm and skills brought various individuals together and as a group, the branding image of “The Wine Capital of Canada” was created (Plaskett, L. 2004). The community soon realized that more could be done with this theme. The Wine Capital of Canada Master plan, which is “a strategy for the economic regeneration of Oliver” was conceived in 2002. The Master Plan began to be applied by the Town in 2003 – the Wine Village Accord (part of the Master Plan and described in detail below) was incorporated into the Official Community Plan. As the ODCEDS also works with the Rural District, the Rural Oliver Determination was developed to ensure that activities in the rural Oliver area complemented the Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan (Murphy, J., Deaking, P., 2004).

Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan
The four main components of the Master Plan have been identified as follows:
- Oliver will be a wine village
- Rural Oliver will continue to be agriculturally-based
- The environment and climate will be protected and promoted
- Commitment is needed from the local community

Within the Master Plan, each component has a description defining how it will be realized. Details include education, marketing and advertising, relationship-building, and in some cases, lobbying to ensure each component’s success (Murphy, J., n.d.).

Wine Village Accord
The accord defines what the village will look like, where it will be located, what it will promote and support, and its connection to rural areas, how it will be designed, and how visitor accommodation and recreation play key roles. There is an understanding that much of the success of the village will be based on satisfying visitor experiences. The Accord acknowledges that marketing and signage must be coordinated and that training tourism workers is paramount to the village’s success. Issues such as transportation and parking are mentioned as needing further consideration. The village will be designed by a design committee, the results of which, will be incorporated into the Official Community Plan (Wine Village Accord, 2003).

Rural Oliver Determination
This agreement between the rural areas of Oliver and the Town of Oliver acknowledges rural stakeholders role in the Master Plan. It also describes the importance of creating a meaningful vision that ensures the agricultural lifestyle will continue to be respected and enhanced. A comprehensive, but not necessarily complete, list outlines important areas that need discussion and planning (Rural Oliver Determination, 2003).

With the determination and input from rural stakeholders, the Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan and the Wine Village Accord initiatives making progress, community members began to get a clear understanding of the potential impacts increased tourism would have on Oliver and the surrounding areas. The challenge of balancing tourism with agriculture was at the forefront once again. It was felt that the best way to mitigate the negative effects of tourism development was to control and monitor its growth. Therefore, the idea of an Agricultural Resort Area was proposed in 2004 (Plaskett, L. 2004).

Agricultural Resort Area
This is a unique idea in that it would be the first agricultural resort in North America.
The Agricultural Resort Area proposes to “marry” two industries: agriculture and tourism (Murphy, J., Deaking, P., 2004). According to the resort plan, the following criteria are essential for agricultural tourism to work in Oliver:

- Support agriculture on ALR land, not replace it
- Celebrate farming activities, not crowd them out
- Learn to value the sight of cultivated fields, not yearn to replace them with acres of time-share condominiums
- Fit in amongst the orchards and the vineyards

(Murphy, J., Deaking, P., 2004).

In addition to the initiatives that have been orchestrated with the help of the ODCEDS, an initiative called Smart Growth on the Ground (SGOG) is making an impact in Oliver. SGOG was created by Smart Growth BC, the Real Estate Institute of BC, and the Design Centre for Sustainability at the University of British Columbia. SGOG principles are to foster “smart, sustainable growth [that] enhances quality of life, protects the environment, and is financially responsible” (Principles, 2003 – 2005). Oliver is the third community to be involved with SGOG. The town and the regional district have paired up to work with SGOG, indicating that there is widespread support for the area to develop smartly. For Oliver, this means keeping the community’s authentic rural roots, keeping agriculture in the forefront as a community asset, and focusing on enhancing community life using sustainability concepts. SGOG has a great focus on community involvement at every stage, and also has a heavy emphasis on implementation. The ideas generated through this initiative will not simply be submitted in a report – the ideas will be developed into an actionable plan created by SGOG and, if approved by the community, will be implemented by the community.

SGOG has been involved with Oliver since November 2005. Activity began with public presentations introducing SGOG, its processes and its principles. This was followed in December 2005 with presentations explaining the topics that would be included in the development of a smart growth community plan. The topics included the following items:

- Making Sense of Place in Planning
- Water Resources & Sustainability
- Planning for Agriculture
- Big Box Stores
- Desert & Grassland Habitats
- Vision of the Osoyoos Indian Band
- Visualizing Density
- Climate Change
- Farming & Land Use
- Affordable Housing

(Previous Events, 2003 – 2005).

January 2006 was used to gather information from group workshops. The goal was to learn what the priorities for the Oliver area on many subjects including land use, green space, infrastructure, etc. were. With priorities defined, the goals of the Oliver SGOG process became more defined. February 2006 produce interesting results from more group workshops. The focus this time was on defining the character and special qualities of Oliver. In one exercise, participants were asked to indicate on maps photo locations that, for them, defined the character of Oliver. Participants were then asked to repeat the exercise this time choosing locations that were out of character for the community. Later in February, participants were asked to set “targets” for the priorities identified in the January workshops. They were to set timelines for concrete, measurable improvements for each of the priorities.

It was also at this time that community members were elected to be part of the charrette team. A charrette, as defined by SGOG, “is an exciting, intense design event. In an atmosphere of trust, people with an interest in the community - including traditional adversaries - are brought together to create land use, transportation, urban design, and other design plans” (Greater Oliver, 2003 – 2005). Organizations represented included the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, the Town of Oliver, Government agencies, and the Oliver and District Economic Development Society. Citizen representatives included town and rural residents, and individuals representing youth, business and economic development, environment, and agriculture. May 2006 saw the charrette team discuss the sustainable growth processes Oliver would take based upon the priorities and target timelines defined earlier in the SGOG process. As of June 2006, all of the information the charrette team has decided upon is being organized into a document called the concept plan. This plan will be given to Town Council and the Regional Board. If it is approved by Council and the Regional Board, and supported by the community, the plan will be implemented (Previous Events, 2003 – 2005).

The final tourism initiative identified in Oliver is the Tourism Coordinator Assistant hired by the Oliver and District Chamber of Commerce with funding secured from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. This is a pilot project and the individual will be responsible for marketing initiatives and working for the tourism services office in the Chamber. The idea is to have a consistent, coordinated effort for developing and promoting tourism through the Visitor Information Centre and the Chamber of Commerce. This position will be monitored over time for its effectiveness.

Problems Experienced / Successes

With so many initiatives in the works, keeping everyone informed has been challenging. Having open communication lines to ensure that each initiative develops in coordination with the others continues to be a priority. A suggestion was made that the Economic Development Officer (EDO) should have more of a direct connection with the Town to liaise between government and initiatives. One individual suggested that the EDO actually be a part of the local government as a town planner to ensure that all tourism development initiatives are complementary and coordinated.

Any kind of change can be stressful on a person, business, or a community. When the ideas of the wine village and agricultural resort were first proposed, some business owners felt threatened because they feared new businesses would mean the loss of their customers. They were not enthusiastic about the development. Although not everyone in Oliver is convinced that tourism development is appropriate, through communication and opportunities to become involved in the development processes, many individuals and business owners are becoming more excited at the prospect of having an increase in visitors to the area.

As mentioned earlier, government programs are a key component to tourism development. However, there have been occasions where the right people were not involved in orchestrating these programs, and consequently many efforts failed.

There are some infrastructure challenges related to the wine village and the agricultural resort. Highway 97, the main highway connecting the lower and upper Okanagan, runs directly through Oliver and is used as the main street. The main street is very close to the envisioned wine village. The village will likely have a pedestrian only section; having the highway next door lessens the village’s appeal because of elevated noise levels. In addition, although the speed limit is reduced through town, it is difficult to get drivers to pull off of the highway. There are no major signs indicating that parking is available, nor are there signs encouraging drivers to shop, eat, or relax in Oliver.

Should the wine village go ahead, a hotel will also be built as part of it. The area planned for the hotel is currently being used as an RV park. This has caused some hard feelings as there have been visitors using that park for many years. One individual stated that if the City removed the RV park, he would no longer vacation in Oliver. In effect, this means that the village would deter some visitors while encouraging others.

Discussions – Lessons Learned

The Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan, the Wine Village Accord, the Rural Oliver Determination, the Agricultural Resort Area, and the Smart Growth on the Ground initiatives have all received plenty of community support. Bringing individuals together to discuss the development initiatives greatly encourages community “buy-in”. Having individuals involved with more than one initiative has kept communication open. It has also helped ensure the initiatives complement one another.

While the Smart Growth on the Ground initiative has been widely approved of in Oliver, some individuals have expressed concerns about the process. “Out of the box” thinking was greatly encouraged, but some feel that there was not much of this kind of thinking. So while innovative ideas are important, a community must not be afraid to examine the innovative process itself.

If funding for an initiative exists, the right people must be available to apply for it. Communities need to do some preliminary work to ensure they have individuals who understand how to search out and apply for funding. However, securing funding should not be where this process ends. If a community receives funding for an initiative, it would be beneficial to have continued support from the source of the funding. Even with funding secured, many communities require some guidance through the process of carrying out an initiative from beginning to end.

Several key people in Oliver mentioned the catalyst for tourism development often came from non residents, or new residents. Non local resources often got tourism development ideas up and running. Bringing in people from other communities can cause some hard feelings amongst locals, but it may also be an excellent source of fresh ideas and perspective. This is not to say that locals are lacking in ideas to move their communities forward, but that new residents can bring in a fresh point of view, out of the box thinking and renewed energy.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is tourism a threat to other industries, or can it be a diversification agent as positioned in Oliver? Debate the alternatives.
2. Do some research on the charrette process. Discuss the pros and cons of this technique for getting local input on tourism planning processes.
3. Why do you think the newcomers in Oliver are pro tourism development? Could this be a source of tension in the community between old and new residents? If so, how would this manifest itself and what could you do to alleviate tension throughout the development process?

Resources on Oliver
Please use this contact information to learn more about this case study.

Website describing the Oliver and District Community Economic Development Society (ODEDS), the Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan, the Wine Village Accord, the Rural Oliver Determination, and the Agricultural Resort Area.
http://www.winecapitalofcanada.com

Jodie Siu – Smart Growth on the Ground (SGOG) Outreach Coordinator
jodie@smartgrowth.bc.ca www.sgog.bc.ca

Town of Oliver's Website
http://www.oliver.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp?bhcp=1

Alleson Mandziuk – Corporate Office for the Town of Oliver
amandziuk@oliver.ca

Official Community Plan for Oliver
http://www.oliver.ca/files/%7BBB2E9F05-091E-4ABE-B755-904426162FEB%7DBylaw%201070%20OCP%20complete.pdf

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Wine Village Accord. (2003, May 30). Retrieved August 5, 2006 from http://www.winecapitalofcanada.com/pdf/rural_Oliver_determination.pdf

Cover map retrieved September 6, 2006 from http://ca.epodunk.com/images/locatorMaps/bc/BC_2001701.gif

Further Readings

Oliver Chronicle Newspaper:

"Town will be bidding regretful farewell to Deakin, first EDO"
http://www.oliverchronicle.com/2004_36.htm

"Wine Tourism: snapshots tell the stories"
http://www.oliverchronicle.com/2002_1.htm

"Wine Country strategy off to historic start"
http://www.oliverchronicle.com/2001_3.htm

"Villaggio d'Asolo could be jewel in Wine Capital crown"
http://www.oliverchronicle.com/2003_14.htm

"Canadian Tire's hopes temporarily deflated by ALC"
http://www.oliverchronicle.com/2005_36.htm

WINE VILLAGE CORE AREA Request for Proposal
http://www.winecapitalofcanada.com/pdf/RFP.pdf

Provincial Agricultural Land Commission
http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/

Understanding Self Drive Tourism (Rubber Tire Traffic): A Case Study of Bella Coola, British Columbia

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Introduction:
Self drive tourism (also known as rubber tire traffic) represents a significant market sector within Canada and North America. Marketing campaigns promoting the ideal of independent travel in vehicles with names such as the Ford Escape, Nissan Pathfinder, Subaru Outback, and Jeep Liberty are now commonly used. In addition, factors such as increased car ownership, retiring baby boomers, and the development of larger and more powerful vehicles have arguably facilitated the growth of this market, despite global events such as rising oil prices and depressed exchange rates (Tourism BC, 2005).

Self drive tourism includes those people who hire or travel in their own vehicle, as well as those who hire or travel in their own recreational vehicle (including fifth wheels, motor homes, campers and camper trailers). In Canada alone, it has been suggested that 13% of the population now own an RV, compared to 10% in the USA (Go RVing, 2004). This high level of use is also apparent in British Columbia- the most recent travel figures for the province suggest that in 1996, 21 million people took overnight holidays in British Columbia, and of these, approximately 86% of residents and 79% of non BC residents took a holiday in their own or hired vehicle (Tourism BC, 1998). Moreover, 440,000 BC residents and 800,000 non BC residents used an RV (Tourism BC, 1998). Consequently, self drive tourism may be regarded as the “bread and butter” of tourism in British Columbia.

The aim of this research was to explore whether the self drive market is heterogeneous in its behaviour, by exploring the psychographic preferences and behaviour of self drive travellers in British Columbia. For this research, Bella Coola was used as a case study. In recognition of the significance of this research, funding was provided to this project by BC Ferries, the BC Real Estate Partnering Fund and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Exploring the Self Drive Tourism Market
Since the advent of the motor vehicle, drive tourism has been an important contributor to the growth of many tourist destinations. Vehicles can now travel further, with greater reliability, greater human comfort and over a greater diversity of terrain and road quality than ever before. In addition, improved road conditions and increased availability of services (e.g. refuelling stations, motels and camp grounds) means that travellers can travel safely with greater convenience over a wider variety of routes (Hardy, Beeton and Carter, 2005). In conjunction with increases in paid leave, increases in car and recreational vehicle ownership, and the baby boomer generation beginning to retire, opportunities for new types of drive holidays abound. These include short breaks (1-3 nights), short tours (4-7 days) and long tours (more than 8 days), the latter of which can be up to several thousand kilometres in length and several months in duration (McHugh and Mings, 1992; Olsen, 2003; Hardy, Beeton and Carter, 2005, Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, no date). However, despite its relative importance within the tourism industry and recognition by the tourism literature of the important role of transport within the industry (Prideaux, 2000), the amount of research focussed on self drive tourism, including RV use, has been described as being under represented (Olsen, 2003; Counts and Counts, 2004). Recent research suggests that the broader self drive tourism market consists of people with varying behavioural characteristics, who are undertaking journeys beyond the traditional

access routes, with differing spatial configuration patterns (Lue, Crompton and Fesenmairer, 1993; Pearce, 2001; Muller and O'Cass, 2003; Hardy, Beeton and Carter, 2005). It has found that with a growing number of 'grey nomads' on the road, and the uncertainty of travel plans of retiring baby boomers, this market is continually changing. Moreover, a life cycle may exist within the drive tourism market, which requires further exploration (Hardy, Beeton and Carter, 2005). There has also been industry based research on the RV market which has suggested that RV travellers represent the 'middle class', with the typical RV owner being 49 years old, married, with an annual household income of $56,000, which is higher than the median for all US households (Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, no date). One US study further suggests that RV ownership relates to a certain lifestyle, as RV travellers are likely to spend their disposable income on travelling an average of 4,500 miles and 28-35 days annually (Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, no date). Within academic tourism literature, research specifically focused on RV use is scarce and often dated (for examples see Jobes, 1984; Paul, 1982; Maertens, 1995). One noteworthy exception is a study conducted by Counts and Counts (2004) which examined RV travel as a retirement alternative and specifically focussed on RVers who lived in their RVs ('full-timers'). They investigated how they viewed themselves, dealt with problems, created communities and behaved.

Unfortunately, despite an emerging dialogue within academic literature regarding self drive tourism and including the RV market, many of these studies have been preliminary in nature or focussed on specific sub sectors, such as full time RVers. There is still a real need for research which studies why people choose different forms of self drive tourism, ranging from motor homes to tents, B&Bs and hotels. In other words, research is needed to explore the potential heterogeneity of the self drive market within a given region and the implications this may have upon the development and marketing of destinations and regions.

Methodology:

This research consisted of in-depth interviews (n=40) and focus groups (x 4 groups of 6-8 participants). A qualitative approach was taken in order to gain in-depth understandings of why and how self drive visitors choose their modes of behaviour and what their core motivations were. In addition, a grounded theory approach was taken for this study, on the premise that any theory derived from the study would be grounded within the data and relates to the particular situation under study (Creswell, 1998; Hardy, 2005).

The focus groups were conducted in July 2005 in the 70 kilometre long Bella Coola Valley. They were conducted at four different locations- a provincial park campground (Atnarko), a hotel in Hagensborg (located mid valley), a private campground (Gnomes) and at a hotel in the township of Bella Coola. The groups consisted of similar types of self drive tourists- those at Atnarko were travelling in RVs, at Gnomes participants stayed in tents, those at the hotel in Hagensborg were staying in it, and those in the group at the Bella Coola hotel stayed in both tents and hotels. The focus group question related to self drive travellers motivations, behaviour, activities and travel choices.

