

# Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management Program Newsletter

Issue 4

September 2009

Welcome to the 2009 ORTM Newsletter!

- Learn about ORTM News and Events
- Find out about what alumni are up to
- Check out what ORTM faculty are doing

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## Welcome to the New ORTM Newsletter

The ORTM Newsletter, also available on our website ([www.unbc.ca/ortm](http://www.unbc.ca/ortm)), is sent to various ORTM alumni and partners to keep them up to date with the ORTM Program. It includes news on alumni, faculty research, field trips, current students, and various local and regional stories related to ORTM and UNBC.

We invite all ORTM alumni to contact us and let us know where they are and what they are doing. We've just added a page on the ORTM website to profile graduate's businesses – send us your info!

To contact us, please send an e-mail to [ortm@unbc.ca](mailto:ortm@unbc.ca) or a faculty member.

## Introducing Phil Mullins, the New ORTM Faculty Member

Phil grew up in Pointe Claire, Quebec, on Montreal's West Island. He developed his love for the outdoors from a young age. Summers were spent learning, racing, and coaching sailing at the Pointe Claire Yacht Club on Lac St. Louis. At John Abbott College he more fully developed his love for wilderness adventure and travel. Phil pursued undergraduate studies at Lakehead University, doing a joint degree in Outdoor Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and a BA in Geography and Philosophy.

Before returning to the University of Alberta for Master's and Doctoral Studies, he spent a number of years facilitating international field research and study programs focused on community-based environmental problem solving. Through his work with the Maasai, in southern Kenya, and the Huu-ay-aht First Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island, he grew particularly interested in tourism as a way to promote and support conservation and sustainability. He tries to understand how travel activities mediate cross-cultural and environmental learning, and influence socio-environmental

sustainability and self-determination of communities.

Currently, Phil is conducting research on how senses of place and movement develop through canoe tripping. He emphasizes the integration of his teaching, research and practice through engaging place-based field programs and experiences for his students. Recently, Phil used canoe-based programs on the Athabasca River and backpacking and mountaineering programs in Jasper National Park and Mt. Robson Provincial Park to explore the human ecologies and social histories of these areas.

Phil and his wife Tara are excited to be here and look forward to making a contribution to the region, its communities and university.





## A New President at UNBC

Dr. George Iwama was named UNBC's fourth President in the summer of 2009.

Dr. Iwama comes to UNBC from Carleton University, where he served as Dean of the Faculty of Science; he served in the same role and as Academic VP at Acadia University as well. Previously, he was a professor for 15 years at UBC, where he completed his PhD. His research is related to animal physiology, primarily related to fish and fish aquiculture. He officially began his duties as UNBC President on July 1, 2009.

He and his wife enjoy cross country skiing, canoeing and fishing, so he seems to share our passion for outdoor recreation as an important part of our lives!

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## Current Student Report — 2009 Antarctica Trip

In February 2009, ORTM students Jen Bennett, Kendra Johnston, Tasha Peterson and Geographer Sydney Van Loon were accompanied by their professor Pat Maher on a two-week field school to the Antarctic Peninsula. These four students were part of a group of 71 students from 16 countries to board the *M/V Ushuaia* and set sail on the first ever Antarctic University Expedition, organized by Students on Ice.

The expedition included three courses: glaciology, oceanography, and tourism impacts, which together generated discussions on climate change, resource management, environmental stewardship, and visitor experiences; all courses were directed towards generating a broader understanding of the Polar Regions. Lessons took the form of lectures, discussions, on-site observations and research. As Sydney was one of the glaciology students, she studied ice core samples and satellite photographs to analyze glacial formations, movements and precipitation measures. Meanwhile, Jen, Kendra and Tasha were enrolled in the tourism impacts course, taught by Pat, which focused on impact management, environmental sustainability, and tourist behaviour.



The tourist behaviour study of the expedition collected data through the use of head-held cameras, heart rate monitors, and GPS locators by willing participants from our whole expedition group. Data from these participants included which attractions (i.e. wildlife, scenery, people, etc.) the participant observed the most, their excitement levels, their speed and distance covered. The analysis of this data will be presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> ACUNS International Student Conference on Northern Studies and Polar Regions being held in Whitehorse, Yukon in October, 2009 ([www.communitiesofchange.ca](http://www.communitiesofchange.ca)).

