Advancing Aboriginal Tourism and Economic Opportunities at Parks Canada

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Commitment to Create Partnerships in Reaching New Heights
IATC 2015 – March 25th 2015
• Under the theme of “Commitment to Create Partnerships in Reaching New Heights”

• Introduce:
  – Parks Canada
  – Aboriginal Partners
  – Why Aboriginal tourism?
  – Current Research: “Advancing Aboriginal Tourism and Economic Opportunities at Parks Canada”
  – Preliminary Findings
“By strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal partners and including Aboriginal knowledge holders in our projects, we become better stewards of these special places, now and for future generations”.

– Alan Latourelle, CEO Parks Canada
Parks Canada manages 90% of the Federal Government Land Base of Canada

68% protected though Land Claim Agreements with Aboriginal peoples

Parks Canada has “Reserves”
• 44 National Parks and National Park Reserves

• 167 National Historic Sites

• 4 National Marine Conservation Areas

• 10 UNESCO World Heritage Sites

• 9 Historic Canals
Today, PCA works closely with more than 300 Aboriginal communities and 88 Aboriginal Stakeholders.

To promote inclusion in the management of Canada’s heritage places.

Spectrum of Cooperative Arrangements.
PCA’S ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT

• Created in 1999

• Provide national leadership, direction and support on matters relating to evolving relationships with Aboriginal peoples

• Instrumental in providing opportunities for Aboriginal partners to meaningfully engage

• 3 key program areas:
  – Engagement
  – Consultation
  – Land Claims and Treaty Negotiations
IT IS VITAL TO REMEMBER AND HONOR THE CONNECTION

Learned that by building strong relationships with Aboriginal partners and encouraging their continuing connection with the lands PCA administers, the agency is best positioned to carry out its mandate on behalf of Canadians.
WHY ABORIGINAL TOURISM?

• Timing: Aboriginal tourism in Canada is top of mind
• Convergence of government priorities, “whole-of-government” approach
• Build on work with Aboriginal tourism organizations
• Engaging Aboriginal Youth
Celebration of Aboriginal peoples and cultures

20,697,868 visitors (PCA 2013/2014)

PCA visitation numbers to combine with the Aboriginal tourism market

Unique capacity to offer sites

Economic Opportunities

Time to build on PCA initiatives and projects
Aboriginal tourism in Canada as a means for welcoming visitors, preserving culture and growing businesses... can assist in advancing PCA’s corporate priorities and opens economic opportunities for collaborations with Aboriginal businesses, groups or organizations.
RESEARCH:
Advancing Aboriginal Tourism and Economic Opportunities at PCA

Research is Two-fold:
• External research on Aboriginal tourism “successes” in Canada
• PCA internal scan on Aboriginal tourism and other economic opportunities

Target Audience is Two-fold:
• PCA Team members
• Aboriginal groups
EXTERNAL
ABORIGINAL TOURISM RESEARCH

• Research external to PCA is required
• Successes, knowledge and learnings from those working to advance Aboriginal tourism and economic opportunities
• Aims to highlight “Successes” and “Leaders”
• Justine Powell, Masters Student, Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, BC

Québec’s Musée des Abénakis
Recipients of the 2014 National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Award.
**INTERNAL PCA ABORIGINAL TOURISM RESEARCH**

**Goal:** Build our understanding and knowledge of the full spectrum of collaborations related to Aboriginal tourism and other economic opportunities in existing parks/sites.

- Draw knowledge and learning from Aboriginal partner-PCA collaborations
- Identify opportunities and factors to replicate success
- Identify common themes and barriers internal to PCA to influence change
- Build awareness of internal/external barriers and opportunities
- How best to promote similar success across our system
THE HOW?

• 27 PCA selected Case Studies
• Seeking experiences from the field
• Conversations with PCA team members who work directly with Aboriginal partners
• Conversations with Aboriginal partners in the same initiatives
• Broadly represent
  - Inuit, Métis, First Nations
  - National parks, historic sites, marine conservation areas
THE WHAT? DRAFT CASE STUDY

CHAPTERS

• Examine PCA Human Resources
  – Interpreters “Own Story” i.e.) Aboriginal PCA team member delivering a park program
  – Youth mentorship opportunities i.e.) exchange programs, joint training

• Examine PCA Financial Instruments
  – 3rd Party Sales Agreements i.e.) Sales of PCA entry fees and passes
  – Contracts for Services i.e.) Firewood suppliers
  – Contracts for Programs i.e.) Watchmen/Guardian Programs

• Examine PCA Realty Tools
  – Licence of Occupations i.e.) Restaurants and gift shops
  – Prepaid Leases i.e.) Interpretative Centres

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Bringing you Canada’s natural and historic treasures
THE WHAT? DRAFT CASE STUDY CHAPTERS

• Examine Visitor Experience / Product Development
  – Aboriginal programming
    i.e.) Aboriginal interpreters delivering crafting/story telling
  – Aboriginal Special Event
    i.e.) Aboriginal community delivering a pow wow
  – Aboriginal Accommodations offer
    i.e.) Overnight experience in a teepee
  – Aboriginal Multi-day/excursions
    i.e.) Cultural hosts, cooks, sharing Aboriginal traditional knowledge

• Examine External Relations/Promotions
  – PCA Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI) Quebec based project
  – Canadian Tourism Commission “Signature Experiences”
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

• August 2014 – Pilot Case Study
• Currently in the Research Phase – Interviews *ongoing

• PCA **Keys to Success** include:
  – Starting small and building momentum
  – Respect in communications

• PCA **Barriers and Opportunities** include:
  – How to highlight the Aboriginal offer in the overall PCA marketing plan?
  – Product development opportunities

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PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

• Aboriginal groups, organizations or communities
  *Keys to Success* include:

  – Authenticity: no one else can offer what the Grandmothers offer
  – Pride inspires
    i.e.) Watchmen / Guardian Programs
  – Hands on / experiential activities help to differentiate the visitor offer

• *Barriers and Opportunities* include:

  – How to deliver the “authentic” i.e.) Food Safety fish presentation
  – Seasonality of staff, high staff turnaround
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

• General **Keys to Success** include:
  – Target tourism human resources i.e.) Summer students
  – Aboriginal tourism growth

• General **Barriers and Opportunities** include:
  – Travellers have options!
    • *How to highlight and market the Aboriginal offer and compete in the international market?*
  – Need to engage Aboriginal youth to continue delivering Aboriginal experiences
THE WAY FORWARD: COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

• Aboriginal partners and PCA team members
• Learn from Aboriginal tourism organizations, formalize relationships i.e.) ATAC
• Federal Government inter-departmental Aboriginal Tourism Working Groups
• PCA CEO’s Aboriginal Consultative Committee
• PCA Senior Management Working Group
• Summer 2015 conclude internal and external research
• Fall 2015 Release internal PCA document

Ongoing...
• Continuous learning
• “Commitment to Create Partnerships in Reaching New Heights”
CONCLUSION

“Commitment to Create Partnerships in Reaching New Heights”

“We have learned that by working together we can respect our differences and strengthen our common values. This, in itself, is the definition of true partnerships.”

Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada

“To build trust and understanding we need to grow as one, to accomplish this we work together as one.”

Robert Dennis, former Huu-ay-aht First Nation Chief Councilor
MERCI, THANK YOU

A sunrise from home...

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