

Report on Squamish Nation Artifact Collections at the Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives

Rudy Reimer and Robyn G. Ewing

In the summer of 2010, the Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives (SCMA) in Gibsons, B.C., contacted the Squamish Nation in regards to artifact collections housed in their facility. The SCMA staff asked members of Squamish Nation Chief and Council, Elderly Advisory Group, and Cultural and Heritage specialists to view these materials. Initial assessment by these groups found that these materials are of great cultural importance to the Squamish Nation.

Subsequent meetings between Julie Baker and Deborah Baker of Squamish Nation Chief and Council, Kimiko Hawkes of the SCMA, Rudy Reimer of Simon Fraser University (SFU), and the Archaeological Society of British Columbia (ASBC) we decided that these materials needed proper cataloguing, photography, analysis, and curation. These steps would ensure the artifacts' proper use and their development into an educational exhibit at the SCMA. Rudy Reimer suggested that the ASBC could fulfill this role and he quickly canvassed ASBC membership for volunteers to help with this task.

On October 29th and 30th, 2010, ASBC members Rudy Reimer (project leader), Robyn Ewing, Jennifer Lewis, Sarah Kavanagh, Jim Pound, Darryl Kirsch, Louise Williams, and Sean Alward catalogued, photographed, analyzed, and brought these cultural materials up to current-day museum standard of curation (Figure 1). Over two hundred artifacts were examined and a summary of our findings is presented here.

Educating the Public About The Importance of the Past

Since the inception of the ASBC 45 years ago, one of the society's main mandates is to educate the public about the im-



Figure 2. ASBC members at work at the SCMA.

Artifact Analysis

Presented by the Squamish Nation, the Archaeological Society of B.C. and the Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives.

Come and Watch Archaeologists at Work!



At the Museum
716 Winn Road
Gibsons, B.C.
Friday & Saturday,
October 29th & 30th
from 11 to 4.

Call 604-886-8232
www.sunshinecoastmuseum.ca

Three separate communities have come together to create a public event that will showcase local First Nations history, archaeology and your local community.

Many ancient artifacts have been curated at the Sunshine Coast Museum but very little information exists around the meaning and function of these items.

Please come and join us as archaeologists photograph, catalogue and analyze these implements so that they can be developed into an educational exhibit.



Squamish Nation



Archaeological Society of British Columbia



SUNSHINE COAST MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives

Figure 1. Poster prepared to invite people of the Sunshine Coast to the archaeology-cataloguing event.

portance of the past. Over the years and decades, the ASBC has at times led in this regard but at other times it has lagged. Throughout our history, we have been involved in numerous cultural heritage excavations and surveys and have put forth a strong voice for heritage stewardship. During this time, the structure of the ASBC membership has changed, but the backgrounds of the individuals remain consistent. We are a combination of academics, consultants, First Nations, and members of the broader public.

A unifying theme for all of us is an expression of interest, sometimes vocal and other times hushed, in fulfilling our mandate. Yet, the opportunity for doing so in recent times has been rare. The current ASBC Executive has discussed the issue of involving our membership in a more meaningful role as it pertains to issues of culture and heritage management. The following is a summary of a project that we hope begins to revitalize the ASBC membership's role in fulfilling our mandate of educating the public and involving ourselves in the amazing cultural heritage of our region.

Database Development

An accurate database is fundamental for enabling access to museum collections for curators, Indigenous descendent communities, and the public. Databases are repositories for information about individual objects (Figure 2) including the history of an artifact, its condition, and its location within a museum. After ASBC volunteers catalogued and photographed the SCMA artifacts, the data entry process began using a customized FileMaker Pro database.

In constructing the database, specific categories were created to record detailed descriptions of each object, including physical dimensions (e.g., weight and length), visual characteristics (e.g., colour, shape, condition), and function, as well as notes on its acquisition by the museum. Cultural affiliation was also a key component to clarify each object's connection to a descendent community in situations where the geographical origin of the artifact was known.

The majority of the database entries were straightforward and required synthesizing the original museum artifact information and the volunteers' new interpretations. To evaluate the accuracy of the object information, artifact photographs

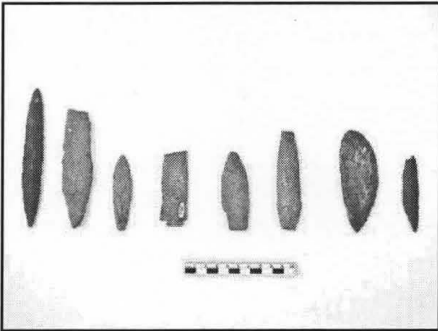


Figure 3. Projectile Points stylistically dating to the early period of the Northwest Coast archaeological sequence.