The in-depth interviews asked participants similar questions, which allowed for results to be compared with those of the focus groups. The recruitment of participants took place in various locations throughout the valley and also on the BC Ferry service between Bella Coola and Port Hardy. The in-depth interviews were purposive, so that similar numbers of tenters, hotel and B&B guests and tenters were interviewed. The in-depth interviews ceased when saturation of opinions was reached, meaning that no new information was emerging (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Interviews were taped, transcribed and analysed using open coding, whereby the transcribed data was assessed for patterns which were then grouped into conceptual categories - also known as the constant comparative method (Hardy, 2005).

Results:
The results described below relate to the behavioural characteristics of self drive travellers, their reasoning for choice of accommodation and their 'travel life cycles'.
When self drive travellers' reasons for choosing their style of accommodation was assessed, it became evident that they could be classified into groups which were defined as: a) 'Dedicated tenters'; b) 'Convenience tenters'; c) 'B&Bers'; d) 'Dedicated hoteliers'; e) 'Large scale RVers'; and f) 'Smaller scale RVers'. These are described below:

Dedicated tenters were defined as travellers who were strongly committed to using tents as their form of accommodation whilst on self drive holidays. They believed they got the 'real experience' because they camped outdoors and felt the elements of nature. For them it was about:
"Being outside ….close to nature…. We've been tenting since forever."

Dedicated tenters did not view RVers favourably, as they believed RVers were not experiencing nature in all its elements. Dedicated tenters felt that they had more accessibility to remote areas because they could use their vehicles, then set up camp. They also tended to be far more physically active and committed towards environmental issues than RVers.

Convenience Tenters in some instances, described themselves as once being committed tenters, who had changed because they had either/or: access to more money, changed their lifestyles because of children or because they had grown older; or lived in different environments. Convenience tenters were the types of self drive tourists who would either: travel with a tent from time to time (for example when travelling with friends); or always travel in a tent, but check into a hotel or B&B (depending on their personality type- see description of B&Bers and hoteliers below) if the weather was inclement, they had extra cash and felt like indulging themselves.

Convenience tenters, when they stayed in hotels or B&Bs, would often stay in more up market establishments. They enjoyed the flexibility of having two options for accommodation: *"We've got a tent. …..Right now we stay in the hotel/motel if the weather is not nice and in a tent if the weather is nice."* Convenience tenters were not always 'Dedicated core tenters' in their youth. Some had downsized from motor homes and trailers. Some Convenience tenters were very physically active, similar to dedicated tenters.

B&B'ers: who were committed to this form of accommodation, did so because they felt they would meet the 'real' people living in the communities which they visited. Social people, they placed a high emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects of their trips and interaction with the community, relative to other types of self drive travellers:

> *"With B&Bs, I find that you get to meet the people of the community wherever you are going and talk to them more. ….. We solved all the world's problems with us until the 3 o'clock in the morning. ….. We had a great time. I cried when we said bye."*

Dedicated hoteliers: or committed hotel stayers, did not like to feel they had to interact with B&B owners, or wake at certain times. Dedicated hoteliers often freely admitted that camping and complete immersion in the environment was not for them:

> *"I don't do camping - ever…..I am allergic to mosquitoes….We choose hotels over B&Bs because we don't want to feel we have to get up and have breakfast …and we are traveling for 29 days…..we have always traveled in hotels."*

This is not to say that dedicated hoteliers were disinterested in interaction with the environment. Rather they differed in the extent of their immersions and showed more interest in historical, cultural activities than heavy immersion in nature.

Smaller scale RVers: were quite often tenters in their youth, but because of their life stage, or income, had made the decision to purchase an RV. To them, RVs were a natural progression from tenting:

> *"We are in a tent trailer because we have old fogies with me and they wouldn't tent. Up to now we have been a tenting family….. This tent-trailer is not much different than a tent. It's a tent on wheels. It's pretty close to nature."*

Most often, these types of self drive travellers had a smaller motor home, fifth wheel or camper trailer and often they would travel in smaller groups of family of friends. They also commonly expressed an interest in meeting locals:

"*… When I go on a holiday, I like to be with the people of the place that I am in."*

Large scale RVers**:** were a group which requires more in-depth research because there appeared to be behavioural subgroups within this group of self drive travellers. This included those who lived in their RVs ('full timers') and those who did not live in them, but rather used their RVs regularly, usually during summer. Also, within the non full timer segments there were different nationalities of RVers including Canadians, those from the USA and those from 'other' countries. Large scale RVers tended to drive larger motor homes, fifth wheels or trailers. Ironically, like dedicated tenters who looked down on large scale RVers, Large scale RVers tended to look down on tenters, believing that they had an inferior experience: *"we don't have to get on all fours and crawl into our bed."*

Some Large scale RVers traveled in groups, and formed their own 'communities' as they traveled. This was also documented by Counts and Counts (2004). Others were more solitary in their behavior. Overall, large scale RVers appeared to be less physically active, and more conscious of safety. The personal comforts of home, their possessions and their own bathroom were priorities for these travelers: *"We travel with our house on wheels and we go from campground to campground.*" Large scale RVers tended to be less physically active than tenters or smaller scale RVers.

Discussion:
This preliminary research suggests that a spectrum of self drive travellers exists, which is identifiable by their accommodation choice and which is in turn, indicative of travel motivations and behaviour. It revealed that in a given destination where self drive tourism (rubber tire traffic) represents a large proportion of the market, one would be mistaken to believe that the market is homogeneous. Indeed, this research revealed that the desire to engage in the environment and socio-cultural activities varied amongst self drive travellers in the Bella Coola Valley. In particular, it revealed that dedicated tenters showed a much greater desire and propensity to engage in "wilderness" based activities. Conversely, the research revealed that large scale RVers placed greater emphasis on safety and their propensity to engage in "wilderness" based activities was lower. Moreover, the research revealed that of all travellers, those staying in B&B were highly social travellers who actively sought out experiences which would allow them to interact with local people. Similarly, Dedicated Hotelers showed the highest propensity to engage in historical and cultural activities. This was the opposite for Dedicated Tenters who did not display such a strong interest to engage in the socio-cultural aspects of their travel experiences.

The research also revealed that self drive tourists' accommodation choice is not a static decision. For example, those who tented in the Bella Coola Valley may also stay in local hotels or B&B's if the weather is inclement. From a marketing perspective this is significant as a tenter staying in a provincial park, may also stay in a hotel or B&B on the same vacation.

Consequently, accommodation choice should not always be considered to be representative of a different market sector.

Moreover, the research revealed that longitudinal changes may occur over time in terms of self drive tourists' behaviour. Cyclical in accommodation choice were found to be most often determined by changes in traveller's life stages, such as family, personal circumstances, or financial status. Further research is needed in regions around BC to determine whether this cyclical behaviour is reflective of the broader self drive tourism market. There is also a need to investigate the issue of life stages and personal finance as determinants of travel decision making as these factors would not seem to be consistent with Pearce's (1988) theory of motivation and psychological maturity being key drivers for changes in travel behaviour.
Finally, the research suggested that diversity exists amongst the larger scale RV market. Some were travellers from overseas who rented their RV and rarely travelled in this manner. Others owned their RV and travelled in it regularly, whilst a smaller proportion of Larger scale RVers were found to be "full timers"- a phenomena documented by Counts and Counts (2004) whereby travellers sell their house and choose to live and travel in their RV, often as a retirement alternative. As this research was preliminary in nature, it was not able to explore in full detail the difference that these types of behaviour have upon traveller's motivations and behaviour. Further research is needed to explore this issue.

Conclusions
This research revealed the diversity which may exist within one region (the Bella Coola Valley) and one market which, from an outsiders perspective, may at first appear to be homogenous. From a marketing perspective, it highlighted the importance of conducting case studies on a local level and in significant detail, as it revealed the motivational and behaviour differences that exist within the self drive tourism market.

Further research is now needed to explore whether the differences which were found in the Bella Coola Valley are representative of the broader self drive tourism market in British Columbia, and also to explore the diversity which appears to exist within the larger scale RV market.

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Researching the child:
Theory and practice in evaluation research

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Learning outcomes:

On completion of this case study, students will be able to:

1. Identify the reasons for conducting research with children and young people in the evaluation of leisure projects.

2. Describe the positive benefits that may arise from conducting research with children and young people.

3. Outline the difficulties that may be encountered in conducting research with children and young people.

4. Describe the types of research techniques that are appropriate for use with children and young people.

5. Evaluate the appropriateness of conducting research with children in evaluations of leisure-projects.

Abstract

This paper discusses a case study examining the practicalities and benefits of including children in evaluations of sport and leisure initiatives designed to target young people. The case study uses an example from an evaluation conducted in England involving two community groups. These groups were given training and sports equipment to assist with delivering sports opportunities to children in areas suffering from extreme deprivation. The programme aimed to assist the groups with providing physical, psychological and wider community benefits to the children attending through the use of sport and physical activity opportunities. The case study demonstrates how applying childhood research theory can ensure a full and detailed evaluation that contains the voices of those who the project is intended to impact upon. This is shown to have positive implications for practitioners for guiding future policy, making amendments to existing policy, and for securing future funding.

Introduction and background

A large amount of public funding is now being invested in youth sport and physical activity initiatives, particularly in Britain. Research has demonstrated the potential psychological, physiological and social inclusion benefits for young people of engaging in physical activity (Ringuet and Trost 2001, Sallis et al 1992). Although research suggests the link is tenuous, self esteem, motivation and self efficacy can be improved through participation in sport and physical activity (Gauvin, Spence and Anderson 1999, Bouchard, Shephard and Stephens 1994, Spence, McGannon and Poon 2005, Fraser-Thomas and Cote 2005). Participating in physical activity can have a positive impact on young people's health particularly reducing the likelihood of developing hypertension, cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer in later life (Health Canada 2003, Berger and Owen 1988). Research has also shown a link between the potential of sport and activity participation to assist with improving citizenships within communities and reducing crime and anti social behaviour amongst young people (Crabbe 2000, Morris, Sallybanks and Willis 2003).

More recent media attention has highlighted the growing levels of childhood obesity in westernised countries and government policy has shifted to focus on the potential use of exercise and physical activity to combat this growing epidemic. Fox explains “It is clear the government’s recognition of the gravity of the obesity epidemic in Britain (trebling from 8% to almost 24% of adults since 1980) has helped to generate greater and more immediate interest in physical activity and its contribution to health” (Fox 2004 p.11). Exercise through either sport or informal physical activity is seen as a positive way to combat weight gain in children and help them with maintaining a healthy weight and also ensure they develop behaviour that will be of benefit to them in adulthood. (Owens et al1999, Robertson-Wilson et al 2003). In most studies it appears that physical activity interventions are capable of achieving desired changes (Boon and Clydesdale 2005). As a result, over the previous decade numerous government funded initiatives have been developed with the aim of making children more active and in doing so, have positive consequences for tackling obesity and improving the well being and behaviour of young people. In England and Scotland the ‘Active England’ and ‘Active Schools’ initiatives have been developed. These fund professional officers to develop more physical activity opportunities and encourage young people to take part in them country wide. Canada’s physical activity unit launched a range of resources in 2002 aimed at making children more active through “providing parents, education, physicians and community leaders with the information they need to help increase physical activity levels in children and youth” (Physical Activity Unit Canada). There is clearly a great deal of money being invested in this area. However, statistics produced by the World Health Organisation (2002) indicate that obesity figures continue to rise and children are still relatively inactive and therefore not gaining from the physical, mental and social benefits that activity can provide. The general understanding is that activity is good for children in multiple ways but despite the abundance of funding in this area we are not making children more active (Boon and Clydesdale 2005). They key issue for practitioners in this area is what can be done to ensure that young people do participate? This case study will suggest that we need to directly ask children how we can encourage them to be active.

Research has indicated children are in the best position to offer information about their experience and the world they live in (Thomas and O’ Kane1998) but their opinions are rarely sought within sport and leisure evaluations. Although evaluations of similar programmes to this case study are now fairly common place, it is not often that these seek the views of the children involved with them. Opinions are usually gathered from deliverers and parents who speak on behalf of young people. Children have little opportunity to inform and direct current and future directions in sport and leisure policies that are targeted to engage them. We feel it is only by involving children in the evaluation of initiatives and subsequently incorporating what they say into future decisions, that practitioners can really understand what is and is not effective and what changes can be made to ensure future policy succeeds. This paper outlines a case study example where such engagement with young people did occur. The results were extremely positive in terms of both their enjoyment and continued engagement with the intervention and developing stakeholder understanding of what constitutes a successful intervention programme.

The purpose of this case study is to explore how we can undertake research with young people to give them the opportunity to voice their views and the impact of this for practitioners.

Case study description: *Making communities active pilot project*

The case study involves an initiative that was developed as a pilot project by a national youth sports organisation in Britain. The organisation develops many programmes aimed at improving and increasing physical activity opportunities for young people both within and outside of school. The initiative was funded by a national children's charity committed to improving the lives of children and young people in Britain. Our role was of independent evaluators of the project.

The initiative was piloted with two existing community youth groups working in extremely deprived areas of Northern and Southern England. The groups attracted a number of young people from the local area aged between 5 and 18. The groups operated twice a week and young people were able to come to a community centre and take part in art activities, play games, watch television and talk to the volunteer leaders. They were unable to participate in any physical activity opportunities due to a lack of expertise and equipment. Funding was provided to develop training for the leaders and provide sports and games equipment for the young people. Ringuet and Trost (2001) suggest the majority of physical activity initiatives have been targeted at the school or classroom environment but community programs are vital because children spend considerable amounts of time in community settings that are conducive to physical activity. Community settings are also seen as favourable to encouraging increases in physical activity because they involve children in informal activities without the pressures of competition or requiring high skill levels. The youth groups in this case study therefore offered an ideal setting to increase the physical activity levels of the young people attending.

Both areas were selected by the stakeholders due to the high levels of poverty suffered by their communities and resulting ill health. Young people in these areas suffer from poor physical and mental health, have high levels of obesity from poor diets, have low education attainment and very limited life choices. The local areas also have limited resources and activities for young people resulting in a great deal of vandalism and anti social behaviour created by young people of all ages. Reflecting the research discussed the stakeholders considered generating physical activity opportunities in these areas could help tackle all of these issues and assist in improving the health of individuals and ultimately the community in which they lived in.

When we began our research with the project the two case study areas had been selected, bags of equipment and training provided and the community groups had been using these for a period a four months. The funders and the deliverers were keen to stress this was a starting point and they wanted to develop the resources in ways that would be guided by the young people's needs. Our role was of action researchers. Participatory action research involves research and development happening at the same time in an integrated process (Walker 2002). We were to work with the young people and leaders to understand whether the equipment was suitable for them and encouraged them to be active, what changes they would like to see made to the equipment available and develop with them a programme of physical activity that they could take ownership of and would encourage them to take par in enough exercise to gain some health and social benefits from.

The remainder of the paper will examine the theory behind obtaining the views of young people and how this can be undertaken in practice. The results and benefits from the process will be discussed and finally the key issues for practitioners to consider when undertaking action research with young people.

Conducting research with children: *A brief introduction*

Children in many societies have been valued for their potential and for what they will grow up to be, but are devalued in terms of their present perspectives and experiences (Greene and Hill, 2004). These assumptions have resulted in children being ignored within research on the basis of their (in) competence, (un)reliability and need for protection, making them inappropriate or too problematic as research subjects (Masson, 2004). During the last two decades, with increasing numbers of children and young people being engaged as participants in research (Alderson and

Morrow, 2004) these perceptions have begun to be challenged. However, it is recognised that children cannot be engaged on the same level and in the same way as adults. They need to be offered the opportunity to communicate in ways in that they are competent in and this may not necessary include verbal discussions with the researcher. At a theoretical level there are several issues which need to be addressed when involving young people in research. Three of these examples have been considered using this case study. They are:

1.	***Power imbalances between the researcher/ researched***. How do we ensure that children are participating because they want to and are telling us what they think not what they believe adults want to hear?
2.	***Using appropriate methodology.*** How do we find ways to allow children to communicate but still collect valuable research data?
3.	***Making sense of the child's voice***. How do we understand what children want and convince stakeholders from what can often be contradictory and disjointed research data produced by young people?

The paper will examine the research theory in each of these areas and how practically we addressed these within this particular case study.

Minimising adult/child power relations in the research process

Theoretical issues:
Alderson and Morrow (2004) suggest that the biggest challenge for researchers working with children is reducing the disparities in power and status. A strong researcher/researched relationship are key to minimising this. There is obviously a weight of responsibility attached to developing this relationship. Children naturally view adults as authority figures due to the power imbalances that exist in wider society (Christensen, 2004). Researchers therefore tend to attempt to minimise this as much as possible whilst recognising that it is impossible to remove themselves from the cultural power issues continually influencing children.

