

Aboriginal tourism product preference by visitors to northern British Columbia



Diana Kutzner MA NRES (Tourism)
University of Northern British Columbia

Overview

- Introduction
- Aboriginal tourism in the north
- Objectives and methods
- Four potential products in comparison
- Preferred product features
- Potential target markets
- Conclusion





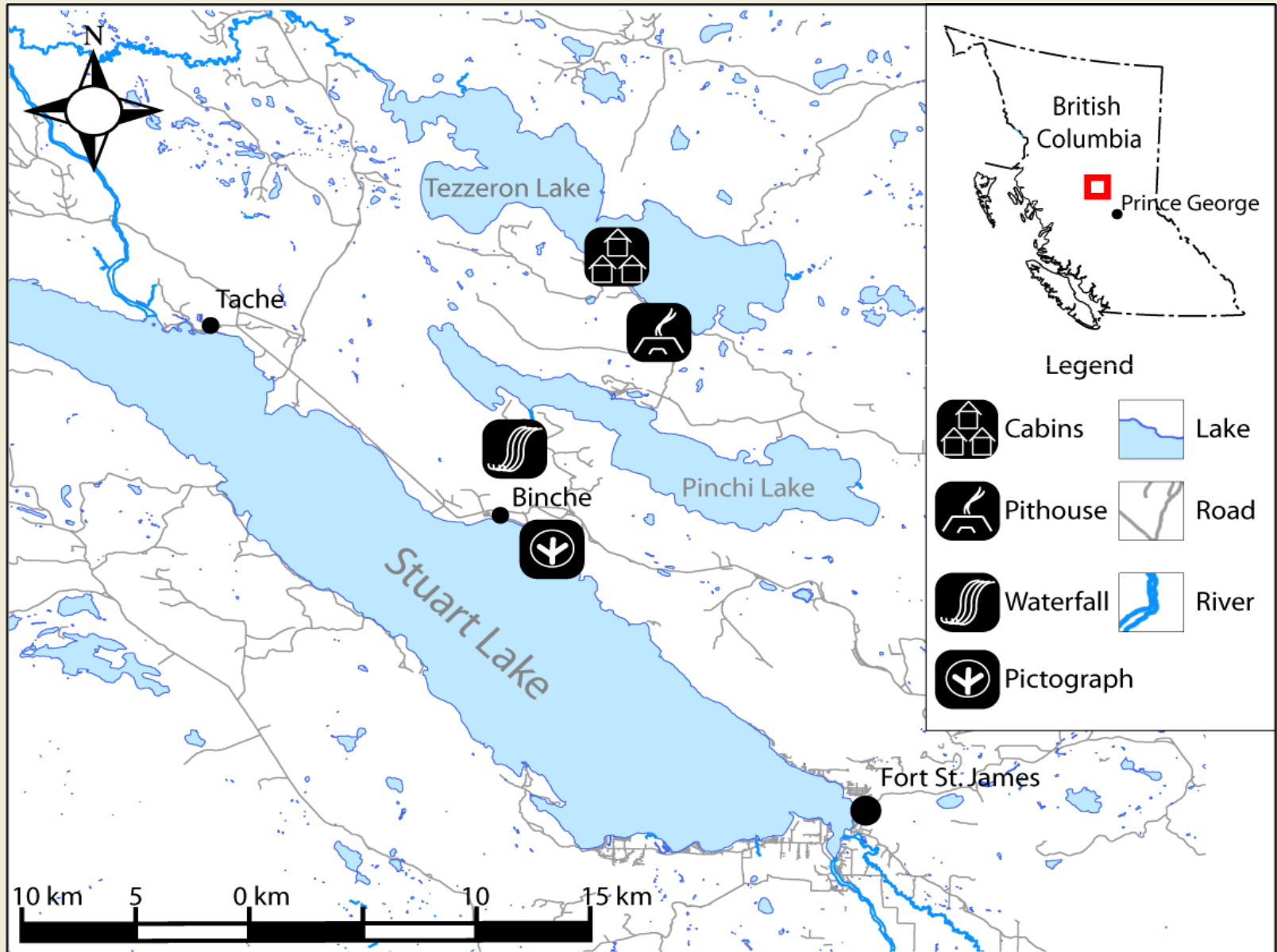
Introduction: A research partnership



- Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
- Despite research partnership with Tl'azt'en, results may assist other First Nation and Indigenous communities in northern B.C.



Study area





Why focus on northern B.C.?