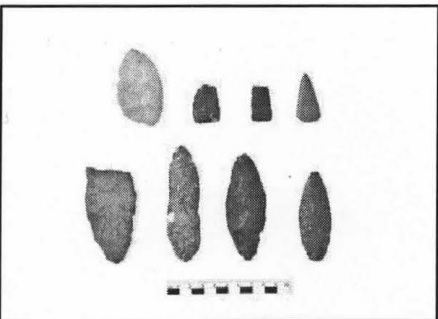


Figure 4. Projectiles Points stylistically dating to the middle period of the Northwest Coast archaeological sequence.

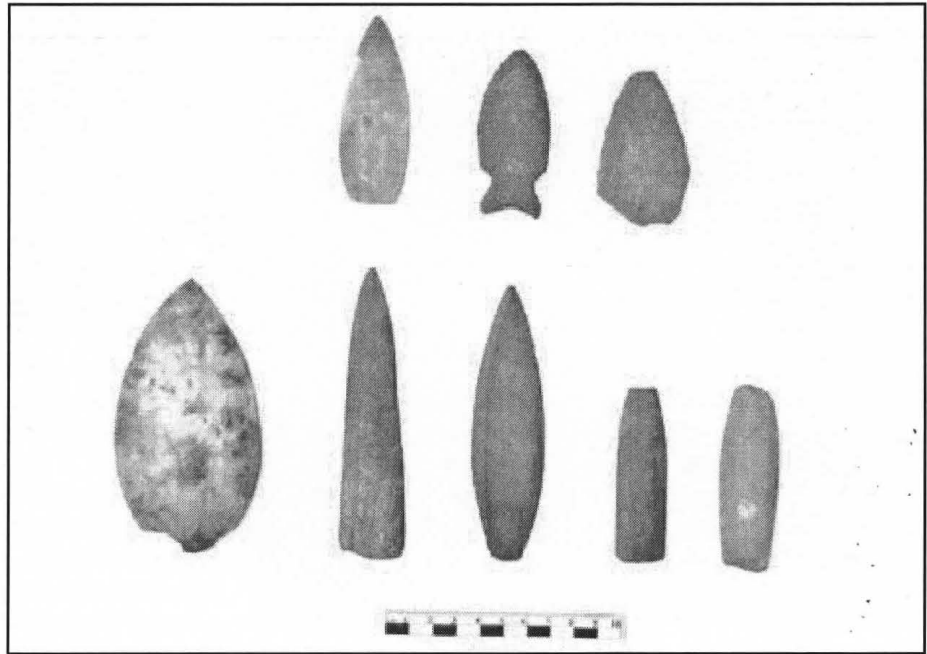


Figure 5. Projectiles Points stylistically dating to the late period of the Northwest Coast archaeological sequence.

were entered into the database and used to help correct misinterpretations. This was a time-consuming process because there were multiple instances where original artifact descriptions did not match the correspondingly numbered object. Moreover, instances of duplicate numbers existed, which required finding the object that most closely matched the recorded description and assigning a new number to the duplicate entry. In these cases, an 'A' or 'B' added at the end of the catalogue number with the assumption that the SCMA would later reassign numbers in accordance with the museum's established system. Finding duplicate numbers is common when updating older museum record keeping systems. After all pertinent information was entered and previous discrepancies mitigated, several reviews of the database were undertaken to ensure the clarity and accuracy of each entry.

Projectile Points

The SCMA collection includes over 45 projectile points, with a wide range of temporally diagnostic styles spanning the past 10,000 years (Ames 1999; Carlson and Magne 2008; Figures 3-5). Seven projectile points represent the Early Period (10,000-5,500 BP) of the Northwest Coast archaeological sequence, 30 for the Middle Period (5,500-1,500 BP) and 8 for the Late Period (1,500-150 BP). Ten of the projectile points in the SCMA collection

are ground stone with the remaining 35 being flaked/chipped stone.

Wood Working

The collection at the SCMA includes over 30 hand mauls of varying types (Figure 7). Three of these implements offer unique insight into production, as they are in the initial stages of manufacture. The remaining examples represent the range of known types and styles of hand mauls on the southern Northwest Coast (Ames 1999). Associated with the collection of hand mauls is an interesting array of celt blades (Figure 6). These implements also range in production stage, size and function, and include stone D-adzes, elbow adzes, and celts.