Case study realities:
In this case study developing the researcher/researched relationship and encouraging the young people to feel comfortable communicating with it was particularly difficult. The children were not used to receiving any attention from adults and particularly not accustomed to having their opinions sought and their views listened too. This made our presence particularly unsettling for them at first. Added to this was the practical complication of undertaking contractual evaluation research which usually has to be completed within a certain time limit. Ideally the researcher/child relationship should use an ethnographic approach that allows the researcher time to gently engage the child and gain their trust so they felt confident talking to them. Despite the stakeholders' commitment to involving children in the research process they still had time pressures on presenting the results of the evaluation and securing funding for the future of the project. As a result we had a period of three months to collect research data and around 8 visits to the community group to develop our relationship and collect relatively complex information from the young people.

We decided the most suitable way to develop a rapport with the young people was to begin by attending sessions at the youth club without attempting to undertake any research. We would join in the activities that the young people took part in, ask them questions about their lives and attempted to be interested in them without being too demanding or unsettling. We made the children aware on our first visit as to who we were and the purpose of our presence. This had to be done in a way that could be understood by all ages of children. We stressed that we were there to hear their views and opinions and that they were in complete control of when they wanted to talk to us. It didn't matter if they did not want to at any stage; they just needed to tell us. We were also required to gain parental consent where possible, for the children to take part.

At the first sessions we observed the dynamics amongst the children, their friendship groups, who were the more extrovert children, which were more introverted and generally allowed them to get used to our presence. The children accepted us reasonably readily, helped by viewing us at a similar level as the regular volunteers with whom they had a relaxed informal relationship. They also enjoyed having the opportunity to express their views and opinions and have someone listen to them. We felt the initial sessions greatly assisted us with learning about the children and helping them to feel comfortable around us. The children were enthusiastic about the equipment and wanted to share ideas with us as to how it could be improved. When we moved into collecting data the transition was fairly smooth, the children were used to our presence and talking with us making the research seem an extension of this rather than something formal and cause for concern. The young people didn't really notice they were taking part in 'research' minimising the opportunity for them to give us information that did not reflect their genuine views.

Key issues	***Solutions***
Power imbalances between adults and children	• Accept these cannot be completely removed. • Gain children's trust by spending as much time as possible with them prior to undertaking research. • Allow children to talk outside the research topic to reassure them the researcher is interested in their views.
Children uncertain about expressing views	• Develop relationship over a period of time. • Researcher takes part in other areas of children's lives to allow them the chance to become used to the researcher. • Reassure children throughout the research process that there are no right or wrong opinions

Method and Methodology: Developing appropriate techniques for involving children

Theoretical principles

The use of appropriate methods can also assist with minimising the power imbalances discussed. It was necessary to recognise that "children are not used to expressing their views freely or being taken seriously by adults because of their position in adult dominated society. The challenge is how best to enable children to express their views to an adult researcher" (Punch 2002 p.325). It can be easy to discount children as incapable of participating whilst in reality they can but not in the same way adults are able to.

At a theoretical level participatory techniques are viewed as enabling children to communicate in different ways, offer interpretations on the work they produce using different methods and also select methods with which they are most happy using. Participatory techniques can include methods such as story writing, drawing, taking photographs or using images. It encompasses a whole range of activities that remove the emphasis on having to talk directly to the researcher to communicate their views with them. Children, according to James (1993) and Alderson (1994), are often happier communicating in different mediums because they are more practised in these forms. It makes sense to integrate mechanisms such as drawings, pictures and photographs into the research process. Asking children to explain why they attribute certain meanings to their paintings and stories allowed them to engage more productively with my research questions but use the skills they are comfortable with (James 1993).

Thomas and O' Kane (2000) suggest "these techniques appealed to children because they are concrete and tactile rather than abstract and verbal and in addition they allowed children more opportunity to shape their agenda…. They enabled a dialogue about more abstract issues that included children's own interpretations and so reduced some of the methodological problems around the interpretations of children's activities by adults" (p.825). O' Kane suggests this assists with reducing the adult/child power relationship because the child has some control of the research process as well as allowing their voices to be heard. “In this sense these techniques are a powerful tool enabling children’s voices, needs and interests to be articulated and to take precedence over adult research agendas” (2000 p.152)

Real applications

We developed a number of participatory methods for working with the young people. The main issue we found when applying these methods was the need for flexibility. It was important to try different research methods but be prepared to alter them if they were not encouraging the children to communicate with us. If we were working with the young people for a period of time, it would have been relatively unproblematic to trial and error methods and find which are the most appropriate. However, in this situation it was vital to collect data relatively quickly but we still needed to make the children feel comfortable and find their best way of communicating their views to us.

The techniques and methods we used revolved around focus groups with the children. Focus groups are typically used to bring a group of individuals together to discuss a particular topic area (Morgan 1988). Focus groups had many advantages for this research. They provided peer support, the opportunity to discuss issues together and feed off each others ideas and the chance to develop researcher and participant relationships in less structured, informal ways. This method also suited the interaction we had been having informally with the young people when we sat with them whilst they took part in other activities. During the focus groups we spoke to the children, but also introduced a range of techniques designed to encourage conversation and generate data in ways that they were more practised at using or would be more interesting for them. This included asking the young people to take pictures with disposable cameras of the equipment and activities they liked and disliked, drawing pictures of equipment they felt would be useful to have or like to change and making spider diagrams with suggestions of how they would like to alter the physical activity sessions generally. These methods then encouraged the children to express their views verbally as well as offering their opinions through the other data sources.

In choosing to use research techniques that are more responsive to the participant than the research agenda, there is less opportunity to gather information in a consistently systematic and structured matter. We felt in this research context, providing the space for children and young people to be listened to was more important than creating uniformity in the research process. Doing this enabled a richness of data that would not have been possible had we been conducting a more rigid research process. The combination of participatory methods and traditional approaches were also useful in ensuring the children were not patronised by only using ‘child friendly’ methods and could participate in the same way as adults but use alternative techniques to communicate when appropriate (Punch 2002).

We found these methods were extremely effective at encouraging the children to communicate with us. They wanted to share their views and they liked not having to just sit round and talk with us but actively generate the research data themselves. The disposable camera session was particularly effective. We asked the young people to spend one session when they were taking part in physical activity to take pictures of aspects of the sessions they liked and disliked, this could include the equipment, the games they played, the leaders or other children. It was left to individuals to interpret the instructions. These photographs were developed the following week and we sat with the young people and asked them to explain why they had taken certain pictures.

We incorporated the drawing session into one of their regular art and craft activities. We asked the children to draw pictures of what their perfect session would look like and describe what they had drawn. There were no restrictions placed on this, they could draw whatever they felt would improve the physical activity opportunities for them. We also developed a session where the young people interviewed each other. They enjoyed being ‘real researchers’ and the responsibility associated with this. It was beneficial for us as some of the quieter children were more open and talkative with their friends than they would have been with us and this greatly extended our data collection.

There is not enough space to examine in full the results of the evaluation but the key issues generated by the use of these methods are reported briefly to give an example of the types of suggestions children can produce if encouraged appropriately:

	Case study results	***Young people's reasoning***
1.	More equipment for small sided games.	Desire to play in pairs and small friendship groups rather then needing large numbers to be able to organise any activity.
2.	Girls requested more ideas for activities that were non competitive.	The girls enjoyed taking part in activity but did not like participating when it became competitive, particularly as they reported this led to the boys taking over the sessions. They wanted more ideas for activities where the emphasis was not on winning
3	Resource cards illustrating different games	The children wanted to organise their own activities. They did not like having to rely on the activity leaders organising the games for them.
4.	More indoor equipment	The children felt the resources were limited to equipment that they could only use outside when the weather was suitable.
5.	Opportunity for older members to take junior leadership qualifications	The older members wanted to have the opportunity to organise and teach younger children at the session.
6.	Organise 'taster sessions' on the local housing estates	The young people wanted to take the equipment out to their local housing estates and organise taster games sessions to encourage more young people to attend the youth club.

We felt our methodological approach was beneficial for this type of evaluation and the children were able to offer their views and opinions fairly easily. We also succeeded in involving all the young people in this process. Some preferred not to take part in the alternative techniques but were happy just to talk to us and enjoyed being listened too. Others enjoyed taking part in the art activities and would offer their opinions on what they produced but were less inclined just to talk to us when they didn't have something visually in front of them that they could discuss. It was important for us to be very responsive to their different needs and adjust quickly to ensure we were able to collect data however the young people wanted to convey to us.

Although we found the methods very effective, there are certain limitations that need to considered if using these for evaluation work. The methods, whilst becoming acknowledged within the academic world as being valuable, may not be considered by stakeholder as being robust enough to make judgements on future policy and particularly for securing more funding. Our stakeholders were very committed to involving children and hearing their views and opinions, but even they felt it may be difficult to convince senior financial directors of the need for further investment based on the drawing of a young child. The use of multiple methods helped us with this. Where different methods were continually generating the same response or requests from the young people, we and the stakeholders felt there was greater validity when reporting this. However, we did recognise that some requests from the children could not be acted upon. We had told them to explain to us what they would like and did not place any restrictions on this to assist with convincing them that we genuinely wanted to hear what they had to say. Due to this, some children offered very creative responses that could not be accommodated; suggestions such as building a water park in the small area behind the community centre. We made a judgement in consultation with the stakeholders not to include these as it would not be possible for them to provide what was requested and may devalue the more appropriate suggestions that the young people had made and enable the senior directors to dismiss all the children's views as fanciful and unrealistic. However, in doing this we were clearly making decisions on behalf of the children and could potentially be limiting their voice within the research process. The final section of this case study examines the practical difficulties we faced when attempting to make the child's voice heard but still produce an evaluation report that would be considered valuable and be taken seriously at senior management levels within the stakeholders' organisations.

Key issues	***Solutions***
Children enjoy having practical tasks to undertake during research	• Tailor methods to suit the interests and skills of the children involved in research
Participatory methods may not be viewed as valid by stakeholders	• Use multi-method approach to triangulate results. • Report only on views and opinions that can be practically applied.
Different children respond to different methods	• Be responsive to children's needs • Be prepared to adapt and change methods if they are unsuitable.

Researching the child, hearing the child? Making the child's voice visible within research

Legal and theoretical positioning

The message within legislation[3] and participatory research is that children's voices should be listened to by adults, be given respect and be viewed as a central source of knowledge in the public domain But "what actually constitutes the 'child's' voice and how should we listen to it?" (Davis 1998 p.327). When analysing data gathered from children, theoretically we are expected to allow the child's voice to be heard and remain 'pure' during this process. We found the methods were excellent for obtaining information but the views of children were not always consistent. On occasions they would offer completely contradictory explanations and viewpoints leaving us to make some best-guess judgements about the child's meaning.

Applications to action research

In reality we were therefore faced with making judgements on the young people's meanings, examining any contradictions and deciding which, if any, is the 'true' voice. Stainton-Rogers and Stainton Rogers suggest the difficulty lies in knowing what is in a child's 'head' (1992). To resolve this we attempted to clarify with the children their meanings as we moved through the research. When this wasn't possible we made decisions based on the other comments made. We acknowledge this added our voice as researchers to the process as other researchers have had to do: "As we set out to research children's experiences we must add analysis of this extra layer of interpretation to the interpretation that is at the heart of experience itself. As adults we bring to our encounters with children a particular package of attitudes and feeling, constructed through our own personal childhood history and our contemporary perspectives of childhood" (Greene and Hill 2004, p.8).

The inconsistency of children's opinions and the difficulty accessing their meaning has contributed to the devaluation of children within the research process. Whilst we felt it was vital to allow them to express their views, we still recognised that the funders had to make vital judgements based on the opinions we presented and it was important that both we and they had absolute confidence that what we reported was what the children genuinely wanted. However, in reality this is actually extremely difficult. Children change their minds continually, it is a benefit of

[3] The recent British Government legislation 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' aims to ensure that policies and services are designed around the needs of children and young people, and that they are involved in decision making at a local and national level.

childhood that they need not be consistent in their opinions and are able to hold contradictory views simultaneously without needing to rationalise these in a way that an adult would, they are simply seen as being children. We wanted the children's views and opinions to be heard but we also needed our research to be taken seriously and seen as valuable to the stakeholders. We addressed this, as discussed, by using several methods and attempting to gain the children's view across multiple approaches. If the children were offering conflicting views we attempted to clarify with them what was meant. The results we presented in the evaluation report were the ones that were consistently expressed using several methods and that were expressed by several pupils. We found this gave the stakeholders the necessary confidence to make adjustments based on these views if they felt they had been expressed across the group.

We also conducted several interviews with the volunteer leaders and, when available, with parents and their views were used to support those of the children. Again theoretically the child's voice should be seen as being valid standing alone. Using the adult voices would dilute this; it conflicts with the theory of childhood research and makes it seem that children's views are not acceptable unless supported by those of adults. We took these issues into consideration but felt that due to evaluation research of this nature being in its infancy, we needed to ensure it would be accepted. We felt we conveyed the voices of the children. If these needed to be supported by those of adults to ensure that they were recognised by the stakeholders then this had to be accepted by us even if it compromised our theoretical positioning.

As a result we produced an evaluation report that reflected the children's visions and beliefs but used adult opinions, including our own to rationalise these views and make them presentable and understandable to the stakeholders. Both organisations involved felt they could trust the views and opinions and the report provided suggestions that would genuinely improve the delivery of the existing project as well as providing a base for new projects if the programme was extended from a pilot.

Key issues	***Solutions***
Children often have contradictory views	• Accept the researcher needs to interpret these and cannot produce a report of the child's 'pure' voice. • Use other adult voices to reinforce the opinions of the child.
Children can change their views and opinions	• Research the same issues using different methods to determine the child's genuine view.

Conclusions
As a result of the evaluation process, the stakeholder was able to secure more funding to develop the project into a nationwide programme targeting similar community organisations. They adopted many of the suggestions made by the young people and developed resources which benefited the existing projects as well as implementing them in new sites. When we returned to the sites worked with, we found several of the young people had undertaken the requested leadership qualifications and were now organising and leading sessions. Again there is not enough space within this example to fully explain the benefits the young people gained from being involved with the initiative, but on our return visit we found children and leaders perceived the young people were more active. They felt their social, negotiation, and organisation skills had improved due to taking part in the physical activities and children reported higher levels of self confidence. To return to the initial introduction the case study has demonstrated how involving children in the research process has enabled them to engage fully in activity and importantly continue with this regularly thus accumulating all the associated health and social benefits documented. Our repeated visits over a year period indicated that the same children were continuing to participate and enjoy the physical activity opportunities and the taster sessions had also encouraged more children from the local area to attend the group. The focus groups we conducted during these visits suggested that the children felt an ownership over the programme because they considered that they had 'designed it' due to the processes that we involved them in.

The case study should illustrate the benefits of involving children and young people in research. We consider it invaluable for any evaluation of physical activity initiatives designed at encouraging children to participate to contain the voices and opinions of the target audience. Ideally some consultation should occur before developing such projects, although this did not occur in this particular case study. Ultimately the young people and the groups involved gained greatly from this process but the stakeholders also became more aware of the value of listening to their target audience and how sophisticated their views can be.

This case study should have demonstrated the benefits of this approach. A summary of the issues that need to be considered before attempting to replicate this type of research with other initiatives are:

- Evaluation is usually conducted under severe time restraints. Research is often limited to a few visits which are not enough to develop the sort of relationship with the child that research theory demands. Unless the researcher has the opportunity to work with children over a period of several months it may be difficult to generate data that the stakeholders can be certain reflects the children’s views. This needs to be taken into consideration in the planning of the research and deciding whether involving children will be a suitable and worthwhile process.

- Researchers need to be extremely flexible and responsive to the children’s needs. Uniformity is very difficult to achieve when involving children in research and this can be unsettling for stakeholders who prefer structured and repeatable data collection processes.

- It can also in reality be difficult to convince funders and practitioners of the values of children’s voices. Stakeholders needed to be completely committed to the process before the researchers begin. It is not worth wasting time seeking children’s views if stakeholders do not feel they will not be of value in improving the programme or importantly securing future funding.

- Researchers need to accept that to convince stakeholders they may have to compromise their academic stance and be prepared to work with stakeholders to develop ways to ensure the research will be taken seriously. In this case study we achieved this by legitimising the child’s voice by reinforcing it with those of adults even if this compromised the theoretical principles of research with children.