- Advancement of Aboriginal tourism in British Columbia
- Potential economic development benefits for Canada's First Nations
- Unique challenges
- Research gap
 - Lack of understanding of traveler interest in and preferences for Aboriginal tourism products



Objectives

- To identify tourists' preferred Aboriginal tourism products and product features
- To identify potential target markets



Tache, B.C.



Easton Nation and the University of Northern British Columbia



Community-University Research Alliance
Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management

Methods

- Self-administered questionnaire contained:
 - ✓ 4 potential products
 - ✓ 3 lists (activities, topics, experiences) of 31 visitor preferred features of Aboriginal tourism
 - ✓ 1 list of 8 features about the nature of an Aboriginal experience
 - ✓ Socio-demographic & travel behaviour questions
- Survey location: Prince George Visitor Information Centre
- 337 questionnaires suitable for analysis
- 60% response rate



Four potential products in comparison

	Description	Central features	Time frame	Physical Activity level
Tl'azt'en Traditional Feast (Feast)	Celebration of the arrival of salmon with a traditional Tl'azt'en dinner. Entertainment includes a singing and drumming performance.	Celebration, traditional food, arts and crafts, scenery, drumming & singing Performance	3 hrs	Low
Family Cultural Camp (Camp)	A camp to experience Carrier culture in form of workshops. Includes the option of a guided tour to rebuild pit houses or to see wildlife and the opportunity to meet Tl'azt'en Elders. Alternatively, visitors can go hiking or canoeing. Overnight stay optional.	Experiencing Carrier culture, traditional activity workshops, rebuild pit houses	1 ½ days	Moderate to low

	Description	Central features	Time frame	Physical Activity level
Carrier Rock Paintings (Rock Art)	A boat trip on Stuart Lake to a rock face with Carrier rock paintings. A guide will explain the paintings and Tl'azt'en traditional life in this environment.	Carrier rock paintings, Carrier culture, boat tour, wildlife viewing	3 hrs	Low
Tl'azt'en Territory Nature Hike (Hike)	2 hour hike though the forest to a waterfall at Pinchi Lake. Includes a small traditional lunch (optional) and a guide to explain the local flora and fauna and Tl'azt'en traditional life in this environment.	Hiking, nature, scenery, learning about local flora and fauna, wildlife viewing, Carrier culture	2.5 hrs	Moderate to high



Rock paintings on Tl'azt'en territory



*Singing
Tl'azt'en youth*



Camp fire at Cinnabar

Study Findings: Respondent Profile

- Sample skewed towards older respondents (64% were 45 years or older)
- 54% have higher education
- Origin: Canada 36%; USA 20%; Europe 33%
- Adult couples dominant travel party

