

**CIT Cultural Spatial Analysis
Peer Review Comments**

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Dear Dr. Dobell,

Below you will find my review of the Coast Information Team's (CIT) Cultural Spatial Analysis (CSA). I consider it an honour to have been selected as a reviewer. Although not involved with the work of the CIT I have followed, as best I can, its development. The CIT is a very important initiative with critical contributions to make for sustainable forest planning and management of the Coastal Temperate Rainforest system of BC, for the communities who live there and the rest of the province. The region is a global treasure; any attempts at achieving viable ecosystem-based management have implications beyond the immediate areas of study. Having spent time in several communities of the region I am grateful for the opportunity to make input into this work.

The considerable delays in completing the CSA have resulted, unfortunately, in there being less time available for me to put into this review. This is regrettable as such an important endeavour requires proper attention. That being said, I have some concerns about the review process. I understand that mine is the only review to be performed for the CSA. I would urge you to consider including two more reviews. Given the cross-cultural nature of the work, it would be very fitting and necessary for a proper review process to have at least one First Nations reviewer with an appropriate culturally relevant background (suggestions can be made if you like). Such bi-cultural standards of verification are vital to conservation and other sustainable development initiatives which attempt to bridge Indigenous traditional knowledge and Western science (Lertzman 2003). I also recommend that you include a reviewer with an appropriate theoretical background for the content whose technical skills include quantitative research. An archeologist is particularly recommended (e.g. Phil Hobler Central Coast SFU Emeritus; Daryl Fedje of Parks Canada for Haida Gwaii; Gary Coupland U of T for the North Coast). My research background and technical abilities are chiefly in qualitative (cross-cultural, participatory) methods and analysis. Therefore, I have focused on examining the report from this perspective.

My comments are grouped into General Comments, Findings, Research Methods and Other. You will find that, although I am very supportive of the work of the CSA, I have some methodological concerns about the First Nations materials and am thus skeptical of aspects of the report's principal findings (please see details). The caveat is that I have not been able to view any of the mapping materials that were to have been available on line. Although I attempted for several hours to gain access to the information at the provided web site (<http://www.crmltd.org/Prescott-Allen/crm725.htm>) none of these materials were available to me. I would be encouraged if any of my concerns are addressed in these maps; however, the methods still need to be explicated.

I shall be available intermittently by email until my return from Ecuador. I will be more readily available after this if you would like to discuss any of my comments.

Sincerely,
David Lertzman, Ph.D.

CIT Cultural Spatial Analysis Peer Review Comments

GENERAL COMMENTS

Although the Terms of Reference for the Cultural Spatial Analysis of the North Coast, Central Coast and Haida Gwaii set a worthwhile task, it is not the opinion of the reviewer that these have been entirely reached. The surprising nature of some of its chief findings, in particular those relating to First Nations cultural features, are difficult to accept in the absence of clearly articulated methods. This is underscored by a lack of supportive evidence in other similar and related work, which runs contrary to the stated results of the CSA. The research performed with Other Communities appears to be its chief contribution.

Other Relevant Work

Other relevant research is conspicuously absent from this report. If the CSA is to be credible, it is a matter of due diligence that some formal literature review of relevant materials be presented. The work of the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound is especially relevant to the CSA.

Review Process

Along with the review presented below, the CSA needs to be reviewed by at least two more people. Given the cross-cultural nature of the work, a proper review process would include at least one First Nations reviewer with a culturally relevant background. Such bi-cultural standards of verification are necessary (Lertzman 2003). An archeologist with an appropriate background whose technical skills include quantitative research should also review the report.

FINDINGS

The first two Principal findings of the Cultural and Spatial Analysis (CSA) report state:

1. Over 90 percent of cultural features are located in places that would not yield a positive return from timber harvesting.
2. Over 90 percent of cultural features are located outside of designated protected areas.

