THE ROLE OF THE SEA KAYAK TOUR GUIDE: MIXED METHODS EXPLORATION INTO THE GUIDES’ PERSPECTIVE

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

in

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

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ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY
January 2011
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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of wilderness tour guiding in order to identify how natural tourism guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver interpretation to clients. The study utilized personal interviews, participant field observations, and an industry survey. Interviews explored the perspectives of four veteran sea kayak guides, one raft and one mountain guide. Following the interviews a survey was administered to a British Columbia based sea kayak guiding professional body. Lastly, the results from both the interviews and survey were further explored through participant field observations of sea kayak guides leading commercial tours. Results demonstrate that sea kayak guides believe themselves to be facilitating opportunities for environmental and cultural learning and behavioral change within their clients; however, the field observations did not completely support the survey results, highlighting a difference between what sea kayak guides self reported compared to actual guides in the field.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my wife and family who have supported me throughout the entire process of achieving a graduate degree. My wife, Elizabeth Young, is acknowledged here as she has had to do more than her fair share of the heavy lifting as I’ve spent most of my free time working on school. The spouses and partners of graduate school students should be given their own special award come graduation time, and I consider myself lucky to have such a good person in my corner.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rick Rollins, who provided me with different perspectives and insights throughout the entire course of my research. I am grateful for the amount of time Rick was able to give me and I know my thesis benefitted greatly from his involvement and guidance.

I acknowledge here and thank my mother and father who made it possible for me to attend graduate school and provided me with a wonderful childhood that certainly created my interest in the natural environment.

I would also like to thank the six guides who granted me their time and provided me with their stories that make up the qualitative portion of this research. I would also like to thank all the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC’s members who took the time to respond to my survey and the sea kayak outfitters who permitted me to attend their commercial tours.

Lastly, I am grateful for my RRU classmates who travelled this journey with me, who inspired me to do better, and in many ways were a source of immense learning.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Perhaps more than any other time in human history our planet is at an environmental crossroads. As a species we number over 6.5 billion individuals, we possess the ability to drastically alter our environment to meet our needs, and we are currently consuming the world’s resources at a rate unprecedented in the scope of human evolution (Gore, 2006). If we are to find a balance between human desires to consume the Earth’s resources to meet our needs while maintaining healthy, properly functioning, and sustainable Earth systems then one can argue that humans need to value nature as the community of life to which we belong (Holland, 1997). This is a tall order and not easily achievable, and the solutions will have to be as diverse as the problems we have created. Education, communication, and interpretation can play a substantial role in creating a more sustainable human existence (Moscardo, 1999). One small piece that fits within the solutions puzzle is that of the guided natural tourism experience and its relationship with protected areas, resource management, and environmental attitudes.

As a place to begin, tourism can be separated into two categories: “mass tourism” consists of large numbers of tourists generally in staged settings, and “alternative tourism” consisting of small numbers of tourists in natural or cultural settings (Rollins, Eagles, & Dearden, 2009; Wearing & Neil, 1999; Weaver, 2001). Alternative tourism can be further broken down into more categories made up of natural, cultural, event and other (Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2002). Located within the natural tourism experience is an opportunity to connect participants to the environment in a real way that can increase participant knowledge, and ultimately lead to and reinforce behaviors that benefit the environment (Orams, 1997). The tour guide has a role to play in this experience as it is the tour guide who facilitates and interprets the natural tourism experience. The tour guide has many responsibilities but within that role exists
the roles of motivator and environmental interpreter (Weiler & Davis, 1993). The motivator role is to modify and correct tourist behavior and reduce environmental impacts; while the role of environmental interpreter consists of increasing tourists’ understanding and appreciation of environmental issues to facilitate long-term responsible behavior (Weiler & Davis, 1993).

Prior research into nature-based tourism and ecotourism references the concept that tour guides can assist resource management agencies in the management of natural resources by modifying and correcting client behavior while at the same time increasing client understanding and appreciation of the natural environment via environmental interpretation (Black, Ham, & Weiler, 2001; Black & Weiler, 2005; Christie & Mason, 2003; Haig & McIntyre, 2002; Howard, Thwaites, & Smith, 2001; Hu, 2007; McArthur, 1994; Randall & Rollins, 2009; Weiler & Ham, 2001). However, what is not clear is how tour guides themselves come to understand this opportunity, and this exposes an area of research that has not yet received much attention. The majority of research, focusing on environmental interpretation as utilized by tour guides, is produced from participant surveys that explore the phenomenon of nature-based tour guiding through the lens of the participant tourist (Armstrong & Weiler, 2002; Luck, 2003; Powell, Kellert, & Ham, 2009; Randall & Rollins, 2009; Weiler & Smith, 2009). Tour guides are one of the most visible pieces within the complete tourism experience (Hu, 2007) but due to a lack of profile tour guides are usually glossed over by researchers, planners and managers (Weiler & Ham, 2001). What is missing from the literature are the voices of the tour guides themselves; and this is where my research contributes to the existing base of knowledge and serves to further inform this field of practice.
Thesis Structure

This thesis is organized around three separate research activities that collectively attempt to best answer the research questions. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, my perspective as the researcher including my stated biases, research questions, and the delimitations of the research. Chapter 2 consists of the literature review and stitches together a collection of interdisciplinary related research that is organized around a central focus of the tour guide. Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter and outlines the use of mixed methods research to best address the research questions. The research undertaking consisted of qualitative interviews, an online industry wide survey, and participant field observations. Additionally, this chapter contains the rationale as to why each methodology was selected and how each discrete research activity connects with the other. Chapter 4 includes the results from the three separate research initiatives. Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter and summarizes the key findings that emerged from the results, including recommendations for further research and the implications of this study.

Researcher’s Perspective

I have always loved recreating in the outdoors. I gained an appreciation for the natural environment through participation in the Canadian Scouting movement and recreating in the wilderness as a child with my family. Even today, as an environmental educator, I continue to enjoy learning about and sharing my passion for the natural environment with others.

Through a process of gaining personal experience and completing the Adventure Travel Guide Diploma program from Thompson River University (TRU), I started my career as a professional wilderness guide, outdoor instructor, and environmental educator. I attended TRU in my early twenties and was interested in the natural environment beyond it just being a playground for challenge and adventure. Reflecting now, I recognize that as a young man I
valued my time in nature, in part for the deep sense of happiness and contentment that it provided me. I was not able to accurately describe these feeling then, but nevertheless could identify that nature did make me feel something.

I have been extremely fortunate to have careers in provincial and national parks, fisheries, and many different forms of wilderness guiding and instruction. On personal trips, I’ve paddled sea kayaks for weeks at a time, kayaked and rafted down white water rivers, and hiked and ski toured across mountain ranges. Resonating throughout all these careers and personal journeys has been my love for the natural world and wilderness. Currently, I work at a post secondary institution and am privileged to have the opportunity to teach students introductory adventure sport skills and guide them on field trips into the wilderness. My view on tour guiding is “I do more than just lead trips”; I connect students and clients to the environment and hopefully provide an experience that they can draw on to deepen their connections to the Earth. I believe that if we are to live sustainably on the planet then learning to appreciate and value the outdoors is undoubtedly a key component. Do other wilderness guides understand this phenomenon as I do, and recognize the opportunity within the natural tourism experience to connect clients to the natural environment? My hunch is that they do, and this is why I am interested in the following thesis research questions.

_Research Questions_

- Question #1: Do wilderness tour guides create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients while participating on a natural tourism experience?
- Question #2: How do wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience?
• Question #3: What do sea kayak guides believe to be the sources of their guiding skills and what are the sources of their environmental knowledge?

• Question #4: How do sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

As an outdoor educator who has been in the business of bringing clients and students into the outdoor environment for the last fifteen I acknowledge here that I entered this research with a certain amount of researcher bias and my own set of assumptions. For the last eight years I have worked in a post secondary institution delivering outdoor recreation programs for students. As a result of my experiences in the field of education, I most likely view the career of tour guiding differently than other tour guides and academics within this field of study. Additionally, I have been a member of the SKGABC, the population accessed for the quantitative portion of this research, since 1996. In addition to being a longtime member of this group I also have been a member of the SKGABC’s executive team since 2005. My connections with the SKGABC made it relatively easy to access this population for the purposes of my research; however my close ties with the industry and those involved with it, in part make up my personal perspective and potential bias. As highlighted by Kidder and Selltiz (1981) a knowledge of, and subsequent opinions of the area being researched does not necessarily mean the introduction of researcher bias. As further stated by Mitra and Lankford (1999) many of the problems of researcher bias can be greatly reduced by the researcher striving to remain as objective as possible. Throughout this entire project I have tried to remain open to any and all possibilities and on numerous times over the course of completing this thesis was surprised by what I learned.
For the qualitative interviews I constructed my research with and analyzed my data through a phenomenological methodology. A central concept of phenomenology is a process referred to as bracketing, where the researcher states and attempts to set aside his or her preconceived ideas of the research phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). The act of stating my assumption below can be applied to my entire thesis and is not limited to just the phenomenological component of my research.

1. Within the interview portion of my research I assumed that all six interview participants participated fully and provided accurate and candid responses.

2. I assumed that the responses obtain through the online survey were reported accurately by survey respondents.

3. Within the field observation portion of my research I assumed my presence on those tours did not influence the behaviours of the guides.

**Delimitations**

The scope of this research is delimitated to professional sea kayak guides. All three separate research activities focus on sea kayak guides who are members of the SKGABC. According to the SKGABC’s website, since 1994 the SKGABC has been “a non-profit society which upholds high standards for professional sea kayak guides and operators in BC. Through ongoing professional development and certification, the SKGABC strives to ensure safe practices on an industry-wide basis” (2010, p. 1). The SKGABC has a general membership of around 625 individuals and of those 450 members actively work as sea kayak guides within the industry (L. McNeil, personal communication, May 25, 2010). Many of the individual guides who are certified through the SKGABC work and guide outside of British Columbia, Canada;
however, the results from this research cannot be applied to other sea kayak guides outside of the province of BC.

Additionally, during the qualitative component of this research I interviewed two guides who were not sea kayak guides, and instead guided in the expedition rafting and mountain guiding industries respectively. These two individuals provided excellent data that greatly added to the research results. However, their comments cannot be applied to their respective industries due to the fact that the sample size was one person.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review stitches together a collection of interdisciplinary related research that is organized around a central focus of the tour guide. This section starts with a brief look at environmental interpretation as it pertains to tour guiding. Following this the literature review steps back to discuss and define tourism, natural tourism, and specifically the sub category of ecotourism as it relates to natural tourism and the tour guide. From here the role of the tour guide is explored through past research that creates a general framework where different tour guide roles can be identified within. These roles are then highlighted and connected to literature that brings attention to the claim that natural tourism/ecotourism can move participants towards changes in behaviors that are environmentally sustainable and conservation focused. The literature review then shifts perspectives and briefly looks at a natural tourism experience as an example of a free choice learning environment (Falk, 2005) and then uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to demonstrate that indeed tour guides can potentially influence salient beliefs that ultimately govern participant behaviors.

Environmental Interpretation

The concept of environmental interpretation, as utilized by tour guides in the field, directly relates to and can be viewed as a method of nonformal environmental education (Ham & Krumpe 1996; Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 2003; Tilden, 1977) The wilderness tour guide brings clients into a location and engages them in a process of exploration into what a given environment has to offer. Edwards (1980) offers the following definition and insight regarding interpretation.
Interpretation is communication about things that are right there helping to communicate. The ingredient that transforms information into interpretation is supplied by the presence of the “real thing”. The subject itself does much of its own communicating simply by being there. Using things and other methods of communication appropriate to his purpose, the successful interpreter has the ability to reach into people’s minds, and there to create interest, understanding, delight, revelation, and sometimes lifelong new interest. (p. 3)

Ham and Krumpe (1996) expand on the above definition of interpretation, stating that the goal of interpretation is not simply to teach audiences factual information about the environment but, rather, it should influence their point of view, and sometimes behavior, with respect to managed resources, conservation objectives, and conservation values. As identified later in the literature review, a tour guide should understand this role and use interpretation in a manner to potentially influence their client’s environmental attitudes, which can ultimately lead to changes in client behaviour. A tour guide has the unique opportunity to connect clients directly to the environment through the natural tourism experience. This experience, in part, represents an opportunity for the tour guide to inspire their clients through the use of environmental interpretation. Interpretation should aim for inspiration, and directly involving clients in the experience can help them find meaning in the landscape (Edwards, 1980; Tilden, 1977).

Interpretation which challenges participants to examine their environmental attitudes and the impacts of their actions, while developing skills for identifying, analyzing, and applying solutions to environmental problems can aid in the development of an environmentally literate society (Ballantyne and Packer, 2005 p. 286).
What is Tourism?

Goeldner and Ritchie (2006) present a definition of tourism that was later expanded by Weaver and Lawton (2002) into the following expansive definition.

Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction among tourists, the tourism industry, host governments, host communities, origin governments, universities, community colleges and non-governmental organizations, in the process of attracting, transporting, hosting, and managing these tourists and other visitors (p. 3).

Another definition of tourism is to say that tourism is simply the sum of the complete tourist experience (Judd, 2006). When tourism is considered holistically with its multidimensional aspects and its interactions with other activities it difficult to formulate a single universally agreed upon definition of tourism (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006; Weaver & Lawton, 2002). Instead the definition of tourism has been broadening over time to include a more holistic interpretation that views tourism as an interrelated model or complex system (Gunn, 2002).

Tourism spending within Canada is an important contributor to the economy. In 2008, tourism spending reached CA $74.7 billion, with Canadian residents accounting for 79% of that total (Statistics Canada, 2009). Over the last decade, Canadian tourism has experienced an increase in domestic tourism and a decrease in international tourism (Statistics Canada, 2009). In contrast, the British Columbia tourism sector has been on a steady increase over the last decade, with tourism spending accounting for $13.8 billion in 2008 (Stroomer, 2009). In 2008 the tourism sector employed 131,000 people or roughly one in every eighteen jobs in the province (Stroomer, 2009).

Within the scope of my research the wilderness tour guide resides under the overarching umbrella of tourism. Here the tour guide has an important role to play in the connection between visitor (participant) and the host site (environment) (Hu, 2007; Weiler & Davis, 1993).
What are Natural Tourism, Ecotourism, Adventure Tourism, and Nature-Based Tourism?

As illustrated by Figure 1, natural tourism can be delineated further into adventure (activity based), nature-based (viewing of natural landscapes), wildlife (viewing wildlife), and ecotourism (elements of education and conservation), (Newsome et al., 2002).¹ It is the category of natural tourism that serves as the lens with which this research views the phenomenon of the wilderness tour guiding through.

Figure 1. Different types of Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mass Tourism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional or conventional tourism with large numbers of tourists usually in staged settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Tourism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific interest or responsible tourism with small numbers of tourists in authentic natural or cultural settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural tourism in natural areas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural heritage and religions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event sports and festivals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other farm or educational</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adventure</strong> emphasis on activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature-based</strong> primarily viewing of natural landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife</strong> primarily viewing of wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecotourism</strong> includes education and conservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Within natural tourism literature that specifically focuses on environmental interpretation and tour guiding, the subset of ecotourism contained research that was relevant to this study.

Ecotourism can be a difficult term to decipher, as many definitions have emerged that are similar in nature, and academics are still exploring, challenging, and changing the definition of ecotourism (Plummer, 2009; Weaver, 2001). At its essence ecotourism is made up of three main
components: nature-based, environmentally educational, and sustainably managed (Blamey, 2001). Additionally, many definitions contain an argument that ecotourism includes a return to the local community and the long-term conservation of natural resources (Blamey, 2001).

Through the educational dimension of ecotourism participants do more than just participate in a given activity. Ecotourism presents a real opportunity for participants to connect intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually through the ecotourism experience (Weiler & Ham, 2001) and ultimately make changes to personal behavior as a result of those experiences (Hvenegaard, Shultis, & Butler, 2009).

Another way to highlight the diversity within the ecotourism paradigm is to view ecotourism on a continuum between passive and active (Orams, 1995). Figure 2 illustrates Oram’s (1995) ecotourism continuum with passive objectives represented on one end and active objectives on the other.² Orams suggests that a given ecotourism product can be situated somewhere on the line between active and passive in relation to its objectives. A passive ecotourism objective would be an experience in a relatively unspoiled place for the purpose of studying, admiring, and enjoying the landscape, plants, animals, and culture with a focus on participant enjoyment (Orams, 1995). At the other end, an active ecotourism objective is to have participants directly contribute to the continued protection of the place they experienced (Orams, 2001) with the additional focus of making positive environmental behavior changes (Orams, 1995).
Figure 2. Objectives of ecotourism management strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increasing success of strategy</th>
<th>Passive Strategy</th>
<th>Active Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on the Ecotourist</strong></td>
<td>Enjoyment and satisfaction</td>
<td>Behavior lifestyle change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on the Natural Environment</strong></td>
<td>Minimize disturbance to environment</td>
<td>Actions that contribute to the health of the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is the responsibility of those who manage the locations and the experience where ecotourism takes place to move participants from passive objectives to a more active role (Orams, 1995). This kind of movement would require the assistance of commercial ecotourism operators and their tour guides. As explored later in this document, it is the tour guide who has the potential to move the ecotourism participant towards the end goals and objectives of active ecotourism.

The qualitative portion of my research consists of standardized open-ended interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Patton, 1980), and focuses on veteran wilderness tour guides. A veteran tour guide who has spent a considerable amount of time working in the field may more readily recognize, utilize, and understand potential positive environmental outcomes for participants by providing environmental interpretation, as opposed to a novice tour guide who predominately leads wilderness based day trips. This point has been illustrated by a number of studies that highlight the importance of individual guide characteristics such as the level of experience, education level, quality of interpretation, and overall guide quality as variables that influence participant knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (Powell et al., 2009; Weiler & Ham,
2001; Weiler & Ham, 2002). Additionally, the multi-day experience offers a greater diversity of interpretive activities, through reduced distraction and increased immersion, as opposed to a shorter day trip (Hockings, 1994). The opportunity for tour guides to influence participant knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors can be located within a four component model that explores the role of the tour guide as first identified by Cohen (1985).

**Role of the Tour Guide**

Cohen (1985) is widely cited as the starting place for academic research on this topic, and offers four principal components within the role of the tour guide. These include the instrumental, social, interactional, and communicative roles.

1. **Instrumental Role**: is that of the pathfinder and navigator while on trip to given goals/locations. It is the guides’ responsibility to keep their clients safe, while ensuring that clients’ actions don’t compromise any elements of the experience (example navigating a raft safety through rapids).

