



secwepemc
LAKES TOURISM

The communities of :

Adams Lake

Little Shuswap

Neskonlith

Splatsin



SECWÉPEMC
LAKES TOURISM
RESEARCH **PROJECT**

June 2021

Secwépemc Tourism Research Project Objectives

Indigenous cultural tourism has been a growth sector within a growing tourism industry for many years, yet growth in supply has been disproportionately slow to respond everywhere in the Province. This research project will do a ‘deep dive’ into the barriers and challenges to the development of authentic, cultural tourism experiences by the communities and members of Adams Lake, Little Shuswap, Neskonlith and Splatsin. The team will develop strategies and identify resources to secure employment and business opportunities from Indigenous tourism and to address barriers to supply growth.

Ultimately, this research is intended to support the sustainable development and long-term economic stability of these communities by enabling interested members to find employment and create business opportunities in the Indigenous Tourism sector of the Tourism Industry.

Project Deliverables

Working together with community members, we will create a roadmap towards a vibrant tourism economy collectively and in each of the communities. The project deliverables include:

1. Assessment of external market and academic research identifying better practices and transferable lessons in the development Indigenous tourism economies.
2. Local research and community engagement with Elders, Chief/Council, Economic Development Managers, Land Managers, self-identified entrepreneurs, culture and knowledge keepers and youth to identify challenges and barriers.
3. Development of strategies to address the challenges and barriers to the growth of cultural tourism experiences.
4. Identification of existing and recommendations for new resources to support those communities and community members wishing to launch or grow a culture tourism business venture.

Project Team

The project team is led by Suzanne Denbak of Cadence Strategies. Suzanne has over 25 years experience in the tourism industry and over the last 20 years has worked alongside Indigenous communities throughout British Columbia to assist them in respectfully and appropriately activating their tourism economies.



Suzanne is supported by Dr. Peter Williams, one of the authors of the Blueprint Strategy that led to the formation of Indigenous Tourism BC and by Jim Johnson of Pacific Analytics. Dr. Williams is supporting the team with research strategies, literature review and engagement techniques. Jim Johnson, Pacific Analytics will assist in the modeling and valuation of tourism opportunities for the four communities.

Local community members, Bonnie Thomas, Shelley Witzky, Jessica Collins and Jamie Davidson will lead the ‘on the ground’ community engagement using a combination of in-person learning circles, virtual ‘tourism talks’ and one-on-one interviews. Bonnie has many years of experience researching, supporting and advocating for Secwépemc communities and recently completed the Labour Training and Education Initiative with Julie John and Dorothy Argent. Shelley has long been a tourism champion for her community and is currently a Councilor with Adams Lake. Jessica Collins has worked alongside Robyn Cyr and Shelley Witzky on the Secwépemc Lakes Tourism Project and Jamie Davidson joins the team with a background in tourism from her studies at TRU.



Bonnie Thomas



Jessica Collins



Shelley Witzky



Jamie Davidson

Community Futures Shuswap provides advice, guidance and project management/reporting to funders through the expertise of Rob Marshall and Robyn Cyr.



The project is guided by a Steering Committee of community representatives and leaders that includes:

Shelley Witzky
Louis Thomas
Wes Francois

Doug Thomas
Sherry Law
Richard Toperczer

Where does the Research Project ‘fit’?

There are many important tourism-related projects currently underway in the communities of Adams Lake, Little Shuswap, Neskonlith and Splat sin are participating. The Tourism Research project will liaise with all these projects, learn from them, and contribute to their continued success.

The Secwepemc Lakes Tourism Project

The Secwepemc Lakes Tourism project is a community based Indigenous Tourism development initiative. It is a partnership between the three Secwepemc Indigenous communities of Neskonlith, Splat sin and Adams Lake, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development, and Community Futures Shuswap. Little Shuswap Lake Band joined the steering committee, in 2020 to ensure that their community members are also able to engage in this project.

