

Nature and Wellness Tourism Innovators Workshop
Developing New Business Opportunities



Final Report

Presented to:

Yukon Territorial Government, Department of Tourism and Culture
North to Knowledge (N2K)
Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), Frank Verschuren
Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon (TIA Yukon)
Yukon Wholistic Health Network

By:

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Whitehorse, Yukon

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At a Glance

Workshop Coordinators

- Teresa Earle teresa@earle.ca 867-667-6472
- Suzanne de la Barre northernknowledgeexpeditions@yahoo.ca 867-633-6904

Workshop dates

Friday, 20 January and Saturday, 21 January, 2006

Venues

High Country Inn and Hotsprings Valley Retreat Centre

Funders

- Department of Tourism and Culture, YTG
- N2K Learning Travel Product Club
- Canadian Tourism Commission
- Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon
- Yukon Wholistic Health Network

Promotion

- 2 purchased ads in the Yukon News: Friday January 6 and Friday January 13, 2006
- TIA Yukon, Tourism Times, Tourism Industry Events Winter Planning section, Yukon News insert, Friday, December 2, 2005, p. 69
- Coming events, Yukon News, December 13, 2005 through to January 20, 2006
- Poster in Zola's Café Doré, White Pass and Yukon Route building 1st floor, Coast Mountain Sports, and on WTAY door
- Numerous rounds of information emails sent to a variety of organizational memberships via their distribution lists including: TIA Yukon, N2K, Tourism Yukon, WTAY E-News
- Numerous phone calls

Media

- *See the sites and shrink your tights: Tourism is good for you!* Yukon News, Friday, January 13, 2006, p. 62
- Interview with workshop coordinators Teresa Earle and Suzanne de la Barre, CBC Yukon: A New Day, Monday, January 23, 2006
- Interview with Suzanne de la Barre, Radio Canada (Vancouver), aired on Sunday, February 3, 2006.

Participants

- 30% nature tourism
- 19% wellness sector
- 10% accommodations and catering
- 7% receptive tour operators
- 9% NGO's
- 13% government
- 12% other, which includes private tourism development consultants and artists

Background

Significant potential lies in the Yukon's ability to more fully develop niche tourism business opportunities that package nature and/or wellness experiences. The purpose of this workshop was to foster nature and wellness tourism innovation in the Yukon. While exploring the potential of these key markets, we focused on strategic entrepreneurial opportunities and partnerships. The intent was to capitalize on the Yukon's rich natural and wellness assets and integrate them into unique and expanded product offerings for visitors.

Nature-Based Tourism

The Yukon tourism industry is firmly anchored by the territory's natural appeal. Each year, close to 300,000 visitors come to experience the legendary pristine and wild nature of the Yukon. Their experiences range from multi-day wilderness adventures to softer excursions and daytrips. Recent research from the Yukon Branding exercise confirms that the Yukon's most promising markets are visitors who seek authentic and personally rewarding experiences in natural settings.

This workshop explored a promising niche opportunity by fostering partnerships between tourism businesses and wellness professionals. It gave tourism entrepreneurs and leaders an opportunity to examine nature-based tourism in the Yukon and touch on some of the opportunities and challenges.

Health & Wellness Tourism

The workshop provided information about health and wellness tourism, how to build new products and relationships in the tourism industry, and how to package health and wellness products and services with complementary ones such as nature tourism. For an overview of some of the information that was introduced at the workshop, have a look at *A Feasibility Study for a Yukon Health and Wellness Tourism Industry*. The study, which was completed in May 2005 for Yukon Government's Department of Tourism and Culture and the North to Knowledge Learning Travel Product Club (N2K), is accessible online. Go to: <http://www.touryukon.org/> under "Product Development and Research" or direct link to: <http://www.tirc.gov.yk.ca/> under "Sundry Reports." The feasibility study is also available in the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon's (WTAY) Learning Travel Resources page. Go to: <http://www.wtay.com/n2k.aspx>

“There is a natural alliance between the Yukon’s traditional tourism industry, and the territory’s existing and potential health and wellness businesses.”

- YHWT Feasibility Study, p. 3

Introduction

Over 65 people came together over the two day workshop held on January 20-21, 2006 at the High Country Inn to discuss and explore the theme of nature and wellness tourism in the Yukon. Participants included nature tourism operators, wellness service and product providers – including a variety of alternative therapy practitioners – government department representatives, non-governmental organization representatives (tourism, environmental and alternative health), accommodations and retreat facilities owners and operators, and sport and fitness professionals and facility managers. This report has been created to report on the workshop to those who were able to attend, as well as to provide information to those who were unable to participate.