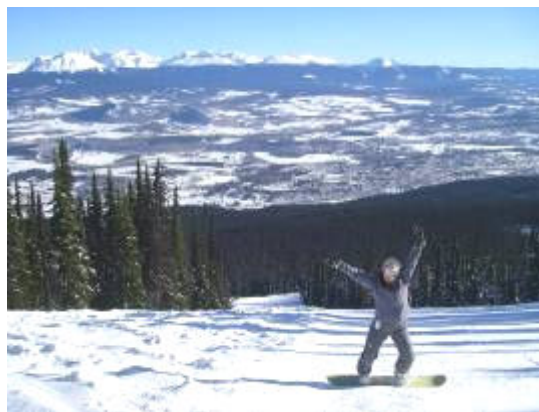
Traveling to Antarctica was an eye-opening experience, one that gave the students a new perspective and appreciation for the pristine and remote wilderness of Antarctica. The fact that so many species can live in these harsh conditions inspires us to advocate change for the future.

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## Alumni Report—Stephanie (Bisson) Trumphour (B.A., 2006)

My love for outdoor recreation started at a young age, doing yearly trips to Algonquin Park and spending every weekend in the winter and after school at my local ski hill. I always knew that I could never have a desk job. After doing two years at Lakehead University my love for the mountains took me west and I found myself attending UNBC to finish up my degree. While I was attending school in Prince George I taught skiing and snowboarding and worked at Coast Mountain Sports, which helped me develop my administrative and 'people' skills.

The move to UNBC was the best thing I could have done. The Resource Based Tourism Program had an important aspect missing from my former university: the focus on the business side of tourism and recreation has really helped my husband and I start our own business. After graduation I had the skills needed to write a professional business plan, which in turn has helped me finance my new business, and showed companies that I will represent their brands to the best of my ability.



Ruckus Skis Boards & Bikes is set to open in Prince George in September 2009. It is located on the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Ave and Hwy 97 at 1455 Johnson St. Ruckus will provide exceptional customer service and knowledgeable staff for outdoor enthusiasts in Prince George who are more interested in quality of product than price, and who prefer to shop with small specialized businesses over big box stores. Ruckus will consist of a retail store and a service shop with well trained and experienced staff for bike and ski tune-ups and parts installation. We will also sell snowshoes, ski and bike accessories and technical and casual clothing.



***“The move to UNBC was the best thing I could have done”.***

This shop has been a dream of ours for years. With the help of personal experience in the industry and knowledge gained from the ORTM Program I know it will be a success. Check out our web site at [www.ruckuspg.ca!](http://www.ruckuspg.ca!)

## Current Students' Story • (Internship, Tourism Prince George)

In a summer when employment opportunities seemed to be few and far between, five ORTM students had the chance to participate in an internship for Tourism Prince George. Normally students look beyond city limits to other communities to try and gain experience in the tourism field, but this summer we were fortunate enough to find experience in our own backyard.

Our internship was made up of three parts. The first part was being trained as an official Visitor Information Counsellor for Tourism BC. This was a weeklong module involving familiarizing ourselves with the resources that we used throughout the summer, learning proper customer service skills and learning about rules and regulations that are important for tourists to know. We also did a World Host module at the end of the summer.

***“this summer allowed us to gain valuable experience in the tourism field”.***

The main part of our internship included many responsibilities and goals to help promote tourism in Prince George. Besides the regular duties of assisting travellers with their itineraries, we also had to act as ambassadors for the city and promote the many local attractions and businesses that the tourists often oversee. This part also came with a few perks, as we got to experience some of the attractions that Prince George and the area has to offer. One was a paid adventure where two counsellors got sent in each direction and had to familiarize themselves with the communities in that region. We were given a very limited budget and task of finding activities that other travellers might be interested in should they be passing through.

The last part of the internship was to develop programs that would help promote the city to both tourists and locals. We chose programs that would engage people in activities that would also help them get out and explore the Prince George area. One example was developing a photo library for Tourism Prince George. We went about this by creating a photo contest that allowed visitors and locals to submit pictures of what they thought was interesting in the city. There were over 50 submissions from professional and amateur photographers.



Overall, this summer allowed us to gain valuable experience in the tourism field. It provided us with training and an inside look at how the tourism industry actually works. It also allowed us to work together and develop programs that we think people who live or visit Prince George would benefit from. It also allowed us to earn money while working towards credits for our education, and nothing is better than that!

