The Purdy Crawford Chair
In Aboriginal Business Studies

Case Studies in Aboriginal Business

Tourism at Broughton Archipelago
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The Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies was established at Cape Breton University in 2010 in response to Aboriginal community leaders’ expression of the need for entrepreneurship, business investment, and corporate skills training for the purpose of creating a model of self-reliance.

Named in honour of Canadian lawyer and corporate boardroom leader, the late Mr. Purdy Crawford, the Chair aims to promote interest among Canada’s Aboriginal people in the study of business at the post-secondary level.

The Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies focuses its work in four areas:

- Research on what “drives” success in Aboriginal Business
- National student recruitment in the area of post-secondary Aboriginal business education
- Enhancement of the post-secondary Aboriginal business curriculum
- Mentorship at high school and post-secondary levels

“Meaningful self-government and economic self-sufficiency provide the cornerstone of sustainable communities. My wish is to enhance First Nations post-secondary education and research to allow for the promotion and development of national Aboriginal business practices and enterprises.”

Purdy Crawford, C. C. (1931-2014)
TOURISM AT BROUGHTON ARCHIPELAGO

On September 20, 2014, photographs of burial boxes and skeletal remains taken during a tour of the Broughton Archipelago off the coast of Vancouver Island gained media attention in British Columbia. The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia was contacted about the incident by some of their stakeholders and members of the broader tourism community. CEO Keith Henry and the board of directors had to decide how best to address their concerns.

ABORIGINAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Established in 1996, the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC) is a non-profit organization that promotes and advances sustainable economic development of Aboriginal tourism in the province. Their work is based in principles of authenticity, respect, and a prosperous tourism industry. As part of its mandate to establish and promote market-ready Aboriginal tourism products, AtBC provides training, resources, and support to tourism operators and stakeholders. AtBC also plays a role in Aboriginal tourism advocacy.

The organization is centered on stakeholder-based operation. These stakeholders partner with AtBC and in return AtBC is able to provide their tourism-based businesses and operations with promotion, training and developmental tools, and, as part of their governance structure, involvement in decision-making regarding Aboriginal cultural tourism in the province. Their strategic priorities include advancing market-readiness, building and strengthening partnerships, expanding online marketing, targeting key and emerging markets, focusing on authenticity and quality assurance, and taking a regional approach.

KEITH HENRY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Keith Henry became the CEO of AtBC in 2008. He has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan and has worked with various Aboriginal communities since receiving his degree in 1995. Keith is a Métis person originally from Manitoba and has engaged with the Métis Nation in various capacities, including his ongoing work with the Métis Nation of British Columbia since 2003.

The AtBC board of directors is comprised of seven directors at large, representatives from five regions of BC, a treasurer, a chair, and a co-chair. Each member of the board is Aboriginal and has extensive experience working in Aboriginal communities, businesses, and tourism, some of which are also stakeholders in AtBC.
BROUGHTON ARCHIPELAGO

Broughton Archipelago, the traditional territory of Kwakwaka'wakw, consists of a number of islands and islets in the Queen Charlotte Straight, off the coast of Vancouver Island. It is also the site of the Broughton Archipelago Provincial Park, established in 1992. With its scenic beauty and waterways, the area is attractive to tourists, particularly sea kayakers. Tourists visiting the area often come across petroglyphs and mussel shell remnants which remain from various First Nation villages that were once located on these islands. There are strict conservation policies in place within the park and tourists are asked to practice “leave no trace” ethics while visiting.

INCIDENT AT BROUGHTON ARCHIPELAGO

In April 2014, images of burial boxes and skeletal remains surfaced online in tourism blogs. The images had been taken by tourists from Washington State on a remote island of the Broughton Archipelago during a tour conducted by an Aboriginal tourism operator. He ran an adventure-based tourism business featuring activities such as kayaking, wildlife viewings, and cultural experiences year-round.

On September 20, 2014, these photographs and the April 2014 tour of Broughton Archipelago received media coverage in Washington State. As the news of the incident came north to British Columbia, the tour operator’s First Nation learned of the incident and decided the remove him from his watchman duties for the community. Soon after, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Government of British Columbia were notified of the incident. Following a review of the British Columbia Heritage and Conservation Act there were no charges recommended by the RCMP.

The tourists who had posted images of the burial site online were contacted by the media. They explained that the tour operator had told them they were permitted to take photographs and video footage of the site. When questioned by the media about these statements, the tour operator responded this was his way of informing the public of what was present at the site and deterring others from disturbing it.

There was little coverage of the incident nationally; however, the news travelled quickly through the tourism community of British Columbia, and AtBC was contacted multiple times about the incident. The tour operator had been involved in AtBC in the past, so some of AtBC’s stakeholders contacted the organization because they were concerned he may still be associated with it or that AtBC might be supporting him.
TOURISM AT SACRED SITES

In many instances, there are sacred areas within provincial and national parks in Canada. The sacred areas in Broughton Archipelago Provincial Park are not supposed to be disturbed by tourists, as BC Parks aims to protect the area’s cultural heritage and conserve its environment. Sacred sites are often restricted for First Nation ceremonial use and are off limits to tourists. AtBC does not support tourism in sacred sites, such as burial grounds; rather, they aim to guide and educate operators on the proper approaches to Aboriginal cultural tourism.

CONCLUSION

AtBC’s stakeholders and the tourism community in general were concerned about the incident at Broughton Archipelago off the coast of Vancouver Island when it received media coverage on September 20, 2014. Keith Henry, the CEO of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia, and the association’s board of directors, had to decide how best to address these concerns.