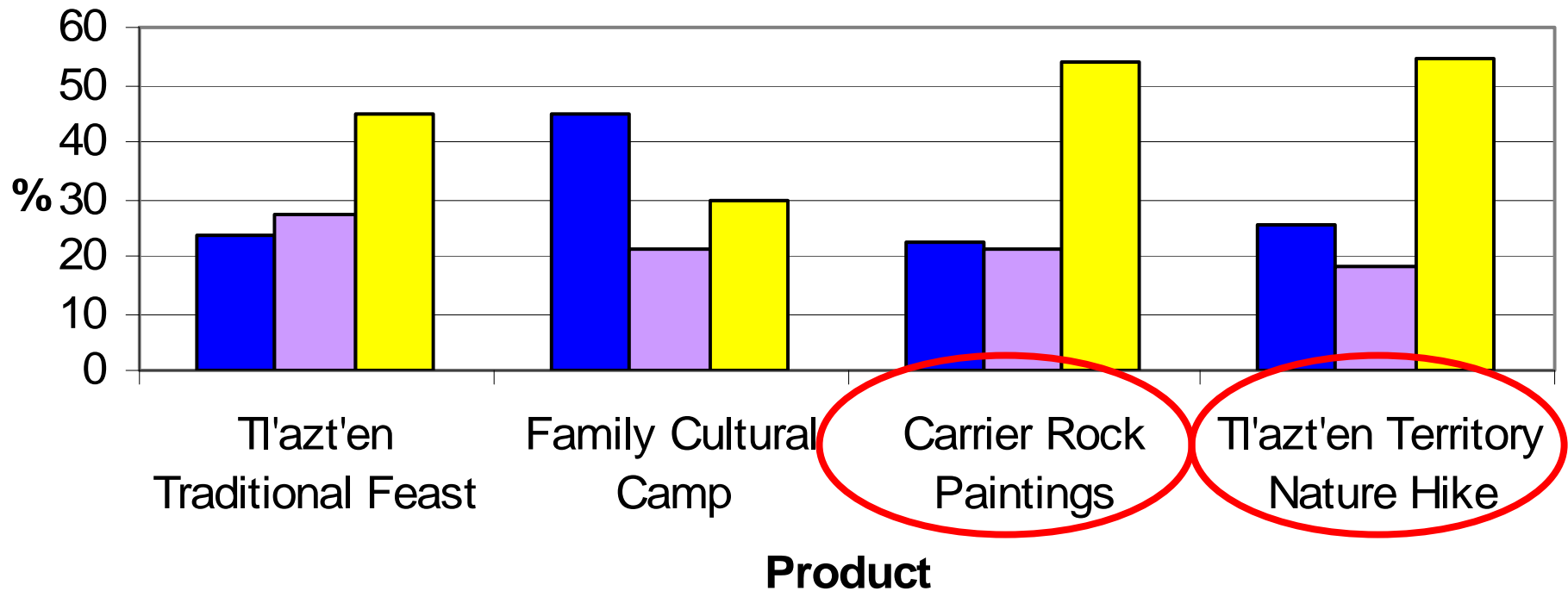


Coastal Nation and the University of Northern British Columbia

CURA
Community-University Research Alliance
Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management

Of the 4 products, most interest was expressed in...

Product purchase likelihood



■ Not likely to purchase ■ Neutral ■ Likely to purchase

Significant relationships were found between...

- **Tl'azt'en Territory Nature Hike**
 - + Education and prior information search
- **Tl'azt'en Traditional Feast**
 - + Prior information search and prior experience
 - Age
- **Family Cultural Camp**
 - + Prior experience and gender (higher interest by women)
 - Age
- **Carrier Rock Paintings**
 - + Prior information search



Preferred product features

Activities

	Mean ^a	Std. deviation
Woodcarving	3.98	0.993
Collecting edible plants	3.90	0.990
Outdoor survival	3.90	0.973
Storytelling	3.83	0.877

Topics

Animal & plant life of the region	4.09	0.834
Stories and legends of Aboriginal culture	4.00	0.893
Aboriginal history post-European contact	3.95	0.891

Experiences

Taking photos of scenic landscapes or wildlife	4.06	0.904
Demonstrations by artisans of artefacts	3.86	0.876
Aboriginal drumming and dance performances	3.82	1.145

^aEach feature was measured on a five-point scale where 1 = not at all interested and 5 = very interested.



Experience creates greater interest

- Respondents with Aboriginal tourism experience were significantly more likely to be interested in the **Tl'azt'en Traditional Feast** and **Family Cultural Camp** products
- Participants were more likely to be interested in these product if they had:
 - purchased Aboriginal arts or crafts
 - attended an Aboriginal tourism performance
 - or similar experiences



Nature of the Aboriginal tourism experience

- Exploring visitors' enthusiasm for:
 - actively participating in Aboriginal cultural activities
 - their preferred level of contact with Aboriginal hosts
 - their preferred activity level and focus of the experience



Tl'azt'en Elders presenting bone tools



Tl'azt'en members and tourists playing traditional game





Nature of the experience

Non-interactive ←————→ Interactive	
Relaxed & observational (15%)	Active & involved (36%)
Self-guided experience (18%)	Guided tour (34%)
Casually speak with Aboriginal hosts (19%)	Opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with Aboriginal hosts (41%)
See how arts and crafts are made (40%)	Make arts & crafts yourself (27%)
See drumming & dancing (50%)	Participate in drumming & dancing (22%)
Explore cultural exhibits (32%)	Participate in daily activities of traditional Aboriginal life (30%)

Potential market segments

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



Sociodemographic information of clusters

Variable	Culture Seekers (<i>n</i> = 88)	Nature-Culture Observers (<i>n</i> = 144)	Sightseers (<i>n</i> = 32)
Origin^a	%	%	%
Majority Canadian	54	30	36
USA	16	26	25
Europe	25	40	32
Age^a			
Oldest (55+)	29	34	49

^aChi-square indicated significant differences, $p < 0.05$



Culture Seekers



- Scored highest on all features such as:
 - Aboriginal ways of living off the land, Aboriginal stories/legends, traditional food, outdoor survival, overnight stays in traditional Aboriginal housing & cultural camps
- Similar to other high-interest segments
- High percentage of Canadian travelers
- Results suggest market for culture focused products
- Nature still plays role in product appeal