Friday, January 20

Setting the Stage: Positioning Yukon Nature and Wellness Tourism

Session Description: *Denny Kobayashi is the manager of marketing operations for North America for the Yukon Department of Tourism & Culture. He opened the workshop with an introductory perspective on marketing nature and wellness tourism and discussed the Yukon's tourism branding exercise and its connection to nature and wellness.*

Nature Tourism: Trends and Opportunities

Session Description: *Naturalist, expedition leader, bush pilot, astronomer and owner of Nature Trails in Ontario, Robin Tapley has been called 'Muskoka's Nature Nut'. Robin provided snapshots of nature tourism trends and opportunities from across Canada and around the world. He also commented on what's new in nature tourism, what works, and why.*



Nature Tourism in the Yukon

Session Description: *Longtime tourism professional and consultant Darielle Talarico discussed the history of nature tourism in the Yukon including industry milestones and management issues. She also provided an informal survey of current product and what national and international trends can mean for the Yukon.*

Introduction to HWT: CTC – National & international context

Session Description: *Spa, Health and Wellness tourism has garnered considerable attention in the last decade or so. Frank Verschuren, CTC Product Specialist for this portfolio, introduced us to this tourism sector and provided us with the 'big picture' from a Canadian Tourism Commission perspective.*

Introduction to HWT: Industry – National & international context

Session Description: *Pat Corbett, chairman of the CTC Spa, Health and Wellness Task Force and owner of Hills Health Ranch in BC, shared knowledge and insights on product development, packaging and the emerging health and wellness tourism markets.*

Health and Wellness Tourism in the Yukon

Session Description: *Suzanne de la Barre is a co-author of the Yukon Health and Wellness Tourism Feasibility Study. She provided highlights from the feasibility study which included an overview of ideas for defining a Yukon-style health and wellness tourism experience; significant trends and their implications for wellness tourism in the Yukon; and, proposed summary recommendations.*

“Wellness tourism is the sum of all relationships and phenomenon resulting from a journey by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health and well being.”

- YHWT Feasibility Study, p. 17

Wellness Tourism Market

Session Description: *Denny Kobayashi, Tourism Yukon’s manager of marketing operations for North America, presented a ‘hot off the press’ overview of markets and destination branding for nature and wellness tourism.*

Friday session presentations are available!

If you would like a copy of any of the PowerPoint presentations that were part of the Friday sessions, please contact TIA Yukon and request a copy of the presentation.

Saturday, January 21

Session 1: Concurrent Interactive Seminars

Three concurrent and interactive sessions highlighted national and local resource people who first provided brief perspective statements or advice on specific themes.

A: Wellness forum: How can I adapt and promote my wellness product for tourism?

Session Description: *Thinking about enhancing or promoting your wellness product for visitors to the Yukon? Want to work with tourism operators and facilities owners? Our resource panel provided some advice and opened up the floor to a lively discussion on how to partner with tourism and other providers and reach wellness business goals. [12 participants] Resource panel: Pat Corbett, Frank Verschuren, Bev Gray, Suzanne de la Barre*

Report:

- Wellness angle can give value-added appeal to nature (and other tourism experiences)
- Wellness angle offers an opportunity to diversify a product
- It’s important to brand yourself
- First you need to have a plan

- You must be (and continue to become) an expert in your field
- Get some training and keep it up to date
- Network: find similar businesses and network with them, and use word of mouth!
- Engage the local community
- Create partnerships!
- Lots of opportunities for sponsoring events and gaining support and promotional opportunities through sponsorship... Sport events!
- Need to be prepared for a lot of hard work and dedication
- Keep public informed: use the press, radio, etc.
- Lifestyle business requires a commitment
- Lifestyle business requires that you consider what you want to “sell” about what it is you love doing and how – careful to hang on to what you love doing
- Embrace uniqueness
- Consider creating or joining “think tank” sessions such as this one we are in presently
- How to get the word out? We need something similar to the “Art Adventures” – a wellness business directory or registry that can be used for both residents and visitors to the Yukon. Not to mention tour operators and other tourism receptors

B: Nature tourism forum: Has it all been done before? What lies ahead?