2. **Social Role**: is concerned with the guides’ need to keep morale high and help group members integrate within the larger group. Additionally, there is the need to keep conflict low and manage tensions between the group members (example: motivating clients to participate in an activity during inclement weather).

3. **Interactional Role**: consists of two parts. The first piece outlines the role of the guide as a middle person who creates the link between the environment and the clients. In this role the guide represents the clients to the environment (example: a foreign culture) while at the same representing the environment to the clients (example: a museum or national park). The second component within the role of interactional is that of organizer. Here the guide is responsible for last minute changes in the
schedule or unforeseen problems such as accommodation changes or medical emergency. In this role the guide is involved with the local population in trying to accomplish tasks in potentially remote and locations where language and cultural differences add to the complexity.

4. **Communicative Role:** is recognized as one of the principle components within the scope of a guide’s responsibilities. Within this role the guide is responsible for the dissemination of information (example: a tour guide giving a safety talk). Cohen explains that “information” is transformed by the tour guide into “interpretation” for the purpose of influencing the impressions and attitudes of the clients. Within the interpreter role, guides “play a prominent role in mediating the encounter between cultures” (1985, p. 15).

Using Cohen’s (1985) research as a starting point, Pond (1993) suggests a guide’s duty and responsibility can be further identified within five roles consisting of (1) leader, (2) educator, (3) public relations representative, (4) host, and (5) conduit (p. 76). Additionally, Pond makes the point that the interaction of these roles is complex and requires that guides exhibit many of them simultaneously while guiding. Both however, focused on the role of a tour guide and not specifically on the role of a nature-based tour guide.

Using Cohen’s (1985) four criteria model as a reference, Weiler and Davis (1993) recognized that a nature-based guide has an additional responsibility to conduct the guided experience in an environmentally responsible manner, and as a result added an additional category of resource management into Cohen’s model. This category has two parts consisting of **motivator** and **environmental interpreter** (Weiler & Davis, 1993) as illustrated in Table 1. The motivator role is to modify and correct tourist behavior and reduce environmental impacts; while
the role of environmental interpreter consists of increasing tourists’ understanding and appreciation of environmental issues to facilitate long term responsible behaviour.

Table 1. The Role of a Tour Guide and Ecotourism Tour Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Sphere</th>
<th>Instrumental: provides navigation, access, and safety</th>
<th>Social: maintains cohesion within the group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediatory Sphere</td>
<td>Interactional: acts as the link between participant and environment</td>
<td>Teacher/Communicator: provides information and interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management*</td>
<td>Motivator: modify and correct behaviour to reduce environmental impacts*</td>
<td>Environmental Interpreter: encourages long-term responsible behaviour*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Subsequent research has utilized this analysis (Black, Ham, & Weiler, 2001; Black & Weiler, 2005; Christie & Mason, 2003; Haig & McIntyre, 2002; Howard, et al., 2001; Hu, 2007; McArthur, 1994; Randall & Rollins, 2009; Weiler & Ham, 2001). Through this conception, nature-based tour guides communicate and interpret the significance of the environment, promote minimal impact techniques, ensure the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment, and motivate the clients to consider their own lives in relation to larger ecological and cultural concerns (Black et al., 2001 p. 149). Additionally, participants in nature-based tourism expect, value, and place a high level of importance on the content and quality of environmental interpretation as provided by their tour guide (Haig & McIntyre, 2002; Luck, 2003; McArthur, 1994; Randall, 2003). Clearly, within the overall scope of the natural tourism experience the tour guide has an important role to play in connecting clients to the environment through guided activity and targeted interpretation (Kimmel, 1999). This brings us to the question, does motivating and providing environmental interpretation for nature-based
participants lead to learning and thus a gain in knowledge, change in attitude, and ultimately a change in behavior? The following section explores this question.

The Interpreted Natural Tourism Experience as a Vehicle for Change

This section highlights past research that explores the claim that natural tourism/ecotourism can move participants towards changes in behaviors that are more environmentally sustainable and conservation focused. This is of importance to the research because my study attempts to discover how wilderness tour guides understand their role as environmental interpreters and if and how they believe they facilitate learning that can ultimately result in changes to participant behaviors. Prior research in this field is varied with different areas of focus and with sometimes conflicting results.

Research clearly demonstrates that given some important factors, environmental interpretation programs can precipitate participant learning and potential behavioral change (Armstrong & Weiler 2002; Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Ballantyne, Packer, & Hughes, 2009; Beaumont 2001; Littelfair, 2003; Luck, 2003; Powell et al., 2009; Orams, 1997; Weiler & Smith 2009). Orams (1997) tested the effectiveness of an educational program that used wild dolphin encounters to facilitate participant learning. The results demonstrated that participants who were administered the educational program were more likely to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors than the participants who did not receive the program (Orams, 1997). In a different study, Weiler and Smith (2009) determined that multiple layers of interpretation enhanced the perceived impacts of the interpretation on visitors within a zoo environment. A multiple layer approach to interpretation appears to be invaluable for captive wildlife attractions and tourism operations who want to impact the way participants think, feel, and act (Weiler & Smith, 2009). Finally, Powell and Ham (2008) tested tourists who were participating in a Galapagos Islands
ecotourism experience for changes in educational outcome and support of environmental conservation. Results indicate that an ecotourism experience that contains targeted interpretation may effectively influence knowledge, attitudes, and intentions related to positive conservation behaviors (Powell & Ham, 2008).

Powell et al. (2009) investigated both the immediate and long-term influences resulting from a multi-day commercial whitewater rafting trip on the Colorado River within Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP). This study utilized pre and post trip questionnaires, plus a separate questionnaire sent to clients who did the same trip one year previous, and interviews with river raft tour guides. Powell et al. (2009) reported that rafting tour participants demonstrated significant changes in both GCNP natural and human history knowledge, and general positive environmental behavioral intentions occurred immediately after participation. Furthermore, the results suggest that a large amount of participant knowledge was retained one year after the nature-based experience. However, one year after the nature-based experience participant environmental behavior was reported to have only incrementally changed. Another important observation suggested that rafting tours with highly rated tour guides, environmental interpretation, and overall tour quality was more likely to influence participant’s behavioral intentions. These results demonstrate that a guided multi-day wilderness experience can increase participant knowledge and potentially change participant behavior. Additionally the quality of environmental interpretation, as provided by the tour guide, was a factor that influenced participant knowledge and behavioral change.

Another study focused on the environmental messaging delivered by tour guides within the various protected areas of Parks Victoria, Australia. Armstrong and Weiler (2002) collected audio recording and participant observation for 20 different interpretive nature-based activities
including vehicle based sightseeing, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, rock climbing, and horse riding. All of these activities were relatively short, ranging from 2 to 14 hours in duration, with one activity being 24 hours in duration. Audio recordings were made of the tour guides while conducting the activity. The recordings were then transcribed, categorized, and content analyzed for alignment with Parks Victoria's management goals. The recording captured 60 hours of audio and resulted in 108 individual messages. The results demonstrate the five most frequently delivered messages to clients were:

1. 29 messages about minimizing human impacts on the natural environment that was predominately made up of a description of what participants should and should not do.
2. 20 messages included the roles and actions of the different protected areas management agencies that included of both supportive and critical messages.
3. 20 messages were about the significance or heritage value of the protected area.
4. 18 messages consisted of a general conservation theme, such as the impacts of logging and agriculture on the natural environment.
5. 15 messages included information regarding the impacts of having tour operators in the protected area.

According to Armstrong and Weiler (2002) a key reason for the delivery of natural environment interpretation is the opportunity for encouraging participants to change their behavior in such a way to benefit the environment. Within the 108 messages collected, this type of messaging was identified only one time. Messages suggesting positive environmental actions, such as encouraging participants to become involved with or donate to environmental non-government organizations were not offered by any of tour the guides. This point is surprising,
given a stated goal of ecotourism is to educate participants through a guided experience that utilizes environmental interpretation as a way to encourage and increase responsible environmental behavior, as this can’t happen if the tour guides don’t facilitate it. For me, one of the questions that emerged from their research was why didn’t the tour guides in this study deliver more information regarding positive actions participants could do to benefit the environment? How do nature-based guides understand this opportunity or do they? This is where my research hopes to add to this body of knowledge.

In summary, the literature seems to indicate that influencing participants’ knowledge, understanding, and behaviors through a guided nature-based experience involves a complicated mixture of factors that are not simply linear. The interpretive nature-based experience can increase participant learning, knowledge levels, and potentially change behaviours. Nevertheless, different factors change this dynamic including the amount and diversity of interpretation provided, the quality of interpretation as provided by the tour guide, and the selected messaging as delivered by the tour guide. Clearly, the tour guide is instrumental within all of this; however, an important piece that has not been discussed yet is the individual participants themselves and the link between the tour guide and natural tourism participant.

A Brief Look at Informal Education and Free Choice Learning

Free choice learning can be defined as self-directed learning, where the participant has a large degree of choice and control over the learning experience to meet individual needs and interests (Dierking & Griffin, 2001; Falk, 2005). Dierking and Falk (2003) describe an informal educational setting as a variety of settings outside of a school classroom, and free choice learning refers to the type of learning that occurs within the informal educational setting. In the context of my research, a guided natural tourism experience is an example of an informal educational
setting and the potential learning that participants experience can be described as free choice learning. There is a growing awareness that free choice learning experiences play an important part of overall lifelong learning (Falk, 2005). Free choice learning experiences represent the area in which most environmental learning is obtained, as opposed to traditional schooling (Falk, 2005). Encounters with nature and wildlife can have powerful emotional impact on participants (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005) and natural tourism represent an opportunity for these experiences to take place. One of the difficulties of assessing the educational impact of free choice learning experiences is that participants differ greatly in their pre-visit life histories, knowledge, attitudes, interests and motivations (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Orams, 1997).

*Behavioral Theory and Natural Tourism*

There are a number of different learning/behavioral theories that have been applied to research examining the impact of facilitated environmental interpretation upon participants. In their study of Grand Canyon National Park river rafting participants, Powell et al. (2009) used interactional theory (Werner, Brown, & Altman, 2002) to construct a model through which to explore the interactive relationship between key nature-based tourism variables. Through interactional theory Powell et al. (2009) identified nature-based trip characteristic that were potentially important for understanding and predicting psychological and cognitive outcomes. An interactional framework takes into account specific nature-based tour characteristics that are recognized as being influential interactions between tourist, host site, fellow travelers, and land management agencies (Powell et al., 2009 p. 764). This theoretical approach acknowledges the complex interactional relationship between tourists and the natural environment that collectively produce experiential outcomes (Powell et al., 2009).
In a different study, Luck (2003) highlights the use of affective domain and cognitive dissonance theory, as used by Forestell and Kaufman (1990) and Orams (1997), in the creation of interpretation programs designed to influence participant behavior. As Luck explains, the affective domain is concerned with human thinking that includes attitudes, feeling, emotions, and value systems. Educational programs that involve the affective domain can best influence participant behaviors (Iozzi, 1989). According to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) individuals wish to maintain consistency between their attitudes and behaviors. When inconsistency exists between attitudes and behaviors a dissonance develops and an individual will eliminate this by either changing their attitude or behavior. Orams (1996) states that interpretation with exposure to dissonant information can provide an opportunity to change participant behavior.

For example, while conducting a wildlife viewing tour, the tour guide provides interpretation about the relationship between grizzly bears, the land management agency responsible for grizzly bear habitat, and the potential threat from a resource extraction industry on grizzly bear habitat. In this example the clients have viewed grizzly bears in the field and been provided with interpretation that highlights how grizzly bears will be potentially harmed as a result of proposed resource extraction that negatively impacts bear habitat. At the conclusion of the tour, the tour company offers the participants the option of signing a petition to oppose the proposed resource extraction and ultimately protect bear habitat. A cognitive dissonance is now created between the attitude (bears are valuable and require unspoiled natural habitat) and a behaviour (being given the option to help the bears through signing a petition). By signing the petition the dissonance is reduced and consistence is maintained between attitude and behaviour. In this example the affective domain could be engaged as participants potentially adopted new
attitudes, feelings, emotions, and values regarding grizzly bears as a result of their tour experience.

*The Theory of Planned Behavior*

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) argues that our behaviors come from our intentions to behave in a certain way, and these intentions (to act or not act) originate from three different factors. These include (1) the desirability or undesirability of the consequences of the behavior (referred to as “attitude towards the behavior”), (2) our perception of social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior (referred to as “subjective norm”), and (3) our perceived control over the behavior (made up of a person’s belief that she or he has the opportunity, knowledge, ability, skill and resources to perform the behavior) (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992). Each of these three factors is the result of corresponding primary beliefs that are important and relevant to the individual. As outlined by Figure 3, the three factors connect with our primary beliefs this way; (1) beliefs that are related to our attitude towards the behavior are called *behavioral beliefs*, (2) beliefs that related to our subjective norm are called *normative beliefs*, and finally (3) perceived behavioral control beliefs are connected to our *control beliefs* (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992).³
Figure. 3 Theory of Planned Behavior as originally produced by Ajzen (1991).


The TPB has been widely referenced, applied, and tested across many different academic disciplines including environmental interpretation and as a predictor of environmental behavior. Ham and Krumpe (1996) used TPB to create a framework for the effective use of environmental education interventions for modifying and changing negative environmental behaviors in protected areas. Kaiser & Gutscher (2003) reported an impressive predictive relationship between the three predictor beliefs (behavior, normative, and control) and a given subjects’ behavior intentions, within the domain of ecological conservation. Knussen, Yule, MacKenzie, and Wells (2004) found that intentions to recycle were significantly related to both behavioral beliefs and perceived behavioral control, but not subjective norms. Brown (1999) in a study that
explored the behavior of tourists climbing Ayers Rock, Australia, found a connection between visitor beliefs and their subsequent behavior. Brown noted that the results could serve to inform the content, design, and delivery of interpretative programs designed at discouraging the large numbers of tourists who climb Ayers Rock. In another study, Seeland, Moser, Scheuthle, and Kaiser (2002) report all three predictor beliefs were influential in determining a behavioral intention for park users to accept future regulations that place restrictions on certain types of activities taking place within Sihlwald Nature Reserve, Switzerland. In this study, the normative beliefs were found to be the biggest influence on a participant’s acceptance of the future regulations. Lastly, Powell and Ham (2008) used the TPB framework to create an interpretive communications strategy for a guided multi-day ecotourism experience in Galapagos National Park (GNP). The purpose of this interpretation strategy was to improve participant enjoyment of the tour, increase participant knowledge regarding threats and park management, and ultimately increase philanthropic activities. Results demonstrated that a targeted interpretation program did have a significant influence on attitudes and awareness of GNP conservation issues, and participant intentions to undertake positive environmental actions and philanthropic activities.

Essentially the TPB posits that to change behavior, messaging must be directed at salient primary beliefs (Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992). The implication of TPB for tour guides can be witnessed in the environmental interpretation they provide. A tour guide who develops and utilizes environmental interpretation that address salient behavioral, normative, and control beliefs will have a greater likelihood of changing participant behavior (Ham & Krumpe, 1996). It is not my position here that a wilderness tour guide understands this theory, and as such creates targeted interpretive events for the purpose of changing client behaviors. However, given how the TPB works, it does appear likely that tour guides purposefully go about influencing salient
beliefs and therefore influencing behavioral intentions leading to behavior change through the mechanisms of TPB.

**Literature Review Summary**

The literature review highlights the important role tour guides play within the scope of natural tourism to connect clients to the environment through the guided experience and targeted interpretation. This research adopts a model first put forth by Cohen (1985) and later expanded by Weiler and Davis (1993) that divides the roles of the tour guide into six distinct pieces. These six roles include (1) instrumental, (2) social, (3) interactional, (4) communicator, (5) motivator, and (6) environmental interpreter (Cohen; Weiler & Davis). Within the roles of the tour guide interpretation is identified as a tool that is frequently used by guides to teach factual information to clients but more importantly interpretation is used to influence client beliefs or behaviors. Through interpretation the tour guide communicates and interprets the significance of the environment, promotes minimal impact techniques, ensures the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment, and motivates the clients to consider their own lives in relation to larger ecological and cultural concerns (Black et al., 2001 p. 149).

Prior research into the affects of environmental interpretation programs have clearly demonstrated that given some important factors, interpretation can precipitate participant learning and potential behavioral change. As stated by Dierking and Falk (2003) a natural tourism or ecotourism experience represents an informal educational setting (outside of a school classroom) where participants participate in free choice learning. Free choice learning experiences are the events in which most environmental learning is obtained, as opposed to traditional schooling. Through the natural tourism experience tour participants may be exposed to situations, including provocative interpretation that can challenge participants’ personal
beliefs. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is widely referenced within the scope of environmental interpretation as a predictor of environmental behaviour. TPB states that messaging must be directed at salient primary beliefs if behaviour change is to take place.
Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction: Overarching Research Design

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role of the sea kayak tour guide in their use of interpretation to enhance the natural tourism experience. Methods were developed to address four main research questions as follows:

- Question #1: Do wilderness tour guides create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients while participating on a natural tourism experience?
- Question #2: How do wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience?
- Question #3: What do sea kayak guides believe to be the sources of their guiding skills and what are the sources of their environmental knowledge?
- Question #4: How do sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?

The thesis research consisted of three distinct pieces (1) qualitative interviews, (2) online survey, and (3) participant field observations. The qualitative interviews focused on how tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience. The survey section of the study sought to discover what skills sea kayak guides believed important for guiding, where those skills are best acquired, and how sea kayak guides utilized interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the guided experience. Additionally, participant
field observations were undertaken on three separate sea kayaking trip to witness guides in their element.

The use of multi-person interviews, a survey, and participant field observation in research design is commonly described as triangulation or the use of mixed methods (Cohen et al., 2007; Patton, 1980). As highlighted by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), a mixed methods approach “is often more efficient in answering research questions than either the qualitative or the quantitative approach alone” (p. 167). Collectively, the research questions explored how tour guides understood and felt about different aspects of their guiding careers. Therefore, the information I wished to discover was potentially rich and by using multiple research methods the study could best access, collect, and analyze that richness.

Furthermore, this study used triangulation as a strategy for improving the reliability and validity of the results (Golafshani, 2003) and aided in reducing researcher bias (Cohen et al., 2007). As outlined by Cohen et al. (2007) triangulation attempts to “map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data” (p. 141). Additionally, an overreliance on one research method can introduce errors into the research design (Mitra & Lankford, 1999), and it was for these reasons that a mixed methods approach was selected.