Krystin St Jean, Darryl Triebner, Tasha Peterson,  
Christina Mynen and Jen Bennett

## Alumni Story • Amanda Cole (2002, B.Sc.)

Since graduating from UNBC, I have had some amazing career opportunities, including being the program coordinator for the Huble Homestead, special event coordinator at the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, working on a city-wide physical activity social marketing campaign and currently managing employee fitness and wellness at the City of Calgary.

I manage a series of fitness centres, teach fitness courses and lead team building, lunchtime and coffee break walks (usually historical or bird tours). I also coordinate family and spousal events and retreats for staff and management throughout the year throughout the year. The diversity of courses I took and skills I learned in ORTM has given me the flexibility to take on many positions in a variety of fields.

In my spare time I race and coach triathlon. I also sit on the executive of a bird banding society. I have traveled to Costa Rica twice to work on a project where we were conducting research on the wintering success of neotropical migrant birds. I am currently working on a grade 6 school curriculum to introduce the students to the importance of bird banding, understanding population dynamics and the importance of protecting over-wintering habitat..

*“ORTM has given me the flexibility to take on many positions in a variety of fields”*



Whenever I am chatting with someone about their university experience I realize how blessed we were with a young university full of potential. The one on one attention we were given by our professors and the research opportunities that presented themselves were as unique as the ORTM program.



## Current Students' Story • (Shannon Champion)

The end of May came with a great deal of excitement and satisfaction for me, having just completed another year of school and an amazing field school experience on Haida Gwaii. Having been away from home (Burnaby) for a couple years, I decided to go home to look for a job near my family.

I had applied with Metro Vancouver Parks much earlier in the season, but had not heard back from them for months. As I am sure many other students noticed, coming across a reasonably paid job for the summer was harder this year than any. But I received a phone call from the Operations Supervisor for West Area Parks in the last week of May, and a few days later the job was mine!

***“The supervisor who hired me told me they chose me over someone else because of the relevant academic background I had” .***

Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy is an immense raised peat bog in the middle of Delta, just south of the City of Vancouver. It is about 5000 acres in size, but being surrounded by industry and farmland, it is ‘hidden’ from most people’s day-to-day view, and therefore most people don’t even know it exists. It is a hugely important ecological system responsible for a great deal of the local oxygen regeneration, and is often referred to as “the lungs of the lower mainland”. Burns Bog is closed to public access, and is only open to those permitted to do research and other management tasks related to the protection and ecological restoration of the bog.

Though my experience as a Park Worker at Burns Bog is difficult to sum up, my time there was primarily focused on patrolling the bog, both inside on foot and the surrounding perimeter by truck. Because Burns Bog is usually at extreme risk of catching on fire throughout the dry summer months, regular patrolling is necessary to ensure responsible actions are being taken in and around the bog to minimize all fire risks. Beyond patrolling, I went into the bog with researchers performing vegetation and water monitoring studies.



It is also extremely rewarding to see my education background leading me to jobs I love. The supervisor who hired me told me they chose me over someone else because of the relevant academic background I had. She also said having a personable attitude is probably one the most important things for working in parks and with the public, and demonstrating that in your interview goes a long way. Working a second summer in the world of parks has really helped me feel confident in the educational path I've chosen and to better understand what types of jobs actually exist and what they involve. All-in-all I am extremely grateful for the amazing experience I had this summer, and more confident and excited than ever before as I head into my last year of school. My hope is that everyone can have a similar sort of experience during their degree that gives them confidence and skills to do the things they are most passionate about.

## Pat's Summer

In April/May, I ran a field course on the linkages between sustainability, community development, aboriginal tourism, and protected areas on Haida Gwaii. This course thematically followed along from the spring course I offered in 2008 and was run in conjunction with a physical geography course offered by



2009 Field Course to Haida Gwaii

Greg Halseth.

Then I headed to Thunder Bay, Ontario for the planning meeting of a SSHRC-funded Northern Communities project I am a co-applicant on. This 3-year project will involve

fieldwork in Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. It is in collaboration with colleagues at Lakehead University, the Arctic Institute of North America and the University of Guelph.

With only 4 days back in Prince George, I headed to Ottawa for an international workshop on Aboriginal Tourism – particularly focused on Nations who utilize reindeer/caribou in their subsistence and tourism operations. Directly from Ottawa I flew to Svalbard, Norway for the second working group meeting for the University of the Arctic Thematic Network on Northern

Tourism.