Session Description: *Has it all been done before, or can we collectively chart an exciting, innovative course for nature tourism in the Yukon? Join our resource panel to talk about the issues and challenges for nature tourism today and talk about your Yukon nature tourism business goals. [20 participants] Resource panel: Robin Tapley, Dennis Zimmermann, Darielle Talarico, Jill Pangman, Mark Stenzig*

Report:

- It’s not all been done before – any limitation is only in our imaginations
- Niches are unlimited (eg geological tours, wellness experiences etc)
- Suggest that operators incorporate elements of these ideas/products incrementally
- It’s all about marketing – the demand is there
- Don’t limit the definition of nature-based tourism; for some it’s having a smokie-on-a-stick on the side of the road, for others it’s a multi-day wilderness experience
- We need to think pig picture in terms of our nature tourism hot spots; we need to view wilderness as a tool for the experience
- We need to identify the ten top spots immediately to ensure this sector has a land base
- Eyes of the south are on us re: resource devt; Yukon has the opportunity now to identify these areas (protected areas and wildlife viewing areas)
- Edu-tourism is a way of broadening what you can deliver – eg the stars etc in the absence of aurora; night hikes, wolf howls, spiritual connection with nature, mushrooms, wild plants, art, culinary...etc
- Need to do more niche in our marketing; how to secure markets for specialty products
- Danger of too niche and how to still re-enforce brand and the broader campaign
- How to sustain operators (burnout, staffing issues etc)
- Think of niche products that appeal to broader markets, not too much niche market
- Strong connection to lifestyle, importance of working with local people and local businesses...is part of the sales appeal of the Yukon
- Stewardship – protecting quality of land for the next guy – eg Leave No Trace etc

- Offering shorter excursions for all those with limited time, trend to shorter trips
- Appeal of 'do nothing' trips (ie a minus 40 experience in Dawson etc)
- We haven't secured the land base for tourism yet
- Heavy use in a few areas, how to keep the quality high
- Need for community buy-in (ie success of Faro and Keno wildlife viewing programs)
- Need to keep paying attention to expectations and quality of experience
- Focus on learning and empowerment in the bush
- Increase interaction between nature programs (ie YG wildlife viewing etc) and operators and tourism associations; collaborate on training and partnerships
- WTAY is currently identifying key tourism and wildlife areas of importance to tourism, looking at Leave No Trace (ie issues re self-guided trips), reviewing WTL Act and regs
- We need to look at other regions, look outside the Yukon and develop partnerships, and reframe the traditional 'canoe trip down the Yukon'
- Issues of managing conflicting land use keep coming up
- We need a paradigm shift in the Yukon and tourism has an important role
- Developing new partnerships and adding 'layers' to our industry and products
- Do a product inventory of nature and wellness products

C: How facilities can collaborate with spa and wellness professionals: An informal discussion with Juanita Corbett for facility owners *(For retreat centres, B&Bs, hotels and inns, day spas, sports and wellness centres)*

Session Description: *Whether you want to incorporate offering spa type services to your guests – for instance the services of a masseuse, who need not be housed on site – or whether you are looking to build spa services right into your facility, join Juanita in an informal discussion that will help guide your next steps. [10 participants]*

Report:

- Mission statements are important: What is your facility's mission statement?
- Important to know your market
- Use contracts
- Build in stages
- Remember that standards are important for safety, product and services



Networking!

Session 2: Marketing Nature and Wellness Tourism Experiences

Session Description: Participants heard from a panel of tourism business owners and marketing experts who shared insights from their experience marketing nature and wellness tourism products. The experts included: Frank Verschuren (CTC), Pat Corbett (Hills Health Ranch, BC) Robin Tapley (Nature Trails, ON), Denny Kobayashi (Yukon Tourism & Culture), Robin Anderson (Latitude Destination Management) and Jill Pangman (Sila Soujourns). The interactive session highlighted such issues as: What sells, to whom, and why? Are there particular challenges with marketing nature and wellness, and what are some of the gems that years of tourism marketing experience can reveal? [34 participants]

Report:

- Passion is at the core of your brand, is key to self-marketing
- Importance of a visioning statement to HWT – re positioning your product or service to target markets
- Stakeholders – identify them. Need time, talent, and financial resources.
- Identify your Top 3 things you need to do
- Partnerships – eg. Robin Tapley and Delta Hotels
- Public Relations – promotion through the media; use tagline (eg Pat: ‘Steam and Cream’); free publicity; send out press releases regularly
- Internet as a marketing tool – the power of the web, ability to be fresh
- The experience is key – the people and guides involved, the place, the lifestyle
- Women market – over 45
- Packaging – ie Spa and golf, spouse packages, new ideas, ‘do nothing’
- Leverage Yukon Tourism’s brand strategy
- Yukon Tourism Marketing Fund
- Media FAM (familiarization) trips
- Yukon Scenic Drives websites – need to add health and wellness
- Volume
- Always see it as niche experiences for broad markets (vs experiences for niche markets)
- Multi-tasking role of business operator: product development, marketing, possibilities, niche product and marketing...is hard!
- Know when to get professional help with marketing – you can’t do it all
- Product = Experience

