Tourism as a profit-making enterprise existing ethically and sustainably alongside eco-tourism. *Case Study the Canadian Rockies World Heritage Site.*

Sue Davies
*Sue Davies Cultural & Heritage Associates*
The Canadian World Heritage Sites

17 sites currently

7 tentative sites
Canadian Rockies’ World Heritage Site

Habitat of: grizzly, black & spirit bears, elk, moose, wolves, mountain goats, wolverine, bald eagles

Located across 4 National Parks

- Banff
- Jasper
- Yoho
- Kootenay

- 23,600 square kilometres
- More than 9 million people visit the 7 preserves annually
The Canadian Rockies World Heritage Site

Located in British Columbia & Alberta

Focus on Jasper & Banff National Park areas
Canadian World Heritage Sites:

Background

Mount Edith Cavell in the Canadian Rockies’ World Heritage Site

Canada joined the World Heritage Convention in 1976

- Represent some of humanity’s most outstanding achievements and nature’s most inspiring creations
- Some sites represent the history of worldwide movements of people while others provide evidence of the forces that shaped the planet.
- Some bear witness to the story of evolution of life on Earth and yet others pay tribute to extraordinary human achievements

Collectively they present Canada’s stories of international significance to the world
Bow Lake

The Criterion

- **Criterion vii**: The seven parks of the Canadian Rockies form a striking mountain landscape. With rugged mountain peaks, icefields and glaciers, alpine meadows, lakes, waterfalls, extensive karst cave systems and deeply incised canyons, the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks possess exceptional natural beauty, attracting millions of visitors annually.

- **Criterion viii**: The Burgess Shale is one of the most significant fossil areas in the world. Exquisitely preserved fossils record a diverse, abundant marine community dominated by soft-bodied organisms. Originating soon after the rapid unfolding of animal life about 540 million years ago, the Burgess Shale fossils provide key evidence of the history and early evolution of most animal groups known today, and yield a more complete view of life in the sea than any other site for that time period. The seven parks of the Canadian Rockies are a classic representation of significant and ongoing glacial processes along the continental divide on highly faulted, folded and uplifted sedimentary rocks.
Dreams of a National Park

In November of 1885, with encouragement from the CPR, the Government of Canada reserved 26 square kilometres of land (10 square miles) around the hot springs located across the valley from Banff. Banff quickly became a popular staging point for travelers wishing to explore the surrounding mountain landscape. While stimulating a tourist economy, this reserve also marked the beginning of Canada's national park system.

With hot springs and spectacular scenery in the Banff area, tourism became the answer. General Manager of the CPR at the time was William Cornelius Van Horne, an American with a flair for making a financial success of railway ventures. Quick to recognize the tourism potential of the area (and his railway line), Van Horne is reported to have exclaimed, "Since we can't export the scenery, we'll have to import the tourists."
Brewsters’ coach tours 1939 with King George V1 and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother

Tour environmental impact 1939 – negligible but how many visitors or World Heritage Sites today consider the carbon footprint in their travel?
Connecting the Rockies

Canadian Pacific Railway, Vancouver

Trains such as *The Canadian*
Canadian Pacific Railway

Coaches with glass roof panels

Some interpretive family workshops offered
Highways – Trans-Canada Highway
Connect / Reconnect
Coach Tours - Brewsters

Leave the guidebook at home

Comfortable, informative but prescriptive
The Canadian Rockies’ WHS Aspirations
Strategic Vision for Banff NP Parks
Canada

Banff Management Plan 2010

Aspires to be:

welcoming; inspiring; transforming; understanding wilderness traditions & adventure; part of shared enterprise of sustaining, celebrating, respecting & appreciating it all

- **Leadership** - as the oldest and flagship Canadian National Park

- **To involve the public** – strengthening links with people & reducing fragmentation in landscape. Sponsoring shared endeavours to build community among people of diverse perspectives. Work with Aboriginal communities to honour and restore cultural connections to the land and to encourage the gathering and sharing of knowledge about how Aboriginal people understand the land.

- **To improve divisions** – eg 20th century tourism proponents & conservation division. Develop strategies to correct environmental & human disconnections.

- **Model of stewardship for 21st century healthy eco-systems/opportunities for visitor involvement** - connect & re-connect with new future meanings & possibilities. Park management as part of a larger regional ecosystem.