Fishing

Nine net weights and two anchor stones represent ocean and river fishing

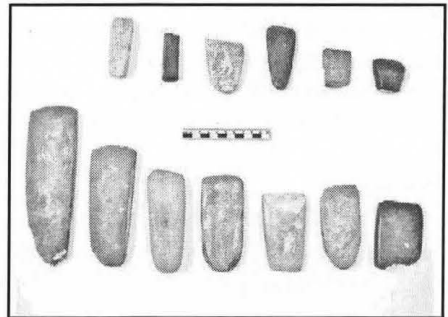


Figure 6. Collection of celts at the SCMA.



Figure 7. Collection of hand mauls at the SCMA.

technology for archaeological sites along the shorelines of Gibsons, Langdale, and the Sunshine Coast (Ames 1999; ARCAS 1999). Together with projectile points, flake tools, and the marine context, net weights indicate that a wide range of marine species were harvested in antiquity along the Sunshine Coast (Bouchard and Kennedy 1986).

Warfare/Defense

A single chipped and ground stone club is in the SCMA collection (Figure 8). Similar materials found along the Northwest Coast date to the past 3,000 years (Ames 1999; ARCAS 1999). In conjunction with the variety of projectile points in the collection, it is safe to say that the ancient Squamish Nation residences of the Sunshine Coast had warriors who both conducted raids on other groups and protected their own home villages (Bouchard and Kennedy 1986).

Ceremonial Items

Two pecked and ground stone bowls are in the collection of the SCMA and attributed to medicinal use. Both bowls lack distinctive features carved, pecked, or ground into them, leaving little room for further analysis. Two strings of dentalium shells are in the SCMA collection. Ethnographic and archaeological analysis of the distribution and contexts of dentalia illustrate that these shells represent economic value. Unique to the collection at the SCMA is an anthropogenic stone mask. Stylistically, the features of this mask resemble Northwest Coast art tradition, but additional research is needed to clarify its potential role and representation (Figure 9).

Other Artifacts

Eight other artifacts examined in the SCMA collection represent additional technologies including hammer stones, flakes and debitage, and scraping flake tools. While informative on what is found in local archaeological sites, all that can be determined from these implements is that a range of resource processing was conducted along the shoreline and in ancestral Squamish Nation villages of the Sunshine Coast (Ames 1999; ARCAS 1999).

Discussion

The temporally diagnostic artifacts in the SCMA collection represent the currently-known time range of archaeological sites of the Northwest Coast (Ames 1999; Carlson and Magne 2008). Yet, the early period is only represented by small projectile points and the remaining collection includes implements common to both the Middle and Late periods. The range of implements,

materials, and functions of artifacts found in the SCMA collection represent different site types, from villages to seasonal camps (wood-working, fishing, hunting, resource processing tools) and temporary camps (warrior implements, flakes, and debitage).

A wide range of lithic raw materials exists in the SCMA collection. The most common material, often visually defined as basalt, is actually Watts Point dacite, a material locally available in Howe Sound close

to the modern town of Squamish (Bye *et al.* 2000). Also found in the collection is another locally available lithic material, Anvil Island andesite. Ubiquitous lithic materials of slate, sandstone, and quartzite of the southern Northwest Coast are also present in the SCMA collection (Ames 1999). Lithic materials not available locally include a variety of different coloured cherts that resemble materials found in the northern Cascade mountain range, often termed Hozomeen Chert and Albany chert. Nephrite is also present in the SCMA collection and known to originate from sources along the Fraser River canyon and the interior Plateau. Rudy Reimer at SFU will do future non-destructive X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis of these materials.

Examination of the SCMA catalogue allowed our analysis

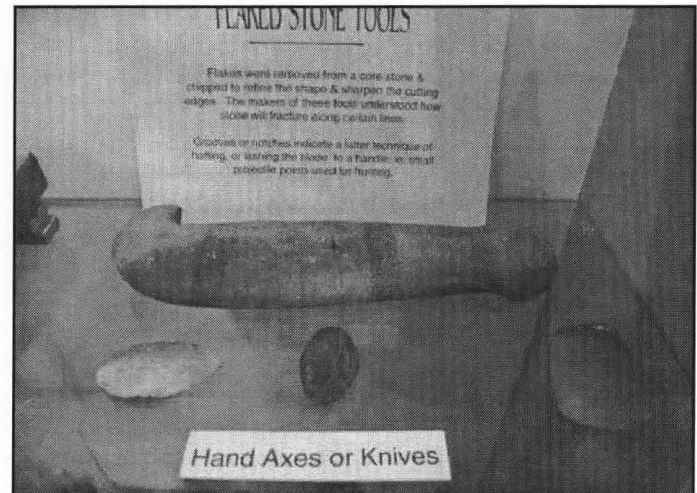
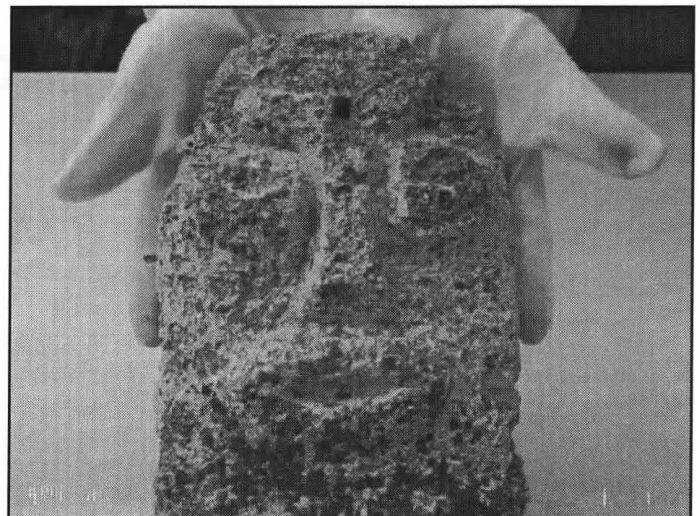