Making it Happen: Planning the Nature and Wellness Tourism Experience

Session Description: Want to know more about what nature and wellness products look like in the Yukon? Want to get a feel for how you can make these products come to life? We heard from a variety of Yukon tourism businesses and were introduced to their nature and wellness tourism products. The bulk of this session was a facilitated hands-on product building experience that provided participants with an opportunity to network while they innovated and ‘created’ a nature and wellness tourism product. [40 participants]

Report:

The participatory afternoon session began with three Yukon tourism operators speaking about their businesses and how they are already integrating nature and wellness into visitor packages: Kim Lawson (Sundog Retreat), Denise Schneider (Arctic Women Expeditions) and Robin Anderson (Latitude Destination Management).

After the presentations, everyone was divided into five groups of 7-8 people and assigned a facilitator. Each group was comprised of a cross-section of sectors and interests such as nature tourism, wellness, accommodation and government. Groups were tasked with working together to create and package a nature and wellness tourism experience based on the products and services available within their small group.

Patti

- The discussion began with goals and ideas about visitors might want to feel once they have completed their tourism experience.
- Ideas on this included: growth, catalyst for change
- Product: A well rounded product: rest, food, activity, price, venues, themes
- Positive experience that begets more: tell 2 friends and repeat business
- In-pricing – leverage existing events (music festival, storytelling, guided free hikes)
- “Festival”: an itinerary of community-based activities with paid, specialized tours.
- The paid element has to be flexible and tends to be a bit more expensive.
- Product: “In light of solstice”
 - o Midnight sun
 - o Light
 - o Integrated cultural familiarity of the market (the PRIDE flag colors)
- Sun Celebrations
- Group size: 13-15
- Duration: 4 to 5 days, for outsiders. 1-2 days for locals
 - o “Sundog” light hot tub
- Core elements: breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Options:
 - o Drumming (\$30)
 - o Learn – storytelling/folklore (FN)
 - o Candle making
 - o Astronomy
 - o Solstice related ceremony
 - o Reiki (means “Universal light”) (\$60)
 - o Meditation (\$10)
 - o Yoga (\$10)
 - o Guided hike (\$30)
 - o Free time
 - o Water color painting (\$25)
 - o Hotsprings
 - o Journaling (\$25 for three hours)
 - o Canoe trip (\$40)
- Food element
 - o Uniquely Yukon
 - o Organic
 - o Local and fresh
 - o Healthful
- Pricing exercise followed: \$ 999.00 plus add on activity costs.

Suzanne

- The session began with introductions and a brief description of type of business or service people represented
- A brief discussion on whether we wanted to start with discussing our product goals, vision, our potential market or our product followed. It was decided to describe the product first as generic / skeleton product then adapt to different kinds of market
- Three things were stated as important: 1) we have a unique setting, 2) we can take advantage of an environmental angle because of some of the principles we identified with the retreat centre (one of our product components), and 3) we can act as the place to bring these two things together
- 3 days at the Hotsprings and one add-on day at Kluane B & B
- Day 0: Whitehorse arrival night before
- Day 1: Breakfast and optional guided meditation
- Snowshoe walk to dog mushing (idea here is slowing them down and getting them acclimatized) and lunch at dog kennel
- Playing with puppies and the dogs, familiarization and bus back to the hotsprings
- Dinner and dip into the hotsprings: End Day 1
- Day 2: Breakfast and bus to kennel and educational session on how to dress for the cold and for dog mushing then some dog sledding
- Lunch outdoors around a fire and sled back to kennel
- Bus and go to Bean North for a presentation on Fair Trade coffee and the North (with a cup of coffee or hot chocolate) and dip into the hotsprings
- Dinner and evening options: Astronomy or guided meditation with bonfire: End Day 2
- Day 3: Late breakfast and guided meditation: Connecting to the land and plants
- Herbal medicine workshop (make something they can take with them)
- Lunch and Wildlife preserve tour
- Take bus down to main street and shop for an hour or so: Give them a brief intro on what they can do (other things than shopping for instance) and have dinner in town
- Bus back to retreat centre: End Day 3
- Day 4: Optional add-on: Bus to Whitehorse airport
- Fly to Kluane "Yukon Wings," Glacier tour and fondue lunch on the glacier
- Van from University of Calgary research station (AINA) runway to Kluane B & B
- Do nothing for the rest of the day (optional walks, etc.)
- Dinner and astronomy session
- Day 5: Breakfast, Drive back to Whitehorse, Hotel
- Market: Brief discussion on who was our market: "Explorer," over 45, high income, active, adventurous
- Product description: Small group activity (this was a lengthy discussion on whether or not folks want to be with people they don't know. The group decided on a small group trip sold as such up front: Maximum 10 people given capacity of all of our service providers and the experience the group was trying to sell.
- Other possible markets: Japanese, women's only (need to consider gender of service providers if all women's tour)
- Run 2 programs per winter (Feb. and March)