When I returned from Svalbard, I bought a house in Miworth. From here I've worked on various book publishing projects and other writing, have supervised 7 ORTM summer internships, and spent one weekend in Vancouver for a Northern BC Tourism Association meeting.

At the end of the summer, I helped organize the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual UNBC Teaching and Learning Conference, and was busy getting my Fall classes prepared!

## John's Summer

I attended a couple of conferences this summer. First, I presented a paper at the George Wright Forum in Portland, OR in May; this annual conference focuses on protected area research. The paper looked at the perceptions of national park agencies in assessing and responding to recent declines in national park visitation.

I also attended the International Symposium on Society and Natural Resources (ISSRM) conference in Vienna in July, giving a paper assessing

whether the National Parks Service (U.S) and Parks Canada's focus on the impact of video games of children's declining use of national parks could be considered a form of 'moral panic'. I also took the time to spend a few days wandering around Vienna and the nearby Wachau wine region while I was there.

The rest of the summer was spent working on several different papers and undertaking data analysis of qualitative data.

I became an Executive Editor of the Journal of Environmental Education this year, so I reviewed an increasing amount of manuscripts this summer.

For my adrenaline fix, I also went on a few short paragliding trips in the Fraser Valley as well.



Vineyard in the Wachau Region, Austria



## Pam's Summer

The summer of 2009 was a quiet summer of writing and research. Several graduate students (Reade, Kutzner, Yim) successfully defended their Master's degree in the past few months and there are numerous writing projects arising from these theses.

In the early summer, NRES MA graduate Diana Kutzner and I also delivered the two of three short courses in Fort St. James on Aboriginal Tourism with the third delivered in early

September.

My one adventure was a drive across Canada to central Ontario visiting several national and provincial parks along the way. I also went on one relatively short canoe trip in northern Ontario this summer – the Whitestone River – but just for a challenge I did it solo in my kayak (with the dog). A short trip but 19 portages added to the adventure value.

Now that fall is here I'm back to teaching and administration. Stop by and see me in 8-144!



Rapids on the Whitestone River in Ontario

## Phil's Summer

You might expect that starting a new job in a new city would be enough excitement for one summer. Well, it would!

However, the mysterious forces that make life so interesting conspired to make my summer one I'll certainly never forget. I've had a great summer, and here are some highlights as proof.

In June, I was teaching my last field courses for the University of Alberta. This year, we spent ten days backpacking to Athabasca Pass, six days exploring

Jasper town, and a week mountaineering on the Wapta Icefield. I'm looking forward to maintaining those connections through UNBC.

In July, I was hitting the books, writing, and prepping course material. I've been working on a research paper concerning how learning to lead in the outdoors influences environmental perception. I'm looking forward to getting back to it this semester.

In August, Tara and I made our way to my family's place

in Alexandria, Ontario for our wedding. It was a blast and certainly the highlight of the summer. Back in Edmonton, we quickly packed up and moved to Prince George. Now we're settling into life here, and the excitement continues...



## First ORTM Tezzeron Lake Social

On the first weekend after classes started this year (Sept 11-13, 2009), the ORTM Program held the first ever—and hopefully now at least annual—Tezzeron Lake Social. Instead of having the ‘old’ afternoon at Shane Lake social, we thought we’d go ‘whole hog’ this year and invite ORTM faculty, students, alumni and friends out for a whole weekend to the Cinnabar Resort in the John Prince Research Forest just north of Fort St James, BC.

We have to admit, at first we were a little worried about the four faculty being the only people there, but in the end we had a great turnout, with 31 people attending over the weekend. Most of the 31 people stayed both nights as well, which was great.

The weather was absolutely incredible, with temperatures of more than 25 degrees both Saturday and Sunday. The sun was definitely needed after a quick swim in the rather cool lake!

On Saturday, most people went on a hike or two, had a swim, canoed or kayaked on the lake, fished, suntanned on the dock, and just sat around chatting. A big campfire each night kept us warm, with the moon making a dramatic appearance over the lake on Friday night, and the northern lights giving a brief display on Saturday. All told, it was one of the best starts to a new term we have ever had!



The ORTM faculty want to warmly thank all the students for taking the weekend off to spend with their ORTM friends and colleagues. While we had a couple of alumni join us this year, next year we are hoping for many more alumni in the Prince George area to join us!

The weekend was such a success there are rumblings that a winter event will also take place, maybe later this term. We will keep you posted!



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