Case questions

1. Why should leisure researchers include children and young people in their research?

2. What may discourage researchers and stakeholders from including children and young people in their research?

3. What problems may arise with the types of information that children and young people provide for researchers?

4. What are the benefits of including children and young people in leisure research?

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A Rapid Rural Appraisal of Taylor, British Columbia "Where Peace and Prosperity Meet"

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Learning Objectives:
By analyzing this case, learners will:

1. Become familiar with the rapid rural appraisal methodology and its potential application in tourism;
2. Be able to critique the advantages and disadvantages of the rapid rural appraisal method;
3. Be able to compare and contrast approaches to identify tourism assets;
4. Be able to contribute ideas to move a community from asset identification to implementation of a tourism planning process.

Abstract
In April 2006, a research team of seven senior students and two faculty members from the Department of Recreation and Tourism at Malaspina University-College undertook a three week research extension tour through northern Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories to study rural tourism development. From April 16-20, 2006 the research team conducted a pilot study using the Rapid Rural Appraisal method to identify potential tourism opportunities in the District of Taylor, British Columbia and thus determine its utility in supporting tourism planning in rural areas. The team coordinated a series of twenty in-depth interviews with community leaders, business operators, not for profit groups, District staff and residents during the four day assessment. Findings revealed that the resources within Taylor place the community in a strong position to integrate tourism into its economic development priorities. The findings also suggest that Rapid Rural Appraisal may have future implications for assessment of tourism development in rural areas.

Introduction
Tourism is a significant economic contributor on a local and national scale. According to The Canadian Tourism Commission's Report on Canadian Tourism Facts and Figures for 2004, tourism spending in Canada totalled $57.5 billion in 2004, leading a 6.4% increase compared to 2003 (CTC, 2004). Both urban and rural regions are attractive Canadian destinations for domestic and international visitors, however rural areas often offer unique experiences not available in urban centres. Pace of life, community oriented character and recreational features are a few of the unique selling points for rural areas. In 2005, Canada's predominantly rural regions were visited by one-half of Canadian tourists, 39 percent of USA tourists and 33 percent of overseas tourists (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Nearly one-third of the Canadian population, equalling approximately nine million people, lives in rural and remote areas (Government of Canada, 2002). Although many rural Canadians significantly contribute to the country's wealth and prosperity through their employment in primary resource-based sectors such as fishing, forestry, mining and agriculture many rural economies are currently in a state of crisis. Natural disasters such as flooding and forest fires are causing massive crop losses, while pine beetle infestations, softwood lumber disputes, declining fish runs and livestock epidemics are negatively impacting their industries and subsequently the rural economies that are reliant upon them. Vaugeois (2005) illustrates that "When a rural community is solely dependent upon resource extraction, the reduction or loss of this resource dramatically reduces the community's economic stability, which in turn affects the overall quality of life of its residents." Many rural communities are beginning to seek alternative ways to diversify their revenue sources in order to ensure long-term sustainability.

In the last decade, the Canadian Government has recognized this issue and addressed it by directing funding and resources to research innovative approaches to helping rural communities diversify their primarily resource-based economies. Programs such as the Rural Secretariat's Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Building Program and the Canadian Rural Partnership have established areas of priority, with economic diversification through service sectors such as tourism, often located at the top of the list (Government of Canada, 2005).

Amenity-based industries such as tourism and recreation are increasingly seen as sustainable opportunities for economic diversification. Rural communities across Canada have been or are in the process of successfully developing their local and regional attributes to attract tourists and thus reduce their employment dependency on more traditional primary industries (Statistics Canada, 2005). Tourism can be seen as an important economic driver but in many cases community leaders are not aware of what tourism possibilities they may have and they may not have the necessary skills to promote or expand upon them. In many cases, communities are very much aware of the potential of tourism but do not know where to get information or resources for use to guide decisions.

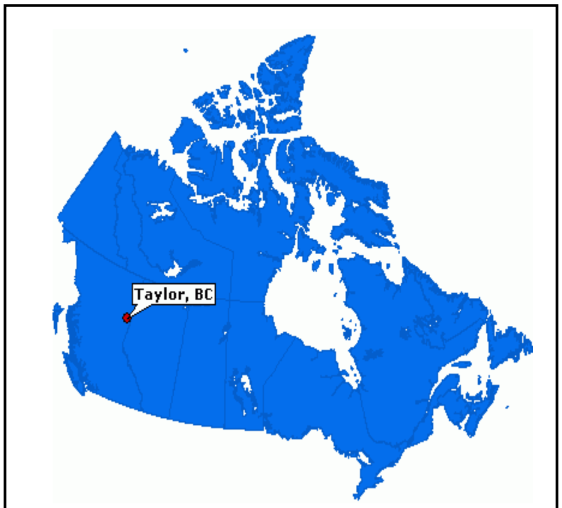
As many rural communities do not have sufficient resources to conduct formal intensive research studies that will help in decision and policy development, alternative methods are needed. Rural areas may benefit by having research done on their own locality in ways that provide expedient information and conducted by people who have become familiar with the community.

Purpose

Although it is not widely used in tourism research, the Rapid Rural Appraisal method has the capacity to deliver meaningful results to local communities involved in developing a sustainable tourism market. Tourism British Columbia has played an active role in this regard through a program called Community Tourism Essentials. Through a series of workshops, Tourism British Columbia has provided facilitation, leadership and support to assist local leaders and residents to identify the foundations of a tourism action plan using a grassroots approach (Tourism BC, 2005). While this information is essential for tourism planning, communities can also benefit by having the perspective of visitors and of experts on the tourism development process in rural areas. The following study is based upon this type of local approach to rural development.

Recognizing the need for timely, relevant and locally specific research, a team comprised of seven senior level students and two faculty members from the Department of Tourism and Recreation Management at Malaspina University-College initiated the Northern Tourism and Recreation Innovation Project (NTRIP). The research team travelled through rural regions of Northern British Columbia, Alberta and the Northwest Territories in April 2006 with the objective to identify transitional methods being implemented by rural communities in relation to tourism initiatives. While on route, the study team employed a pilot study using the Rapid Rural Appraisal method to determine its utility in supporting tourism planning in rural areas. The main objective was to identify potential tourism development opportunities in the District of Taylor. This paper will highlight the Rapid Rural Appraisal research method, the findings of this pilot study and report on how the method may be of use to other rural communities.

Background



Map of Canada:
Illustrating the location of Taylor, B.C.

Located in the Northern part of Alberta, the Peace Country also includes portions of Northeast British Columbia. The District of Taylor is a small town in the northeastern section of the province, located on mile 36 of the Alaska Highway, between Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. The town was incorporated in 1958 and named after the Taylor Flats which the town is situated upon, and after the early settler Herbert Taylor. With a small population of approximately 1,270, it is "a community that values and nurtures personal endeavour, affordable living and unrivalled amenities for the enjoyment of the whole family" (Discover the Peace, 2006). The District of Taylor is also the fastest growing community in the Peace River Region.

The economy of Taylor is dominated by the employment generated by large industrial plants including forestry, agriculture, oil and gas. The PetroCanada Industrial Park operates a natural gas liquid extraction plant, the Canfor Forest Products Park has a stud mill that specializes in small diameter logs, and the Duke Energy property processes and transports natural gas destined for Vancouver and Chicago (District of Taylor, 2006). The largest employers are West Coast Energy which is involved in natural gas and sulphur processing, Fiberco Pulp mill which runs a thermo-chemical pulp mill, Peace River Greenhouses which is a major retailer of trees and shrubs, and McMahon Co-generation plan which produces electricity from natural gas and steam turbine generators. All of these industries are involved in primary resource extraction and are made vulnerable by market fluctuations. For example, as a result of the U.S. – Canada Softwood lumber dispute, Canfor was forced to shutdown its planer mill in 2004 resulting in a massive loss of jobs and a ripple of instability in the town's economy (Young, 2004).

Supported by the tax base of large industries, Taylor boasts some of the best recreational facilities in the region. There are few communities the size of Taylor that can compete with the award winning facilities that it can offer. The town has such developed facilities that over two thirds of all users are from out of town, making Taylor a recreation destination for the region. Its newest facility, built in 2001 is a multi-purpose community hall and gymnasium, with seating for up to 450 people for community events. This facility was designed and built to the same standard as a full sized secondary school gymnasium and has been fully outfitted with state of the art media projection equipment. As a result, it has been used for conferences and other public events. Also within the same vicinity is the District Ice Centre, race track (stock car and motocross), baseball diamonds, curling rink and swimming pool. Built in 1993, the Ice Centre has two rinks, one full-sized for ice hockey and another for leisure skating. During the summer, the rinks are used for roller hockey, trade and dog shows, conventions and graduation ceremonies. The curling rink has four sheets of ice, which also converts to a twenty five meter above ground swimming pool in the summer.

Lone Wolf Golf Course, the community's pride and enjoy, is an 18-hole championship golf course owned and managed by the district. At a cost of $3.5 million the 320 acre course opened in

1995. In addition to clubhouse facilities, golf cart rentals, and a driving range, the course also offers a 4.2 km partially paved trial, named Participation Trail, which meanders through an adjacent forest and on the outskirts of the golf course. An outdoor tennis court, located beside the Golf Course Clubhouse provides another venue for activity. In the winter, the golf course and its trails are used for cross-country skiing, dog-sledding, snowmobiling and quadding. The district also manages the Peace Island Park, which is used for camping, boat launches, fishing, and social and private outdoor events and has become a popular spot for both residents and tourists. Annual events in town include a dogsled race in winter, a dog show in spring and a Halloween party for kids in the fall. The most popular event however, is the Invitational Class 'A' Gold Panning Championships, which has been held in Taylor annually since 1972. This two day event recalls the gold rush days of the Peace River and includes advanced and amateur competitions, a parade and other community-wide events, attracting thousands of observers from all over the province. To preserve its heritage, several pioneer houses are still in use today. The Visitor Information Centre and the Peace Island Park meeting hall are both renovated log houses from Taylor's pioneer days. There is also a replica of Alexander Mackenzie birch bank canoe displayed in front of the Information Centre.

Taylor is in the fortunate position of being able to choose to diversify the economy through additional industries such as tourism. The oil and gas, forestry and agriculture industries have provided a strong economic foundation for the community. Insightful leaders have made sure to direct some of this wealth into social programs to benefit residents. Where most communities choose to fund recreation only when times are good, Taylor has consciously invested in its recreation infrastructure as a way to enhance the quality of life for its residents. The side benefit however, is that the wealth of recreation opportunities found in this community also provide resources for sport, cultural, and other forms of tourism that provide alternative sectors with which to diversify the town's main sources of revenue.

Methodology

This study was conducted using the Rapid Rural Appraisal method. Rapid Appraisal (RA) is a relatively new methodology, first developed in the late 1970's in response to the disadvantages of more traditional research methods (Dunn, 1994; Gibbs 1995; Kachondham, 1992). Disadvantages included biased perceptions based on outside experts exerting urban-lenses on rural communities, the length of time taken to produce practical results, and the high cost of formal studies conducted by experts. The technique came to be called rapid rural appraisal (RRA) due to the efficiency of its use in rural localities (Gibbs, 1995; Montreal Process, 1998). This method has been used extensively in developing areas of the world, usually within the fields of agriculture, health and social work (Montreal Process 1998; Dunn 1994; Kachondham, 1992). It has also been influenced by other disciplines and methodologies such as applied anthropology, participatory action research, and agro ecosystem analysis (Cornwall, Guijy and Welbourne, 1993).

At this time there is no generally accepted definition of RRA, however it is more commonly described as "a systematic but semi-structured activity out in the field by a multi-disciplinary team and is designed to obtain new information and to formulate new hypotheses about rural life" (Montreal Process, 1998). As described by Grandstaff and Grandstaff (1992) it is "a process of learning about rural conditions in an intensive, iterative, and expeditious manner or any systematic activity designed to draw inferences, conclusions, hypotheses, or assessments, including the acquisition of new information, during a limited period of time." Furthermore, as noted by Green et al. (2001), "rapid rural assessments use the information gathering process and the reporting process to help residents contribute information to decision making and to better understand the issues, choices and concerns in the community."

Many rural areas cannot afford to pay for research to assist in social and economic development, and when they can, they often have to rely on the expertise of consultants usually from urban areas. It is not uncommon for consultants to come into and exit communities quickly to save money and time. Interviews are often conducted with community leaders who provide only one perspective in development decisions. Methods are often restricted to formal surveys or interviews with only key informants. Results of studies can often take a long time to be completed, thereby limiting their impact for timely decision making. As reports are often long, tedious, technical and not widely distributed within the community (Montreal Process, 1998; Dunn, 1994), the beneficiaries often do not benefit from formal, expensive and time consuming research processes.

Advantages of RRA

The Rapid Rural Appraisal method overcomes some of the challenges rural areas face, to provide rigorous study of an issue but in a timeframe that is useful and cost-effective for the community. It is done using a team of researchers (vs. one or two) thereby providing different interpretations of what is found and ensuring triangulation of results through "systematically combining the observations of team members with different backgrounds and using a variety of research methods" (Gibbs, 1992; Montreal Process, 1998). Researchers spend a few days within the community talking to people, interacting, living with residents, recreating, reading documents and observing. Rapid Rural Appraisal thus ensures that the views of groups which are typically ignored are included in the research process (Cameron 1997). The results of the study are prepared while in the field to capitalize on the accuracy of the information provided, and to provide timely feedback through rapid dissemination of the material (Gibbs, 1992). The information is analyzed as it is in the field so that the team's understanding of the problem grows throughout the field study (Freudenberger and Gueye, 1990). The sheer presence of the field researchers often spurs dialogue on an issue, and allows for a diversity of community perspectives to be shared in the process.

Limitations of the Method

The advantages of cost, speed and type of information in the rapid appraisal method are also curbed by a number of limitations. As described by Gibbs (1992), the method is subjected to issues and concerns of validity. Rapid appraisal does not use probability sampling and may therefore be subjected to criticism for producing results that are not proved to be representative of the population. With so much flexibility in the approach of this method, there is also possibility for distortion or bias from the individual judgment of the researchers involved. The findings are often considered to lack credibility as the data is based upon description and observation instead of statistically-sound, survey data. This is often the primary argument against qualitative research methods in general. Furthermore, qualitative information may also be difficult to record, code and analyze. The data collected may not be useful for making generalizations about populations as it helps to enrich the picture better than it can provide specific information about the reasons or causes behind a particular phenomenon.

Gibbs (1992) argues that as long as the limitations are addressed or kept carefully in mind, the rapid appraisal method is useful when what is needed from the research is descriptive results or when the goal of the research is to generate solutions or recommendations. The primary strength of the method is that it can produce quick, efficient conclusions for swift decision-making or for a subsequent formal study.

As a result of the flexibility in the number and type of techniques that can be employed in the Rapid Rural Appraisal, each application of the method will be unique. Cameron (1997) notes that "there is no particular number of techniques which must be used in order for the methodology to qualify as Rapid Rural Assessment…the emphasis is on the people using RRA to learn as they go and to improvise on methods according to their own needs." The Rapid Rural Appraisal method offers several distinct characteristics that set it apart from other qualitative methodologies and which made it a good fit for the assessment of the Town of Taylor. It offered a short-time frame suitable for the objectives of the pilot study, provided a quick and inexpensive way to identify issues and collect information for the community while enabling the researchers to offer timely feedback based upon the findings. Information and data gathered is highly relevant to the community as it values local knowledge, perspectives and development of insights from a balanced cross-section of community stakeholders.

Results

This study was conducted by a team of field researchers from Malaspina University College over the course of four days, from April 16 to 20, 2006. The team was comprised of one faculty member in the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management and seven senior level students in the degree program, bringing eight different sets of eyes and ears to the community, providing a wide range of perspectives for the interpretation of the data. A variety of research methods were employed including focus groups, one on one interviews and direct observation. The audit incorporated a review of existing information available to visitors including first impressions of the community as well as the extent to which accessibility, amenities, marketing, community spirit, resident support, and policy and planning where evident. Prior to arrival, the study team analyzed marketing materials, websites, and planning documents for Taylor, to address some of the pre-trip and policy and planning questions.

The team coordinated a series of twenty in-depth interviews with community leaders, business operators, not for profit groups, District staff and residents during the four day assessment. The researchers were paired into teams of two and each pair conducted between two and three interviews each day in a variety of locations that were most suitable for the interviewees. The study team was also billeted with residents of Taylor to allow for interaction and input from residents. Researchers were engaged in a variety of recreation activities and ate at local establishments while in the community allowing for first hand perspectives on the experiences available to visitors. Observations and insights were recorded in using multiple methods including journals, video cameras and photographs. After each day of interviews the research team discussed the details of the day's events and shared the collected data with the rest of the group. On the last night of the assessment, the study team conducted a three hour session to produce the findings of the report that was fed back to the community.

The following section will outline the findings of the Rapid Rural Appraisal of tourism development in the District of Taylor. An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was compiled to integrate the findings from each interview and observations, made by the researchers, of the community. In general the strengths of tourism in Taylor, as summarized in Table 1, include the presence of a strong industrial economy and tax base in which tourism will add strength to the economies stability. The town's location and history are key assets for the development of the industry as the natural and cultural resources are plentiful and authentic. The Visitor Information Centre is visible, well presented and resourced thus allowing visitors to learn about the community. Friendly residents and strong leadership has enabled the community to become resilient.