Darielle

- Product: Woman's Winter Quest
- The Market: Female, Type A, North American, dogsledding and skiing, nature, ego
- Yukon: Northern experience, real wilderness experience, learning experiences, self-sufficient, discover yourself again, 'survival' (bragging rights back at home)

- Hills Health Ranch: Pampering, recuperate, natural products, transition to home
- Day 1: Arrival
 - o Overnight in Whitehorse at a B&B
 - o Checklist of what they want
 - o Shopping, dinner, food/drink prep and clothing prep
- Day 2
 - o Transfer to Wheaton River Wilderness Retreat
 - o Stop in to visit Marlynn – snowshoe, dinner, sauna
- Day 3
 - o Breakfast, guided meditation
 - o Transfer to Lebarge with lunch in Whitehorse
 - o Meet a dog team
 - o Dinner, sauna, cabin, Marlynn, aurora
- Day 4
 - o Breakfast, guided meditation
 - o Small activity
 - o Transfer to Whitehorse
 - o Shopping, massage, nails
 - o Restaurant dinner (Cranberry Bistro)
- Day 5
 - o Departure to Hills Health Ranch

Teresa

- After a round of introductions and describing their products and services, the group mapped their tourism infrastructure and assets, including a list of all activities: herb walks, sea kayaking and canoeing, hiking, backpacking, yoga, photography, basketmaking, writing, arts experiences (writing, stained glass), historical and nature interpretation, aromatic head massage, sauna, fishing, lake-based explorations, cabin stays and bed and breakfasts
- Product #1: Winter Wilderness + Wellness Getaway
 - o Accommodation: Wheaton River Wilderness Retreat – stay first and last night at the retreat, with a multi-day winter wilderness experience in the middle
 - o # nights: 3+ (depends on length of wilderness experience)
 - o Multi-day activity: Winter camping package featuring skiing or snowshoeing, with campfire cooking lessons, wilderness survival education etc
 - o Aftercare at the retreat: sauna, aromatherapy head massage, onsite massages
 - o A la carte day activities back at the retreat: work with a personal trainer, extreme activities, nearby skating rink, basketmaking, dogmushing
- Product #2: Crag Lake Wild Creative Retreat
 - o Accommodation: Dunroamin' Retreat
 - o # nights: 2
 - o First Day activities: art workshop, fishing excursion
 - o Second Day activities: Caribou Mountain hike and herb walk (gathering edibles), cooking experience
 - o Second Evening: Couples Spa-in-the-Woods, day-end aftercare that includes teaching to do a nurturing massage
 - o A la carte activities: wood-fired bathtub with a view, hot cocoa by the fire pit, relaxing walks and reading...

Shannon

- 4/5 multi-day trip
- Hot springs valley retreat:
 - o hot water pool
 - o peace and quite
 - o adventure opportunities
 - o food and lodging
 - o pre-trip meeting space
- Tai chi (wellness)
- Downtown pick up
- ½ day canoe trip – guided with interpretation and picnic lunch
- Transfer from river
- Wilderness and Wellness: Day One:
 - o ensure clients have proper gear
 - o transfer to retreat centre
 - o introduction to trip (wellness)
 - o healthy meal
 - o free time
 - o bed

Day two: Tai chi, run or hike

- o breakfast
- o start paddling
- o shore lunch (berry picking, herbal walk, fishing, use foliage workshop)
- o paddle (4 hours)
- o spa evening-nature style (massage, mediation, athletic therapy)
- o bed

Day three: Morning depart – wildlife therapy (2 hours)