Figure 8 (above). Stone club (top center) at the SCMA.

Figure 9 (below). Stone mask carving at the SCMA.



to tie the majority of artifacts in the collection back to known recorded archaeological sites along the Sunshine Coast and the southern Northwest Coast (ARCAS 1999). Local archaeological sites well represented in the collection include DiRu-15, DiRu-16 and DiRu-19 (Figure 10). All three of these archaeological sites are highly important villages of the Squamish Nation. Of these, two are named *Ch'kw'elhp* and *Schen'k*, also known as Squamish Nation Indian Reserves numbers 26 and 26A. These places are culturally important origin sites where the Squamish people have lived for a very long time. The collection of artifacts at the SCMA correlates well with the long-term history (over 10,000 years!) of the Squamish Nation in this region of their territory. Other artifacts in the SCMA collection were determined to originate from other archaeological sites in Sechelt territory to the north and Stó:lō territory along the Fraser River.

Conclusion

In conjunction with the Squamish Nation and the SCMA, the ASBC has once again begun to fulfill our mandate in playing a role in the cultural and heritage landscape (Figure 11). Over the two days of our work at the SCMA, over 50 visitors witnessed our work. Visitors came from the local community, other areas of the Sunshine Coast, Vancouver, and the Lower Mainland, and as far as Europe. During their visits, ASBC members involved in the work at the SCMA interacted with the public, answering questions about archaeology, sites, and artifacts. This opportunity allowed us to inform people about the importance of reporting

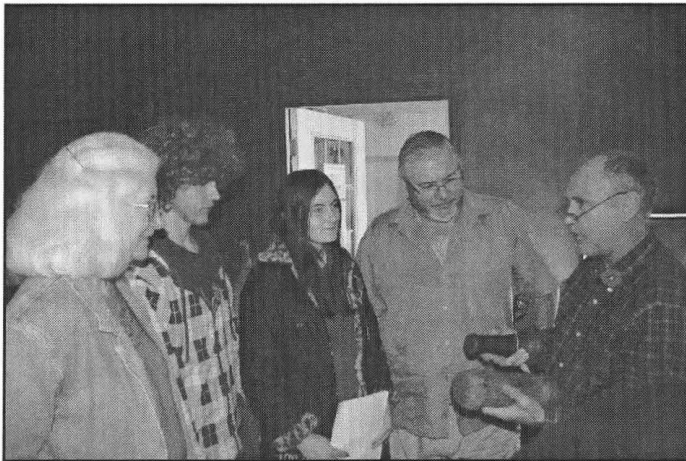


Figure 11. Jim Pound talks with travellers from Europe at the SCMA.

archaeological finds and their role in cultural and heritage stewardship, as well as the roles that First Nations, the Archaeology Branch, and the ASBC play in this process. Several individuals found their experience enlightening and enjoyable and expressed interest in informing others about the ASBC and the importance of archaeology (Figure 12). In the future, the ASBC Executive hopes to replicate this process at other community museums so that this recognition can take place in other contexts.