Photo left:
The research team out in the field learning about tourism assets on the Peace River with the River Rat Boat Club.

Table 1: Summary Table of the Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses

o Has natural and cultural resources to build tourism around, including:
  o Peace Island Park
  o Peace River
  o Colourful history of the river, fur trading, industrial development, boom and bust cycles and the highway
  o Recreation facilities
 	
o Has a substantial tax base
o Diversified and wealthy economy
o Location is advantageous both on the HWY and on the Peace River
o People – friendly, welcoming and proud of their community
o Involved in regional economic development initiatives (NARADA, Brand the Peace)
o Rubber tire markets have disposable income for travel
o Strong community leadership
	o Awareness of the North region among key markets in BC and Alberta
	o Travel costs to get to the north
	o Location is too close to Fort St. John
	o Limited population base
	o Lack of amenities to support tourism growth both in services and developed products
	o Limited appeal for investors
	o Communication within Taylor could be enhanced
	o Signage is limited – too few, not consistent and not visible enough
	o The access off frontage roads is confusing for vehicle travellers
	o Layout with road right through community is not appealing and results in navigation problems
	o Lack of awareness of the role of tourism, and limited support for its development
	o Negative image regionally by neighbouring communities
	o Limited awareness beyond the region
	o Visually unattractive
	o Few champions and young leaders stepping up

Limiting these assets however, are numerous weaknesses. There is limited awareness in the populated urban areas of Alberta and B.C. of the travel opportunities in the north. Likewise, the costs of travelling to the north remain high thus further limiting exposure. Adding to the access problem, there is limited information on Taylor available in the airport, hotels and Visitor Information Centre, to the visitor arriving via Fort St. John making it easy to remain unaware of the experiences provided there. Additionally, there is a negative regional image of Taylor in other communities where visitors are told things like “Save the gas”, “There is nothing to do in Taylor”, “It smells” or “Why would you go to Taylor?” The layout of signage and the road network do not create strong first impressions of the community. Limited options for immediate services like restaurants, gas, banking, or stores combined with the lack of amenities and infrastructure to support overnight stays in the community limit the ability of visitors to obtain basic travel needs while in Taylor.

There is currently a reliance on the traditional tourist markets, including the RV market on route to Alaska, to utilize the existing services. Threatening further development is the rivalry between neighbouring communities such as Fort St. John, resulting in a lack of regional approaches to attract outside visitors. The community is also facing serious issues of labour and leadership shortages to sustain the human capital needs of the industry. Table 2 provides a summary of the opportunities and threats that are present in terms of tourism development in Taylor. While there appear to be numerous current weaknesses for tourism development, there remain even more opportunities. Taylor has unique assets and a strong economy to build its tourism base upon. There are a number of active clubs and associations that are working to create access to resources, uncover them, or share them with visitors. These groups provide great resources for the District to undertake important work. There are opportunities for recreation indoors and outdoors at all times of the year, providing ample opportunity for Taylor to position its tourism industry as an all season resource.

Table 2: Summary Table of the Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities	Threats
o Taylor has unique assets that could draw regional and national visitors if presented well (River access and history) o Opportunity to invest in developing tourism now while the economy is strong, thus enabling it to help diversify the dependence on other industries while adding to the quality of life for residents o Ample partnership opportunities with service clubs and associations (River Rats, Historical and trail societies, Stock car etc) o Day use of the golf course could be maximized by increased visitation o Ample business opportunities with limited competition o Opportunity for year round tourism activities	o Reliance on one travel market – RV'ers which is in flux o Rivalry between neighbouring communities may weaken efforts to work together to develop products and draw visitors o Expansion of Fort St. John and potential loss of identity of Taylor o Labour market shortages across all sectors will result in few employees to work in tourism o Aging community leaders and volunteer champions o Contentment with current industrial base may prevent action to develop tourism while resources are present

Pre-trip and First Impressions
Based upon a review of the pre trip information (marketing), signage and first drive through of the community, the field researchers answered the million dollar question "Would you stop in Taylor?" Only 25% reported that they would and their reasoning was for the Peace Island Park and for a picture of the large Golf Ball at the Lone Wolf Golf Course. The remaining 75% indicated they would not stop because the visual image of the industry base, limited signage, lack of points of interest and lack of visual appeal via the road. Others said they would wait another 10 minutes for Fort St. John for services.

Infrastructure/Services
Observations and informants reveal that there is a range of infrastructure and services needed to support tourism development. Of primary importance a range of accommodations is needed including alternatives for a hotel/motel on the strip, a resort that ties in with the golf course, expanded RV sites and options for Bed and Breakfast stays within the community. Similarly, as much of the current market is self contained, there is a need for a convenience store, grocery story or market stands to provide food options for visitors. Expanded restaurant options and a coffee shop/snack bar would allow for more alternatives for visitors to stay within the community to eat. Other important services include alternatives for fuel and laundry, and other commonly used items for visitors in RV's or camping.

Attractions
Taylor currently has a variety of natural and cultural resources that attract visitors. Unlike many rural communities, Taylor does not have to go about inventing things to draw visitors, rather it can enhance what it currently has, ensure visitors are aware of the resources and has access to them while in the community. From the interviews, the team identified a variety of attractions including the Peace River, the Alaska Highway and the rich history of the region which could attract tourists looking for cultural and historical experiences. The extensive trail system has potential for attracting the adventure tourist looking for hiking, horseback riding and river boating opportunities. To capitalize on the first-rate recreational facilities, the research team saw significant potential for the development of sport tourism in the form of tournaments and other major events. The industrial history and base within the community is also poised for development of industrial tourism as a key attraction, considering Taylor is often referred to as the "Industrial Capital of the North".

Table 3: Attraction Opportunities in the District of Taylor

Type of tourism	Product	Description
Heritage tourism	History of the Peace River	Opportunities exist to help visitors learn about the role of the Peace River in the development of the region. Partnerships with other communities along the Peace, and with local historical groups could lead to development of hands on experiences to access the river, read about history, hear stories, travel the river to various sites, participate in archaeological digs, build river rafts, canoe, hike former heritage trails (to Hudson Hope) and canoe back.
	History of the Alaska Highway	Visitors can learn more about the engineering feat and important role of the longest bridge on the Alaska Highway. Opportunities to partner with Dawson Creek and Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism to outline the story of the Highway including the construction, later collapse and resurrection. It is important for visitors to have this information prior to travel such that they anticipate reaching the bridge and are informed that they can stop to learn more.
	History of boom and bust cycles	Over its relatively short history, Taylor has survived boom and bust cycles from industry, transportation, recession, and unfortunate tax encounters. This story is worth sharing with visitors as it exposes the modern history and life of the people of Taylor and gives those coming from the outside a glimpse of the actions taken by Taylor to remain vibrant. This history could be told within the community with opportunities for interpretation and photos of different eras in public spaces. Other communities have used murals to depict this history. Taylor can adapt this idea to showcase history in a way that suits them and provides a "must see" stop for people on route. Short videos or still pictures in the info centre or elsewhere would also help to bring this alive.
Adventure tourism	River boat trips	The close access to the Peace River offers visitors the chance to make contact with, and learn about the river. Community groups are actively working to keep the river clean and work with BC Parks to improve the location of sites up the river. Taylor could support and become involved in this activity to encourage visitors to spend multiple days in the area, potentially attracting river boat operators. The visitor centre volunteers indicated that there is demand for this type of activity and the demand is not being met.

	Hiking	There are already visitors who identify the participation trail behind the golf course and those down at Peace Island Park as areas to visit in Taylor. To add more advanced hiking opportunities and keep people around longer, Taylor could work with Hudson hope to resurrect a trail between the two communities (estimated at 40 miles by one interviewee). This would allow adventure tourists an opportunity to spend multiple days in the area and potentially return using canoes or other forms of traditional water transportation.
	Horseback riding	The visitor information staff indicated that there are plenty of visitors who are seeking to do some trail riding in the area. At the moment, there are no operators that provide this type of activity. Enhancing the trail network would also allow horse enthusiasts to travel for multi day trips while learning about Taylor's heritage.
Sport tourism	Tournaments	Taylor's abundance of recreation facilities places it is a strong position to capitalize on hosting tournaments in a variety of sports.
	Golf	The quality and accessibility of the Lone Wolf Golf Course is in a position to help Taylor thrive as a sport tourism destination. Programming to maximize the number of outsiders for tournaments or golf during the day when there is available tee time space may help the course become more profitable.
Event tourism	Special events	Taylor is already known for its ability to offer special events that attract outside visitors. A concerted effort to partner with groups in the community to increase volunteer capacity, and incorporating special events into tourism marketing efforts may enhance the ability to draw visitors and participants from other regions.
Agricultural tourism	Market stands	Taylor has rich agriculture resources. Presence of farmer's market on key days throughout the high season would offer visitors the chance to sample produce while providing value added income for farmers. The province of BC (Agriculture) offers Agricultural tourism workshops which might be a way to introduce the industry to local farmers. As Taylor is known for its ability to grow corn, it may want to position itself as the Taber corn (Alberta) equivalent for BC – branding the corn and the community.
Industrial tourism	Industry tours	The industrial history and base of activity in Taylor provide visitors an opportunity to learn more about forestry products and the oil and gas industry. Although labour shortages limit the ability of these industrial partners to provide industry tours, perhaps drive tours, videos, or limited exposure would provide education and contact.

Marketing

Rural communities seeking to develop tourism can not often go at it alone. They require the support and partnership of neighbouring communities to provide a regional approach to tourism marketing. In this area, Taylor is already working with partners on a Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism initiative which may advance the ability of the entire region to capitalize on its access to the Highway. The current Visitor Information Centre is also a valuable asset for tourism in Taylor. It is well signed on the highway, where visitors are told that the VIC is 2 km further. It is visible from the highway in a central location in an appealing building and it has dedicated volunteers who are knowledgeable about the community. These volunteers are a key asset for Taylor to learn more about what visitors are seeking when they visit. The Taylor website provides visitors with ample knowledge prior to arrival. As with most rural communities, signage coming into and within Taylor is not adequate to serve the needs of visitors. Visitors need clear and consistent signage to show them, remind them and direct them to the resources in Taylor. This should start from the points where visitors are likely to make the decision to visit Taylor and then continue to the key attractions and service areas.

In keeping with the regional approach to marketing, the researchers found that Taylor could be doing more to expand its efforts to entice visitors by providing materials at key stopping points along the Alaska Highway. While the Visitor Information Centre in Prince George had two brochures for Taylor on display, the Visitor Information Centre at Dawson Creek contained no specific information on Taylor other than the Lone Wolf Golf Course and an outdated River boat operator. While a one page profile on Taylor appeared at the back of the “Hello North” guide, it didn’t profile the unique assets of Taylor in a way that would make visitors feel they need to stop. Similarly, there is a lack of information on Taylor in the airport and hotels in Fort St. John.

Community spirit and resident support

Strong resident awareness and support of the role of tourism and the benefits it can provide are needed in order to add tourism to the economic and social fabric of Taylor in a strategic way. There are small pockets of awareness and support in the people the researchers spoke with in Taylor. Awareness of the full benefits and costs of tourism for the community are limited, and there is a general feeling among many that tourism is the “poor third cousin” amongst other industries in the region. Tourism is “not on the radar” and there is a “wish that it will happen vs. concerted efforts to make it happen” as quoted by one interviewee.

The findings of this study provide an analysis that should be of interest for the District of Taylor as they explore the potential for tourism in their community. The resources within Taylor place the community in a strong position to integrate tourism into its economic development priorities. The location, history, accessibility, natural and cultural resources are all assets that not all-rural communities benefit from. Working together with local groups and regional partners, it is feasible for Taylor to position itself as one of the most sought after destinations for visitors in the region.

Discussion

Many rural communities like Taylor are heavily dependent on extractive resource based industries such as forestry, agriculture, oil and gas, and mining. Sole dependency on a particular sector is leading many of these rural communities into a state of decline as resource-based industries suffer from market fluctuations caused by natural and human disasters. In response, many rural areas are recognizing the potential for tourism development and are successfully developing their local and regional attributes in a way that is attracting tourists and providing new stability to the economy. Often, rural communities that are attempting to diversify through tourism lack sufficient research to support planning decisions. Research on potential markets or resident attitudes for example, is often not accessible due to cost or ability to undertake the study. If research is conducted, it is usually done by an external consultant, at a costly fee, and can be done using “quick and dirty” methods that fail to capture a full spectrum of perspectives towards tourism. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) is an efficient, cost-effective and valuable tool that is useful in the assessing the tourism potential in rural communities where limited resources are available to conduct formal research studies.

Benefits for Communities

RRA recognizes the role of people in rural localities. It allows them to be part of the decision making process of which they play an important role. Unlike other methods, RRA attempts to facilitate dialogue with the beneficiaries, which provides the chance for locals to offer their expertise in local affairs and voice their opinion on a number of issues that are directly relevant to the community. The purpose of conducting an assessment is to create a foundation for further planning and action. Information in the form of an analysis is only relevant when it becomes useful for making decisions, or taking action. Using this multi-disciplinary and interactive method can lead to opportunities for researchers, decision-makers and stakeholders to exchange perspectives, thus adding more weight to the importance of a specific problem or opportunity. RRA is a viable starting point for gathering and synthesizing the key issues in tourism development, such as the case within the community of Taylor.

Lessons Learned

The use of Rapid Rural Appraisal as a research method provided a valuable learning experience for community members and also for the student field researchers as well. The methods required the students to rigorously apply and practice numerous skills including data gathering and recording, oral communication, interview techniques and analytical thinking. By learning and implementing the principles of qualitative research in a relatively short period of time the process became an effective way in which to apply theory to practice in the assessment of the attitudes, perceptions, and concerns of residents in the community of Taylor. It also allowed for the information to be shared in a variety of ways in the field relying on the knowledge expressed by local people rather than the information being extracted through fancy and formal investigations not relevant to the community or the student's learning. As best said by Dunn (1994):

> *The RRA experience often has a far reaching effect on individual team members who learn from one another and from the local people…Its chief claim is to train and skill a team of like-minded researchers to interact with one another in a rural context to learn from the experience, to use the qualitative data collected and help all interest groups to plan and act for the future.*

Future Application

Although Rapid Rural Appraisal is a relatively new methodology, first developed for agricultural, health and social research studies, the implications for future research in rural localities are significant. The techniques for RRA are diversifying. Adaptations of this method, such as the Rapid Tourism Assessment as developed by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program in 2002, are becoming more relevant to recreation and tourism studies for the twentieth century. With continued progress made in this methodology it can be used as a very practical research tool in the field of tourism that can be implemented in a variety of settings due to its flexibility, affordability and result oriented focus. The researchers of this study hope that rural policy makers will regard this method as an alternative, cost-effective and valuable source of descriptive information for communities concerned with the development of tourism. While it is clear that insights gained from this case study cannot be generalized to fit other rural communities, as each will have unique opportunities and challenges, the process of employing the Rapid Rural Appraisal method can inform future action for other communities hoping to uncover their own potential for tourism development.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the rapid rural appraisal method?
2. What sort of preparation would be required to undertake a rapid rural appraisal in a community?
3. What challenges do you think you would have to deal with while undertaking the rapid rural appraisal method in the field?

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Gem of the Gulf: Community based tourism on Hornby Island, British Columbia

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Learning Objectives:

By analysing this case study, learners will:

1. Become familiar with issues faced by communities that are seeking to manage vs. develop tourism;
2. Understand the complexity of tourism impacts on an island community;
3. Observe how research, conducted with community residents, can inform the tourism planning process;

Introduction

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism accounts for 11.5 per cent of the world's GDP and 12.5 per cent of its employment. It has become the largest industry in the global economy. The tourism industry in British Columbia has been proven to be major driver to the provincial economy. In fact, in 2004 the Ministry of Economic Development indicated that BC hosted 22.4 million overnight visitors and generated $9.4 billion in province-wide tourism revenues. In 2005 those revenues increased to over $9.8 billion with tourism accounting for more than 117,500 direct jobs in the province (Go2, 2006). When indirect tourism employment is included this number swells to 266,000. This number accounts for almost 1 out of every 8 jobs in the province.