- o healthy breakfast
- o paddle
- o lunch - land
- o build sauna (have essential oils)
- o swim
- o dinner – after dinner photo workshop
- o overnight
- o

Day four: Tai chi, run, hike or meditation

- o breakfast
- o start paddling
- o lunch prepared by clients under guide direction
- o berry picking, herbal walk, fishing, use foliage workshop
- o off river and transfer to retreat
- o Final dinner: wellness cuisine workshop (using what was gathered earlier that day)
- o spa night: massage, facials, therapeutic wraps, feedback, spiritual connection

Day five: breakfast and transfer to airport

Option to stay an extra day

Net price: \$2750 pp and retail \$3300 pp

Plenary and Recommendations

All five groups presented their product in the plenary session. They also discussed some of the issues that came up in the product building session (i.e. markets, pricing, etc.).

The participants were asked to fill in their evaluation forms so that suggestions for next steps would be recorded. Some discussion followed on what possible next steps might be, with agreement on the need for the report to be made accessible to participants present at the workshop as well as to interested individuals who were not able to attend. It was proposed that the report be made available on the TIA Yukon website, as well as other websites as appropriate (WTAY, TIRC, etc). See “Evaluation Results” section for more information on recommendations.



More networking!

Evening Event



The workshop included a very successful evening event for 35 people at the Hotsprings Valley Retreat Centre. The evening featured a delicious meal prepared for us by Takhini Hot Springs Catering, a Northern Skies educational session with Robin Tapley, and a “Heavenly Meditation” demo with Eleanor Velarde.

Schedule of events:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 5:30 | Bus transportation left downtown Whitehorse |
| 6:00 to 7:30 | Dinner at the Hotsprings Valley Retreat Centre |
| 7:30 to 9:30 | <i>Northern Skies</i> : An evening with Robin Tapley and <i>Heavenly Meditation</i> with Eleanor Velarde, followed by a bonfire |
| 9:00 and 9:30 | Buses left Hotsprings Retreat to return downtown |

Objectives: Expose participating operators and practitioners to a high quality visitor experience that packaged nature and wellness components and help shape discussions about product development and market expectations.

Outcome: Aside from being a memorable evening with a broad range of nature tourism and wellness sector participants, everyone raved about the concept and the quality of the event. Well over half of the evening participants owned tourism businesses or offered wellness products and services. The rest were organizers, speakers, and government and association representatives. Robin presented lots of practical, useful information and ideas about delivering astronomy and aurora interpretive experiences, and Eleanor lead a wonderful guided meditation that introduced meditation in an inclusive, comfortable way.



“Wellness is an active, lifelong process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more healthy and fulfilling life.”

- YHWT Feasibility Study, p. 11

Catering



Our criteria:

1. As much as possible, the ingredients, preparation and presentation of food and beverages should help deliver and reinforce the nature and wellness experience.
2. We encouraged caterers to provide written information, visual graphics or a brief presentation about the foods served (eg. food origin, nutritional or healing properties, info about ingredients, etc).

We selected the **High Country Inn** (the venue) to provide early refreshments and to cater the two lunches. Their staff went to great lengths to meet our challenge—they adjusted their menu in consultation with us, the foods were presented and labelled with our objectives in mind, and the executive chef gave an engaging lunch introduction on Day 1.

After soliciting proposals from five catering companies, we selected **Alpine Bakery** to cater the wellness breaks on Day 1, and we chose **The Chocolate Claim** to cater the wellness breaks on Day 2. For the evening event, we selected **Takhini Hot Springs Catering**. All businesses rose to the challenge and eagerly accommodated our special objectives. Highlights of the Alpine Bakery menu included three kinds of fresh squeezed juice, handmade organic chocolates, smoked local salmon, and organic baked goods. The Chocolate Claim menu featured fresh-baked scones, organic fruit, and trays of organic veggies and dip. Highlights from the dinner at the Hotsprings Retreat Centre included local bison, local Arctic char, organic fruits and root vegetables, and organic wines.

Objectives: Education and awareness were key objectives of this symposium, and we felt that the setting and atmosphere were as important as the sessions themselves. Through a Request For Proposals, we challenged local catering companies to create innovative and healthy culinary selections that demonstrate how food and nutritional information can enhance nature and wellness tourism experiences. We asked caterers to place information cards on tables near the food, and we encouraged caterers to present their fare to the audience.