Furthermore, we hope that this will change the perspective of the role of collections in community museums. Initial examination of collections such as those at the SCMA would probably make many archaeologists wary of their interpretive value, having little spatial or temporal context. The ASBC assessment of this collection challenged the common conception that small, dusty



Figure 10. Location of archaeological sites and lithic sources mentioned in text.

community collections have little archaeological value. The time, expertise, and knowledge that the ASBC members contributed to examining this seemingly unimportant collection directs us to continue playing a role for museums, communities, the public, First Nations, and archaeologists, in order to provide a decent-sized window to peer into the past.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

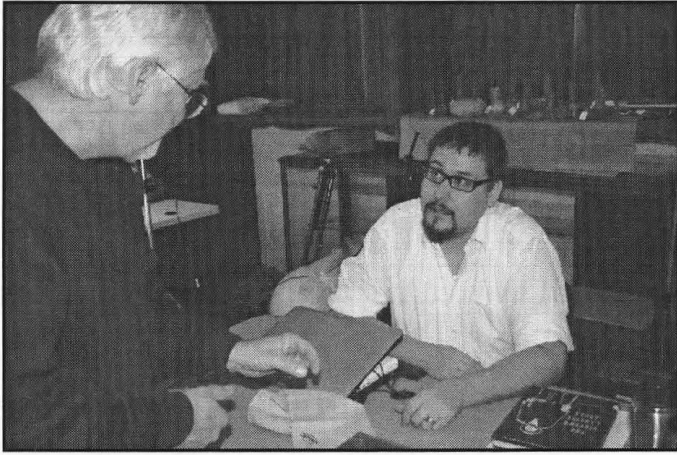
We would like to thank the Squamish Nation Chief and Council (Julie Baker and Deborah Baker) for providing funds for the ASBC to do the necessary work to complete this task. We would also like to thank the Squamish Nation elders and community for sharing their interest in this project. Thanks also go to the ASBC members who took part in this work; your time and efforts are well worth it! We cannot forget the board of directors and staff at the Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives for playing their important role in this process. All photographs were taken by the author and Sarah Smith, used with permission.

Rudy Reimer/Yumks is faculty in First Nations Studies and Archaeology at Simon Fraser University, and is President of the ASBC. His almost 20 years of experience looks at the Indigenous perspective of the landscape and archaeological correlates.

Robyn Ewing is a recent MA graduate in Archaeology from Simon Fraser University. Her research interests include negotiated repatriation and intercultural collections management practices.

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Figure 12 (right). Rudy Reimer talks with members of the public at SCMA.

Klahowya Village: Heritage and Aboriginal Tourism in Stanley Park

Marina J. La Salle

Come enjoy Vancouver's premier family-friendly Aboriginal tourism experience! See and experience the rich, vibrant Aboriginal culture through song, dance, art and cuisine! Ride the Spirit Catcher Train - Enjoy live cultural performances daily - Listen to Aboriginal stories & legends at the Story Telling Circle (teepee tent) - Browse artisan kiosks to purchase authentic Aboriginal arts & crafts - Taste amazing Aboriginal cuisine from authentic food vendors - Try your hand at making some Aboriginal crafts...and much more! (Metro Vancouver 2010)

In August 2010, after coming across the above advertisement on the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation website, I made the trek across town to visit 'Klahowya Village'—an Aboriginal village featured as a summer exhibit in Stanley Park. Klahowya is Chinook jargon for 'welcome,' and this is certainly the message that is conveyed throughout the project. Co-sponsored by Vancouver Parks and the non-profit, membership-based organization, Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C. (AtBC), Klahowya was marketed as "an authentic Aboriginal tourism experience" involving live cultural performances and dancing, on-site work by artisans such as weavers and wood carvers, a storytelling circle, and the chance to speak with Elders (Figure 1). AtBC's mission statement is "to contribute to the preservation of Aboriginal culture and advancement of economic development through support, facilitation and promotion of the growth and sustainability of a quality and culturally rich Aboriginal tourism industry in British Columbia" (AtBC 2010). In other words, it's all about cultural tourism, a project designed to ride the wave of successful marketing seen at the 2010 Olympics, says Keith Henry, AtBC's CEO (pers.comm. 8 November 2010).

My interest, however, was to see how this contemporary 'Indigenous village' exhibit connected with the rich history, heritage, and archaeology in Stanley Park—history that First Nations and archaeologists have long been aware of, but that



Figure 1. Advertising billboard at Klahowya Village in August 2010.

was more recently publicized in *The Vancouver Sun* following the storm-induced damage to sites in the park (Shore 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). The ASBC, particularly Past-President Eric McLay, played a key role in promoting public awareness of the archaeological heritage of Stanley Park

Klahowya is definitely a theme-park village. While the three local First Nations—Tseil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish—were most closely involved in the design of the project and the art work (produced by local Aboriginal artists affiliated with AtBC), the Aboriginal village presents an amalgamation of British Columbia First Nations' cultures into 'pan-Indigenous' traditions, flattened of all cultural diversity. Cultural features common to most Nations are synthesized to present simplified representations that emphasize a cultural connection to 'nature,' such as the