The second of these is not unexpected, however the first is quite surprising. This finding is not consistent with other research of a similar nature that maps the traditional land-use and occupancy of First Nations and other Indigenous peoples (Robinson, Garvin and Hodgson 1994; Robinson and Kassam 1998; Kassam and Graham 1999). Nor is it consistent with the findings of similar efforts to bridge Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Western science in ecosystem-based management for sustainable forest planning in British Columbia's Coastal Temperate Rainforests (Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound 1995). What emerges from such detailed, culturally and methodologically rigorous research is a very densely populated cultural landscape. The picture is of a whole landscape that is culturally relevant and in use. Everywhere is cultural; every place has a story, or a name associated with food and medicinal gathering (and other traditional resource uses), spiritual or historical significance. This is consistent with historical accounts in British Columbia where, "every little point to which a white man would not dream of giving a name has its separate appellation" (Fisher 1983). The

awareness of this had a profound impact upon ecosystem-based management and sustainable forest planning recommendations from the seminal work of the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound (Lertzman 1999). Scientific experts contacted on this point concur that the Mid-to-North Coast is both an archaeologically and culturally rich landscape.¹

The first principal finding of this CSA report is supported by similarly surprising findings related to the density of First Nations cultural features (which are unexpectedly lower than non-First Nations communities). It is frankly hard to believe that First Nations communities have a lower density of cultural features than do non-First Nations. Taken together with findings relating to the overlap of timber values and cultural features, these lead to some serious management implications. “There is virtually no overlap of cultural features and positive timber values...given current wood values and harvesting costs, timber harvesting should pose little threat to areas valued by Other Communities or First Nation communities.” Such conclusions are reflected in the fifth principal finding of the CSA report, the result of which seems to place a very low priority on protecting First Nations culturally valued areas in forest planning.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methods for Identifying First Nations Features

Research methods for identifying culturally valued First Nations land features have not been explicated. Indeed, there is little discussion at all on these procedures, considerably less than those for the similar research with Other Communities. It is mentioned that First Nations communities developed their own methods for identifying cultural features and that Robert Prescott-Allen worked with First Nation communities to facilitate the gathering and reporting of information on cultural features. We are also told that there was considerable variation in the methods used by First Nations and that First Nation features were not classified because there was so much variation in how features were described by various communities. Categories such as sustenance, sacred/spiritual, and heritage often overlapped in meaning and “classification schemes that did exist varied among First Nation communities, making it impractical to develop a valid common scheme for all communities.” Little else is revealed beyond the above discussion regarding research methods in First Nations communities. Thus, it is not surprising that there would be lower densities of First Nations features, given that these did not fit with the classification scheme, whereas those of Other Communities did.

In the absence of providing any detailed methods, how can we evaluate the validity of the seemingly unreasonable findings discussed above? It seems quite appropriate that First Nations should be in control of research into culturally significant features of their traditional territories. Clearly, without such direction the research would be fruitless. Nor is it unreasonable to encounter considerable variability when working across linguistic, territorial and political boundaries. Similarly, overlapping layers of meaning is a core feature of such work lending richness to the character of the research. Various methodologies have been proposed and articulated in detail and applied in such situations

¹ See also data in GIS layers found in research performed by the St:lo, Nicola, and Deh Cho First Nations.

(Robinson, Garvin and Hodgson 1994; Robinson and Kassam 1998; Kassam and Graham 1999; Grenier 1998; Emery 2000). Drawing on the expertise of First Nations people and other researchers experienced in such work would have helped to find creative solutions for such methodological challenges. Archaeological records would support such efforts.

Given the conspicuous lack of methods for gathering data relating to First Nations cultural features and the inconsistency with the findings of other research, there is good reason to question the credibility of principal findings in the CSA report. The data with regards to First Nations features seem likely to be incomplete, spurious or both and can not be recommended as applicable for ecosystem-based forest planning and management in the Mid-to-North Coast of British Columbia and Haida Gwaii. It may be that the findings are accurate; however, given the surprising results, the onus is on the CIT to document very rigorous research methods.