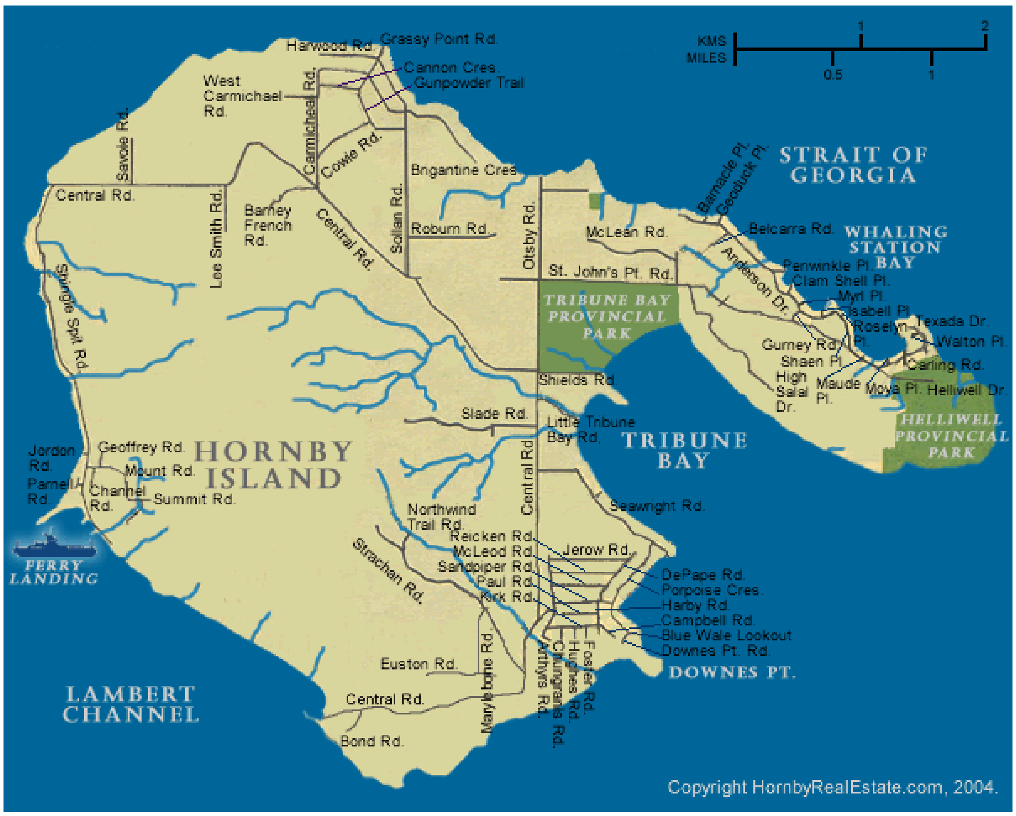
A goal issued by the Premier of the province of British Columbia has been to double tourism by the year 2015. This plan for aggressive expansion in tourism development stands to benefit many of the urban centres with their already existent infrastructure and market ready product prepared for the influx of visitors. The case is much different in many of B.C.'s rural areas. In many cases rural areas are not ready for the increase in visitors to their region and any growth must be carefully considered due to the potential environmental, economic and social impacts to the community and surrounding area. The potential impact of tourism development is even more apparent on small rural island communities due to limitations in carrying capacity.

This case study will outline how one island community in British Columbia's Gulf Islands is attempting to manage the impacts associated to tourism growth. The findings have been obtained using participatory action research where residents of Hornby Island have been working with faculty and students from Malaspina University-College to assess the impacts of tourism on the island and identify potential strategies to manage growth for the social, environmental and economic health of the island.

Background on Community

Hornby Island is located just off the eastern coast of Vancouver Island approximately one hour North of Nanaimo and twenty minutes South of Courtenay (Figure 1). This small island of approximately nine hundred fulltime residents is located East of Denman Island and directly across from Buckley Bay and visitors must take two short ferry rides on B.C. Ferries before arriving on the island referred to as “the gem of the gulf.”

Figure 1: Map of Hornby Island



Agriculture, fishing and forestry supported the early settlers on the island, whereas today, tourism, recreation, retirement and a large arts community contribute significantly to a growing business sector. Today tourism plays the leading role in the economic development of the island with Hornby Island hosting over 50,000 visitors per year. In recent years the island has become a major tourist destination. In the summer months, for example, its population easily quadruples in size.

The main attractions on Hornby Island include soft sand beaches of Little and Big Tribune Bay as well as Helliwell Provincial Park and Mount Geoffrey. To the visitor, modern-day Hornby represents a fascinating world of diversion. Recreation includes kayaking throughout the Gulf Islands, diving, and hiking, camping, shopping and taking advantage of the resort-style accommodations on the island. There are two music/arts festivals each year as well as several galleries featuring renowned local artists. The island is distinctive culturally and one can still find a number of original residents. Hornby Island has often been referred to as fertile ground for creative endeavours. Any activity that requires creativity and skill, and does not require living in the city, is represented on Hornby Island.

The residents of Hornby Island are very warm and hospitable and visitors coming to the island can observe that there is a spirit of helpfulness and friendship, and a desire for peaceful coexistence amongst a wide variety of people, which seems to pervade the islands' attitudes. Residents believe firmly in having a voice in the local decision making process on the island. Although not an organized community in the legal sense, the residents operate many of the facilities normally carried out by municipal governments, such as fire protection and waste disposal. Hornby Island is a place where people can choose to take part in community life and affairs, relax and enjoy a quiet secluded lifestyle, or enjoy the pleasures of both. The island offers a unique alternative for those wishing to return to the values and pleasures you might have supposed long gone.

The community members of Hornby Island have established long-term visions of what they want the community to focus on in the years to come. These are key elements that tie directly into the decisions that they make as a community. This has been done to ensure that locals feel that they have control of the decisions made within their community. Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association list the following as key components of that vision (HIRRA, 2006).

> **Living Sustainably**
> *Hornby Islanders understand that living in balance with nature is essential. We are dedicated to improving our transportation systems, incorporating renewable energy sources, utilizing more sustainable building practices, recycling our resources and respecting the limits of our water supply.*
>
> **Strengthening Community**
> *We will build a healthy and diverse community by pooling our resources, sharing our skills and working co-operatively. A community where everyone is respected, well-nourished and adequately housed, where our education systems thrive and healthcare is available for everyone.*
>
> **Building A Thriving Economy**
> *Hornby Island will diversify its economy by building on the strengths within the community such as our vibrant arts scene, sustainable agricultural practices, diverse healing arts and our capacity to live in harmony with nature. Tourism is a valued part of our economy, and to be more sustainable it will become more integrated into the values and lifestyles that Islanders cherish.*
>
> **Creating Local Control**
> *Hornby Islanders intimately understand this island's natural cycles, its community and its needs. We will continue to find ways to bring as much decision-making power as possible into the hands of the community. In co-operation with off-island agencies, we will establish our own mechanisms for dealing with conflict, protecting the environment, providing essential services, creating peace and security and meeting the needs of all our citizens.*

With the increase in the popularity of Hornby Island as a tourism destination over the years tourism has become both a blessing and a curse to the small island community. While there are many benefits to the influx of tourism there are also some negative impacts as well. Hornby Island residents and groups are well aware of the pros and cons of tourism and are attempting to manage the impacts in a way that fits with their overall vision of the island. The Island has developed a vision for tourism:

“In 2020 tourism is only one part of Hornby Island’s diverse and thriving economy. Tourism is now actively planned and managed by the community for the benefit of residents, visitors and the island itself. We foster low-impact, “intentional” tourism and have a manageable, comfortable number of visitors each year.” HIECC, Planning for Tourism on Hornby Island, Appendix B).

The vision is an integrated part of the Official Community Plan which also outlines a series of objectives for tourism including:

1. To allow, through appropriate zoning, for a variety of types of small-scale visitor accommodation operations that meet health, safety and environmental objectives,
2. To allow forms of accommodation which have the least impact on the quiet rural character of the Island,
3. To ensure all accommodations can be adequately serviced,
4. To allow for recreational opportunities to the citizens of the Province without stressing the existing natural and social systems and services,
5. To encourage a kind of tourism which is compatible with preserving and protecting the environmental and social qualities of Island life for present and future generations and to discourage large scale tourist accommodation,
6. To emphasize activities which involve quiet, low impact use of existing natural features and amenities rather than man-made ones, and
7. To prevent undue cost to the local taxpayers in providing basic facilities for visitors.

Hornby Island Official Community Plan

Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives in the OCP, residents of Hornby Island have been seeking to develop a tourism strategy. Early stages of planning have incorporated a variety of research strategies to ensure that decision making is based on evidence. Staff at the Hornby Island Economic Enhancement Corporation undertook a resident survey on tourism in the spring of 2006 (see Appendix B) to gauge the level of support for tourism and identify potential strategies. HIEEC also obtained funding to hire a field researcher for the summer months to intercept visitors leaving the island to complete a questionnaire on their experience. HIEEC worked with faculty and students at Malaspina University-College to design the survey and later to analyse the results (see appendix A).

The insights into tourism development on Hornby Island have been gained using an action research approach between the Recreation and Tourism Research Institute and the Hornby Island Economic Enhancement Corporation. In May of 2006, insights from residents were shared in a community meeting, attended by the authors. The input from residents helped to identify the complexity of issues surrounding tourism on the island. Meetings were set up and a field visitation was done in July to learn more about the issues and strategies being used on Hornby Island. Follow-up communication has occurred to help gather information to guide a strategic planning process. At the time of this case study, a small group of citizens is working to identify how to move forward, who should be involved in a task force, and what strategies should be targeted for initial stages.

The context of tourism on Hornby Island

Assets

Hornby Island has become a popular destination and resort community due to its inherent natural and cultural attributes. This section will orient the reader to these assets to develop an understanding of its tourism potential.

Natural Beauty
Hornby Island is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty. The beaches at Tribune Bay are known as “Little Hawaii” to many. Boasting close to 1 km of fine white sand beach, this park is one of the most spectacular on the east side of Vancouver Island (Project G.O. 2006) and the rocky bluffs of Helliwell Park offer stunning views of the surrounding ocean landscape and Coastal Mountains. Helliwell Park also offers a 5 km trail that wanders through.

Unique Draw of Community
Many rural communities struggle to find an authentic tourism product. That is not the case with Hornby Island. They have a product that is genuine in that it was created at the local level and it feels as if the same experience can not be had at any other location It has a special drawing power for visitors with promises of relaxation and solitude. Hornby Island has a very active artisan culture. In fact Hornby Island has the second largest concentration of artisans in Canada.

Community Involvement
One of the most apparent success stories of Hornby Island is the community itself. Community members are very involved in decisions that are made regarding the community. The residents are passionate about the community in which they live and a real sense of ownership can be felt when talking with locals. There are numerous examples of community involvement and volunteerism found throughout the island and there seems to be a real sense of local ownership on Hornby Island where people pride themselves in being an active participant in their own community.

Range of Activities
Visitors to Hornby Island as well as local residents have ample opportunity to participate in a range of outdoor including, but not limited to the following:

- Diving
- Swimming
- Beachcombing
- Hiking
- Biking
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Wildlife viewing
- Picnicking

Empowered/Educated Local Population
Hornby Island residents look to people as visitors rather than tourists when they arrive on the island. They are welcoming warm and hospitable people. They do however know what kind of visitor they seek and the Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association have established a checklist as to what an ideal visitor would look like. The ideal visitor would:

- come to Hornby Island because they appreciate and share the islanders’ interests and values
- walk, bike or use public transportation
- purchase local goods, food and services
- walk lightly on the land (including water use and disposal)
- contribute time and energy for the benefit of the community
- participate in the community (HIRRA, 2006)

Arts Culture
There is a very large arts culture within the community of Hornby Island. The artists seem to be a big draw to the visitors and there are numerous galleries and studios situated on the island including painters, jewelers, sculptors, and photographers. These artisans offer a range of products that are unique to the area and add a certain flavor to the community. It has been stated often that the arts are considered to be local product to sustain local residents.

Environmental Stewardship

Community members of Hornby Island have long realized the importance of environmental stewardship and there are numerous organizations over the years that have addressed key environmental issues at the local level. The most celebrated program over the years has been the Hornby Island Recycling Depot, which has been in operation since 1978. It has played a leadership role in implementing reduction, reuse, and recycling services and community education programs in the community. Hornby Island residents now generate less than half a kilogram of garbage per person per day, much lower than the provincial average (Hornby Recycles, 2006).

Helpful Local Organizations

There are numerous organizations that can be found on Hornby Island that are locally based and look at the issues involving Hornby Island at the local level and ensure that decisions made regarding their community are decisions that the community wants. Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association is one of these helpful organizations that has the following vision: “The aim of the association is to contribute to the ongoing evolution of a vibrant, self-governing community that supports and nurtures the well being of all islanders and of the island itself” (HIRRA, 2006). Another helpful local organization is the Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Committee, who looks to foster community development that is sustainable, diversified and grounded in community values (Hornby Way, 2006). A final example of the many organizations is the Hornby Island Educational Society whose mission is to foster education and community development on Hornby Island. (Hornby Way 2006) .

Issues and challenges to overcome with sustainable tourism management practices

The growth of tourism to Hornby Island has resulted in a range of negative impacts that residents and organizations must learn to manage if tourism is to remain a sustainable economic development strategy for the island. This section will highlight some of these challenges.

Living Costs/Real Estate

Hornby Island faces real social, economic and ecological challenges. As the demand for recreational land has grown, the cost of living on Hornby Island has gone up, making it harder for year-round residents to live comfortably and securely (HICEEC, 2006). Real estate costs have skyrocketed and property buyers are no longer primarily local. Buyers aren’t necessarily living and working on the island but are rather out of province buyers purchasing summer homes while having other sources of income from other locations. The Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Commission stated “People have been forced to leave the island as they are unable to make a decent living, or resign themselves to living marginally, below the poverty line. Young people, single parents and families with children, in particular, are struggling to balance the benefits of rural life with the insecurities presented by the current economic realities of Hornby Island” (HICEEC.) This changing trend in demographics and the real estate market has the potential to cause serious social implications.

Summer Rental Units/Peak Season Housing Shortages

The issue of summer vacation rentals is a hotly debated topic for the residents of Hornby Island. Year round residents that rent housing find themselves without housing as home-owners rent out their homes as short term rental units to non-residents during the busy summer months. The local population that depends on the rental pool on the island is displaced and forms what over the years has been referred to as the “Hornby Homeless.” These folks live in tents or other less desirable options due to the fact that there is not enough housing on the island for the current level of visitors. Another issue that stems from this is a lack of accommodation for summer season workers that are coming from off island. There is sufficient work to employ seasonal full time workers but it is nearly impossible to find accommodation on the island for these seasonal workers. This results in labor shortages during the summer months and services offered on the island suffer due to lack of an available labour pool. This in turn leads to service and tourism sector businesses struggling to offer services that are up to the level that many of the visitors to the island are expecting.

Hours of Operation for Businesses/Quality of Services offered
Hornby Island is seeking to distribute the positive and negative impacts of tourism over a longer period of time so that the impact is less acute in the summer months. In seeking to expand the shoulder seasons, one of the biggest obstacles to overcome will be to convince businesses to stay open and cater to the needs of visitors on a year round basis since there are questions about the extent that this would be profitable. Expectations of visitors must be clearly understood and a cluster of businesses will need to be on board to ensure that visitors aren't drawn through marketing efforts when the experiences and services needed are not being provided.

Visitor's perceptions/Resident reactions
Perceptions seem to be changing about Hornby Island. The magic of Hornby Island unique with its art centered and alternative lifestyle oriented residents seems at times to be slowly replaced with off island visitors looking to buy second homes. Has the magic of Hornby Island been replaced with yet another string of second homes for urban couples looking for that authentic island getaway? Do Hornby Island residents want this change to occur? What will happen to the relationship between resident and visitor? Many visitor responses to questions about Hornby see the island as quiet, private, and relaxed but for how much longer? One visitor stated "looking at where Hornby is now it is only a matter of time before money changes hands and big business takes over." Some have also noticed a change in the friendliness of locals towards visitors, a common experience when destinations reach their social carrying capacity, or acceptable ratio of visitors to locals.

Accessibility
Another key barrier to tourism growth for Hornby Island is the limited amount of transportation to the remote island. Hornby has a limited ferry service, which already is stretched well beyond capacity during the summer months with lengthy waits being the norm in the months of July and August. The question must be asked; "how much more can the island hold? How much are local residents willing to sacrifice to get the tourism dollars that they depend on? And what are the future levels of tension going to look like if the increase in visitors continues in the years to come?

Water Supply during peak months
Hornby Island residents have an ongoing concern with the declining quality and quantity of their drinking water. This has become of greater concern in the past years as Hornby Island has become a more desired destination for vacationing in summer months. There are no adequate supplies of natural surface water on Hornby Island for drinking water and therefore, residents depend solely on the present limited supply of groundwater and water shipped to the Island. These concerns have prompted residents of Hornby Island to assess the importance of protecting their water supply (McGuff and McMillan, 2006).

Declining youth population
One of the biggest issues on Hornby Island is that the demographics of the population are changing. Inflated housing prices and lack of available housing options make it very difficult for young people to stay on the island. Houses are being bought by second home-owners from out of province and the percentage of full time local residents is decreasing yearly. This has major impact on the social fabric of the community. It also causes other social issues that affect the community as a whole such as decreased enrollment in school and the lack of a volunteer base.