Outcomes: The catering component constituted a significant part of the cost of the conference; however, the feedback about the food was extremely positive and the catering firms essentially became an extension of the workshop and product-building experience. There was broad appreciation about the role of food in delivering a quality nature and wellness visitor experience. Overall, the strong success of the catering program appeared to have made it well worth the investment.

Demos

The workshop program included 7 “demos” presented to the participants by local wellness practitioners.



Reiki with Susan Gwynne-Timothy

Objectives:

- Increase participant knowledge of wellness practices, treatments, services, products and philosophies
- Increase participant awareness of wellness services available locally
- Engage participants and enhance the hands-on nature of the workshop
- Create a memorable and fun learning environment

Outcomes:

These hands-on, 15-20 minute presentations were key in creating an experiential and memorable learning activity which engaged the participants and helped them to better understand how wellness practices can be integrated into tourism activities.



Yoga with Juliette Anglehart

Demo Presenters:

Bev Gray, R.A., CH, *is an herbalist and founder of Aroma Borealis, a Whitehorse business that creates Yukon-made all-natural body care products and herbal teas. Bev leads herb walks and talks and medicine making workshops throughout the summer.*

Shelley Gellatly *is an athletic therapist in Whitehorse who also organizes and offers sport tourism products through her business, Northern Athletic Experiences. Shelley has also worked as an interpreter and visitor activity manager with national parks and as a private ski guide.*

Cheryl Buchan, RMT, NTS *has been a certified Trager practitioner since 1992. She conducts sessions in her home studio and movement classes through the Yukon's Tai Chi Association.*

Eleanor Velarde *is a meditation practitioner in Whitehorse who offers a variety of wellness services through her business HODIYIN: SACRED PLACE.*

Susan Gwynne-Timothy *is trained in Reiki, Inner Journeying, Core Energy Management and Foot Reflexology. Her work is also based on body awareness from her career as an international rower.*

Lee Randell *is a Certified Personal Trainer who offers a variety of wellness services through Peak Fitness, a Whitehorse gym and fitness studio.*

Juliette Anglehart *is a yoga instructor and founder/owner of Shanti Yoga in downtown Whitehorse.*

Business Showcase

Registered participants were offered a free opportunity to display their nature or wellness products and services at the workshop.

Objectives: To showcase nature and wellness services, practitioners, facilities and professional associations to our participating tourism operators, health and wellness product and service providers, and Complementary and Alternate Medicine (CAM) Practitioners.

Outcomes: Close to a dozen businesses and organizations displayed information and promotional materials along tables in a central area that stayed busy with networking throughout the two-day event.

- Aroma Borealis
- Yukon Convention Bureau
- Yukon Conservation Society
- Yukon Wholistic Health Network
- Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
- Hodiyn: Sacred Place Workshops and Retreats
- Sila Sojourns
- Yukon Pride Adventure Tours
- Environment Yukon
- Bold Rush Drink and Cranberry Bistro

Evaluation Results

Number of respondents: 20 (or 50% of those present at the end of day 2). Note: Several respondents identified themselves in multiple categories. Sample evaluation form follows summary.

Evaluations by participant sector:

Wellness: 6
Nature: 4
Nature/wellness: 4
Accommodation: 7
Other/specify: Government (and nature) x2, receptive tour operator x2, health product, NGO (MCIT marketing) x1, writer x1, NGO (economic development) x1

Attendance: Most evaluation respondents who filled in the evaluation forms attended both days.

- 19 both days
- 1 x day 2 only

Summary:

Overall, the ratings were extremely favourable and participants almost exclusively chose a 4 to 5 scale for the workshop sessions (agree strongly – refer to the attached evaluation form).

Sessions that were deemed most useful: Some respondents chose more than one

- Marketing workshop x 4
- Found them all interesting x 3
- Day 2 afternoon, product and packaging exercise x 3
- Discussion and networking x 2
- Day 2 morning sessions x 2
- Trends and opportunities and wellness tourism market sessions
- How facilities can collaborate with spa service providers
- Denny's branding research
- Morning session on Day 2 with Juanita Corbett x 2
- Keynote speakers (Robin T. and Pat C.)