- **To be welcoming**
Strategic Vision for Jasper

Jasper Management Plan 2010

- **Welcoming our visitors** – recurring theme at each stage of their trip, increasing visitor numbers, connect visitors to experiences aligned to their interests using Explorer Quotient

- **Bring the mountains to people where they live** – strong outreach drive through popular media & technology & outreach programmes, create virtual learning centres where researchers, scientists & students can interact, inspire each other and share learning & engage youth through schools & developing a national excellence centre for stewardship & education

- **Celebrate history, culture & the World Heritage Site** through 4 national historic sites

- **Ensure healthy ecosystems**: raise awareness & understanding of ecological issues; restore impaired ecosystems with community involvement; lead at risk species recovery; improve grizzly bear habitat

- **Foster Open Management & Innovation** and involve communities in critical analysis & creative thinking.

- **Strengthen Aboriginal Relationships**

- **Manage Growth & Development**

Aspires to be a place to connect with the mountains & headwaters for all Canadians; renowned as a place to learn – to experience a living vital landscape & its people, grow in knowledge & respect & share decisions ensuring its all time health
## Eco –Tourism

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<tr>
<th>Uniting Conservation, communities &amp; sustainable travel</th>
<th>Principles of Eco-tourism</th>
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<tr>
<td>Definition – The International Ecotourism Society 2015</td>
<td>Minimise physical, social, behavioural and psychological impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education. (TIES 2015)</td>
<td>Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education is meant to be inclusive of both staff and guests</td>
<td>Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide direct financial benefits for conservation</td>
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<td>Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries’ political, environmental and social climates</td>
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<td>Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities</td>
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<td>Recognise the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment</td>
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Jasper & Banff NPs

Maligne Canyon, Jasper NP

Jasper & Banff Governmental NP Vision

- Places for learning, recreation and inspiration where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forms that shaped Canada
- Offer Canadians & visitors several experiential opportunities so they are valued by Canadians
- Canadians form a lasting connection to this heritage & they are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired
- Preserved for future generations
- Lead the way as the first national park
- Our Government’s vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to experience our natural and cultural heritage
How far has the Canadian Rockies’ WHS come in its Heritage Conservation Quest?

Part of The Lower Weeping Wall Falls, Banff National Park
What is the Visitor Activity Offer?

Wildlife tours or high octane adventure

More sedentary, indoor reflective experiences
What is the visitor activity offer?

- Sky trams
- Horse riding, white water rafting
Heli- Glacier Landings
Columbia Icefield

Awe and wonder factor but is man’s literal footprint on it further accelerating its demise as well as mitigating its educational message ...

The Athabasca Glacier has receded 1.5 kilometres (0.93 miles) since being discovered 100 years ago. Now 83 sq miles long & up to 800 ft deep
Columbia Icefield: Eco-tourism rating & excellence of visitor experience?

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education. (TIES 2015)

Importance: 6 major glaciers flow from the icefield. Its meltwaters flow west to the Pacific, north to the Arctic & east to Hudson’s Bay & the Atlantic

Brewsters’ Bus Park

Glacier Snow Bus  Ice Explorer
Alaskan Glacier experience: ship held 80 people
cost of trip higher but how do you calculate this
with regard to eco-tourism impact?

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the
well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education. (TIES 2015)
Elitism and tourism? The environmental message?

Marine biologists on board to gave informed talks from a respectful distance: key message the glacier shrinkage

Drivers of Ice Explorer buses - set general talk – vague educative message & at odds with hoards descending on a fragile glacier. Key message lost in sense of imbalance with conservation mission
Ethical Eco-tourism: Canadian Rockies’ Marketing?

Advocates getting onto the Glacier

Mixed messages?

- What message is the public actually getting here?

- Walk on the Columbia Icefield in your millions before it disappears?

- First Nation interpretation of our wild and sacred places seems at odds with this marketing

- Is it at odds with an eco-tourism mission?
Business model & experience at odds with eco-tourism principles?

How is it being evaluated?