Seasonality
Hornby Island, along with many other communities on the Vancouver Island, faces the difficult issue of seasonality in the tourism industry due to a short summer season. Businesses and communities are overrun with visitors for the summer months and then experience very little tourism revenue for the rest of the year. Overcrowding during the summer months cause major strain on the local environment in regards to waste management as well as environmental impact on the open spaces found on the small island. What can a community such as Hornby Island do

to promote shoulder season and off-season opportunities for visitors? What steps are needed to make this a possibility?

Many of the above mentioned issues have been acknowledged and addressed by the residents of Hornby Island. Many residents have come to realize that they must move beyond fear of change and take control of the process to ensure that their livelihood and way of life is maintained, that their community remains diverse and that their delicate ecology is respected. (HICEEC, 2006) Hornby Island has numerous success stories at the local level to help address many of the key issues that residents face.

Resident support for tourism

In the short resident attitude study undertaken by HIEEC in the spring of 2006 (see Appendix B for results) 83% of people surveyed felt that tourism had exceeded the carrying capacity of the island. Furthermore 93% reported that they had experienced negative impacts from tourism. When asked about what approaches should be used to manage tourism, the following themes emerged:

1. Use controls, regulations and enforcement (e.g. for vacation rentals, raves)
2. Attract the visitors we want and educate them.
3. Limit the number of visitors.
4. Improve what we offer visitors (e.g. better services, better attitude)
5. Make improvements for residents (e.g. access to ferry service)

Visitors coming to Hornby Island

The visitor study conducted in the summer months of 2006 have also provided information on who is visiting Hornby Island and what type of experience they are having while there (see appendix A). Overall highlights of the study include:

- Hornby attracts regional visitors – Vancouver Island (45%), elsewhere in BC (40%)
- Visitors are generally high income – 35% over $100,000; 69% over $60,000
- They decide to come because of previous experience (50%) or word of mouth (38%)
- The main attractions are the beaches (77%) and the scenic beauty (74%)
- For most (87%) Hornby is their main destination. 55% are repeat visitors.
- They generally stay for 2-7 nights – 43% four to seven nights; 29% two to three nights
- The majority stay in campgrounds (37%), rented houses (27%) or with friends (21%)
- Most visitors participate in outdoor activities
- Over three quarters visit Tribune Bay, the beaches and local shops
- Over half visit Helliwell Park and the Farmers' Market
- About a third take in galleries, studios, wineries, events/concerts
- Visitors are spending less money than is usual at other destinations
- Two-thirds buy local food/wine; a third buy crafts or clothing; a quarter buy fine arts
- Visitors overall are extremely satisfied (74%) with their Hornby experience
- 91% say they are inclined to come again.
- 33% would consider coming in the off-season

Discussion/Conclusion
Tourism is an agent for economic development but it is also seen as an agent for change. It has become a very crowded and competitive industry, where the tourist consumers have become more sophisticated and demanding over time. If a community is to enter such an industry it needs to do so with its eyes open, for to serve such consumers means changing to some extent a community's regular routine and pattern of life. Just as when we have houseguests, many of us modify our environment and behaviour to suit our visitors.

The approach being taken by residents and groups on Hornby Island is commendable in that a community development approach is being used, with ample research evidence to support tourism planning decisions. The official community plan already contains a vision for tourism with a clear description of the types of visitors that are wanted as “houseguests” on the island. Armed with this information, residents are using a participatory action process to work with those at the University level to move towards their ideal tourism scenario. At this point, this involves finding ways to manage tourism growth and negative impacts while extending the season to allow for better distribution of the impacts over the year. Hornby is also inviting representatives from Denman Island to the table in an effort to coordinate strategies.

Although in its infancy, communities that are feeling the need to gain control over tourism growth can learn from Hornby Island’s example. By inviting participation and undertaking research, the community is giving voice to multiple stakeholders while the research evidence gained keeps perspectives in check. The people involved have become empowered and have commented about tourism “you mean we can control this thing?”

Discussion Questions:

1. What is social carrying capacity? How does one set its social carrying capacity? And, how does a community know when it has been reached or surpassed?
2. Discuss the potential role of research in resolving conflicts during the tourism planning process. Can it play an important role? What type of research can inform tourism planning decisions?
3. How can a destination like Hornby Island distribute visitation beyond the summer months? What strategies can be used on the Island to minimize impacts during the summer season?
4. Debate the housing issue on Hornby Island where one group represents residents of Hornby Island who are displaced during the summer season when landlords rent out their vacation homes to high paying tourists. The other group represents the owners of the summer vacation homes who are seeking profit from their investment property.

Hornby Island Visitor Survey

Preliminary Results

Summer 2006

Appendix A.

Prepared by Richard Giele and Nicole Vaugeois

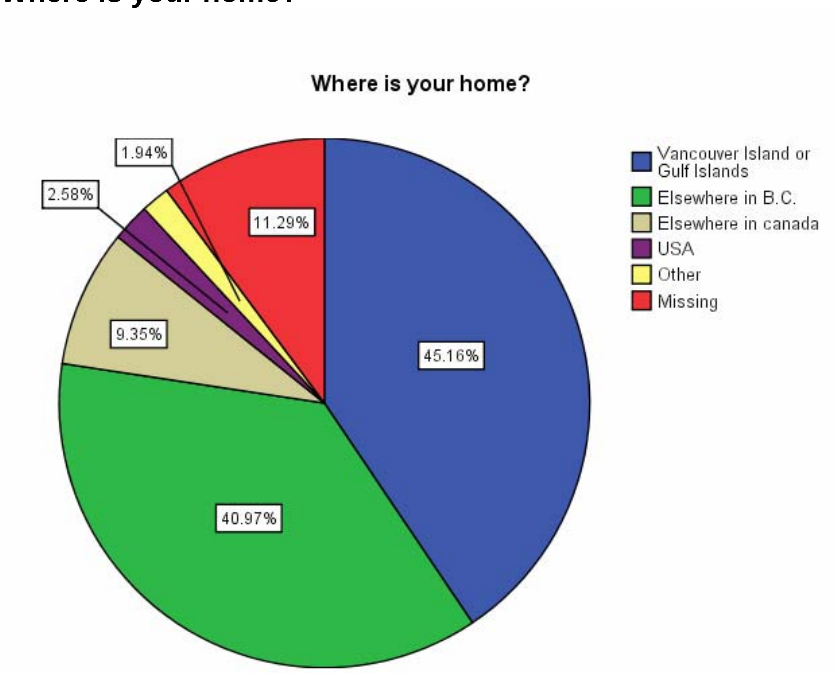
Recreation and Tourism Research Institute, Malaspina University-College

In an effort to understand its visiting markets and plan for sustainable tourism on Hornby Island, the Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation undertook a visitor study during the summer months of 2006. This short report will provide the preliminary results from the long survey version for discussion at the October 23rd meeting.

Highlights:

- Hornby attracts a regional market;
- High income visitors
- Traveling predominantly with family and friends
- Attracted for beaches and scenic beauty
- Staying in campgrounds and community rentals
- Eating in the home, with some expenditure in café's
- Spending at the destination is low (less than $100 a day)
- Participating in outdoor activities and visiting parks and beaches
- Very satisfied visitors who are repeat visitors

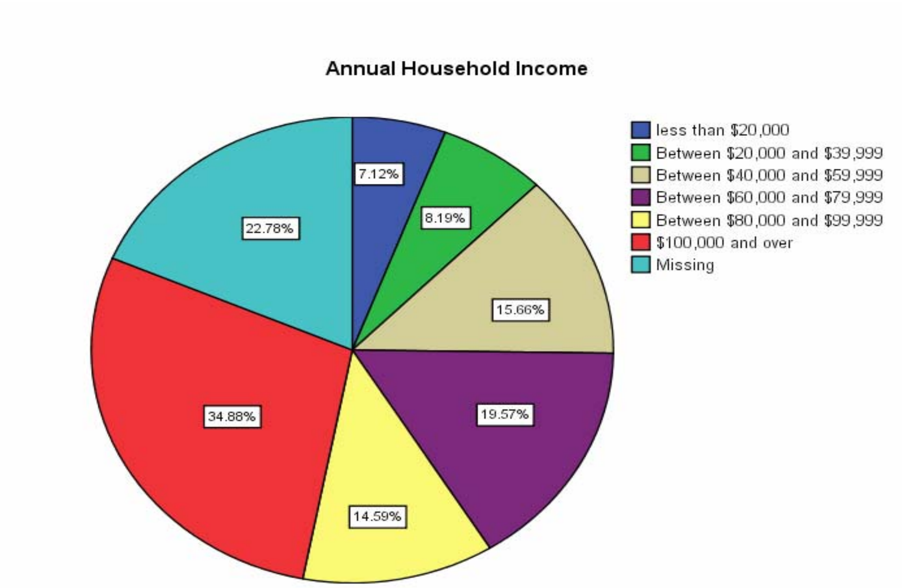
Where is your home?



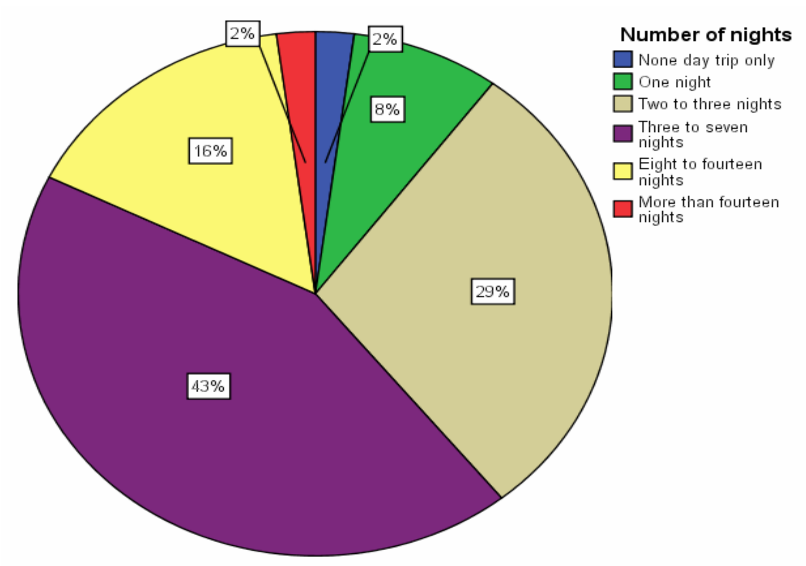
The primary origin of visitors to Hornby Island is from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, followed by elsewhere in British Columbia. At the same time, 86.9 % of visitors indicate that Hornby is the main destination for their visit. Whereas only 13 % indicate it is a stop over on their trip.

Key characteristics of visitors

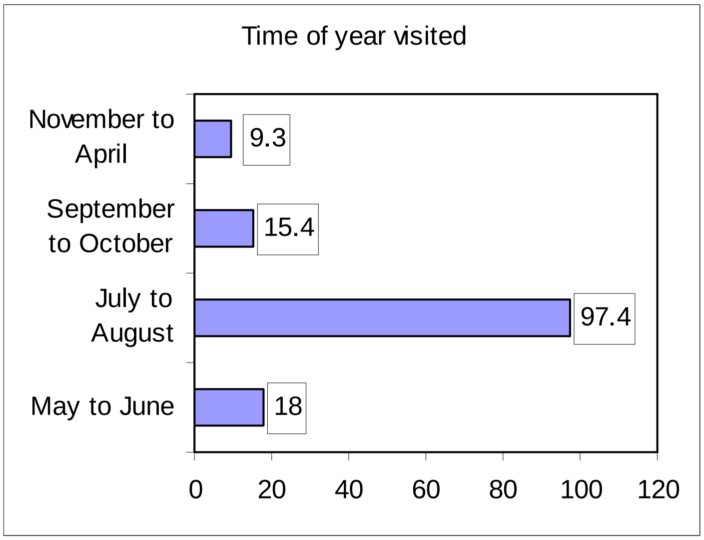
The visiting market to Hornby can be characterized as a wealthy, local market traveling predominantly with their family. Approximately 35% of visitors earn $100,000 and over, while 69% earn at least $60,000.



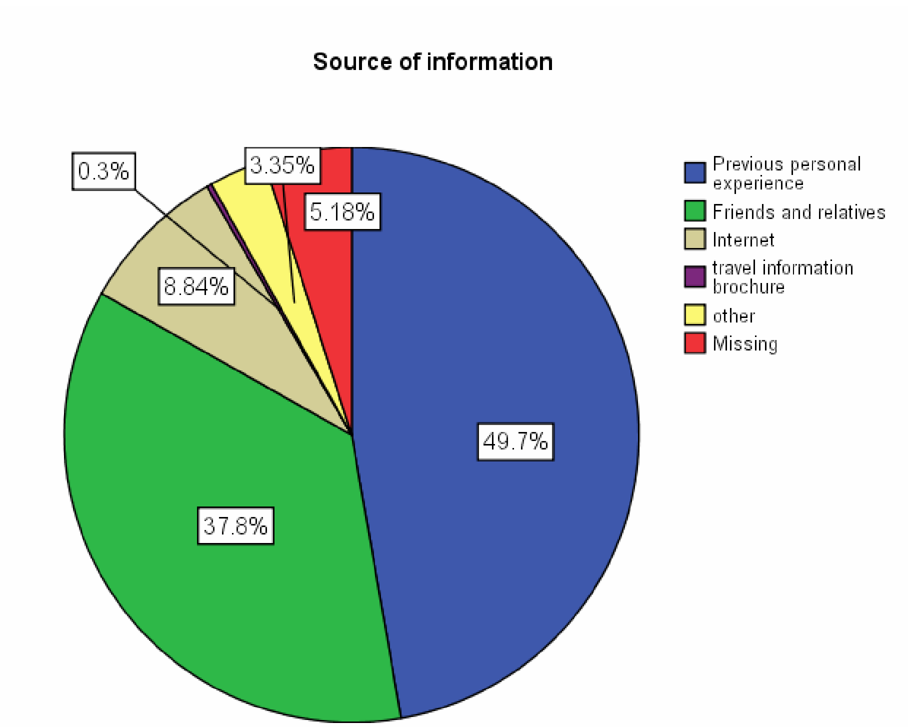
Trip characteristics
Approximately 43% of Hornby's summer visitors are staying three to seven nights, 29% are staying two to three nights, 16% are staying longer at between eight to fourteen nights. 40% of visitors are traveling with their family, another 18% with friends and family, and a further 24% as a couple.



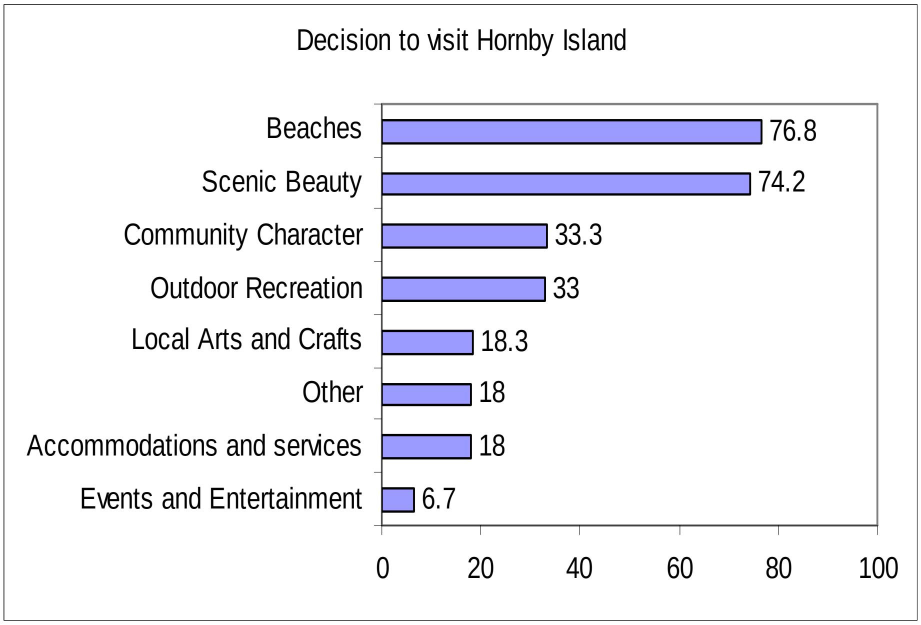
Hornby summer visitors appear to be a loyal audience. About 55% of visitors indicated that they have traveled to Hornby before (two to five times), whereas 36% have been there once and 9% have traveled there more than five times. The majority visit in the summer months (97%) and a further 18% indicated they have been there in the May to June period.