Nature-Culture Observers

- Interest in a variety of Aboriginal topics:
 - traditional food, edible plants, flora and fauna, etc.
 - greater interest in features related to nature
- Not interested in multi-day camps and hands-on experiences
- Appear to match the ‘dual-track’ market
- May best be targeted with a mixed nature-culture product



Sightseers

- Interested in taking pictures of scenic landscapes
- Not interested in overnight stays, multi-day cultural camps or hands-on activities
- Neutral response on remaining features
- May need introduction to Aboriginal tourism
- High number of adults with children
- Great amount of leisure travelers





Market segment feasibility

- Most promising marketing opportunities appear to lie with the **Culture Seekers** and **Nature-Culture Observers**
- **Culture Seekers** – focus on Aboriginal cultural content products
- **Nature-Culture Observers** – focus on mixed nature/culture products or nature products with culture as an added-value
- **Sightseers** – potentially require intensive marketing & an introduction to Aboriginal tourism

Conclusion

- Aboriginal tourism is of interest to a portion of travelers to northern B.C.
- Generally speaking, products and product features centred on nature experiences were preferred
- There appears to be a smaller market for Aboriginal cultural tourism
- Work with Tl'azt'en on tourism development continues



Acknowledgement

- Dr. Pam Wright (UNBC)
- Amelia Stark (Ecotourism Stream Leader)
- CURA (SSHRC and the team)
- Tl'azt'en Nation
- Dr. Gail Fondahl (UNBC)
- Dr. Simon Hudson (UofC)
- Dr. Peter Williams (SFU)



References

- Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (2004) *Blueprint Strategy: Consumer Intercept Survey Final Report*. Vancouver: Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC.
- Aboriginal Tourism Canada (2003) *Aboriginal Tourism Canada 2003 Strategic Plan - Growing Canada's Aboriginal Tourism*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Tourism Canada.
- Australian Tourist Commission (2003) *Segment insights pack; Market intelligence on Aboriginal tourism*.
- BearingPoint LP, Goss Gilroy Inc. and Associates (2003) *Aboriginal Tourism in Canada; Part II: Trends, Issues, Constraints and Opportunities*. Canada: Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada.
- Cook Consulting Inc. (2004) *Traveling With Wisdom: Aboriginal Tourism Industry in Canada*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Tourism Canada.
- Fuller, D., Caldicott, J., Cairncross, G. and Wilde, S. (2007) Poverty, Indigenous culture and ecotourism in remote Australia. *Society for International Development*, 50 (2), 141-148.
- Hensher, D.A. (1994) Stated preference analysis of travel choices: the state of practice. *Transportation*, 21: 107-133.
- Lang Research (2000) *Travel activities & motivation survey – Aboriginal tourism report*. Canada: Lang Research.
- Loverseed, H. (1998) Aboriginal tourism in North America. *Travel & Tourism Analyst*, 6: 42-61.





- McIntosh, A.J. (2004) Tourists' appreciation of Maori culture in New Zealand. *Tourism Management*, 25: 1-15.
- Moscardo, G. and Pearce, P.L. (1999) Understanding ethnic tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2): 416-434.
- Notzke, C. (2006) *The Stranger, the Native and the Land: Perspectives on Indigenous Tourism*. Concord, Ont.: Captus University Publications.
- Pettersson, R. (2002) Sami tourism in northern Sweden: measuring tourists' opinions using stated preference methodology. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3 (4), 357-369.
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2002) *Alberta Aboriginal Tourism Product Opportunity Analysis*. Retrieved March 2, 2008 from http://www.alberta-canadauat.gov.ab.ca/documents/SP-TR_abtoup.pdf
- Ryan, C. and Huyton, J. (2000a) Who is interested in Aboriginal tourism in the Northern Territory, Australia? A cluster analysis. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8 (1), 53-88.
- Ryan, C. and Huyton, J. (2002). Tourists and aboriginal people. *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (3), 631-647.
- Sofield, T.H.B. and Birtles, R.A. (1996) Indigenous peoples' cultural opportunity spectrum for tourism (IPCOST). In R. Butler and T. Hinch (eds) *Tourism and Indigenous Peoples* (pp. 396-433). London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Zeppel, H. (2002) Cultural tourism at the Cowichan Native Village, British Columbia. *Journal of Travel Research*, 41, 92-100.