**Participant Interviews**

The qualitative research centers around research questions #1 and #2, focusing on if and how wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver interpretation to clients while participating in a nature-based tourism experience. As a place to begin the research, it was important to better understand the lived experiences of wilderness tour
guides in relation to my research questions. As such, a phenomenological method was selected for this portion of the research. Phenomenology focuses on the description of an experience based on the perspectives of the people involved in the study (Groenewald, 2004; Miller & Salkind, 2002; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Phenomenology makes use of probing questions that explore the why and how of the lived experiences of participants. From the phenomenological method of questioning a rich description of the experience is revealed (Groenewald, 2004). This portion of the study utilized open-ended interviews (Cohen et al., 2007; Patton, 1980) to create a picture of how wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to provide environmental interpretation to their clients. The open-ended interviews included questions that are predetermined so that the same questions were administered to all research participants (Cohen et al., 2007; Patton, 1980).

The use of phenomenological interviews to answer the research questions was not without its challenges. The amount of time it took to organize, travel to, record, transcribe, validate, and finally analyze the interviews could have been greatly reduced had one or two focus groups been used instead of interviews (Cohen, et al., 2007). That being said I don’t know if the depth and richness of information obtained from the interviews could have been accessed by other methods.

A series of questions were created to explore the lived experiences of wilderness tour guides and their thoughts and beliefs surrounding the work they do and how they specifically use environmental interpretation (see Appendix A). The interview schedule consisted of sixteen questions organized around five separate topic areas and made use of the literature review to create and inform questions 8, 12, 13, and 14. The five topic areas included (1) an introduction and general information on guiding, (2) environmental history, (3) role of the tour guide, (4)
questions about the role of the tour guide specific to environmental interpretation, and (5) education and guide’s training. The interview schedule utilized a standardized open-ended interview where the exact wording and question sequence was predetermined and constant throughout all the interviews (Cohen, et al., 2007; Patton, 1980). As stated by Cohen et al. (2007) this method of interview provides the researcher with data that can be readily organized, analyzed, and compared between participants. As a part of the research included comparing themes between all the participants a standardized open-ended participant style interview made that process possible (Patton, 1980). As outlined by Patton (1980) the schedule was structured such that the first few questions were designed to be easily-answered conversation starters to get the participants feeling comfortable with the interview process, and the more challenging questions were delivered closer to the end of the interview.

Once the interview schedule was created it was pretested on three separate occasions with individuals who had experience working as natural tourism tour guides, and additionally were not going to take part in the actual study. Pretesting provides a way of identifying and changing potential problems within the interview schedule before the start of the full-scale study (Berg, 2004). This process proved to be valuable and the interview schedule was changed and some questions re-worded to increase clarity. One of the most important observations to emerge from the pretesting was the need for participants to be familiar with the interview schedule prior to the interview. The nature of the questions required participants to engage in a process of deep reflection and when the pretest participants were given the schedule just prior to the interview they obviously needed more time to think about what I was asking them to reflect on. As a result, the actual study participants were emailed the interview schedule two days before our scheduled meeting time with instructions to read over the questions to get a general idea of what we were
going to be discussing. The participants were also instructed to not write any of their thoughts down for the interview but instead just think about these things prior to our meeting. This technique proved to be valuable as all the interview participants were able to read over the questions prior to our interview; and as a result they were better prepared to reflect on their experiences of being a wilderness tour guide than those interviewed in the pretest.

The qualitative interview portion of the study relied on purposeful sampling techniques to identify five of the six research subjects. A snowball sampling technique was used to identify one other research participant. As outlined by Cohen et al. (2007) when using purposive sampling a researcher selects the sample based on the characteristics that are sought after in the subjects to best fulfill the needs of the study. For this study, participants were selected based on two criteria (1) they were a wilderness tour guide (2) they were veterans within a given natural tourism industry. A veteran tour guide is a difficult label to define, and is probably most easily defined by years of service. The participants selected in this study ranged in years of service from 8 years in a given industry to over 30 years for the most senior tour guides interviewed. Snowball sampling was used once when an interview participant recommended and provided access another participant suitable for my study.

The entire study explores the phenomenon of sea kayak guiding; however, in the qualitative interview portion of the study only four of the six interview participants were sea kayak guides. The other two participants guide in different natural tourism industries. One participant worked in the expedition rafting industry and the other was primarily employed in the field of mountain guiding. I was also interested in better understanding how other wilderness tour guides, who were not in the sea kayaking industry, felt about the responsibilities of being a guide and if and how they utilized environmental interpretation on their trips. By including a
broader range of guiding industries I was able to slightly broaden my understanding of the phenomenon of wilderness tour guiding, while additionally exploring potential areas for future research.

Once the participants had been identified they were sent a short email that outlined my research interests and asked if they would consider taking part in my study. All the participants contacted agreed to be part of my study and interview times and locations were arranged. Through email correspondence, participants were instructed that they would have to sign a Letter of Agreement prior to participating in the research. This document clearly stated the purpose of the research, how the data would be collected and handled, and how participant confidentiality would be ensured (see Appendix B). Participation in this study was predicated on signing the Letter of Agreement prior to the interview and all the participants signed the document. The interviews were conducted in locations suitable for audio recording and agreed upon by the interview participant and myself. All the interviews were digitally recorded and verbatim transcriptions produced. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to well over one hour. As required by phenomenological methodology, themes were created for each interview and these were then returned by email to the individual participants for validation (Groenewald, 2004; Hycner, 1985). Additional questions were asked at this time to clarify comments made by the participants during the interview, explore the themes I had generated, and generally gather more data.

The transcripts were analyzed using the following phenomenological steps as adapted from Groenewald (2004) and Hycner (1985).

1. **Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.** Here the researcher suspends or ‘brackets’ their interpretations and meaning of the interview and transcription.
As illustrated by Hycner (1985) in this stage the research data is “approached with an openness to whatever meanings emerged” (p. 280). Essentially, the researcher attempts to put aside any working theories or assumptions of what is contained within the research data and does their best to remain open to what emerges from phenomenon as a whole.

2. **Delineating general units of meaning.** In this step the researcher begins the process of going over and carefully examining the data in its entirety to best understand participant’s meaning. The transcription is broken down into smaller units of text; however, in this stage the text is not yet connected to the research question and instead the process remains open and broad in nature.

3. **Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question.** The general units of meaning are connected back to the research question. In this stage the data is reduced and only the units of meaning that highlight and address the research questions are kept.

4. **Clustering of units of meaning to form themes.** In this stage the individual units of meaning have been connected to the research question and are now grouped together to form themes. The researcher rigorously examines “each individual unit of relevant meaning and tries to elicit what is the essence of that unit of meaning given the context” (Hycner, 1985, p. 287). At this stage themes are formed between similar clusters of information.

5. **Summarizing and validating the interviews.** At this point a summary of an individual’s interview is created including the researcher’s initial themes. The summary is returned to the research participant to see if this person agrees that
the interview was accurate. At this point further questioning can take place in an effort to seek clarification, and this can take the form of a second interview.

6. Extracting general and unique themes from all interviews and making a composite summary. Finally, once all the research participants have validated their interview summaries and themes, the researcher can now start to identify common themes and variations that exist between the entire research data set. At this point a composite summary can be created that essentially captures the essence of phenomenon being investigated.

Quotes from the raw data are used as supporting evidence to highlight themes and insights that become apparent as a result of the analysis process (Yeh & Inman, 2007).

Industry Survey

I used an internet-based survey as the primary data collection method to obtain information from individuals who are employed as sea kayak guides. The focus for this portion of the study included research question #3, what do sea kayak guides believe to be the sources of their guiding skills and what are the sources of their environmental knowledge? And question #4, how do sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?

An internet based survey was selected over a more traditional mail out questionnaire for a variety of reasons. Firstly the factor of expense, as stated by Cohen et al. (2007) the use of an internet based survey reduces the costs associated with printing, mailing, and processing returned data. Secondly, the population required to make up the sample was most easily accessed by the use of the internet. The survey invitation was sent out to the entire population of the SKGABC
whose members are somewhat transient and may not have permanent fixed home addresses and could have been difficult to access through mail (Cohen et al., 2007; Dillman, 2000).

The questionnaire (see Appendix C) utilized a number of design principles taken from the Dillman Total Design Method (TDM) (Dillman, 2000). The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions comprised of 8 different sections. As advised by Cohen et al. (2007) and Dillman (2000) the first section of the questionnaire consisted of introductory questions designed to be relatively easy to complete and thus would get survey participants engaging with the survey.

Section 2 was used to rate different sources where sea kayak guides acquire the skills necessary to be a guide. The respondents had to rate the usefulness of each source using a 5 point Likert scale from “not at all useful” to extremely useful”. The provided list of necessary guiding skills was taken from the SKGABC Guide’s Technical Manual (Webster, 2009) and from the qualitative interview results.

Sections 3, 4, and 5 asked respondents to agree or disagree with a list of statements. Each section was comprised of a different theme: section 3 focused on managing the social interactions of clients while on trip, section 4 focused on creating awareness of local communities, and section 5 dealt with the use of environmental interpretation. For all the sections respondents had to rate a provided statement using a 5 point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The statements were organized in groups based around the role of the tour guide as adapted from Cohen (1985) and Weiler and Davis (1993). The statements were also arranged such that each grouping included individual statements that represented the passive through to the active end of the Oram’s (1995) ecotourism continuum. The next provided statement within the grouping was worded to be more active than the previous statement, and so forth until final statement, which represented the most active end of the ecotourism continuum.
Section 6 was designed to understand where sea kayak guides gained their environmental knowledge. In this section a list of sources was provided and respondents had to rate the usefulness of each one of those sources. Again, a five point Likert scale was used ranging from “not at all useful” to extremely useful”. The list of sources was gathered from the qualitative interviews.

Section 7 focused on guide training and education and asked respondents to identify what formal guides training they had participated in from a provided list. Additionally, this section asked respondents to select where they thought individual guiding skills would best be learned. As in section 2 the list of guide skills was adapted from the SKGABC Guide’s Technical Manual (Webster, 2009).

Section 8 concluded the online questionnaire with demographic questions and included questions about age, gender, and level of guiding certification obtained through the SKGABC. The final question was open ended and respondents were given an opportunity to comment further on anything they came across in the survey.

The questionnaire was administered using a web-based survey company (Grapevine Surveys) because they are a Canadian-based survey company and respondent confidentiality could be better assured (Grapevine Surveys, personal communication, May 2nd, 2010). As per Dillman’s TDM (2000) a number of principles were followed to create and deliver the web-based questionnaire. A multiple contact approach was utilized for correspondence between the researcher and the participants as Dillman asserts that it can increase the response rates of web-based surveys. As suggested by Dillman, all potential survey participants were emailed a pre-notice message, followed by a letter of invitation and consent that contained the web-link to the
online questionnaire (see Appendix D), then a reminder follow up email, and finally a thank you email once the survey was concluded.

As with the qualitative interview portion of the research, it was important to pretest the online questionnaire. Dillman (2000) notes that a web-based questionnaire can appear differently on a monitor depending on the software the respondents are using to access the survey website. Two individuals completed the pilot questionnaire and offer feedback during the pretest. These individuals were familiar with the sea kayaking industry but would not be participating in the thesis research. I personally sat with them while they completed the survey and took notes, answered questions, and listened to their comments. The two sessions were valuable and resulted in small refinements to the questionnaire.

The population selected for this portion of the study consisted of sea kayak guides. As a method of accessing this population, an industry body that provides training and certification for those wishing to become sea kayak guides was used to contact this population. There are a number of different professional bodies that train and offer certification for sea kayak guides within the province of BC, and the SKGABC is one of the most prominent. Because of my earlier stated history with the SKGABC, it made sense for me to use this population for my study. According to the SKGABC’s website, since 1994 the group’s purpose has been “…a non-profit society which upholds high standards for professional sea kayak guides and operators in BC. Through ongoing professional development and certification, the SKGABC strives to ensure safe practices on an industry-wide basis” (SKGABC, 2010). The SKGABC has a general membership of around 625 individuals and of those 450 members actively work as sea kayak guides (L. McNeil, personal communication, May 25, 2010).
The SKGABC has a number of different guiding certification levels that guides can achieve when they become involved in the industry, gain experience, take courses, and keep up to date on the other requirements necessary to become and maintain their guiding certification. Within section 8 of the questionnaire, containing the demographic questions, respondents were asked to identify what level of guide certification they had achieved. This was done as a method to compare responses from the different experience levels for the same question.

Figure 4. Certification Levels and Responsibilities of SKGABC Guides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification Level</th>
<th>Certification Level Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Predominately lead trips in protected water that are less than one day in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Overnight Guide (AOG)</td>
<td>Assists Level 2 and 3 guides in an assistant role on multi-day trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Can lead multi-day trips in moderately challenging waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Can lead multi-day trips in more challenging and remote waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide Trainer and Examiner</td>
<td>Has a level of experience and knowledge suitable for training and examining all guides on sanctioned exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Member (not a guide)</td>
<td>Is a member who does not guide or has potentially let their membership lapse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from SKGABC, 2010)

All correspondence between myself and the potential respondents was conducted through the SKGABC’s Executive Director. This person has access to the database and could readily contact the total membership through mass email communication. The entire membership of the SKGABC with an email address was invited to participate in the survey. The pre-notification message, letter of invitation and consent with web link to the survey, reminder follow up email, and the thank you email were sent to approximately 550 individual members by the Executive Director (L. McNeil, personal communication, May 25, 2010). The online questionnaire was open for twenty consecutive days during the spring before the 2010 summer sea kayaking guiding season got underway.
The raw survey data was transferred from the online survey host and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. With the use of SPSS software an analysis of cross tabulations was possible. ANOVA tests were used to explore whether statistically significant variance existed between respondents based on both guide level and age. Guide levels were partially grouped together to form larger data sets. This was done because some of the guide levels had low number of respondents. As a result the Level 1 category was kept separate with 21 respondents, Assistant Overnight Guide (AOG) and Level 2 guides were combined to produce a category with 55 respondents, and the remaining three levels comprised of Level 3, Guide Trainer and Examiner were combined to form a category with 26 respondents. A Sheffe test was further utilized to highlight the variance between the subgroups on statistically significance results produced from the ANOVA tests. A chi-square test was used to explore whether any statistical significant differences existed between respondents based on gender. Both the chi-square and ANOVA tests used a significance level of 0.05 as the cut for statistical significance.

Field Observations

Field observations were used to further explore the research questions and gave me the opportunity to potentially witness if the results I collected through the interviews and online survey were in fact occurring in the field. As stated by Patton (1980) interview or questionnaire participants are reporting personal perceptions and these can be selective. An observer in the field could gather a more comprehensive understanding of the research setting as opposed to using just reported data from an interview or questionnaire (Patton, 1980). Further, the use of field observations was the final piece of research that let me triangulate the three different data collection techniques used to complete this study.
The role of the researcher in field observations is one that requires the researcher to be a participant in the setting being studied. The extent of participation can be viewed as being on a continuum between total immersion in a setting as a participant through to complete separation as an observer (Patton, 1980). For the field research undertaken in this study, I utilized the ‘observer as participant’ research role (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003). In this role the researcher acts as a spectator, and my identity as a researcher was understood by all the members of the group (Ritchie & Goeldner, 1994; Saunders, et al., 2003). The extent of participation and interaction involving myself and the guides and clients did vary across the different sea kayak experiences.

As a researcher engaged in field observations, I was aware of the Hawthorne effect (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939), also referred to as participant reactivity (Cohen et al., 2007). The Hawthorne effect occurs when the presence of the researcher influences and changes the behavior of the participants from how they might usually behave (Berg, 2004). As reported by Berg (2004) the Hawthorne effect is generally short-lived as research subjects return to their routines and become accustomed to the researcher. To test if this was the case, at the end of a sea kayaking trip I simply asked the guides being studied if they thought this had occurred. All the guides reported similarly that my presence, complete with small clipboard and at time frantic note taking, was only a distraction for perhaps the first ten minutes of the trip and that my presence did not influence how they would normally behave while guiding. The field observations were set up in such a way as to reduce participant reactivity as described below.

For the field observation component of the study I wanted to participate in a variety of sea kayak experiences for the purpose of observing sea kayak guides of differing experience levels and observing these same guides on tours of differing durations. To accomplish this I
participated on two different sea kayaking day tours and one five-day tour. I used purposeful sampling techniques to select the sample (sea kayak guides) based on the characteristics that were sought after in the subjects to best fill the needs of the study (Cohen et al., 2007). For this portion of the study, participants were selected based on two criteria (1) guides who predominately guided sea kayak trips one day in length and (2) guides who predominately guided multi-day trips.

As a result of my experience in the sea kayaking industry it was not difficult to gain permission to accompany these trips. Contact was made with company owners and an explanation was provided regarding my research interests and why I wanted to attend a trip with their specific company. Company owners were very receptive to my research interests, and dates and times were established for participating on a trip. Each company owner informed the individual guides that I would accompanying them on their tours, so guides were expecting me and were aware of my general research interests. On the day of my field observations I would arrive early and introduce myself to the guides. I explained to each guide that I would like to participate on their trip for the purposes of research and asked they read and sign the informed consent form. As specified in the form, participation was voluntary and participants were free to withdraw from the research at anytime without repercussions. Each guide kindly granted me permission to be observed, and were receptive about my research and my coming along with them on their respective trips. Additionally, I offered each guide the opportunity for me to explain the specifics of my research once the trip concluded. This was done so that at the start of the trip guide participants only knew my general research interests and thus helped to reduce subject reactivity and the introduction of potential bias.
For each kayak trip, field notes were created to record specific participant observations (Cohen et al., 2007; Richards, 2005). As outlined by Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte (1999), the field notes had to specifically identify and describe my research interests including the physical state of the environment at the time of data collection. For this portion of the research I looked for guide messaging that addressed the role of the tour guide as outlined by Cohen (1985) and Weiler and Davis (1993). Specifically, I was interested in documenting the instrumental, social, motivator and environmental interpreter roles. A field note form (see Appendix E) was created to aid me in the recording of observations and provided me with a method of jotting down key observational elements in the moment while ensuring that I didn’t miss recording key descriptive details that had to be recalled at a later time after the observational event had concluded. The field note form included areas for start and finish times, location at the time of observation, a passive to active rating (Orams, 1995), notes on general content of guide messaging, and room for my personal thoughts. I commenced taking field notes the moment the clients first met their guide, and for the entire duration of the trip.

Once an individual trip was complete the field notes were then analyzed. This process involved looking at each field note as an individual source of data for such things as content, duration, and where provided interpretation fell on a passive to active continuum (Orams, 1995). Once each field note had been explored in this way a general summary was produced for each trip. The summaries included the total number of events witnessed and the overall themes and issues that emerged from the data (Berg, 2004).