Sessions that were deemed least useful: Some respondents chose more than one

- Everything was useful x 5
- CTC presentation x 4
- Wellness national and international session x 2
- History of nature tourism in the Yukon x 2
- Wellness demos, though they were fun and interesting
- The ones I missed
- Building a product session

In addition, the following comments were also received:**What kind of follow-up to this workshop do you think would be useful?**

- Anything that would provide the fantastic networking opportunities arising from this workshop
- More core group strategic planning between wellness providers and tour operators interested in working together
- Plan our new industry (strategic planning)
- Product development
- Packaging and pricing
- Another 2 days, after report, with new people networked by repeaters
- Revisit this in a year
- More marketing ideas
- More networking possibilities and a directory/registry made available to promote and encourage partnership opportunities
- Develop a product guide that includes sport and fitness in the wellness envelope
- Report summary from TIAY x 4
- Follow up at TIA Yukon spring conference
- Workshops on marketing the product, how to make contact with investors
- Repeat and expand this workshop
- Database of resources available, ie booklet like the "Arts Adventure" studio guide
- Help new businesses understand what they can do to be successful

- Partnership and package development training, best practices, mentorships
- Workshop with same format. Carefully selected outside presenters are especially useful

Additional information / research for WELLNESS experience:

- Market research
- Legal requirements for doing business in the Yukon
- Marketing support from YTG?
- Knowing our brand
- Knowing how tourism will start marketing this and incorporating it into the Yukon brand
- More get-togethers with groups with full range of service providers in both nature and wellness sectors
- The branding strategy as it relates to this product
- Website devoted to new emerging markets for the Yukon that will keep suppliers etc up to date on new happenings
- Massages for all...!
- Database of products and services, ie booklet like the “Arts Adventure” studio guide
- Customer segment analysis for wellness consumers
- A ‘home’ where HWT stakeholders can help each other is urgent; existing tourism associations don’t seem to be able to do it. The mandate of the N2K could be broadened to the North-to-Knowledge AND WELLNESS association
- Money for training, Spa and personnel



Crazy gals Bev and Georgia just hangin' out!

Additional information / research for NATURE tourism experience:

- I'd like to see YTG tourism or TIA Yukon offer the kind of networking service support to us that YTG Economic Development and National Research Council offers to business product innovators
- Knowing our brand
- Leveraging money/sponsorships i.e., what Robin Tapley was talking about. How about another workshop on that?
- Political lobby to identify additional protected tourism sites
- Website devoted to new emerging markets for the Yukon that will keep suppliers etc up to date on new happenings

- Just research and hands-on
- Database of products and services including biologists, geologists, other specialists willing to work in the tourism industry
- Customer segment analysis for nature enthusiasts
- How the government can assist small business in getting into the game. How do we go about doing these things?

Any other comments or suggestions:

- I'd like to see YTG building partnerships between tourism and economic development to build a stronger tourism business sector. And for wellness, partnerships with Culture, Department of Environment, and Health and Social Services, so that they are all on the same page working for the market sector, assisting with our success and growth
- A one-day follow-up workshop that would present branding in terms of nature and wellness
- Food was excellent. Conference was very inexpensive. Good value! Should have been more people!
- This was great! Kudos to all who organized/planned/implemented!
- Good job!
- Thanks! Very well done.
- Overall a great two days. It has opened up to me just what is available when I start up my B&B. Networking is all important
- More networking opportunities!
- Sales workshops. Tips to closing the sale when you have an interested client.
- This was two very informative days with great inspirational people and super food.
- Excellent!
- Another session to really create 'new products'
- Great job, keep going!
- Identify the Yukon as a unique health and wellness destination. Establish a mission and objectives for this niche market. Add new health and wellness questions to all future tourist surveys. My bet is that this will dramatically affect survey results
- Thank you – a very innovative workshop!

***“Nature as Healer.
Wilderness as wellness.”***

- YHWT Feasibility Study, p. 14

Nature and Wellness Tourism Innovators Workshop
Developing New Business Opportunities

Workshop Evaluation

Please assist us in our future workshop and tourism product development initiatives by filling in this evaluation before you leave.

Please identify your sector:

Nature Tourism ___ Wellness ___ Accommodation ___ Others/specify _____

Please rate the value of the following workshop components on a scale of 1 to 5

(1=disagree and 5 = agree strongly)

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall workshop | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Workshop format | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Relevance of guest speakers/topics | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Wellness demos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Catering showcase | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Business showcase/displays | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Evening program at Hotsprings Retreat Centre | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Day 2 morning workshops | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Day 2 afternoon workshop | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Did you attend both days?

YES

NO

If no, which day/session's did you attend and why not both (all)?

Session most useful for me was _____

Session least useful for me was _____

What kind of follow-up to this workshop do you think would be useful?

What additional information / research might assist you in further developing a WELLNESS tourism experience?

What additional information / research might assist you in further developing a NATURE tourism experience?

Any other comments, suggestions, etc.:

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