

Partnering for Sustainable Resource Management

Community Update
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Ensuring Ethical Research in Tl'azt'en Territory by Beverly Leon

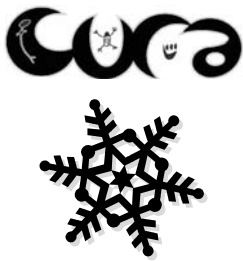
Hadi' Tl'azt'enne,

As Tl'azt'en's Improved Partnership Stream Leader, I am working on a project with Gail Fondahl, Sue Grainger and Beverly Bird to provide information to improve and update the existing "Tl'azt'en Nation Guidelines for Research in Tl'azt'en Territory", adopted by Tl'azt'en Nation Chief and Council in May 1998.

A growing number of Aboriginal communi-

ties are insisting that research must include the community from beginning to end in all aspects of the research process. Researchers can no longer go into communities, conduct their research, and leave without delivering benefits to the community. Because of advances made in other communities, the current Tl'azt'en research protocol needs to be up-

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Current CURA Research: Defining the Tl'azt'en Educational Philosophy

The goal of the Education Stream's research is to establish community-based educational programs that enhance youth retention in science, incorporate Tl'azt'en culture and Dak'elh language, and build capacity for sustainable resource management.

To understand Tl'azt'en's educational philosophy, values and goals, we conducted a series of focus groups in summer 2005. We heard from educators, Tl'azt'en youth, Tl'azt'en children, Tl'azt'en parents/guardians, and Elders. In total, 87 participants took part in

our focus groups. We are sincerely appreciative - Mussi!

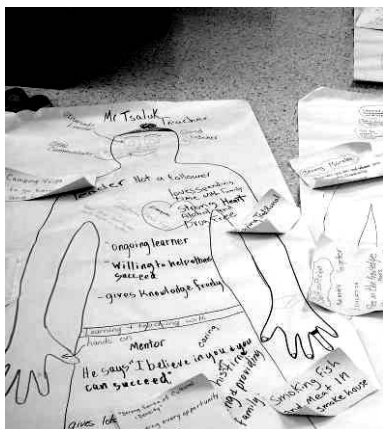
With our Elders group, we accommodated our participants as much as possible by arranging three separate focus groups. On October 24th, a full-day session was held in Middle River, and on November 9th, two focus groups were held in Tache, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

These discussions provided us with an amazing amount of information. Now that we have collected information from all parts of the community, we can move onto our next research stage: analyzing our data and summarizing our findings.

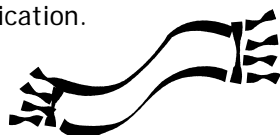
CURA-Education student, Sophia Raby began an initial analysis of the data in December. In January, a group analysis of UNBC and Tl'azt'en researchers will occur to verify the themes Sophia discovered. Next, we will present our work to the community for final verification.

A Short Note from Sophia Raby

In my Aboriginal Education class at UNBC, we read a collection of writings written by various indigenous educators worldwide, focusing upon aboriginal education. The book is called Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice, edited by Maenette, Kape'ahiokalani Padeken Ah Nee-Benham, and Joanne E. Cooper. The writings provide a vision of education defined by Aboriginals. The models introduced emphasize the interdependent relationships that exist between the learner, the family and the community in the learning process. Curriculum must focus upon Native language, knowledge, spirituality, and history and must be community-based in order to establish healthy learners, families and communities. As a member of the Education research stream, I found that the readings in this book largely reflected the Stream's research focus. Hopefully, through applying the Tl'azt'en Educational Philosophy, and learning from other Aboriginal communities, a successful community-based education program can be established.



A poster by Tl'azt'en Educators from a Focus Group in June, 2005





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dated to hold researchers to a strict ethical standard when conducting research in our territory. It has also become essential for research to be reflective and inclusive of Aboriginal language, culture and world view, in this case the Tl'azt'en perspective.

While the current research guidelines makes reference to the above noted, an updated version would provide specific research processes that all researchers must adhere to. Another current issue in Aboriginal research is Intellectual Property Rights, and ensuring that any publication(s) of research results are reflective of and properly represent our culture and language. These are some of the improvements that would become part of a new Tl'azt'en research guideline.

The challenge, at present, is to read the large amount of information that is currently available on this topic. There is a lot of literature to review but in order to fully understand and contribute to an improved research protocol for Tl'azt'en Nation, this task is necessary. I find it very rewarding and have learned a lot about the topic, but would be very interested in hearing feedback or suggestions from community members on your views about research.



Tl'azt'en Values for the John Prince Research Forest by Sarah Parsons

The John Prince Research Forest has been in operation since 1999, thanks to many years of work by members of Tl'azt'en Nation and UNBC faculty and administration. While there is a general feeling that the JPRF has made positive contributions, consistent measures of success can show where progress has been made, and where more work is needed.

In many co-managed partnerships, outside experts develop measures of success. The purpose of this project is to hear from community members on how *they* measure success, and develop a process to involve Aboriginal communities in projects like this. To keep the task at a manageable size, I chose to focus on how Tl'azt'en would like the JPRF to contribute to revitalizing traditional Tl'azt'en culture.

The first step in this project was to identify what outcomes Tl'azt'enne want to see from the JPRF. This work was accomplished in 2003/2004, with interviews conducted by Beverly Leon. By listening to what people said, I was able to find out how Tl'azt'enne would like to measure the JPRF's success in meeting the expectations they identified.

I began by interviewing nine Tl'azt'enne on different aspects of cultural revitalization, including Dak'elh language, traditional roles and systems, community well-being, and cultural education. Following these interviews, I met with seven Tl'azt'enne to discuss the findings as a group, and clarify what values should be measured. I have now compiled the data into a list of measures.

Measures ask questions about how the organization is making progress. I found that Tl'azt'enne would like to hear about many elements of cultural revitalization, including:

- How many JPRF maps use Dak'elh

place names?

- What JPRF projects have involved Keyoh holders?
- How many stories have been collected from Elders?
- How does JPRF provide information to Tl'azt'en community members, and how often?
- What facilities do JPRF provide for community use?
- How do children and youth feel about the quality of programs supported/provided by JPRF?
- What cultural curriculum has been produced by JPRF, or with JPRF support?

My next step is to review this list with some Tl'azt'enne to verify this information.

To benefit the community, the results of my research will be shared with the JPRF staff and board of directors. It will be up to them to decide which of these measures should be reported on. The intention is that these measures could be assessed over time to give an indication of trends in how well the JPRF is supporting cultural revitalization in Tl'azt'en Nation. Measures also can be developed for the other values identified for the JPRF, such as economic development, forest management and cross-cultural learning.

For my thesis, I will write about the process I used, and how I could improve on this process. I will also compare results with other similar projects involving Aboriginal communities, and involving outside experts. This information will be shared with Tl'azt'enne through the CURA community workshop in the summer of 2006, and by submitting a copy of my work to Tl'azt'en Nation. I also hope to publish my work in journals for sharing with wider audiences.