**Study Limitations**

A limitation with the qualitative portion of this study was the relatively small number of individuals who made up the qualitative sample. Given that the data from the qualitative research
was used to inform and help construct the quantitative survey. A sample size of six participants was sufficient. However, I did not interview any junior guides for this section of the research and instead elected to interview six senior guides. Therefore, a limitation of the qualitative component of this research was a lack of data from junior guides on the phenomenon of wilderness tour guiding and specifically sea kayak guiding. An additional limitation was the interviewing of a single guide representing the expedition rafting and another from the mountain guiding industries. The inclusion of these two participants in the study provided excellent data that greatly added to the research results. However, their comments cannot be applied to their respective industries due to the fact that the sample size was just one person for each.

A limitation of the survey portion of the research was the use of an online questionnaire as a tool to access the research population. Potential survey respondents received the research invitation and attached survey hyperlink through their personal email accounts. At the time of the online survey, approximately 91.5% of the entire SKGABC membership could be reached by email correspondence (L. McNeil, personal communication, January 25, 2011). Therefore, a limitation of my research was only members of the SKGABC who provided an email address were invited.

Field observations were valuable in supporting and adding to the previous two parts of the overall research design. However, the relevantly small number of field observations, made on seven days spent in the field, limited the scope of the observational results. The results stemming from the field observations can’t be applied to the British Columbia sea kayaking industry as a whole, and instead can only represent a snapshot in time of the guides who participated in the study and the nature of the trips they were leading over the observational period.

Researcher’s Perspective on Trust
As previously highlighted, I am a member of the greater SKGABC community, and have been actively involved with this group in different capacities since the mid 1990. Through my career in post secondary education, I still sea kayak guide and consider myself fortunate to be able to introduce students to the ocean environment through the activity of sea kayaking. Within the paradigm of qualitative inquiry the importance of building and maintaining a sense of trust with the research participants is of critical importance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As stated by Lincoln and Guba, “building trust is a time consuming process” and “prolonged engagement is a must if adequate trust and rapport are to emerge” (p. 302). This applies in varying degrees to all three aspects of the study. Given my background in the sea kayaking industry and wilderness guiding in general, I believe I was able to quickly engage with participants and establish a high level of trust. As highlight by Berg (2004), a high degree of understanding on the part of the researcher of the phenomenon in question can benefit the entire research process. From this position of trust a researcher can honor those being investigated and ensure participants have input and influence within the qualitative research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Chapter Summary

The research design followed a mixed methods approach starting with a comprehensive literature review, qualitative interviews, online survey, and finally participant field observations. From the beginning of the study I wanted to better understand the role of the sea kayak tour guide and if and how guides were using interpretation to enhance the natural tourism experience. Each separate piece of research addressed a slightly different set of questions and sought to explore the phenomenon of wilderness tour guiding from a different perspective. All these pieces were designed to work together to best inform, construct, support, evaluate, and question the results that emerged from each. Triangulation, through the use of three separate methods,
informed the research questions in different ways and enhances the validity of the study.

Additionally, triangulation serves to mitigate some of the limitations inherent in the use of a single research method.
Chapter 4 Results

*Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role of the sea kayak tour guide and their use of interpretation to enhance the natural tourism experience. This chapter serves the purpose of exploring the results from the three research themes that make up the study.

*Part 1 Interview Results*

The interview portion of the research addresses the following questions:

- **Question #1**: Do wilderness tour guides create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients while participating on a natural tourism experience?
- **Question #2**: How do wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience?

The themes are organized and presented through the use of metaphorical headers that reference the different stages of a sea kayaking experience. The use of metaphors was utilized and reproduced here as an opportunity to see important interactions, relationships, and as a method to aid in data analysis (Berg, 2004). The four themes presented here include: Preparing to Launch, Moving on Water, Sharing the Experience, and Choosing Your Own Route. The themes are briefly introduced here and explored in more detail further in this same section.

- **Theme One - Preparing to Launch** - Participants identified life experiences that were powerful motivators of environmental understanding and the importance of childhood experiences in nature that sparked an interest in the natural environment.
- **Theme Two - Moving on Water** - Participants identified their use of environmental interpretation while working as a guide, and described the importance of this
opportunity in relation to the satisfaction they derive from wilderness guiding. Here participants provided accounts of how they envision their own personal environmental beliefs represented in their careers as a guide.

- Theme Three - *Sharing the Experience* – Participants highlight the importance of sharing a given place with clients, and through sharing, a place is revealed and connections are made between client and the natural environment. Participants emphasized the importance they placed on developing an environmental awareness in clients, but the reasons for wanting to do this varied between participants. Through the use of interpretation, participants believed that as a guide they had the ability to potentially change their client’s environmental understanding and ultimately move clients toward pro-environmental behavior.

- Theme Four - *Choosing Your Own Route* - The final theme touches on a story that was shared by five of the six guides interviewed. Here all but one of the participants believed that through their careers as a guide they were making a positive difference in their client’s lives and ultimately having a positive effect on the Earth.

**Theme One - Preparing to Launch**

This section assembles participant narratives that identify individual life experiences that were powerful motivators of personal environmental understanding. This theme additionally highlights the importance of childhood experiences in nature that sparked an interest in the natural environment. For the six participants who provided me with their stories, Karolin, Nelson, Sierra, Larson, Dewitt, and Reese this theme represents their collective backgrounds and histories of how they became interested in the natural environment. The research participants’ names have been changed to ensure confidentiality and pseudonyms have been created for each
participant. Karolin, an owner operator of her own sea kayaking company, described how her experiences working at an outdoor based summer camp and a personal tour to Africa influenced her understanding of the natural environment.

…for me Educo was definitely the foundation of my guiding. I’d been there as a student and fell in love with it because I hadn’t had much exposure to being outside in the wilderness. So that was a really a life changing experience, the ten days I spent there as a student. Then in 1993, I spent a year in Africa travelling there and met various different people, one person in particular who had a really broad depth of knowledge about wildlife and plant species and shared that with me and that really peaked my curiosity and made me realize wow, I haven’t actually paid a lot of detailed attention to certain aspects of the places I was working in. So after returning from Africa that’s when I really started to soak up information about natural history, and I’ve been very passionate about that ever since. (Karolin, Interview 1)

Another participant provided a different example of an experience with environmental activism that acted as a catalyst for environmental understanding.

I had a kind of ongoing eye opening experience there (university) and became involved in the first environmental issue that I sort of had some involvement in, it was with a place called the Wilmore Wilderness in Alberta, just north of Jasper, and there were plans to put in a coal mine there and there was a lobby to preserve it. That was my first involvement in activism and then it’s kind of grown from there. (Nelson, Interview 2)

All the participants provided rich accounts of experiences in childhood or as youth that acted as powerful influences on their environmental understanding and helped them become interested in the natural environment. Dewitt provided many such examples through his narrative and specifically recounted how experiences in nature at a young age were in part responsible for the career path he selected in life.

There was really exposure through camping with my family. On the property we owned on a lake in Ontario, while everyone else had a cottage, we stayed in canvas tents on platforms and cooked on the fire and canoed. And then Scouting, so probably though that exposure from my parents and my dad and Scouting background; and then through that developing, whatever my version is of Canadiana and wilderness and natural environment and being connected with it. Probably 15 years ago I realized that the path that I had meandered down all made
sense, that it pointed and connected to guiding and then eventually owning a company and working and guide training. It all made sense according to my background, just from the exposure as a kid. (Dewitt, Interview 5)

The first theme explored participant narratives describing significant life experiences, particularly in childhood and adolescence, as important motivators of personal environmental understanding. Research into significant life experiences and the impact of these experiences on individuals who have selected careers as environmental educators or environmental activists has repeatedly demonstrated these people identified extended time spent outdoors in nature, often as children, as the main attribute to their environmental interest and action (e.g., Chawla, 1999).

Theme Two - Moving on Water

In the second theme, all the participants clearly identified that they interpret the natural environment while guiding clients, and participants further went on to explain the high level of personal satisfaction they derive from connecting clients to the natural environment through the interpretation they provide. This theme starts with Nelson, an owner and operator of an expedition rafting company, who shared his thoughts around the overall enjoyment he derives from guiding being related to the environmental interpretation he facilitates for his clients.

I would say that it enhances my satisfaction quite a bit. I guess I would say that if I finished the day off, or a tour off, knowing that people felt that they had a value added experience, this fits in that satisfaction category. (Nelson, Interview 2)

Sierra, a veteran sea kayak guide, explained her perspective similarly to the one provided by Nelson, in that providing environmental interpretation for her clients adds satisfaction to her career as a guide. Sierra explained “I love it, if I can change one person’s perspective per season; I’ve done good in this world. So yes, sharing the environmental interpretations, that’s what excites me most about guiding.” For this second theme all the guides interviewed clearly expressed a similar sentiment that being able to share the guided experience, in part through
interpretation, was an important part in feeling satisfied with their careers as guides. Karolin explained the relationship between the satisfaction she derives from providing environmental interpretation and how this connects to her personal learning and teaching in the field.

…I’d say with our company currently, that’s a huge part of what we promote and what differentiates us from other kayaking companies is that we have a strong educational component and that’s been the history of this company in the 30 years that it’s been around. And even though I’m not even officially guiding a lot of the time, I’m always teaching, I’m always sharing information about the environment that we’re in and always being asked questions and it’s still a new place for me so I’m still learning a lot too. So for my enjoyment as a guide it’s a big part of it cause that’s what keeps it interesting and new, is being able to learn more and share with others. (Karolin, Interview 1)

As Karolin’s passage expresses, there is an important element present when providing environmental interpretation that can be described as sharing. This theme of sharing was talked about and described by all six of the interview participants. The idea of sharing information and the potential for this sharing to promote change through the guided experience is the focus of the third theme.

**Theme Three - Sharing the Experience**

The third theme further explores the participant’s stories as they describe the act of sharing information and knowledge to their clients, and through this sharing of a given location, culture, or object, something new is revealed and connections made between client and the natural environment. All six of the participants emphasized the importance of fostering an environmental awareness in their clients. However, the reasons for wanting to create this environmental awareness in clients were somewhat different for each guide. These reasons are highlighted through the participant’s stories in this section. Lastly, within the theme of sharing guides expressed a belief that through the use of interpretation they had the ability to potentially
change their client’s environmental understanding and ultimately move clients toward pro-
environmental changes in behavior.

Nelson provided a narrative that explained how he views the guided experience as an
opportunity to educate clients and potentially leverage this community of past rafting clients for
wilderness protection.

I see my career as a guide as being a chance to have a platform to do a number of
things, number one, to educate people and have them learn about these issues and
develop a love for these places themselves and to prioritize protection of these
places and good stewardship of other wilderness places as a priority in their lives,
and also as a platform to mobilize people on specific issues.

Dewitt, who owns and operates a sea kayaking company, shared a story that was similar
to that of Nelson’s, in that he believed a learning opportunity existed within a guided experience
and he was interested in having his clients take something away from a tour with him.

It comes up naturally, learning opportunities and teachable moments or thinkable
moments. It’s realizing the potential that’s all around that interconnected of
people, place, culture, that’s part of ecology. And with that, providing an
opportunity for myself to always be reflecting on challenging that model and then
representing it for guests, for them to have that opportunity to take something out
of the experience in the remote, rugged Kuyquot setting. (Dewitt, Interview 5)

Larson expanded on this theme, highlighting the importance of developing his skills at
inspiring, to inspire his guests to make a difference once they return from their guided
experience.

I think that’s something I’ll always be working on… how I can do better, be better
at inspiring people to appreciate the natural environment that they’re in. When I
was first taking my guides training, near the end of the course we were all sitting
around doing a debrief sort of session, we were all asked individually, “What do
you want to get out of being a guide or what do you hope to inspire people to do?”
That was sort of my answer at the time, was that I wanted to be able to inspire
people to make changes in their lives and do better in the environment. (Larson
Interview 4)
Another finding was that the participants used environmental interpretation differently. As illustrated by the narratives of Nelson, Dewitt, and Larson their stories included using environmental interpretation as a tool for activating clients to protect wilderness, moving clients to reflect on their experiences, or as an inspiration for change. Karolin and Sierra supplied a narrative that was similar to that of the other three guides. However, Reese’s story was at times different from the other participants. Reese’s background is different than the others selected for the study, as he has spent the last fifteen years working in the rock climbing, snowcat skiing and helicopter skiing industries. For Reese, his primary reason for interpreting the environment was to manage risk.

In the winter months it [environmental interpretation] is super important, and in some ways it’s maybe self motivating but it’s extremely important because clients will have a better understanding of the risk that they’re accepting. Snow science and snow… so it makes decision making and client feedback a little bit easier; they have a better understanding of how difficult your decisions may be, and why you’re in one place, and they want to be somewhere else. Because we are moving people through mountains and really need to have cooperation with how we move with the clients so they don’t go places we don’t want them to; so when they have a better understanding it really makes the day unwind easier. (Reese, Interview 6)

From interviews, it’s clear that all the research participants believed that as a guide they have the ability to potentially change their clients’ environmental understanding and ultimately move clients towards pro-environmental behaviors as a result of their environmental interpretation. Larson highlighted this belief,

Being able to lead your guests to a better understanding is important because, generally people in society tend to be so disconnected from our natural world, they just don’t have the appreciation of nature because they feel disconnected from it. They may not even feel consciously disconnected, they just are. When you’re out on a tour and you are just able to show them the world and their interconnectedness with nature, it can sometimes be as simple as the changing of a light bulb when all of a sudden they understand our natural connection to the world. I firmly believe that once we feel connected to the world around us, it makes us change our behaviours towards more pro environmental to see their actions in our own personal lives. (Larson, Interview 4)
Karolin expresses the same belief as Larson - that a potential exists within the guided experience for clients to change - but she thought this kind of change was not very common:

I would probably say the vast majority aren’t affected or don’t change but I don’t really know. It probably depends on their personality and what their lives just extend to. But there’s definitely potential, no question, I think everybody has that potential. (Karolin, Interview 1)

Through guiding and eventually owning his own sea kayaking company Dewitt has experienced getting to know many of his past clients well as they have returned to do tours with him for almost two decades. He has literally witnessed some of his clients grow up as he first met them as young children and watched them grow into adults. Dewitt believes these guests who visited his base camp location on the west coast of Vancouver Island repeatedly as a child, adolescence, and eventually as an adult have made significant life choices based on these experiences. Dewitt explains,

I spoke with their parents and I think what they’ve chosen in their schooling and how they’re going to apply themselves as adults in society is totally linked to those summers on Spring Island, and having the opportunity to explore the forest and intertidal zones. (Dewitt, Interview 5)

Dewitt not only spoke about the potential to changing his client’s environmental understanding through the interpreted experience, but the potential for clients to become affected by the experience of being in the wilderness. This theme concludes with Nelson’s words, as he explores his belief that a guided experience and environmental interpretation can potentially move his clients towards more pro-environmental behaviours:

I know that beyond just preventing damage it also provokes people… not just when they’re first bonding with these ideas, but even later on, it provokes further thought about the footprint that they leave in other places. Whether it be on a beach here or on the river near their home or driving across a field let’s say in their four wheel drives. Hopefully it leads to questions about, should I be putting this fertilizer on my lawn, and do I need to do that this time, and maybe I should get a push lawnmower instead of a gas one, stuff like that. I think it’s a good
catalyst, especially because it’s often coupled with such a powerful experience in their life because it’s during a special occasion in their life like a holiday or something they’ve planned for a long time. It probably has just that much more impact and more chance that it will be carried with them longer and talked about more. (Nelson, Interview 2)

The third theme highlighted participant narratives that described the act of sharing the outdoor experience with their clients. Prior research demonstrates that given some important factors, participants in environmental interpretation programs can learn new information that can potentially change behaviour. Lugg (2007) wrote “direct experience in natural environments can facilitate connections with and concern for nature. If approached from a critical paradigm, outdoor experiences can also offer alternative world-views and practical approaches to more sustainable living” (p. 108). All of the interview participants clearly articulated the importance of fostering an environmental awareness in their clients, and the belief that through the use of interpretation they had the ability to potentially change their client’s environmental understanding and ultimately move clients toward pro environmental changes in behavior.

Theme Four - Choosing Your Own Route

For five of the six interview participants an additional theme emerged that highlighted the belief that through their careers as guides they were making a positive difference in their client’s lives and ultimately having a positive effect on the Earth. This idea that they were making a difference and contributing to the betterment of the planet was obviously important to the participants. While concluding the first interview Karolin made a comment that she felt as a guide she was contributing to a better world. I thought this was an interesting opinion to share and it became a question that was put to the remaining five interview participants.

I mean, it [tourism] definitely has that potential and that’s the part that’s kept me involved. That’s a big part of what’s held me in it as long as it has. In some ways you can say that’s a pretty small influence and I wouldn’t argue against that, but at least I feel like I’m doing something in an environment that I enjoy, and I’m
passionate about. And I think just sharing that passion and that enthusiasm really affects people. That in itself, you know, just showing that you’re passionate and caring about the place. (Karolin, Interview 1)

Sierra expressed a similar thought as she explains how her guiding contributed to what she believed to be a better Earth:

Yes I do, I do make a difference I’m trying to educate one person at a time as they go through. They’re not getting it anywhere else. If they’re on a tour with me, that’s where they’re going to get that information and to spark an interest to look into it further. (Sierra, Interview 3)

Nelson describes a story similar to both Karolin and Sierra, in that his feeling of making a difference is in part through direct contact with his client base, but Nelson additionally through other aspects of his business such as marketing, and professional associations were another way he was making a difference. Nelson describes contentment with what he has been able to achieve through owning and operating his own expedition rafting company.

Frankly I could die a happy person right now, feeling that at least in that part of my life I’ve played a significant role in achieving something that I think is a good thing; that I know is a good thing. I’ll go back again to creating the sixth largest park in the world. Not a small achievement. So I think in general terms we have this platform idea, that for better or worse we were given this platform not only when we run our tours but in our marketing and advertising and professional associations and affiliations. Even things we say in public because people look to us whether we know it or not. (Nelson, Interview 2)

For five of the six participants this theme emerged: that through their careers as guides they felt they were contributing to solutions that ultimately benefited the Earth. For Reese, the participant who was primary employed in the winter as a mechanized ski guide, he believed that through his career as a guide he was in fact doing the opposite and negatively impacting the environment and thus the planet.

I have to say no. Because through education I am sure we may be kind of building up that curiosity for guests and maybe triggering some awareness or gaining a little bit more knowledge. We’re able to show them places that may be getting affected a bit more, that are a little bit more obvious. How the climate’s changing
and how that’s affecting the areas that we work or recreate in, but I think we probably do more damage in some ways, you know, with all the jet fuel we use it’s huge. (Reese, Interview 6)

Reese did state that he felt differently about the work he was doing in the summer months as a rock climbing guide and hiking guide. In these guiding positions he felt that he was contributing to a better planet. For the last theme guides did believe that through their selected careers they were making a positive difference in their client’s lives and ultimately contributing to the betterment of the Earth.