Columbia Icefield is located in the Jasper National Park which

Aspires to be a place to connect with the mountains & headwaters for all Canadians; renowned as a place to learn – to experience a living vital landscape & its people, grow in knowledge & respect & share decisions ensuring its all time health
Brewsters’ Glacier Skywalk

Highly controversial development

Seeks to give everyone access to views only climbers had previously
Educative Mission in line with Parks Canada’s wider strategic remit

Bilingual interpretation boards & multi-lingual audio tours on geology, landscape, flora & fauna

Educators impart hands-on natural history information
Natural History Artefacts

Birds of prey skulls – using museum style learning outside the museum

Bear skull & footprint
The Role of Museums & Galleries – can demonstrate eco-tourism principles effectively by inviting reflection.
The Whyte Museum, Banff

Catherine & Peter Whyte’s love of the mountains
The Whyte Museum Mission

Gateway to experiencing art, culture & history of the Rockies in order to inspire & cultivate knowledge & the exchange of ideas

The Vaux Family 1900s
The Whyte Museum's *Legacy in Time* Exhibition: *Three Generations of Photography in the Canadian West*

highlights glacier shrinkage by juxtaposing images old and new over a 100 years by Henry Vaux Jr. re-tracing his ancestors’ steps & work

Illecillewaet Glacier 1902

Illecillewaet Glacier 2002
Interpretation throughout the Parks

Coach driver/interpreter

Handling artefacts
Interpretative bi-lingual boards throughout National Parks

Athabasca Falls, Jasper

Fossil Interpretation board
Aboriginal Interpretative Connections

Spiritual vistas at Lone Clearing ancestral home to the Ktunaxa people

Aboriginal Interpretative panels in English

These Mountains are Our Sacred Places

The creator placed us at Wapta Mothbi (Crackling River), a favoured area that holds significant spirituality and a wealth of wildlife, food and medicinal plants.

Long before European explorers, a Stoney party arrived at its traditional hunting encampment. They spotted bighorn sheep high on the mountain slopes. Although the sun was setting and elders warned him to wait for a new day, a skilled young hunter scaled the mountains and shot some sheep. That night they all feasted.

These are our homelands where we thrive, follow the sacred traditions of our ancestors and maintain our cultural beliefs and spirituality.

Oral History shared by Rock Abraham, Jim Wildman & the Stoney Mountain Traditional Knowledge Group. Title courtesy of the Reverend Chief John Snow & family.
Lone Clearing

The Piikani have moved nomadically through Lone Clearing since time immemorial.

The Lone Clearing spanned a great distance along the mountains’ edge, from the Yellowstone River to the North Saskatchewan River.

This area provided an abundance of food such as bison, deer, elk, and was used for gathering traditional medicines, roots, berries and red ochre paint.

After the arrival of European explorers, the Piikani continued to travel through Lone Clearing to trade at Rocky Mountain House and Edmonton House.

Oral history shared by Wilford Yellowings & Trevor Kiitskii.

Ktunaxa Trails Across the Mountains

For many years before European settlers came to these traditional areas, the Ktunaxa lived on the valleys, benchlands and plains along the mountains. The Ktunaxa made trails across the mountains to hunt buffalo on the plains of present-day Alberta. Along these trails were places for hunting, gathering, sacred dances and ceremonies.

In later years, European explorers used Ktunaxa trails through Howse Pass to cross the mountains.

During the fur trade, the Ktunaxa continued to travel through Howse Pass to get to Rocky Mountain House and as far away as present-day Edmonton and Saskatchewan.

Oral history shared by Ktunaxa Nation.
Hotels display social history images and artefacts and many hotels are co-operatives owned & run by enterprising First Nation peoples.

First Nation Dreamcatcher

First Nation Artefacts and Images
Hotels display natural history specimens

Grizzly Bear

Grey Wolf
The Past, Present & Future

Climate Change Gallery
Royal BC Museum Victoria

Aboriginal people’s oral history exhibition at Museum of Anthropology Vancouver

When we were talking about časnaʔam, it took a long time to say, “It’s not a midden, it’s our village site.” When you talk about a village site, it changes how you look at it. It changes how you connect to it. It changes what you feel that’s rising out of that earth.

txʷsnəʔa:ł - Wendy Grant-John

Today we have concrete. We don’t have any real forests. We don’t have salmon-bearing streams. We don’t have plants for medicine. We have to import all of that from someone else’s territory. That’s part of the colonial system: you come in and you harvest everything and leave behind devastated people. It’s progress, but it’s not sustainable progress. That’s how I feel about Vancouver.

sʔayalqə - Larry Grant
Conclusions: aspirations & progress positive in developing the WHS on eco-tourism principles. The balance between tourism and preservation is, as ever, fragile – need to monitor & review critical
Lake Louise, Banff National Park

With thanks to The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies & Henry Vaux Jr

suedavies01@aol.com

Sue Davies Cultural & Heritage Associates