

Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management

Community
Update
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A Short Note from Kateri Haskel

Hello everyone, my name is Kateri Haskel. I was hired on April 3 by the Tl'azt'en Treaty office/CURA as a Research Assistant but I was working part time with Bev Bird since January 2006.

I have transferred VHS and Mini DV (small video tapes) to the computer and edited them, then burned the finished product to DVD. So far I have finished 55 DVD's complete with labels. I also copy the master cassette tapes, for research use. I also record meetings and other functions if need be. I have enjoyed my work so far, I have learned a lot in the last two months.

I attended a GIS workshop on May 30/31 in Prince George and found that I like it, but will need to get more education on GIS.

I also helped to coordinate a three day Teck Cominco gathering which was held on June 6/7/8. There was a tour on the first day and meetings on the second and third day in Tache and Nak'azdli. I hadn't done a whole planning and coordination of a meeting like this, so this was a good learning experience.

I look forward to working with Bev Bird and CURA for the next year, hopefully longer. This has been a great two months so far, lets just say it's never boring at work, there's always something to do.

-Mussi



CURA Research: Community Benefits

by Gail Fondahl, Principal Investigator

Hello! Tl'azt'en & UNBC have now been involved in the CURA project, "Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management" for 2.5 years. We are half-way through this 5-year project. What has this brought the community so far? Here is a quick summary of some of the benefits we feel Tl'azt'en Nation has received from its partnering with UNBC.

Employment - The project has provided work for 18 Tl'azt'en members, from high school and college/university students, non-students, & Tl'azt'en Elders (for their expertise in various fields). In doing this work, Tl'azt'enne have gained or improved a variety of skills, including data collection, computer skills, interviewing, report writing, literature analysis, communication of results through newsletter and poster generation, and web-page building. These skills should be useful as Tl'azt'en Nation takes over more of its own research and management in the upcoming years.

Community Participation - Community members came up with the research questions we are asking. It is critical to continue to have Tl'azt'en input during our research. So far over 100 people have participated in various aspects of our research: 14 Tl'azt'enne participated in

interviews for Improved Partnerships research; 10 Tl'azt'enne participated in Traditional Ecological Knowledge research; and 81 Tl'azt'enne participated in Education stream research!

Communication of Results to Community - It is critical to communicate our results back to the community. To do this, each year we host a community workshop, where we present what we are doing through posters and brief comments, and ask for community feedback. We also produce this community update every 6 months (for Tl'azt'enne), and a longer project newsletter, which goes to both Tl'azt'enne and about 400 other people and organizations around Canada and the world.

Our CURA project is run by a steering committee (SC), which meets every 2 months. The SC 'co-manages' the project, with equal numbers of Tl'azt'en and UNBC people. Recently we have had a few changes to the SC. We welcome Alex Pierre as a new Member-at-Large. Amelia Stark, formerly a Member-at-Large, has taken on the role of Tl'azt'en Ecotourism Stream Leader. Welcome, Alex - we look forward to working with you and benefiting from your knowledge of forestry. And we are delighted to have you in your new capacity, Amelia!

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF *Chunach'ul* (Birch)

by Jane Young, TEK Stream Leader

Field studies took place in Ron Mattess' Keyoh. The sites that are selected for gathering of birch are areas with high densities of birch trees and can be seen from the river or from along traditional and/or game trails. Individual birch trees are evaluated for specific characteristics and sites near water with moist soil are preferred and trees are most likely to be selected that are multi-stemmed or if they are in clusters.

Birch is gathered from mid-May and throughout June when the sap is running and the bark is easy to peel. When selecting birch bark, it is important that the "eyes", or lenticels, are narrow and tight. If these openings are too well opened, the bark will crack in that area and will not be functional for baskets. The width of the trunk should be about the diameter of a dinner plate. Once a birch tree has been selected, all of the flaking bark is removed and the trunk is cut down. The bark is cut off starting in the knot area, as this allows for the bark that is peeled to contain fewer knots. Knots may cause the bark to crack. When a cut has been made down the tree, two corners are pulled and the bark is peeled in sheets.

One birch tree can provide enough bark for 18 to 20 baskets. The bark can be stored and made into baskets for up to a month after harvesting. After this time, the bark becomes too dry and brittle. Bark not used for baskets can be burned as fire starter, and the remaining logs that are bare are cut into lengths and left to dry in

Ecological Monitoring for the TI'azt'en Territory

by Chris Johnson, Improved Partnership Stream Associate Partner

September is going to be a busy time for those involved in the TI'azt'en-UNBC CURA. Several research streams are starting in new directions. Among new CURA students will be Deanna Yim, who graduated



from UBC. She will be moving to Prince George in August to begin her graduate studies at UNBC under the direction of Chris Johnson.

Deanna's research will take place within the Improved Partnership Stream and will focus on developing effective approaches for community-based ecological monitoring. When up and running, the ecological monitoring program will track the change in important environmental features, such as salmon. This information can then be used to determine how the lands in the TI'azt'en Territory are changing over time. Collecting, holding, and applying this information will allow the community and the Research Forest to better manage the land and engage government on issues of resource planning and development. This could involve discussions on everything from the health of local moose populations to the effects of climate change on berry productivity. Through development and implementation of an ecological monitoring program we will increase the capacity of TI'azt'enne to enhance sustainability and quality of life in their communities.

Very few First Nations in Canada have explored or developed locally relevant, community driven environmental monitoring programs. One exception is the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Coop (www.taiqa.net/coop). The Coop

monitors and investigates the northern environment surrounding 8 communities in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon Territory, and Alaska. Each year community researchers conduct interviews with local experts and ask about the state of key environmental features. For these communities, key environmental features or "indicators" range from the abundance of caribou to the length of time ice can be found on important rivers. Although local or traditional knowledge is important for monitoring some indicators, others are measured using scientific approaches such as weather stations and aerial surveys of caribou calving grounds.

We hope that Deanna's research will contribute to a TI'azt'en monitoring system. One of her challenges will be to identify indicators that address the concerns of TI'azt'enne and to present methods for monitoring that are practical and thus adopted by the community. Deanna will spend some time in Tache in 2007, talking with people interested in the health of the local environment. From these conversations and past research, Deanna will identify locally important indicators and then document existing or develop new ways of measuring and storing this information.

Deanna is very excited about working with the community and views this project as an opportunity to improve local-level resource management and environmental well being. We invite CURA participants and the community at large to contact Deanna, Chris (johnsoch@unbc.ca) or Erin Sherry (sherry0@unbc.ca) if they have questions, comments or want to be involved with this project.