**Summary of Interview Results**

Qualitative interviews were conducted with six different wilderness tour guides and resulted in the identification of four different overall themes. The themes include: Preparing to Launch, Moving on Water, Sharing the Experience, and Choosing Your Own Route. The first research question for the interview section of the research was:

1. Do wilderness tour guides create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients while participating on a natural tourism experience?

This question was clearly answered by all interview participants as they stated yes, they do in fact create and deliver environmental interpretation while conducting tours. In the second identified theme - Moving on Water - participants identified their use of environmental interpretation while working as a guide, and described the importance of this opportunity in relation to the satisfaction they derive from wilderness guiding. The second research question asked:

2. How do wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience?
This question was answered through a number of different themes. Within theme three – Sharing the Experience – participants explained their reasons to create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients. Interview participants touched on the importance of sharing a given place with their clients, and through the process of sharing, the place is revealed and connections are made between the client and the natural environment. Participants also explained that with the aid of interpretation they could help develop an environmental awareness within their clients, and further believed that as a guide they had the ability to potentially change their client’s environmental understanding and ultimately move clients toward pro environmental behavior.

Lastly, theme four- Choosing Your Own Route-touched on a story that was shared by five of the six guides interviewed. Participants believed that through their careers they were making a positive difference in their client’s lives and ultimately having a positive effect on the Earth.

Part 2: Industry Survey Result

Introduction to Internet Survey Results

For this portion of the project the research questions changed slightly from that of the qualitative interviews and two research questions guided the survey. The survey portion of the study flowed from the following two questions.

- Question #3: What do sea kayak guides believe to be the sources of their guiding skills and what are the sources of their environmental knowledge?
- Questions #4: How do sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?
The questionnaire was completed by 103 respondents who are members of the SKGABC, for a response rate of 19%. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

**Analysis of Internet Survey Questions**

**Profile of Study Participants.**

Table 2 illustrates the breakdown of guide certification levels across the entire membership of the SKGABC, and provides the breakdown of guide certification level from the online survey sample. Results demonstrate a moderately good fit between the population being studied and the sample obtained from the population; and thus the sample was considered to be a reasonable representation of the SKGABC’s population. This finding partially addresses concerns about the 19% response rate and potential nonresponse error. Given the response rate, the sampling error was relatively small (± 8.7% at the 95% confidence interval (Salant & Dillman, 1994)). Grooves (2006) demonstrates surveys with high response rates can potentially have as much nonresponse bias as surveys with lower response rates, and responses within the same survey, regardless of low or high response rates, can produce high levels of nonresponse bias.
Table 2
Breakdown of Guide Certification Level Between Population and Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide Certification Level</th>
<th>Guides Level Representation within Population (%)</th>
<th>Guide Level Representation within Sample (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Overnight Guide (AOG)</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide Trainer and Examiner</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Member (not a guide)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from L. McNeil, personal communication, May 25, 2010)

Table 3 highlights the characteristics of the sea kayak guides who participated in the study, and describes gender, age classification, certification level, and where guides acquired the skill necessary to be sea kayak guides.
Table 3
Summary Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Gender (N = 103) (Q11)</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown of Respondent Age (n = 101) (Q12)</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 19</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Formal Guides Training (n = 103) (Q9)*</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKGABC</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training with an individual company</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other recognized sea kayak training course</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post secondary specific guides training</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Participants could select all that applied

Table 3 demonstrates that a small majority of respondents were male 56%, the greatest number of respondents (35%) fell between the ages of 20 - 29 years old with the 30 - 39 year olds representing 31% of the sample population. SKGABC guide level certification within the sample population was highest for Assistant Overnight Guide (AOG) and Level 2 representing 27% and 28% respectively. The SKGABC was the highest ranked source for guide training, which made sense given the survey population consisted of the SKGABC’s membership. In summary the SKGABC has a diverse population represented by a relatively even distribution in gender, and a wide distribution in age and certification levels amongst its members.

*The Sources of Guiding Skills.*

Respondents were asked to indicate the usefulness of different sources for the acquisition of sea kayak guiding skills. This information was collected for comparison between the SKGABC’s system for providing skills to guides and where the guides themselves believed they acquired their guiding skills. The results from this section could potentially offer the SKGABC
insights into future guide training initiatives. For each statement respondents selected for usefulness on a five point scale from “not at all useful” to “extremely useful”. Figure 10 displays the results, and only includes the “very useful” and “extremely useful” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills.

Figure 5 The Sources of Sea Kayak Guiding Skills (n = 103)

Mean computed from a 1-5 response scale. "Not applicable" responses not included in mean calculation

The list of potential sources was partially generated from the qualitative interview results and aided in informing this part of the survey. Mean score results from Figure 5 demonstrate mentoring with other sea kayak guides, guide training course, and personal paddling experience as the most highly rated. Skills semester program and non-guiding specific post-secondary scored the lowest. The SKGABC has a guide mentoring process that exists throughout the entire certification stream and mentoring is recognized as an integral part of the guide training program.
The Role of the Sea Kayak Tour Guide.

Cohen’s (1985) original distinction of the roles of the tour guide includes four parts.

- **Instrumental** - provides navigation, access, and safety
- **Social** - maintains cohesion within the group
- **Interactional** - acts as the link between participant and environment or local culture
- **Communicative** - provides information and interpretation (Cohen, 1985)

Weiler and Davis (1993) recognized nature-based guides as having an additional responsibility to conduct the guided experience in an environmentally responsible manner, and as a result added an additional category of resource management into Cohen’s (1985) model. The role of resource management is split into two different areas described below (Weiler & Davis, 1993).

- **Motivator** - modify and correct behaviour to reduce environmental impacts
- **Environmental Interpreter** - encourages long-term responsible behaviour

Respondents had to rate a provided statement using a 5 point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Additionally, the statements were arranged such that each grouping started with individual statements that represented the passive end of the Oram’s (1995) ecotourism continuum, with the following statement worded to be more active than the previous statement. The final statement in a given series represented the most active end of the ecotourism continuum.

Figure 6 displays the results for only the “slightly agree” and “strongly agree” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills. Figure 6 focuses on how guides manage the social interactions between guide and client.
Figure 6 How Sea Kayak Guides Manage the Social Aspects of the Experience “Social Role” (N = 103)

Mean computed from a 1-5 response scale. "Not applicable" responses not included in mean calculation

Results from this question demonstrate that most guides report they are actively managing the social aspects (conflict, morale, and social interactions) of a guided experience. Guides reported that creating opportunities for guests to interact and managing conflict between guests was important, and the need to improve morale when required was the highest rated social aspect of leading a guided tour.

*Use of Interpretation.*

This section was split into two streams, with one focusing on how guides create awareness of local communities and the other on how guides create awareness of First Nations’ communities. Figure 7 displays the results of how sea kayak guides believe they bring awareness to local communities, and displays the results for only the “slightly agree” and “strongly agree” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills.
Figure 7 How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities “Communicator Role” (N = 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bringing Awareness to Local Communities</th>
<th>Percentage Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. I don't present information about the local community (1.7)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I provide information about local communities if asked (4.5)</td>
<td>27.2 Slightly agree 61.2 Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. I actively present information about local communities (4.3)</td>
<td>25.2 Slightly agree 54.4 Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean computed from a 1-5 response scale. "Not applicable" responses not included in mean calculation

Results from this section demonstrate that guides report they are actively interpreting local communities. Guides reported they provide information about local communities when asked by guests and believe themselves to be actively presenting information about local communities on their own.

Figure 8 displays the results of how sea kayak guides believe they bring awareness to First Nation communities, and displays the results for only the “slightly agree” and “strongly agree” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills.
Figure 8 How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to First Nation Communities “Communicator Role” (N = 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bringing Awareness to First Nation Communities</th>
<th>A. I don't provide First Nation interpretation (1.6)</th>
<th>B. I provide interpretation about First Nations if asked (4.5)</th>
<th>C. I actively interpret First Nations' culture (4.4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean computed from a 1-5 response scale. "Not applicable" responses not included in mean calculation.

Guides reported that they provide First Nation interpretation if asked by guests and further reported engaging in active interpreting of First Nations’ culture. However, additional results emerged from the analysis of cross tabulation for this question that tested for differences between gender, guide level, and age. The cross tabulation results are provided in their own section titled Analysis of Cross Tabulation near the end of this chapter.

Section 5 of the survey explored how guides used environmental interpretation with clients while on tour. Figures 9 displays the results for how guides believe they interpret the environment for their clients, and include only the “slightly agree” and “strongly agree” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills. Figure 9 explores how sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to highlight the natural environment for their clients.

Guides self reported that they do provide environmental interpretation and rated themselves in the active end of the ecotourism continuum (Orams, 1995). Mean scores for all of the environmental interpretation statements were all over 4.5 and demonstrate that guides believe themselves to be actively interpreting the natural environment for their clients.
Section 5 of the survey contained another set of statements that furthered explored how guides use environmental interpretation and the natural environment to promote positive behavior change within their clients. These statements were designed to explore the Weiler and Davis (1993) roles of the tour guide and specifically looked at the guide as a motivator to modify and correct behaviours to reduce environmental impacts and the guide as an environmental interpreter who encourages long-term responsible behavior. Figures 10 displays the results for how guides believe they use the natural environment to promote positive behavioral change within their clients (motivator role), and include only the “slightly agree” and “strongly agree”
response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills.

Figure 10 How do Guides Use the Natural Environment for Behaviour Change “Motivator Role” (N = 103)

Mean computed from a 1-5 response scale. "Not applicable" responses not included in mean calculation

Results generally show a slightly lower mean score rating for the statements provided in this section of the survey when compared with those in Figure 9. Figure 10 illustrates guides rated themselves highly on the statement “when guiding I model low impact environmental behaviors” in contrast to the statement “I use the entire tour to modify and influence behaviors”.

Figures 11 displays the results for how guides believe they use the natural environment to promote long-term positive environmental behavioral change once clients return back from their sea kayaking experience. Results displayed here include only the “slightly agree” and “strongly agree” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills.
Figure 11 How do Guides Use the Natural Environment for Behaviour Change “Interpreter Role” (N = 103)

Results from Figure 11 illustrate that sea kayak guides report that they are encouraging their clients to practice positive environmental behaviours once they return home from the guide experience. Additionally, guides believe once clients return home they do implement responsible environmental behaviours and further believe clients may become more involved in issues of sustainability and the environment.

These findings contrast with research by Randall and Rollins (2009) who explored the role of the BC sea kayak guide through the perspective of tourist clients who had participated on sea kayaking tours. Clients indicated that sea kayak guides performed well in the instrumental and interactional roles, but were not performing their communicative, interpretative, or motivator of responsible environmental behaviours to the desired or expected levels of the tour participants.

Section 6 of the survey was designed to understand where sea kayak guides gained their environmental knowledge. This data was collected to better understand the sources of guides’
environmental knowledge so that the SKGABC or any other guide training entity could develop and best target future training/workshop programs that dealt with the natural environment.

Figures 12 displays the results for the sources of environmental knowledge for sea kayak guides. Results displayed here include only the “very useful” and “extremely useful” response categories. Mean responses are provided in the parenthesis next to the listed source of guiding skills.

**Figure 12 Source of Environment Knowledge for Sea Kayak Guides (N = 103)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Environmental Knowledge</th>
<th>Percentage Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Personal trips and field observations (4.6)</td>
<td>25.2 68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Mentoring from other guides (4.4)</td>
<td>36.9 52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Environmental literature and media (4.3)</td>
<td>31.1 48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Something else (4.2)</td>
<td>12.6 15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Post secondary education (3.9)</td>
<td>21.4 39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Staff training provided by outfitter (3.8)</td>
<td>26.2 24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Guides training course (3.8)</td>
<td>27.2 25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Skills semester program (3.4)</td>
<td>14.6 5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean computed from a 1-5 response scale. "Not applicable" responses not included in mean calculation.

Results from this question demonstrate that “personal tours and field observation” was selected as the most useful source of environmental knowledge, while mentoring and environmental literature scored slightly lower. Additionally noteworthy is the lack of emphasis placed on “staff training provided by outfitter”, “guides training courses”, and “skills semester program”, which all scored low as sources of environmental knowledge for sea kayak guides.
Analysis of Cross Tabulation

For ease of readability and to best highlight the results from the analysis of cross tabulations only statements that produced statistically significant results are included here. The originating data table’s title is provided followed by the individual statement to aid the reader in identifying were the data came from. Table 4 displays the different guide levels responses to provided statement from all the survey questions.

Table 4
Summary of Cross Tabulations by Guide Level (N = 103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean Response*</th>
<th>Significant Differences (ANOVA/Scheffe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Sea Kayak Guiding Skills: Employer training</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I don’t provide First Nations interpretation</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I actively interpret First Nation’s culture</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Guides Believe they Interpret the Natural Environment for Their Clients: I provide interpretation about the connections between species</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Guides Use the Natural Environment for Behaviour Change with Guests: I encourage guest to practice responsible environmental behaviour when they return home</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Source of Environmental Knowledge for Guides: Guide training course</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.5
** p<0.1
Results demonstrate that on many of the questions Level 1, AOG and Level 2, and Level 3, Guide Trainers, Examiners responded differently. Table 4 highlights that guides with more experience (higher level of certification) reported that they interpret First Nation’s culture more frequently and more actively than guides with less experience. In this example Level 1 differed from AOG/Level 2 and Level 3/Trainers/Examiners. Another difference emerged from two of the environmental interpretation questions and again guides with more experience (higher level of certification) are more likely to report they provide interpretation about the connections between species and encourage guest to practice responsible environmental behaviour when they return home. For these two statements AOG/Level 2 differed from Level 3/Trainers/Examiners. Cross tabulations were carried out on gender (see Table 5) and comparisons done using a chi-squared test.
Table 5  
**Summary of Cross Tabulations by Gender (N = 103)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Statements</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
<th>Female n = 45</th>
<th>Male n = 58</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Manage the Social Aspects of the Experience: When morale is low I don't address this</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Manage the Social Aspects of the Experience: When morale is low I take charge and work to improve morale</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I provide interpretation about First Nations if asked</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I actively interpret First Nations’ culture</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I don't present information about the local community</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I provide information about local communities if asked</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong>: How Sea Kayak Guides Bring Awareness to Local Communities: I actively present information about local communities</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.5  
** p<0.1

An analysis of cross tabulations for gender produced statistically significant results that are presented here in three themes. The first theme demonstrates that female sea kayak guides report that they manage the social component of the experience, specifically morale, more actively than male guides. The second theme illustrates that female guides believe that when asked by clients they provide interpretation regarding First Nations’ culture more frequently and more actively than male guides. The last theme presented here highlights that female guides report that they provide information regarding local communities more frequently and more actively than male guides.
Finally, a cross tabulation of age classification resulted in a statistical significant
difference between sea kayak guides between 20 and 29 years of age and guides between 40 to
59, including guides over 60, in terms the source of their guiding skills. Here older guides
reported that personal study was more useful as a source of guiding skill compared to younger
guides. Results are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
<th>Significant Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sources of Sea Kayak Guiding Skills: Personal study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 19, 20-29</td>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 34</td>
<td>n = 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.5

Summary of Key Findings from Internet Survey

Demographic Profile.

Results from the online survey illustrate a close fit between the survey respondents and
the overall population of the SKGABC. The demographic questions show a relatively even
distribution of both male and female sea kayak guides with 65.4% of guides being between the
ages of 20 to 39, and the remaining 34.6% being 40 or older. Respondent guide certification
levels show a distribution that is close in fit to the SKGABC’s total population, with more
members in the junior certification levels (Level 1/AOG/Level 2) and less in the higher levels of
certification (Level 3/Trainers/Examiners). Survey results also highlighted that the majority of
sea kayak guides (76.7%) had participated in a SKGABC guide training course.
Sources of Guiding Skills and Environmental Knowledge.

The first research question addressed by the internet survey was: What do sea kayak guides believe to be the sources of their guiding skills and what are the sources of their environmental knowledge?

Guides reported what they believed to be the sources of their sea kayak guiding skills and rated (1) mentoring, (2) guides training course, and (3) personal experience as the most useful. Additionally, guides reported what they believed were the sources of their environmental knowledge and rated (1) personal trips and field observations, (2) mentoring from other guides, (3) environmental literature and media, (4) something else as the most useful.

Role of the Sea Kayak Tour Guide and the Use of Interpretation.

The second research question addressed by the internet survey was: How do sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?

Results demonstrate that guides view themselves to be actively managing the social, interactional (link between clients and environment), and motivator of positive environmental behaviours when viewed on an ecotourism continuum (Orams, 1995). Specific results from these questions are as follows.

- Guides believe they actively manage the social aspects of a guided experience.
- Female sea kayak guides produced statistically higher ratings when addressing low morale than male guides.
- Female respondents produced statistically higher ratings when interpreting local communities and local First Nation’s communities. In this case female guides
reported themselves to be more active interpreters of local communities and First Nations’ communities than male guides.

Through the analysis of cross tabulations, a difference between how junior and senior sea kayak guides interpreted First Nations’ culture emerged. Results are presented here as follows.

- Senior sea kayak guides reported that they actively interpret First Nation’s culture more frequently than did junior guides.
- Senior sea kayak guides rated themselves more highly than did junior guides for the statement “I provide interpretation about the connections between species”.
- Most guides, regardless of gender, age, or guide level stated they believe themselves to be actively, versus passively, using environmental interpretation and further believe themselves to be actively using the guided experience as a tool for positive behavioral change.

Survey research can be criticized for not always reflecting reality, since respondents sometimes describe “socially acceptable” views and behaviours and lack the insight to accurately describe their own views and behaviours (Patton, 1980). With this concern in mind the research also utilized participant field observations described in the following section.
Part 3: Participant Field Observations

Introduction

The participant field observations were generally focused on the same research questions used for the qualitative interviews. These include:

1. Question #1: Do wilderness tour guides create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients while participating on a natural tourism experience?
2. Question #2: How do wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience?

Essentially, the participant field observation focused on if and how sea kayak guides utilized the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to their clients in the field. Field observations were used to further explore the research questions and gave me the opportunity to witness if the results collected through the interviews and online survey were in fact observable in the field. For the purpose of conducting field observations, I participated on two different sea kayaking day tours and one five-day tour.