In 2016, these three Indigenous communities saw an opportunity in the rapidly growing Indigenous Tourism sector to create employment and business opportunities within their communities. As a result of the Indigenous Tourism strategy, the **Secwepemc Lakes Tourism project** was created, and funding was received to implement the project in September 2018.

The vision of the project is to “Honouring Secwepemc Ancestors through Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Ecotourism”.

The Purpose:

- Increasing the Indigenous Cultural Presence throughout the Secwepemc/Shuswap region by supporting the awareness and development of Indigenous cultural experiences and artisan products.
- Providing business skills training and support for community members interested in developing a business to either work or start a business in the Tourism Industry.

The Landmarks Project

The Shuswap Trail Alliance is currently partnered with Adams Lake Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band, Splat sin, the City of Salmon Arm, Shuswap Tourism, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and the Province of British Columbia for the Secwépe mc Landmarks Project.

This collaborative project is designed, in the spirit of reconciliation, to create awareness of Secwepemc traditional territory through the creation of a series of iconic orientation Landmarks (sculptures) and trailhead signposts situated at key, highly visited areas. These Landmarks portray Secwepemc location names, culture, and stories throughout the Shuswap Lakes region of Secwepemcú'lecw.

The Secwepemc Lakes Training & Employment Initiative

This two-year initiative is funded by BC Rural Dividend Fund, submitted by Community Futures Shuswap on behalf of the local Secwepemc Lakes Communities and regional partners.

The goal of the Secwepemc Lakes Employment and Training Initiative was to empower and build self-determination among Indigenous youth and their communities. In addition, they promoted successful youth entrepreneurs. The foundation of the work will be guided by traditional practices, identifying, and encouraging the "gifts" they were born with.

This was achieved by working collaboratively with communities and project partners to provide entrepreneurship, education, and training opportunities.

Tsuts'weye Women's Entrepreneur & Innovation Network

Tsuts'weye Women's Entrepreneur & Innovation Network supports women entrepreneurs in the Shuswap region. Tsuts'weye is a three-year, federally funded initiative through Western Economic Diversification Canada and facilitated locally through Community Futures Shuswap. The project supports women-owned, or women led businesses in the start-up, expansion, or ongoing operational phase of business.

There are four goals of the Tsuts'weye project. They are:

1. Mentor - Women entrepreneurs are supported through a comprehensive mentor and consultant program.
2. Network - The Tsuts'weye project is building a strong network of Shuswap women entrepreneurs that will support each other.

3. Education - Workshops, classes and courses are available to Shuswap women entrepreneurs for them to learn new skills to support them as they move through the various phases of entrepreneurship.
4. Marketing - Marketing and promoting the strength of women entrepreneurs and their businesses throughout the Shuswap.

Tsuts'weye embraces an inclusive community of female entrepreneurs who recognizes that we are all enriched by our diversity. Tsuts'weye is committed to fostering an environment that advocates for respect, acceptance of others, and inclusion for all women entrepreneurs.

Indigenous Entrepreneur Hub

Located in Chase, the Indigenous Entrepreneur Hub is established to assist new entrepreneurs with their business plans and launch. Julie John is leading this initiative with the guidance of a Steering Committee.

Research Project - Questions to be answered by March 2022....

1. What is the Indigenous tourism opportunity - globally, nationally, provincially and in the Shuswap region?
2. What is the Indigenous tourism demand potential for the Shuswap region and the Secwepemc Lakes Tourism Initiative communities?
3. What are the actual and potential strengths/competitive advantages of Indigenous tourism in Adams Lake, Neskonlith, Splatstin and Little Shuswap Lake?
4. What are better practices in developing a sustainable Indigenous tourism economy?
5. What is the current level of supply of Indigenous cultural experiences in Canada, BC and the Shuswap region?
6. What is the supply opportunity for the Secwepemc Lakes communities?
7. Why don't we have more supply - what are the barriers and challenges?
8. What are the cultural tourism 'supply building blocks' ?

9. Who are the partners that can support the path forward? What tools and programs do they offer?