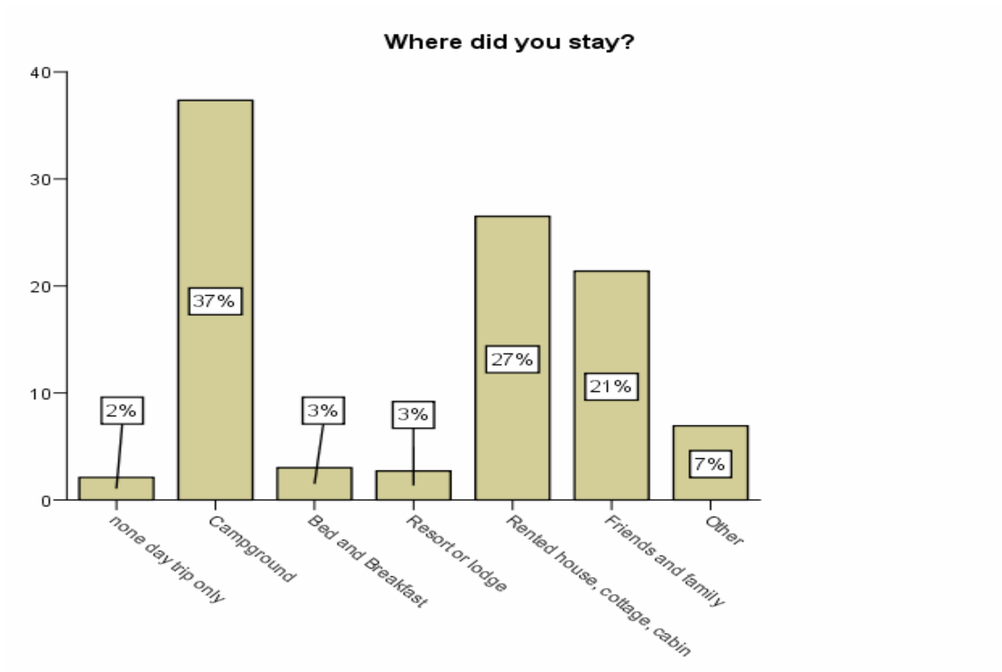
Visitors appear to be coming to Hornby Island based on word of mouth through friends and family, or based on their previous travel experiences. Unlike many other destinations, Hornby visitors are relying less on the internet and travel information to make their travel decision.



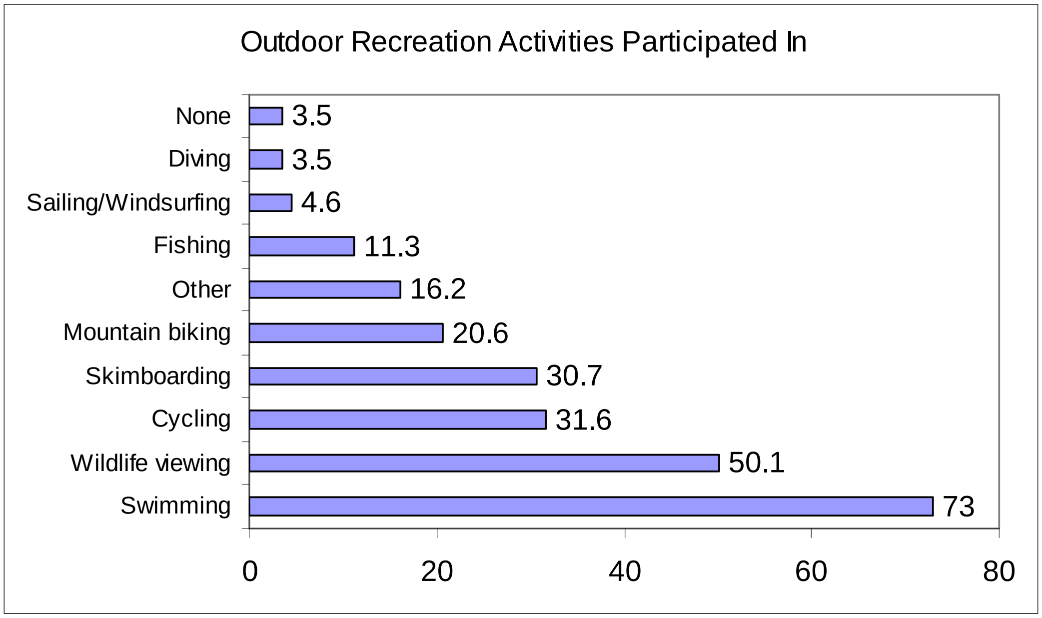
Visitors appear to be motivated to travel to Hornby for its beaches and scenic beauty, whereas the community character and outdoor recreation appear to be strong secondary attractions.

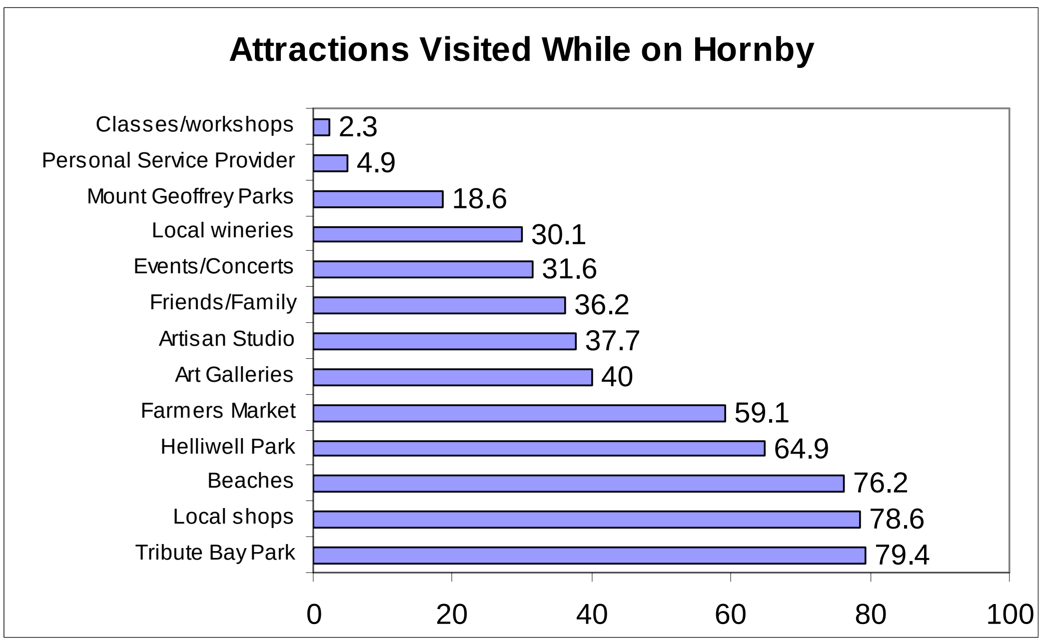


The majority of visitors appear to be staying in campgrounds and in community rental properties or with friends and family. Compared to other destinations, relatively few visitors are staying in resorts, lodges and bed and breakfast establishments.

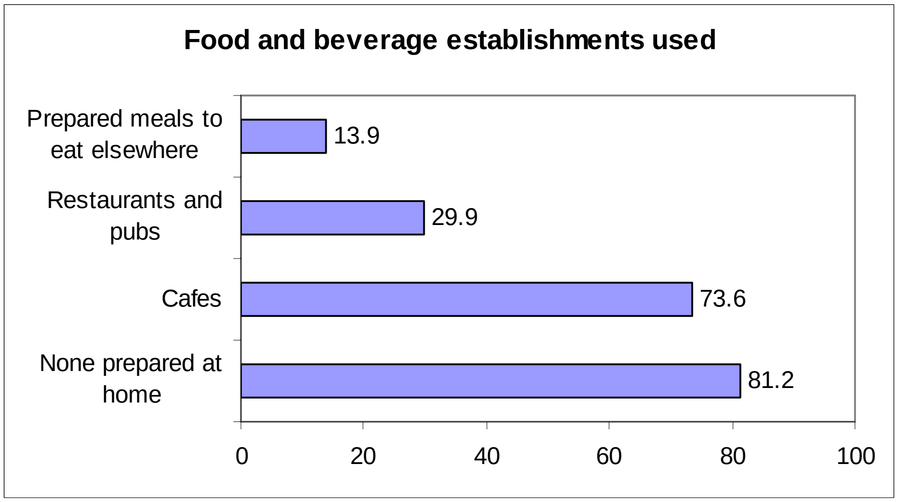


Visitors to Hornby are partaking in numerous outdoor recreation activities, and visiting a variety of community attractions. The most popular activity for visitors is swimming and wildlife viewing, whereas cycling and skimboarding are strong secondary activities. Parks and beaches were the most popular attractions visited.

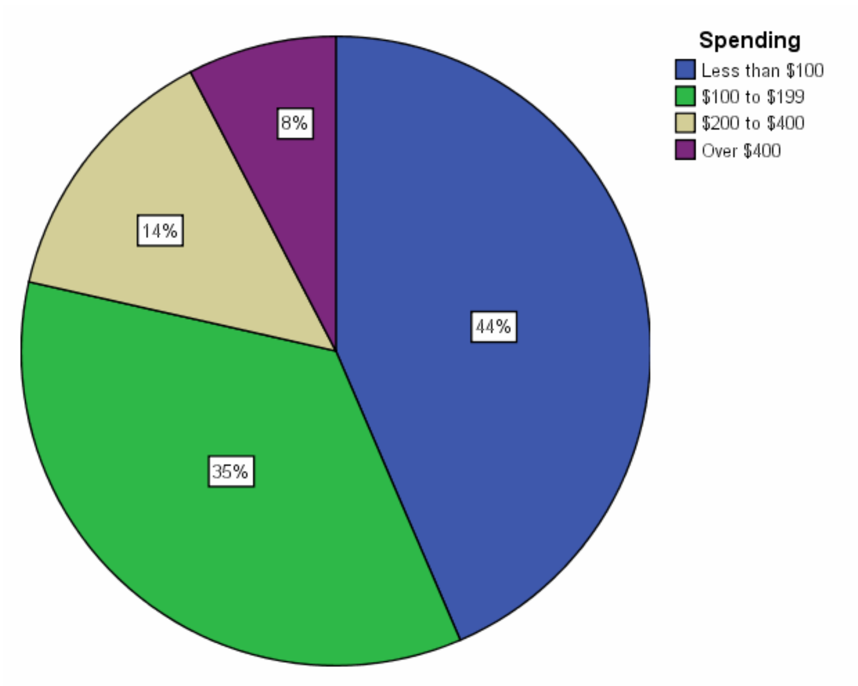




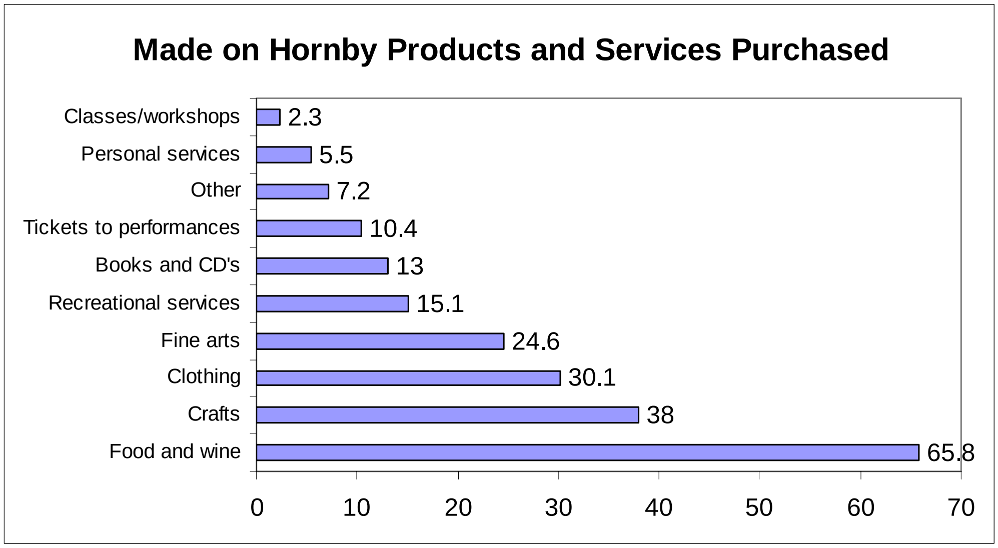
The majority of visitors to Hornby indicate that they did not eat at established food and beverage establishments but prepared their meals at home. Of those who did, the cafes were used by 74% and pubs and restaurants by a further 30%.



While visitors are staying a fairly long period of time on Hornby, their relative economic impact is lower than other destinations due to the fact that they are not staying in established lodges/b and b's, or eating at restaurants etc. About 44% of visitors are spending less than $100 per day, while another 35% are spending between $100 to $199 per day.



Beyond accommodations and food and beverage (which usually account for between 60 to 80% of overall travel expenditures), visitors are purchasing "made on Hornby Island products and services. For those that are, about 66% are purchasing food and wine, and another 38% are purchasing crafts, 30% clothing, and 25% fine arts.



Approximately 91% of visitors were strongly inclined to visit Hornby again, whereas only 33% indicated that they would be interested in the off season. For those that are keen to visit in the off season, the main attractions (38%) are for outdoor recreation and (33%) for festivals and events. Visitors overall are extremely satisfied (74%) with their Hornby experience.

Appendix B

PLANNING FOR TOURISM ON HORNBY ISLAND

HIECC document, 2006

Tourism happens in communities.
But does it happen for the community? Or does it happen to the community?

OUR COMMUNITY VISION FOR TOURISM

"In 2020 tourism is only one part of Hornby Island's diverse and thriving economy. Tourism is now actively planned and managed by the community for the benefit of residents, visitors and the island itself. We foster low-impact, "intentional" tourism and have a manageable, comfortable number of visitors each year.

We prefer the concept of a "visitor" rather than a "tourist". A visitor is someone who comes to the island in the same manner in which they would visit a friend - respectfully and lovingly - and we welcome them accordingly. We have found ways to inform visitors and summer residents about the lifestyles, values and ecology of the island so that tourism is a positive experience for both year round residents and visitors.

The ideal visitor would:

- come here because they appreciate and share our interests and values
- walk, bike or use public transportation
- purchase local goods, food and services
- walk lightly on the land (including water use and disposal)
- contribute time and energy for the benefit of the community and participate in the community

We have incorporated some of the ideas from the "Slow Cities" movement such as preserving and celebrating our traditions and lifestyles and then encouraging our visitors to participate in them. We work at what we love and people come to learn about what we have to offer. Visitor accommodation is accessible for people of all income levels. The community feels energized and stimulated by visitors to the island and welcomes the excitement and fun provided by interaction with new people and new ideas. Visitors leave the Island feeling revitalized in body, mind and spirit."

OUR OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN OBJECTIVES FOR TOURISM

1. To allow, through appropriate zoning, for a variety of types of small-scale visitor accommodation operations that meet health, safety and environmental objectives,
2. To allow forms of accommodation which have the least impact on the quiet rural character of the Island,
3. To ensure all accommodations can be adequately serviced,
4. To allow for recreational opportunities to the citizens of the Province without stressing the existing natural and social systems and services,
5. To encourage a kind of tourism which is compatible with preserving and protecting the environmental and social qualities of Island life for present and future generations and to discourage large scale tourist accommodation,
6. To emphasize activities which involve quiet, low impact use of existing natural features and amenities rather than man-made ones, and
7. To prevent undue cost to the local taxpayers in providing basic facilities for visitors.

Survey of Hornby Residents about Summer Tourism, 2006 - Summary

Experience of summer tourism

- 46% had a negative experience; 43% had a positive experience.
- 68% of people receiving tourism income experienced tourism as positive.
- Only 14% of people with tourism-related jobs experienced tourism as positive.
- Only 23% of people with no income from tourism experienced it as positive.
- Younger people found it a more negative experience than older people.
- Two thirds experienced tourism as neither very positive nor very negative

Perception of Island carrying capacity

- 83% perceive that the Island has reached or exceeded summer carrying capacity.

Personal benefits from tourism

- 47% reported receiving income from summer tourism.
- 34% reported enjoying social and cultural activities associated with tourism.
- 27% experienced no personal benefits.

Negative impacts from tourism

- 93% reported experiencing negative impacts from tourism.
- Over half reported impacts with ferry waits, noise, traffic and litter.

Issues for the Island

- 77% identify water as an issue resulting from summer tourism.
- 64% identify stress upon the community as an issue.
- Over half identify policing, stress on infrastructure and waste.

Suggestions to improve summer tourism for visitors and/or residents

6. Use controls, regulations and enforcement (e.g. for vacation rentals, raves)
7. Attract the visitors we want and educate them.
8. Limit the number of visitors.
9. Improve what we offer visitors (e.g. better services, better attitude)
10. Make improvements for residents (e.g. access to ferry service)

Developing off-season tourism

- 44% support efforts to develop the off-season.
- 28% are neutral and 28% do not support off-season tourism

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