Participant Field Observation Results

Participant field observations were structured around the role of the tour guide as adapted from Cohen (1985) and Weiler and Davis (1993). For this reason field observations were gathered for all six roles including the (1) instrumental, (2) social, (3) interactional, (4) teacher/communicator, (5) motivator, and (6) environmental interpreter (Cohen, 1985; Weiler & Davis, 1993). However, given the research interests, what had already been discovered from the interviews and survey results, and the natural overlap and blending of these roles I specifically observed for messaging dealing with the instrumental, social, interactional, and communicator of
environmental interpretation/motivation elements of a sea kayaking tourism experience.

Additionally, I observed for the passiveness or activeness of individual messaging and record that information at the time the observations were made.

Table 7 highlights the number of individual observations per guide role for each of the tours and total duration of all messaging based on the guide roles.

Table 7
Field Observations Based on Event and Duration of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of the Guide</th>
<th>Instrumental # of Events Observed/Total Duration (hrs:minutes)</th>
<th>Social # of Events Observed/Total Duration (hrs:minutes)</th>
<th>Interactional # of Events Observed/Total Duration (hrs:minutes)</th>
<th>Environmental Communicator # of Events Observed/Total Duration (hrs:minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Tour 1</td>
<td>1/0:10</td>
<td>1/0:01</td>
<td>3/0:04</td>
<td>6/0:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Tour 2</td>
<td>2/0:24</td>
<td>2/0:03</td>
<td>3/0:06</td>
<td>9/0:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-day</td>
<td>4/3:19</td>
<td>2/2:11</td>
<td>7/4:48</td>
<td>15/9:54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 7 sea kayak guides who participated in the study produced more environmental messages than any other message on all observed tours. It is important to note here that the instrumental role is probably not best observed through messaging. I could only record specific messages such as guides giving a safety talk or explaining to clients how to hold their paddles, and had no way of knowing when guides where thinking about safety, planning route changes, group pacing, or myriad other potential thoughts that make up the instrumental role. For this reason only the social, cultural (interactional), and environmental communicator roles are explored in more detail. The participant field observation results are presented here in three themes consisting of the social, cultural, and environmental communicator.

Social Messaging.

The social component of the guide’s role was observed frequently throughout each of the three different tours observed. On all the tours, when the clients first met their guides they were
friendly, professional, and attentive to client needs. As an example, on one of the day tours the lead guide took a bit of extra time to learn all the client’s names and through this process got clients interacting with her and each other. Guides on the multiday tour were observed frequently checking in with clients, including clients in the decision making process, motivating clients to participate in a given activity, creating different options to suite client needs, and providing the necessary lubrication to generate conversation and discussion around the campfire. An example of this occurring was the evening campfires where clients interacted with each other and their guides and recounted the highlights of the day. At no time during any of the tours did I witness conflict or negativity between the guides and the clients, between clients, or between guides. As illustrated through the survey results, guides reported to be actively maintaining and improving morale during a sea kayaking experience. Guides clearly demonstrated the social role actively during all observed tours.

*Cultural Messaging.*

The observations of cultural messaging were divided into local First Nations messaging and local community (non First Nations) messaging. Guides were observed providing interpretation regarding local communities frequently and with large differences in duration. On one of the day tours the tour left and travelled by a busy coastal village, which provided an opportunity for messaging and produced enjoyable stories about the locations and residences we were paddling by. Local community messaging was specific in nature and included things like who owned a private island and how much it sold for last time it went up for sale, or the married couple who had constructed two different homes on one island so they could each have their own space. These stories and local lore were entertaining, initiated by the guide, and were generally short in duration lasting from one to two minutes.
On the multi-day tour, aspects of the local community including sport fishing, fishing lodges, logging, land use issues both past and present, were interpreted by all the guides. We even went into the local restaurant one afternoon for coffee and pie and met some of the people who lived in the village. The cultural component during this tour was actively represented by guides, complete with real-life examples observable in the field. As illustrated through the survey results, guides reported to be actively interpreting the local community during a sea kayaking experience and they clearly demonstrated this during all observed tours.

Observations of sea kayak guides providing First Nations’ culture messages were evident on all observed tours. However the duration and quality of First Nations’ interpretation was not the same between the any of the day tours and the multi-day tour. On one-day tour the guide referred to the local Coast Salish peoples by name a number of times as we paddled by shell beaches that would have served as shellfish gathering spots in the past. The guide also explained how coastal First Nations would have dealt with their dead and how they use wooden boxes in this process. In these examples the senior female guide actively interpreted First Nations’ culture over the duration of the tour. On the second day tour the local First Nation was briefly mentioned during the tour; however, the local Nation was not referred to by name and the information provided by the male Level II guide was short in duration. Comparing the First Nation interpretation field observations from the second day tour with the results from the online survey there appear to be differences. The survey results reported that AOG and Level II guides rated 4.51 out of 5 for the statement “I actively interpret First Nation’s culture”, however, the guide on the day tour only briefly mentioned First Nation’s culture and didn’t actively provide interpretation regarding coastal First Nations.
Lastly, First Nation-specific messaging was observed frequently and for long durations during the multi-day tour. The particular geographical area this company bases its field operations from has a First Nation village located close by, and one of the company owners is a member of that community. As such, First Nation’s culture featured prominently throughout the duration of the entire experience. Examples include traditional place names for geographic locations and plant species, past and present local history, a visit to the local present day village site, and a traditional First Nations salmon diner. The salmon dinner was an example of an active ecotourism product (Orams, 1995). In this example, on the fourth evening of the tour, a group of First Nation residents travelled to the base camp and cooked a salmon dinner over a fire with the salmon fillets supported by wooden slats. For hours the tour participants and the community members discussed the lives of the local residences. In this example of active tourism, the clients were given the opportunity to learn directly from the local host First Nation as opposed to having First Nation’s culture interpreted by non-First Nation sea kayak guides.

*Environmental Messaging.*

The environmental messaging provided by guides was observed frequently throughout each of the three different sea kayak tours. All the guides from each tour demonstrated an obvious passion for the natural environment as was evident in the interpretive messaging they delivered. On the multi-day tour environmental interpretation was provided in large and frequent doses at a much deeper level than what I witnessed in both day tours. For each of the day tours, guides generally initiated environmental interpretive messages for clients that included an identification of what we were seeing in the field with the addition of a fact or short anecdote about that particular object.
For example on the first day, the guide readily provided information regarding the plants and wildlife we were encountering, discussed the origins of the modern kayak, and included information on geological processes relevant to what we were witnessing. During our lunch stop the guide provide information on leave no trace etiquette and made sure we all knew not to feed the raccoon that lingered with us over lunch. For both day tours, the guides did not provide interpretation on how humans interact with the local ecology nor did guides directly connect anything we saw or discussed that day with positive environmental behaviour changes that clients could potentially bring home.

The multi-day tour demonstrated guides providing a similar style of environmental interpretation but at a level of detail and depth of knowledge that was not witnessed on the day tours. For example, on the first day of the tour the entire group spent 1.5 hours exploring the tidal mud flat located in front of our camp on the lowest tidal event of the year. While on the mud flats the clients and guides discovered many different species of kelp, fish, sea stars, sponges, and other invertebrates to identify and discuss. Individual species were collected in small jars so everybody could get a good look and then later returned to the exact places they were gathered. The interpretation included the ecological significance these species had within the larger ecosystem. For example, the concept of bioturbation (mixing of sediments due to the digging action of sea otters) was introduced and explained to clients. Here the relationship between sea otters, sea otter habitat and food sources, and humans-caused impacts was interpreted.

As illustrated through both the qualitative interviews and survey results, guides reported to be actively using environmental interpretation to educate clients on the natural environment. Additionally, guides self-reported that they believe themselves to be actively using the natural environment as a tool for positive behavioral change. However, this latter claim was not overtly
observed on any of the tours. Certainly, many of the environmental messages could potentially motivate clients towards changes in their behaviour, but these messages were not direct or explicit in nature.

Chapter Summary

The entire research undertaking can be separated into three distinct pieces. The first part consisted of six qualitative interviews that addressed two research questions:

Question #1: Do wilderness tour guides create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients while participating on a natural tourism experience?

Question #2: How do wilderness tour guides recognize, understand, and utilize the opportunity to deliver environmental interpretation to clients while participating in a natural tourism experience?

The analysis of interview data resulted in the identification of four different themes. In the first theme participants described experiences in their lives that were powerful motivators of environmental understanding. The importance of childhood experiences in nature as a catalyst for interest in the natural environment emerged through participants’ narratives. In the second theme, participants identified they use environmental interpretation while working as a guide, and described the importance of this opportunity in relation to the satisfaction they derive from wilderness guiding. Within this second theme, guides clearly stated that they do create and deliver environmental interpretation to their clients, thus answering the first research question.

The second research question was addressed through the remaining third and fourth themes. The third theme highlights the importance participants placed on the sharing of a given location with clients, and through sharing, a place is revealed and connections are made between client and the natural environment. Through the use of interpretation, participants also believed
they had the opportunity to potentially change their client's environmental understanding and ultimately move clients toward pro-environmental behavior. In the fourth theme, five of the six guides shared a similar story in that through their careers as guides they believed they were making a positive difference in their client’s lives and ultimately having a positive effect on the Earth.

An online survey made up the second part of the study and made use of a slightly different set of research questions consisting of:

Question #3: What do sea kayak guides believe to be the sources of their guiding skills and what are the sources of their environmental knowledge?

Questions #4: How do sea kayak guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?

The majority of sea kayak guides (77%) had participated in a SKGABC guide training course. Tour guides reported the sources of their sea kayak guiding skills and rated as most useful (1) mentoring, (2) guides training course, and (3) personal experience. Additionally, the most useful sources of their environmental knowledge were (1) personal trips and field observations, (2) mentoring from other guides, (3) environmental literature and media, (4) something else.

Cohen’s (1985) model as expanded by Weiler and Davis (1995) was used as a framework to explore how sea kayak guides identified with these roles. Results demonstrate that guides view themselves to be actively managing the social, interactional (link between clients and environment), and motivator of positive environmental behaviours when viewed on an ecotourism continuum. Specific results answer the fourth research question, how do sea kayak
Guides believe they use interpretation to manage and highlight the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the natural tourism experience for their clients?

- Guides believe they are actively managing the social aspects of a guided experience.
- Female sea kayak guides reported a statistically higher score when addressing low morale than male guides. Here female guides reported themselves to be addressing low moral more actively than male guides.
- Female respondents produced statistically higher ratings when interpreting local communities and local First Nation’s communities. In this case female guides reported themselves to be actively interpreting local communities and First Nations’ communities more actively than male guides.

A difference between how junior and senior sea kayak guides interpreted First Nations’ culture and the natural environment was found.

- Senior sea kayak guides reported actively interpret First Nation’s culture more frequently than junior guides.
- Senior sea kayak guides rated themselves more highly than junior guides for the statement “I provide interpretation about the connections between species”.

Regardless of gender, age, or guide level sea kayak guides had similar ratings for their use of environmental interpretation and how they use the natural environment to modify or change the behaviours of their guests similarly. Guides believe themselves to be actively using environmental interpretation and further believe themselves to be actively using the guided experience as a tool for positive behavioral change.

The final piece of research made use of participant field observations structured around the role of the tour guide as adapted from Cohen (1985) and Weiler and Davis (1993). The same
general research questions that were utilized for the qualitative interviews were used again for the participant field observations.

The social component of the guide’s role was observed frequently throughout each of the three different tours observed. In the field, guides demonstrated the social role actively during all observed tours, and supports results that emerged through the online survey where guides self reported actively managing the social aspects of a guided experience.

Observations of cultural messaging were divided into First Nations messaging and local community (non First Nation) messaging. In the field, guides demonstrated active interpretation of local communities during all observed tours, supporting results that emerged through the online survey. On all tours guides on were observed interpreting local communities; however the duration of these messages were much shorter on day tours as compared with the multi-day tour.

Observations of sea kayak guides providing First Nations’ culture messages were evident on all observed tours. However the duration and quality of First Nations’ interpretation was not the same between any of the tours. This observation is only partially supported by the survey results.

The environmental messaging provided by guides was observed frequently throughout each of the three different sea kayak tours. Field observations from the multi-day tour demonstrated guides providing a higher level of detail, greater depth of knowledge, and longer duration in messages compared to day tours. However, all guides from each tour demonstrated an obvious passion for the natural environment as was evident in the interpretive messaging they delivered.

As illustrated through both the qualitative interviews and survey results, guides reported actively using environmental interpretation to educate clients on the natural environment.
Additionally, guides self reported that they believe themselves to be actively using the natural environment as a tool for positive behavioral change. However, this was not overtly observed on any of the tours. Certainly, many of the environmental messages could potentially motivate clients towards changes in their behaviour, but these messages were not direct or explicit in nature. At no time did guides provide clients with messaging suggesting how they could make changes in their live that could potentially benefit the environment or messaging suggesting clients get involved with a cause connected to an aspect of the tourism experience they just encountered.
Chapter 5 Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role of the sea kayak tour guide and their use of interpretation to enhance the natural tourism experience. The thesis research consisted of three distinct pieces (1) qualitative interviews, (2) online survey, and (3) participant field observations.

Contribution to Research Literature

Guide Roles Viewed Passively and Actively

As highlighted throughout this study, past research has explored the idea that nature-based tour guide has the opportunity communicate and interpret the significance of the environment, promote minimal impact techniques, ensure the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment, and motivate the clients to consider their own lives in relation to larger ecological and cultural concerns (Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001 p. 149). This study made use of Cohen’s (1995) and Weiler and Davis’, (1993) interpretation of the role of the tour guide in conjunction with a model (Orams, 1995) that viewed a given ecotourism product on a continuum between passive and active strategies. Figure 13 presents the role of nature-based tour guided split into passive and active strategies applicable to each role of the guide.
Figure 13 Role of the Nature-based Tour Guide from Passive to Active Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide Role</th>
<th>Passive Strategy</th>
<th>Active Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>• Is not participating in ongoing skills training</td>
<td>• Participates in ongoing skills training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Plans and leads a safe trip</td>
<td>• Included clients in decision making process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides minimal skills feedback to clients</td>
<td>• Provides feedback and spends time coaching clients to improve skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>• Ignores or is not aware of conflict within the group</td>
<td>• Address conflict within the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not facilitate social activities</td>
<td>• Facilitates social activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ignores or is not aware of opportunities to improve morale</td>
<td>• Identifies and capitalizes on opportunities to improve morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional</td>
<td>• Models appropriate behaviours and minimizes impacts on host culture</td>
<td>• Provides knowledge, resulting in actions that directly benefit host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Models appropriate behaviours and minimizes impacts on local environment</td>
<td>• Provides knowledge, resulting in actions that benefit the local environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has not continued to learn about the host culture or local environment</td>
<td>• Carries out activities that benefit host cultures and local environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has not built relationships with local community to facilitate continued learning</td>
<td>• Continues to learn about the host culture and local environment by building relationships within the host community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>• Provides minimal amounts of information to clients</td>
<td>• Engages with clients and initiates conversation without first being prompted by clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Answers client questions but does not facilitate discussion and dialogue</td>
<td>• Explores local issues through facilitated discussion and dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not freely provide information and instead waits for client questions</td>
<td>• Respectful of differing opinions and view points and welcomes these ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivator</td>
<td>• Understands the tour’s environmental systems (example recycling) but motivates through example only</td>
<td>• Demonstrates and discusses examples and the reasons behind the positive environmental actions of the tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not connect what clients are seeing in the field to meaningful discussion that build on an experience</td>
<td>• Uses different techniques in the field to have clients reflect on their experiences as a method to motivate positive environmental change in the field and at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Interpreter</td>
<td>• Provides interpretation/information but does not link the information with client behaviour</td>
<td>• Provides clients with resources that they can utilize and ways to get involved once the trip concludes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refers clients to guide books for the identification of species</td>
<td>• Makes clients aware of their role within the larger ecological ecosystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Works with company owners and fellow staff to provided options for clients to get involved and make a positive difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Cohen, 1985; Weiler & Davis, 1993; Orams, 1995)
Figure 13 does not present a model in which the passive end of the continuum represents guides that are not doing their job to the best of their abilities or the active end of the continuum as representing a benchmark of what guides should be aspiring to become. Instead it is recognized here that wilderness tour guides are constantly faced with challenging situations and the location where an individual guide falls on the passive to active continuum, in any of the guide roles, is based on guide interests, knowledge levels, personal abilities, training, company policies, situational factors, and is often outside the control of the guide. By using the phrase “outside the control of the guide” I am highlighting myriad circumstances where the guide can’t necessarily do as they wish. Examples of this in the field could include a commercial operator offering tours that are located on the passive end of the continuum and a guide who desires the more active strategies; another example could be an orca viewing tour that did not encounter any orcas, so the guides didn’t present the roles of motivator, and environmental interpreter as actively if they had encounter orcas. Additionally, tour guides could choose to be more active in some roles and less active in others.

It also appears that the amount of associated risk an activity carries with it also dictates what role a tour guide will adopt. For example, a tour guide leading a group on a land based salmon viewing tour (low risk) could potentially utilize more of the active strategies when compared to a helicopter ski guide (high risk). The length of the tour also influences how much of a passive to active role a tour guide could take over the duration of the guided experience. It appears with an increase in tour length (between a short day tour verses a multi-day tour) the opportunity for tour guides to employ the more active strategies of their roles becomes available. I certainly witnessed this with guides on the day trips who did not utilize as many of the active strategies as guides on the multi-day trip. Other research that has explored changes in tourist
knowledge and behavioral intentions facilitated through a natural tourism experience has
demonstrated that the duration of the tour, number of interpretive presentations, and time spent
immersed in the host environment promoted participant learning (active strategy) and ultimately
behavioral change (Powell & Ham, 2008; Powell et al., 2009; Weiler & Smith, 2009).

Survey Result Discussion

Survey results demonstrated a difference between guides with more experience (higher
level of certification) when compared to guides with less experience. Senior guides reported
interpreting First Nation’s culture more frequently and more actively than guides with less
experience. Additionally, guides with more experience reported interpreting the connections
between species and encouraging guest to practice responsible environmental behaviour when
they return home more frequently than junior guides. A difference between how male and female
guides reported to manage tour morale, interpretation of First Nations’ culture, and information
regarding local communities was illustrated with female guides reporting they do all of these
more actively than male guides.

These results add to a body of literature that has not yet directly included research
focused on the tour guides. Natural tourism guides, especially in the adventure tourism markets,
are often male, and as a result of the seasonality of the work many guides do not stick with the
craft for more than a few seasons. My survey results demonstrate that senior guides and female
guides believe themselves to be more actively delivering on select tour guides roles in
comparison to less experienced and male guides. Participants in nature-based tourism place a
high level of importance on the content and quality of the interpretation provided by their tour
guide (Haig & McIntyre, 2002; Luck, 2003; McArthur, 1994; Randall, 2003); however, if the
tour guides are inexperienced can they really deliver on the content and quality expected by their
clients? Furthermore, are female guides more actively displaying the role of the tour guide when dealing with the social aspects and the interpretation of different cultures for their clients? These questions are explored in more detail below in a section called *Limitations and Ideas for Future Research*.