Research Methods for Identifying Other Community Features

Contrary to the research performed in First Nations communities, the methods undertaken in other communities are made quite clear. It is unfortunate that not all of the data were made use of and that not all the terms of reference for the CSA were met. That being said, the research performed on the cultural values of land features in the Other Communities is an ostensibly novel contribution to forest planning research. There has been seemingly little attention previously given to formal research into the forest values of non-First Nations communities outside those which are market driven. Given that the research methods for this component of the CSA are made much more clear than those in the First Nations communities, and given that the research was carried out more systematically, the data seem more credible and useful. This is underscored by the absence of other similar research with which the data from Other Communities can be compared. This component of the CSA can and should be refined and replicated by other researchers interested in the topic. Contrasted with the apparent lack of rigour in the First Nations component, the strength of research in the Other Communities seems to lend a significant bias to the CSA.

One aspect of the research methods in Other Communities can be clarified. Under the section on “Data Collection” in Other Communities, it states that, “Knowledge of valued places was distributed throughout society rather than concentrated in the minds of experts.” Was this put forward as a hypothesis, or is it an assumption? It seems to be stated almost as a finding; however, this runs contrary to the manner in which some First Nations traditional knowledge research is done where elders and other TK practitioners are considered to be experts in their field (e.g. Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound). Nevertheless, in the research with Other Communities a method was created for identifying local individuals who possess local knowledge. How is this different from identifying experts?

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data from the CSA are presented in a largely visual and quantitative manner in the form of charts, graphs, etc. These are useful, yet other means of presentation should be considered which could help explain the complex meanings behind the various ways in which cultures value forest landscapes. Such perceptual layers are the very heart of this research and must not be overlooked but this aspect of the CSA is lost in the quantitative

presentation. This seems to run contrary to stated intentions of the CSA in its Terms of Reference and also in the background and mandate of the CIT.

There needs to be considerably more discussion of the concepts behind and within the research, and of the intentions driving it. The overall purpose of the CSA was to give voice to how people value land and water so these cultural values can be compared with economic and ecological values. This challenging, important task is a necessary part of achieving “healthy ecosystems and healthy human communities.” It is recognized that “Knowledge of the cultural values associated with places included a wide range of human meanings and sentiments” and that cultural values, “include spiritual, communal, and material values, including sustenance, heritage, recreational, aesthetic, inspirational/artistic, and religious/spiritual values.” Yet these are not explained, described or discussed. Such qualitative description and analysis is missing from the CSA yet it would greatly help the reader to understand and appreciate the nature of the CIT’s work and stated mandate.

Identifying cultural features and traditional land-use mapping results from the sharing of precious and privileged information. It would be helpful to provide some discussion and explanation of these values with a description of the different kinds of activities that are represented on the maps and explanations of their significance. To give voice is to give voice, and it would be useful to see or hear the actual words shared by people to gain a perspective of these values. Drawing on traditional First Nations concepts and words is very helpful in such endeavours, as was illustrated by the adoption by the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forestry in Clayoquot Sound of key Nuu-Chah-Nulth concepts such as *Hishuk ish ts'awalk*, and the “Sacredness and Respect for All Things”. If we are going to map a complex and wide range of human values and sentiments, we need to understand the meanings behind these things.

OTHER

- **Identifying Protected Areas**

In the CSA report a watershed was, “considered to be covered by a protected area if 50 percent or more of the watershed was occupied by a protected area.” This does not seem entirely reasonable. A watershed that is 50 or more percent protected can still be at risk. It could have all of its riparian zones disrupted, or the bulk of its forest cover removed; yet, this could still cover less than 50 percent of the total area.

- **“Official Nuxalk Community”**

On page 5 of the report under “Procedures for Identifying First Nation Features” it states that, “First Nation data for the Bella Coola area was not available from the official Nuxalk community.” The word “official” should be replaced or the term clarified. To whom is the report referring here? Is it the elected Band authority, the hereditary Chiefs’ structure or both?

- **Technical Concerns**

The materials that are supposed to be available at the following website: “<http://www.crmltd.org/Prescott-Allen/crm725.htm>” are not readily accessible and must be made so. These maps and other materials are critical and should be made available as pdf files. If the hypertext in the report is not working (which

seems to be the case) it should be fixed or the maps included within the body of the report. The second option should be chosen for any hard copy presentation.

- **Typographical Issues**

The report should be edited for the occasional typographical error.

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