**Active Guiding in the Field**

Researchers and academics have put forth different visions of what truly active guiding might look like. Christie and Mason (2003) coined the term “transformative tour guiding” and state that competency/skills based training courses rarely ask the larger, philosophical questions dealing with personal growth, change, and ultimately transformation. Christie and Mason define the term “transformative tourism” as “the practice of organized tourism that leads to a positive change in attitudes and values among those who participate in the tourist experience” (p. 9). This definition as applied to the natural tourism experience becomes what has been described throughout this study as *active* strategies for tour guiding. It is my belief that sea kayak tour guides can employ more of the active strategies to help facilitate truly transformative nature-based experience for their clients.

In concluding this section I would like to take the opportunity to offer what I believe are examples of active guiding within a BC based sea kayaking experience. Many of these examples will be applicable to other natural tourism industries located within other countries outside of Canada. Throughout the thesis experience I have had the privilege of speaking with, surveying, and observing company owners and guides in the field; the following examples of active guiding strategies are, for the most part, a representation of those experiences. The role of the tour guide as first created by Cohen (1985) and expanded by Weiler and Davis (1993) is again used to create the framework for the following active guiding examples.
Role of the Nature-based Tour Guide: Examples of Active Instrumental Strategies

Description: An active instrumental strategy is a guide’s continuation to skills development through professional associations, further industry courses and certification, and the use of personal trips to push boundaries and acquire new skills.

Example: A sea kayak guide providing detailed and accurate feedback to clients for the purpose of improving their forward paddling stroke. Here guides could discuss items such as torso rotation in relation to windup and catch, generating needed power through proper fitting of the sea kayak, and techniques for long distance paddling such as the selection of blade size or potential modifications to the forward stroke.

Example: Organizing smaller lessons, for interested clients, on some of the more advanced strokes (low brace turns or the draw stroke) or how to read a marine chart and navigate a sea kayak. In this example guides could offer a course after dinner (multi-day trip). The after dinner sessions are an opportunity to present additional instructional material to interested clients and can include items such as kayak rolling, compass use, self or assisted rescues, camp craft, or marine weather interpretation.

Example: For guides, the instrumental skills necessary to keep a group safe are born out of experience and good judgment. These two things are connected in that good judgment, in part, comes from experience. Experience can take many different forms for the commercial sea kayak guide, but sea kayaking experience is the essential piece. Guides need to paddle sea kayaks as recreationalists if they want to develop their skills, build experience, and ultimately increase their good judgment. When paddling as a recreationalist guides can potentially take on more ambitious trips, with more exposure to risk, make mistakes outside of the commercial arena, and as a result really make gains in personal acquisition of experience and judgment.
These personal trips then serve the guide well when leading commercial tours by deepening the experience level in which to draw from when making decisions in the field.

Example: The acquisition of further skills through continued guides training and courses are another representation of an active instrumental strategy. Through the SKGABC the continuation of personal guide development is a part of system for maintaining industry certification. In this example a guide could participate in a sea kayak guide conference and learn new skills (advanced strokes, how to roll a kayak, paddling in strong currents, marine weather) that they then can apply to their careers as guides

*Role of the Nature-based Tour Guide: Examples of Active Social Strategies*

Description: Natural tourism products offer participants a unique opportunity to develop social skills, and tools that can then be applied to their lives once they return home. The use of initiative games, activities that involve perceptions around risk, and short simple fun activities can bring the group together and a useful tool for getting clients to interact with each other and shifting the energy levels of the group.

Example: From the moment guides first meet their clients the guide has the opportunity to set the tone for the entire trip and promote group social cohesion. Group introductions can serve to do more than just introduce a group member by name and where they are from. One observed active social strategy used by guides was to have each group member introduce themselves with a short story about a powerful or memorable experience in nature. All group members could recount an animal encounter or particular sunset that was memorable. This exercise was interesting to listen to, provided an easy in for later conversations throughout the tour, and did more to promote social cohesion than clients simply stating their name and where they came from.
Example: Another active social strategy witnessed on a guided tour was the use of found objects to promote conversation and sharing while additionally serving to inform and educate clients on the objects they selected. In this example the guide instructed each client to take 5 minutes and walk the beach and select any found object they thought interesting (shell, rock, kelp holdfast, discarded plastic water bottle) and bring it back to a predetermined spot on the beach. Once all the clients had made their selections the group was instructed to create a circle with the beach objects in the center. The guide then selected an object and provided the group with a short narrative of what the object was and how it connects to the greater marine ecosystem. After this the person who originally found the object identified it as theirs and spoke about why they selected the object and what it meant to them if anything. The exercise was a great way to get all the clients participating, learning, and sharing.

Example: The introduction of risk or an activity that is perceived by the clients as high risk can be a useful tool to bring the group together and offers an experience that all the clients can later recount and relive. A sea kayaking surf landing is an example of this kind of activity. Here the group needs to land on a beach that has moderate sized surf on it. The guides would explain the procedure, contingency plans, and provide some additional instruction on skills specific to surf landings. The clients perceive the surf landing activity as high risk, when in actually practice it is a low to moderate risk activity. Guides frequently and intentionally move the client’s perception of risks around depending on client, group, and guide needs. In the surf landing example once the entire group has safely landed on the beach the clients are excited and celebratory because they accomplished a task. The surf landing experience then services as a kind of community touch stone, as a memorable event, which clients can refer to and relive through a form of collective narrative over the duration of the tour.
Example: Another active social strategy I have used and also witnessed other guides utilize is the use of silence as a method to encourage reflection and change the tone of the trip (if required). This strategy can be used in conjunction with the other roles such as the teacher communicator and environmental interpreter. Here the guide preloads the clients with a short description of what it is they will soon be experiencing. In this example I'll use an old growth forest that contains a 1000 year old western red cedar. On route to the tree, the guide explains the natural history of the cedar, its traditional uses, and its importance to the entire terrestrial ecosystem. After the hike, the group is asked by the guide to sit silently someplace close to the tree where they will be comfortable and not in direct view of other clients. Again the guide can set up this exercise by giving the clients a question to ponder or a statement to reflect on as they sit. Once the group has enjoyed 10-15 minutes of silence (can be longer depending on group/guide interest) all members get back together to share (optional) their thoughts from the sit. This exercise can be incredibly powerful, and comments can be diverse. However, the exercise always seems to shift the energy levels and brings the clients closer to each other in a way they generally didn't expect to on a commercial tour. I have used this same strategy when on the water paddling through interesting terrain. It works exactly as illustrated above and the group paddles silently through an area and enjoys the beauty of a kayak sliding silently through the ocean. Once finished the group can raft up (get together side by side in kayaks) and share their thoughts with the rest of the group.

Example: Often when guiding in the outdoors inclement weather can be a challenge for personal and social aspects of the group. An active social strategy for getting people moving, keeping the energy levels up, and interacting with each other is any kind of movement activity. One activity I have seen used in the field is a kind of two person foot dance, where clients
partner up and complete a series of steps that involve touching the other partners foot. The two participants end up kind of hopping in a rhythm while they go through the steps and touch opposite feet, jump through and touch back feet, and so on until they eventually mess it up or get too tired they have to stop. Once a couple of clients pick it up the rest soon follow, and once they learn the steps they might even start doing it on their own during rest breaks and other down times. This is a great activity to pick up low energy, promote movement, and creates fun and laughter as clients dance around in the outdoor environment.

*Role of the Nature-based Tour Guide: Examples of Active Interactional Strategies*

Description: Sea kayak tour guides have the opportunity to present the local culture, environment, and associated industries of a given location to their clients. Sea kayak guides can utilize the local people who directly work and live in these places to speak to their unique perspectives.

Example: An example of an active interactional strategy witnessed in the field was a guided sea kayak group visiting a finfish aquaculture site and asking the company employee to speak to the tour participants about the operation. The employee provided a narrative that explained the company, the site’s operations, and answered the clients’ questions regarding the environmental concerns that are widely reported in media. In this example the sea kayak guides believed the positive and negative effects of finfish aquaculture were very different than what was stated by the industry employee. Once the group left the aquaculture site there was a discussion around the differing viewpoints. As observed through leading many sea kayaking tours, in actual practice some sea kayak guides will not encourage this kind of exchange between their clients and a local industry for fear of conflict between what the guide personally believes (and wants their clients to believe) and the differing information provided by the local
industry representative. However, by including industry in the conversation, issues and opinions are better explored by the addition of different perspectives.

Example: Another example of an active interactional strategy was witnessed on the multi-day tour during the participant field observations. Here the commercial sea kayak tour hosted a dinner for their clients provided by members of the local First Nation. In this example the First Nation residents travelled to our camp and cooked supper for the clients, complete with two large salmon fillets prepared over a large open fire using traditional cedar stakes. In this example clients sat with First Nations residents and engaged in a conversation about cultures, family, challenges, past history, and their life on the rugged west coast of Vancouver Islands. The entire event took place over 3 hours and clients and First Nations entered and left conversations freely. As in the previous example, by actively including First Nations in the tour these people were afforded the opportunity to provide a unique perspective to the clients.

*Role of the Nature-based Tour Guide: Examples of Active Motivator Strategies*

Description: The motivator role is to modify and correct tourist behaviours and reduce environmental impacts. In the field clients appear to quickly and easily grasps the individual environmental ethics of a given tour company/guides, and within the sea kayak industry guides generally spend little time modifying and correcting client behaviour.

Example: Witnessed through the participant field observations, an example of an active motivator strategy was evident when guides brought attention to the garbage generated on trip. Multi-day sea kayak tours use a communal garbage where all the groups’ garbage eventually ends up. On the multi-day trip I witnessed a guide who used the communal garbage to highlight how little garbage our group generated when we are in the wilderness. The discussion then flowed into a conversation on consumerism, wants, needs, contentment, and happiness. In this
example clients placed their garbage in the communal garbage (passive strategy) and the garbage was then used as a talking point to facilitate a dialogue that was richer and deeper than just correcting client behaviours.

Example: Recycling and composting examples representing active motivator strategies were evident during the multi-day tour. Similar to the garbage example, the commercial tour company had systems in place that required clients to scrape their dinner plates into a compost bucket and recycling was collected and sorted much like individuals would in a city type environment. Once the systems were explained to the clients they happily followed the prescribed instructions (passive strategy). Like the previous examples the active motivator strategy comes into practice when the clients and guides engaged in a deeper conversation about the systems that were in place. The take home message for clients was if a sea kayak company, running tours on a remote island off the west coast of BC, could implement affective environmentally systems, so could they in their local home communities.

Example: On the multi-day tour the commercial operator used a rain water catchment system that captured rain coming off the kitchen/dining structure and directed it into large containers. The water was used for kitchen needs and for the hot shower available to clients in base camp. Much like the other examples the system itself without explanation represents a passive strategy. In this example all the clients where shown the system and an explanation was provided as to how important it was to conserve water to meet all our required needs and the needs of future clients. The active part of this example was the dialogue between guides and clients on the importance of conserving water in our daily lives when we returned home to our own communities. Here clients could readily see how much water the group used for drinking, cooking, and cleaning purposes as well as how much they individually consumed when taking a
shower. In the client’s home environment this direct measurement would be more difficult to observe.

**Role of the Nature-based Tour Guide: Examples of Active Environmental Interpreter Strategies**

Description: Through a guided nature-based experience, an opportunity exists for increasing client understanding and appreciation of the natural environment that can ultimately facilitate long-term responsible behaviour. In the field, this cannot happen without explicit and tangible goals and objectives for clients to support.

Example: An active example of this strategy would be to offer the clients an opportunity to become directly involved in a campaign to protect what they experience on the tour. Through the qualitative interviews the owner of an expedition rafting company illustrated how he leveraged his companies’ client base for wilderness preservation. In this example the clients were made aware of the opportunity to increase the boundaries of an existing National Park. The clients were encouraged to write letters to governments and to include in those letters, their thoughts and feelings stemming from their experiences on the river. In the end the National Park’s boundary was increased and the campaign was successful. As explained to me during the interview the company owner believed that the participation of his client base was instrumental in the success of the campaign, and without client involvement the park would not have been expanded.

Example: Another example witnessed was a client who volunteered at an orca research station after participating on a commercial sea kayaking experience. At this time I was one of the guides on a multi-day tour located in Johnstone Strait, BC. Johnstone Strait is well known as an area frequented by orcas during the summer months and is one of British Columbia’s most popular sea kayaking destinations. During the tour we had wonderful orca encounters and visited
a local research station (Orca Lab) that tracks and records the movement of orcas with the aid of a system of underwater microphones that monitors whale vocalizations. During these tours the guides provided all the interpretation about whales and the research lab. One of the details about Orca Lab that was passed on to clients was the lab’s use of volunteers to help staffing needs during the summer months. The following summer I returned to lead more tours in Johnstone Strait and once again stopped in at Orca Lab. I was met on the beach by a client from the previous summer, who after her guided tour contacted Orca Lab and organized a summer of volunteering at the lab. In this example the client was moved by viewing orcas in the wild and wanted to get involved and the orca research station provided her with the opportunity. Lastly, the messaging provided to clients about volunteering at Orca Lab was passive in nature and consisted of only a few sentences. In this example the client had to do all the work to organize her own volunteer experience at the research station.

Research Applications

Land Management Agencies

The results from this research can be of use for individuals responsible for land use management such as marine and terrestrial parks. Those who manage National, Provincial, and Municipal Parks have messages they want communicated to park users (Rollins & Dearden, 2009).

BC Parks.

Goldstream Provincial Park, located on the southern end of Vancouver Island BC, can be used as an example to illustrate the types of messages that BC Parks wants to impart to park visitors. The types of messages include:
• Interpretive – information presented on signage or by staff within the park addressing salmon ecology, old growth forests, First Nation’s traditional use of area, and estuary ecology.

• Safety – information about where and when to have fires within the park, the importance of staying on established trails, and what to do if encountering a bear or cougar.

• Conservation – information about how to have a fire in the park and the importance of not damaging the forest to obtain fuel for campfires. Signage conveying where to dispose of garbage, keeping dogs leashed and under control at all times, and the importance of cleaning up after your pet.

A tour guide could potentially aid in the delivery of these different types of messages. BC Parks’ mission statement is to “protect representative and special natural places within the Province's Protected Areas System for world class conservation, outdoor recreation, education, and scientific study” (2010, p. 1). Given the nature of BC Park’s mission statement it would appear they value educating park visitors about park conservation goals, and using tour guides who are leading trips within the park to assist in those goals would be advantageous. However, this linkage is not currently being utilized by BC Parks as a method to transfer knowledge between park’s management and the tour guides who lead clients within the park boundaries. BC Parks does require a park use permit for commercial operators who wish to use the park as a location to offer natural tourism experiences. However, at no point through the permit application package, the obtaining of a permit, or the annual requirements of maintaining that permit does BC Parks supply the commercial operators with resources that could be used to educate tour guides on local issues, park conservation initiatives, and park’s management
objectives. It appears there is a missed opportunity to provide commercial operators and guides with park supplied conservation/management information that would benefit all parties. Additionally, through the use of their permitting system, BC Parks does not require commercial tour operators or their guides to provide interpretation to their clients as condition of the park use permit.

*Parks Canada.*

As a federal agency, Parks Canada is committed to increasing visitor understanding of Canada’s natural heritage and developing support for its protection (Parks Canada, 2008). As explained by a National Parks website, experiencing National Parks are “unforgettable experiences, made all the more memorable by the learning opportunities Parks Canada offers through interpretative walks, exhibits and activities or in co-operation with the heritage tourism industry” (2008, p. 1). The marine National Parks on the BC coast (Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, and Gulf Islands National Park Reserve) have a system in place where through various methods depending on specific National Park, sea kayak guides are provided with some educational material produced by the park. However, this system is not the same between all three parks. The system for Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve (GHNPR) consists of new guides attending a guide orientation, which is comprised of the same orientation delivered for independent visitors. Following the general visitor orientation guides receive additional information from Parks Canada staff on the National Parks Act, and its subsequent regulations, plus the terms and conditions of the business license (A. M. Husband, personal communication, November 22, 2010). GHNPR has not developed resources specifically to support sea kayak guides; however, guides do have access to management plans and the main
objectives of those plans are outlined during the new guide orientation to the park (A. M. Husband, personal communication, November 22, 2010).

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (PRNPR) and Gulf Island National Park Reserve (GINPR) have a different system in which the individual guide is not required to attend a pre-season information session but instead the commercial operators are provided with a DVD/CD which is included within the park’s orientation package (D. Gray, personal communications, November 23, 2010; F. Burnett, personal communication, December 2, 2010). The viewing of the DVD/CD is a condition attached to the business license for commercial operators and includes the guiding staff that potentially works for a given operator. The DVD/CD contains content to educate the commercial operator to Parks Canada’s mandate, park specific messaging related to the individual park, First Nations messaging, low impact guidelines for sea kayaking, and current research projects taking place within an individual park (D. Gray, personal communications, November 23, 2010; F. Burnett, personal communication, December 2, 2010). Both Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Pacific Rim National Park Reserves explained that their current systems were under review and changes would be coming in the future (A. M. Husband, personal communication, November 22, 2010; D. Gray, personal communications, November 23, 2010).

Both BC Parks and National Parks recognize the tourism industry as a partner in the transfer of information between park and visitor. As outlined throughout this study the sea kayak guide has a role to play in this exchange of information. Parks could better use tour guides as conduits to deliver messaging to tour participants. My research explored what guides believed to be the sources of their environmental knowledge. Results demonstrate sea kayak guides believe (1) personal tours and field observations, (2) mentoring from other guides, and (3) environmental
literature and media are the most useful sources of their environmental knowledge. Parks could develop strategies to educate sea kayak guides through these three sources as a method of increasing guide knowledge regarding the mandate, initiatives, and local management issues of a given park. Potential strategies for accomplishing this task include.

- **Personal tours and field observations** - A National or Provincial Park could host a guide’s exchange within the park. A guide’s exchange is a three day event where a large number of sea kayak guides participate in ongoing professional development as a requirement of maintaining their professional guide certification. The events are open to all guides regardless of certification level. A parks agency could facilitate one of these events for the SKGABC, and in doing so use the opportunity to directly access and provide guides with a unique park’s perspective.

- **Mentoring from other guides** – A National or Provincial Park could facilitate a workshop for senior sea kayak guides with a focus on effective interpretation (much shorter than a three day guide’s exchange). The workshop could increase the interpretive abilities of senior guides who then pass that knowledge on to junior guides through the mentoring process that presently exists within the SKGABC and the commercial sea kayaking industry.

- **Environmental literature and media** – National or Provincial Parks could develop some form of environmental media that could be used to best inform guides. At present some parks do utilize e-newsletters or printed resources that could serve this purpose; however, these resources are not specially created for commercial operators and guides and are not currently targeted at this group. Given the ease of access and
popularity of online media such as websites and videos there appears to be an opportunity to make resources available online and thus available to all guides.

SKGABC.

The SKGABC could benefit from my results in a number of ways. Since its inception, the SKGABC has been responsible for upholding high standards for professional sea kayak guides and operators (SKGABC, 2010). This is accomplished through a process of training, guide certification, and ongoing professional development. The survey results highlight where sea kayak guides acquire the necessary skills to become a guide. Results demonstrate sea kayak guides believe (1) mentoring from other guides, (2) personal trips, and (3) guide training courses are the most useful sources in the acquisition of skills. All three of these areas potentially offer the SKGABC an opportunity to improve the skills of creating and delivering quality cultural and environmental interpretation.

Interpretation and the SKGABC

There is not a clear place where the use of interpretation is introduced and explained to guides within the SKGABC’s pedagogy of guide training. As guides move through the different training course levels and certification exams they may come across individual instructors or examiners who have an interest in the use of interpretation. As a result, the SKGABC could potentially use the training opportunity to better inform guides of their role in relation to the stated goals of ecotourism and the use of interpretation to best connect clients to what they are seeing in the natural environment.

A potential benefit for guides could be the inclusion of new training material within an existing technical guide manual that outlines the use of interpretation for highlighting cultural and environmental material. Additionally, the SKGABC has an active website that is regularly
updated and maintained by a paid employee. The website could also become a location to provide interpretive content for the purpose of educating guides. Given the recent explosion in digital media, there is an opportunity for the SKGABC to use their website to facilitate the dissemination of interpretive information that could be of use to its membership.

Finally, it is important to mention here that the use of interpretation doesn’t solely reside within the SKGABC. Individual commercial sea kayak outfitters that advertise and promote their tours as ecotourism and nature-based tourism products have a responsibility to deliver on what these labels mean. As highlighted through the qualitative interviews, outfitters often place limits on the use of provoking interpretive messages used by their staff to challenge clients and their personal beliefs. As highlighted by one interview participant “we sign contracts where we say we are going to be diplomatic… I don’t agree with it. I think if you’re calling yourself ecotourism then yeah, let’s do environmental interpretation”. In the field there is a balance between what an individual guide can do within the given constraints of any company that is ultimately their employer. However, research into the use of interpretation by tour guides has demonstrated participants in nature-based tourism expect, value, and place a high level of importance on the content and quality of environmental interpretation as provided by their tour guide (Haig & McIntyre, 2002; Luck, 2003; McArthur, 1994; Randall & Rollins, 2009). Through my research there appears to be an opportunity for guides and commercial outfitters to work together to create and deliver interpretive messaging that is rich in quality while at the same time respecting the boundaries of commercial operators who are potentially long time residents of local resource based economies.

Limitations and Ideas for Future Research
Each of the three individual research undertakings had its own limitations. A limitation with the qualitative portion of this study was the relatively small number of individuals who made up the qualitative sample. Given that the data from the qualitative research was used to inform and helped construct the quantitative survey a sample size of six participants was sufficient. However, I did not interview any junior guides for this section of the research and instead elected to interview six senior guides. Therefore, a limitation of the qualitative component of this research was a lack of data from junior guides on the phenomenon of wilderness tour guiding. An additional limitation was the interviewing of a guide representing the expedition rafting and another from the mountain guiding industries. The inclusion of these two in the study provided excellent data that greatly added to the research results. However, their comments cannot be applied to their respective industries due to the fact that the sample size was just one person for each.

A limitation of the survey research was the use of an online questionnaire as a tool to access the research population. Potential survey respondents received the research invitation and attached survey hyperlink through their personal email accounts. Therefore, a limitation of the research was only members of the SKGABC who provided the SKGABC with an email address were invited to participate in the survey.

Lastly, the field observations were valuable in supporting and adding to the previous two parts of the overall research design. However, the relevantly small number of field observations, made up of seven days spent in the field, limits the scope of the observational results. The results stemming from the field observations can’t be applied to the British Columbia sea kayaking industry as a whole, and instead can only represent a snapshot in time of the guides who
participated in the study and the nature of the trips they were leading over the observational period.

It is hoped that this research adds a voice from the tour guides themselves to previous research on the role of the nature-based tour guide, the use of interpretation by tour guides, and how guides come to understand the guided experience as an opportunity to educate and influence clients to make positive environmental behaviour changes. Results from this research demonstrate a difference between what guides reported through interviews and survey, and what was observed in the field. Future research could use a similar technique as applied by Armstrong and Weiler (2002) and collect audio recordings of sea kayak tour guides in the field as a method to improve data collection and analysis. Armstrong and Weiler’s research looked at environmental messaging delivered by tour guides within various protected areas of Parks Victoria, Australia. A similar study involving Canada’s National Marine Parks and the alignment between messaging provided by sea kayak tour guides in relation to Parks Canada management goals would be of value to Parks Canada.

The results also illustrated that female sea kayak guides reported themselves to be more actively presenting some of the roles of a tour guide. This appears to be an area of research that has not been explored. Much of the prior research in this field focuses on potential changes in attitudes and behaviours within tour participants after receiving specific interpretive messaging. Little attention has been place on who is delivering that message (gender) and how that content was created (experience level). More study is needed to better understand the role of gender in the natural tourism industries, to discover if female sea kayak guides present aspects of the role of the tour guide more actively than their male counterparts, and why this might be occurring.
The qualitative interviews provided a glimpse into the unique perspectives of those who guide in a variety of different natural tourism products. Results from the interview process highlight a difference between how the mountain guide interviewee used environmental interpretation primarily as a method to manage risk as compared to how the four sea kayak guides and single river raft guide used environmental interpret for educating clients on the natural environment for reasons other than risk management. This research focused specifically on how sea kayak guides believed they were using interpretation. How other guides in different natural tourism industries identify with the roles of the tour guide and the use of interpretation in conjunction with risk management could be another area of further study.

**Knowledge Mobilization**

As stated by Berg (2004) it is not enough for research to locate answers to problems or questions, as this information is of little use until it has been presented to others who can use the findings. The results from this study have already been shared in a variety of ways, and what follows is a brief description of the methods that will be used for the purpose of knowledge mobilization.

- The results will be shared at an academic conference in the future.
- A journal article will be prepared and submitted to an academic journal for review and could be potentially published.
- Results will be shared with the SKGABC through an article that will appear in their newsletter.
- Results can be furthered share with the SKGABC through a presentation during a guides exchange or prior to the annual general meeting.
• I have already guest lectured at a university and presented the research results to four year recreation and tourism students.

• As a result of my research, the SKGABC has already made changes to their website in an attempt to get guides sharing information about interpretation and other matters relevant to sea kayak tour guides through the use of an online form.
References


Randall, C. (2003). *An examination of visitor management issues within the Broken Group islands, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve*. Masters of Arts, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC.


Appendix A

Interview Schedule

Participant’s name:_______________________________________________________

Introduction General Questions about Guiding

1. How long have you been guiding trips in the wilderness?

2. Please briefly describe the guiding you have been involved with in the last year

3. What guiding industries have you been employed in and in what capacity?
   (Examples could include: rafting as a trip leader, sea kayaking as a Level III guide,
   mountain guiding as an ACMG Assistant Ski guide)

4. What have you enjoyed most about guiding clients?

5. What have you enjoyed least about guiding clients?

Environmental History

6. How did you become interested in the natural environment?

7. Did you have any experiences in your life that stand out as a powerful motivator for your
   environmental understanding?
   If so please explain

Role of the Tour Guide

8. What do you think are the essential roles of the tour guide?
   (Use Cohen’s model here for reference)
Specific Questions about the role of the Tour Guide and Environmental Interpretation

9. How do you see your own personal environmental beliefs represented in your career as a guide?

10. How would you define environmental interpretation?

11. Do you use environmental interpretation while working as a tour guide?
   - If so why, and what kinds of things do you interpret for your clients?

12. How important is the environmental interpretation you facilitate for clients to the overall enjoyment you derive from guiding?
   - Please explain

13. How important to you is developing an environmental awareness within the clients you guide?
   - Please explain

14. Do you believe that as a guide you have the ability to potentially change your clients’ environmental understanding and ultimately move them towards pro environmental behaviors as a result of your environmental interpretation?
   - If so could you please give me an example?

Education and Guides’ Training

15. What is your training/education/experience in the following areas:
   - College/university?
   - Professional industry certification and training?
   - On the job training?
   - Learning through personal field experiences
   - Personal learning through study (field guides, text books, movies)

16. Do you think the guide training you received prepared you for the role of environmental interpreter?
   - Why or why not? Please explain.
17. Do you feel that as a guide you have contributed and made a positive difference for the Earth?

Conclusion

Before we close, are there any final thoughts you’d like to share about our conversation?
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form: Interview and Field Observations

Re: Research interview on the wilderness tour guide and environmental interpretation in the field.

Royal Roads University, Victoria, BC

Researcher: Matthew Kellow

Phone: 

Email: 

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Rick Rollins, Professor

Vancouver Island University, Recreation and Tourism

Phone: 

Email: 

Dear,

I am currently taking my Masters of Arts in Environmental Education and Communication at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by emailing either Dr. Richard Kool, Royal Roads University at, or Program Administrator, Andrea Turnbull at. My research supervisor is Dr. Rick Rollins and he can be reached at.

I would like for you to consider participating in a face-to-face interview with me for purposes of conducting my research.

The research consists of an interview which will take approximately 1-1.5 hours of your time. The questions are focused around wilderness tour guiding only and will not ask potentially sensitive personal information. This interview will be recorded using an audio recording device and written notes will also be taken. The results of the interview will not include your name which will ensure confidentiality of the information you provide. Additionally, research participants will be given the opportunity to review transcripts and identified themes created from their interview.
All results will be analyzed and compiled within a larger thesis document that will be available for the public to read once my thesis is concluded. The audio recording will be erased once written transcripts are produced. The transcripts and any field notes will be stored in a locked filling cabinet in a locked office at the university where I work.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you wish to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview and are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences to you.

As a participant in this research you will be entitled to a research summary document upon completion of my thesis.

If you have additional questions or require more information please contact Matthew Kellow by phone or email.

**Participant’s Response:**

Do you wish to participate?

By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Please initial here if you agree to the audio-taping of the interview. ________

Name (Please Print): ___________________________________________________________________

Signed: ______________________________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________________________________________________________

Researcher: __________________________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Title: Sea Kayak Guiding - Connecting Guests to the Experience

How Important to you is Sea Kayak Guiding

For the following question please select just one number for your response.

Q1 How important is sea kayaking in your life?

1. Not at all important
2. Slightly important
3. Moderately important
4. Very important
5. Extremely important

For the following question please select just one number for your response.

Q2 How important is sea kayak guiding in your life?

1. Not at all important
2. Slightly important
3. Moderately important
4. Very important
5. Extremely important
Required Skills to be a Guide

A sea kayak guide possesses a diverse set of skills necessary to be an affective guide. As a guide you are using some of these skills on a daily basis when guiding. Below is a partial list of those skills:

- Leader/Decision Maker
- Navigator
- Weather Interpreter
- Camp craft (fires, tarps, kitchen setup)
- Entertainer
- Educator
- Co-ordinator (organizes shuttles, food, and other logistical details)
- Performs rescues when required

Q3 Thinking about the skills listed above, please rate the influence of each of the following sources in terms of where you learned these skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>VERY INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A University/College guide training program (example: Thompson Rivers University, Capilano College, North Island College)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B University/College degree or diploma program (not specific to guiding)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Skills semester program certificate (example: COLT, Yamnuska, MAS)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Guides training course (example; SKILS, SKGABC Level II course)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Staff training from an individual employer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Personal sea kayak experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Personal study through books, magazines, or instructional DVD’s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Learned by working with more experienced guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Other, Please list:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managing the Social and Cultural Aspects of a Guided Trip

Managing the social and cultural aspects of the guided experience are skills that are utilized by sea kayak guides.

Q4 As a sea kayak guide, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to you when guiding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>I normally don’t facilitate the interaction of guests with each other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I actively create opportunities for guests to interact with each other (example: games, conversation)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>When group morale is low I don’t normally address this and instead get on with the trip</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>When group morale is low I take charge and actively work to improve morale</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>I normally ignore conflicts between guests as this is something that I don’t want to deal with</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>When there is conflict between guests I normally try to resolve that conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>I don’t normally provide any cultural/First Nations interpretation when guiding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>I actively interpret and encourage conversation regarding First Nations in the area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I don’t normally present information about the local host community when guiding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>I actively present information about the local host community when guiding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environmental Interpretation and Guests’ Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviours

How guides understand and utilize the opportunity to provide environmental interpretation for their clients is an important aspect in understanding how clients who participate in a nature-based experience benefit.

Q5 As a sea kayak guide, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to you when guiding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>I believe that part of my job as a guide is to provide environmental interpretation for guests.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>If asked by guests I will provide the names of the plants and animals we see while on trip.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Without being asked by guests I provide interpretation about the natural environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>I provide interpretation about the connections between different species and how they impact each other.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Through the use of environmental interpretation I have the opportunity to enhance a guest’s experience with the natural environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>I believe that part of my job is to modify and correct guest behaviours to reduce environmental impacts.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>When guiding I share my environmental beliefs and opinions with guests.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>I model low environmental impact practices as a way of modifying the behaviours of my guests.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I use the entire guided trip as platform to modify and influence the environmental beliefs and behaviours of my guests.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>I encourage guests to practice responsible environmental behaviour once they return home from their trip.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>I believe that guests leave my trip and think about implementing responsible environmental behavioural changes at home (such as recycling, or viewing wild animals from a distance).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>I believe a guided trip can inspire guests to become involved in environmental/sustainable initiatives (such as a blog about their experiences, volunteering with an ENGO).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sources of Environmental Knowledge

This section is included to better understand how and where sea kayak guides develop a working knowledge of the natural environment.

Q7 Consider all the sources you have used to develop and build your environmental knowledge and please indicate how *influential* each of the following sources was to you.

**The source of my environmental knowledge has been...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOT AT ALL INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>MODERATELY INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>VERY INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>EXTREMELY INFLUENTIAL</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Post secondary education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Personal trips and learning from observations made in the field</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Skills semester program (example: COLT, Yamnuska, MAST)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Guides training course (example; SKILS, SKGABC Level II course)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Environmental literature and media (books/magazines/DVD’s/online sources)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mentoring and learning from other guides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Staff training provided by a sea kayak guiding outfitter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Something else, please list:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Education and Guides’ Training**

Where you learned how to be a sea kayak guide and where you think those skills are best learned from is the focus of the next two questions.

**Q 8** What formal guides training have you completed? Please select all that apply.

1. Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC training courses
2. Other recognized sea kayak training courses
3. Post secondary specific guides training education
4. Staff training with an individual company
5. Other sources of guides training, please list:_____________

The role and responsibilities of a sea kayak guide are diverse and require different skills at times during a trip. The list below contains a number of skills a guide might use when working in the field. Q 9 Please read each skill and select what you believe to be the best source for a sea kayak guide to learn that skill from.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COMPANY TRAINING</th>
<th>SKGABC</th>
<th>POST SECONDARY GUIDES COURSE</th>
<th>MENTORING WITH OTHER GUIDES</th>
<th>NOT APPLICABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Hard Skills: skills such as strokes, navigation, marine weather interpretation, rescues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Social Skills: helps guests feel comfortable and aids in group cohesion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Cultural Skills: highlights and includes elements of local culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Communication Skills: the ability to communicate effectively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Teaching Skills: the ability to teach strokes, tarp set up, how to put up a tent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Motivation Skills: modify and correct behaviour to reduce environmental impacts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Interpreting Skills: connects guests to the environment through interpretation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Behavioural Change Skills: encourage long-term responsible environmental behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Facilitation Skills: the ability to understand guests’ needs and figure out how to meet those needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Little Bit About You

Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions about your background.

Q10 Are you...

1. Female
2. Male

Q11 In which age category do you fall?

1. Less than 19
2. 20-29
3. 30-39
4. 40-49
5. 50-59
6. Over 60

Q12 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Some High School
2. High School
3. Certificate course
4. Trade or Diploma
5. University Degree
6. Graduate Level Degree

Q13 What level of SKGABC guide are you?

1. Level I
2. Assistant Overnight Guide (AOG)
3. Level II
4. Level III
5. Guide Trainer
6. Examiner
7. SKGABC Member and not a guide

Q 14 Is there anything else you would like to add or additional comments you would like to make regarding sea kayak guiding, environmental interpretation, or anything you came across in this survey?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and your contribution is appreciated. Happy paddling this summer!

Matt Kellow
Introductory permission and consent letter for online survey

Title: Sea Kayak Guiding - Connecting Guests to the Experience

Dear: SKGABC Member,

Sea kayak guides are in a unique position to influence their guests’ environmental attitudes and behaviours. It is not clear if guides recognize this as part of their jobs or if they have been trained to do this. I am contacting you to find out your views about the kinds of skills required to be a sea kayak guide and how those skills are used by you to influence your clients’ environmental beliefs and attitudes.

I would like you to consider being a participant in this quick and easy study. The research consists of a brief on-line survey that will take 10 minutes to complete. The survey has been created using a secure Canadian web based survey generator, and this will ensure confidentiality and non-traceability of any information you submit.

Once my research concludes this fall, a written summary will be produced and made available to all members of the SKGABC.

As a prospective research subject, you are free to withdraw at any time from the survey without repercussions. To participate in this survey, please click on the link below. If it does not automatically load, please cut and paste the link into your web browser. The survey will be open from May 3rd to May 20th, 2010).


This study will form part of my MA thesis in Environmental Education and Communication from Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting my thesis supervisor Dr. Rick Rollins at or by email at.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact me directly by email or by phone. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kellow
Appendix E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Observation Tool MK 2010</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Message #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Guide Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Guide:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of yrs guiding:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Guide Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Guide:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of yrs guiding:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretive Messaging Choices (social = S, cultural = C, environmental = E) (General vs Specific, G or S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Finish Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Messaging Initiated by Guide or Client?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General content or quote:

For later use: passive to active rating

Examples of nature speaking for itself (subjective):

Researcher comments, observations, conversations or feelings: