

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PATRICK JOHN F. SANTIAGO, April 2013. Promotion of Metro Baguio as a Haven for Health and Wellness Tourism. Open University, Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet.

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the current status of Metro Baguio in relation to health and wellness tourism. Identifying the different dimensions of health and wellness, as well as the challenges and opportunities being faced by Metro Baguio tourism were at the core of this study. The study also looked into how the promotion of Health and Wellness enhances Metro Baguio Tourism in the context of Development Communication.

This study spanned the Baguio – La Trinidad – Itogon – Sablan – Tuba and Tublay area or BLISTT, employing interview schedules with key informants, survey questionnaires with stakeholders of tourism and observation.

Major findings include the current and potential offerings of Metro Baguio in terms of the dimensions of Health and Wellness, particularly the physical, spiritual, and social dimensions. The identification of challenges for the development of Metro Baguio Health and Wellness Tourism include primarily the development of accommodation facilities and improved road networks. Results also indicate the identification of potential opportunities for the development of eco – sports and adventure in Metro Baguio due to its unique and strategic location.

The promotion of Metro Baguio’s health and wellness tourism provides a new focal point in further enhancing tourism activities in the region as well as providing a new roadmap in the course of developing and discovering new potentials in boosting tourism. The creation of a comprehensive tourism campaign with Health and Wellness at the center is therefore recommended, particularly focusing on the three (3) core dimensions of Health and Wellness; physical, spiritual, and social.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents

The respondents of this study, primarily included the Local Chief Executives of the members of the BLISTT or Metro Baguio. City Mayor Hon. Mauricio Domogon – Baguio City, Municipal Mayors Hon. Gregorio Abalos – La Trinidad, Hon. Oscar Camantilles –

Itogon, Hon. Arthur Baldo – Sablan, Hon. Florecio Bentrez – Tuba, and Hon. Rueben Paoad – Tublay.

The local chief executives were tapped for this research for their insights and administrative perspective on the status of health and wellness tourism in their respective areas.

Tourism officers from the BLISTT members were tapped as well to share their perspective on health and wellness tourism in their area from the viewpoint of the people in the front line of local tourism. Mr. Benedicto Alhambra – Supervising Tourism Officer, Baguio city, Mr. Dwight Daodao – La Trinidad, Ms. Flordeliza Diase – Itogon, Engr. Caliquing – Sablan, Ms. Magdalena Niwane – Tuba, and Mr. Ricky Moresto – Tublay. Survey questionnaire were administered to identified tourists and guests of the city during the Lenten season of 2012. A total of 121 respondents were surveyed between April 12 to 16, 2012. Majority of the respondents were Filipino citizens, females, between the ages of 25 to 34 years old, with the general points of origin coming from the greater Manila area. Respondents included Three (3) Singaporean, Two (2) American and Two (2)

Chinese nationals, and One (1) Japanese, Thai, and African Indian.

Responses from the identified tourist and guests provided data or information to actual offerings in health and wellness tourism being patronized by tourists in the Metro. Giving a clearer perspective of what Metro Baguio is offering and being patronized by tourists and what Metro Baguio can still offer in terms of health and wellness tourism.

The BLISTT: A New Emerging Tourism Development Hub

Baguio – La Trinidad – Itogon – Sablan – Tuba – Tublay or more commonly known as the BLISTT. A proposed metropolitan arrangement of Baguio city and the surrounding municipalities to achieve and socio – economic development and promote inter – local cooperation in the region.

A mountainous and land lock area in the Cordillera Region, the BLISTT primarily boasts of year round cool to temperate climate and beautiful natural and man – made tourist attractions. Including mountain trekking sites, hot



spring resorts, cave exploration, historic sites, organic produce/ dining, and a wide range of festivals showcasing the unique culture and tradition of each member of the BLISTT. With these tourism offerings, the BLISTT becomes the perfect and ideal place to develop health and wellness tourism.

Baguio city, being an established tourist destination for the country with its known parks such as Burnham and Mines View Park, Camp John Hay and Lourdes Grotto together with its yearly offering of the Panagbenga Flower Festival, serves as the gateway and jump off point to explore the health and wellness tourism offerings of the surrounding municipalities.

La Trinidad, proudly bears the title of being “The Strawberry Capital of the Philippines”, for producing organic strawberries for the country and even breaking world records of creating the biggest strawberry short cake during its annual Strawberry Festival.

Another proud title bore by La Trinidad: “The Salad Bowl of the Country”, for its production and center of highland vegetables from around the Benguet area. La Trinidad also offers a wide range of potential eco – tourism venues with its identified communal forests in the municipality such as the century old forests in Ambiong and Mt. Kallugong in Tangbawan, Balili.

Itogon, regarded as a mining community boasts now of historic and natural tourist attractions, it is now rigorously and enthusiastically promoting eco – tourism as well. Aside from catering to hot spring resorts, the Mt. Ugo climbs and treks is its main attraction in health and wellness, so much so that other potential areas in the municipalities are being considered and developed for eco – tourism like Mt. Pigungan and the proposed Ave Maria Shrine in Mt. Bidawan. With the Balitok and Kintoman festivals recently being launched,

Itogon’s main product of gold is presented in the former festival, while the red rice variant Kintoman is featured in the later.

Sablan, considered as the fruit bowl of the region for the production of various fruits including pineapples, has so much potential for development in eco tourism since most of the land area of this municipality is untapped and rural. Developing or conceptualizing a festival for the municipality, that would center either on local products produced or eco – tourism would surely encourage the growth of tourism in Sablan.

Tuba, with its proximity and fairly good access to the city of Baguio, holds a lot of hidden opportunities for health and wellness tourism. Mt. Cabuyao which houses two giant radars seen from the city proper of Baguio and Mt. Sto. Tomas, which houses also the stations of the cross, provides both physical challenge and spiritual rejuvenation. And



spread along Tuba is an assortment of natural wonders such as waterfalls, famed hot spring resorts and caves, including organic farms.

Tublay with the Bengaongao and Paterno Cave as its crowning glory has made itself a spelunking destination in the BLISTT. While age old caves that have a rich history and amazing sites for discovery, Tublay is already a cave explorers delight.

The Present State of Baguio Tourism

Baguio Tourism per se has always been associated with its main attraction of having a cool to temperate year round climate (Personal Interview with Mayor Domogan, & Supervising Tourism Officer Alhambra, May 2010). Baguio in its infancy and development stages was originally designed by the Americans to be a center for health and wellness having one of its very first facilities to be a sanitarium which tended to the needs of American soldiers who would like to be rehabilitated, rejuvenated and to address their other health concerns (Supervising Tourism Officer Alhambra, May 2010). This sanitarium still stands today as Casa Vallejo, on top of session road which is one of the few structures that survived the carpet bombings during the second world war. Coincidentally and maybe even serendipitously, Casa Vallejo is now housing one of Baguio's Wellness Centers which is the North Haven Spa, one of the many spa centers around the city, which like in the early days of Baguio is also tending to the general health and wellness needs of its patrons.

Baguio has currently around 25 spa and wellness establishments/ centers in and around the city, excluding in-house spa services of hotels and other accommodation establishments, that caters to addressing general health and wellness concerns of both tourist and residents alike.



Plate 1. North Haven Spa at Casa Vallejo, Upper Session Road
(October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)



Among other famous and commonly visited tourist spots in the city which offers avenues for health and wellness tourism and activities; Camp John Hay, Burnham Park, Lourdes Grotto and Maryknoll Sanctuary were identified as areas frequented by tourists during the survey period. These identified tourist spots are areas within the city of Baguio that has offerings in health and wellness tourism, particularly in the three focus dimensions of health and wellness specifically the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of health and wellness.

A total of 96 out of 121 respondents or 79% of the total tourist of that survey period visited Camp John Hay. While 79 out of 121 or 65% of the tourists went to Burnham Park. Among the common tourist spots visited during the survey period were Lourdes Grotto and Maryknoll Sanctuary having a fair share of 38% and 27% or 46 and 33 out of 121 tourist visitations respectively.

Table 1. Tourist spots in Metro Baguio visited by identified tourists and guests.

TOURIST SPOTS	TOTAL RESPONDENTS N=121	PERCENTAGE	RANK
Camp John Hay	96	79	1
Mines View Park	81	66	2
Burnham Park	79	65	3
PMA	64	53	4
Botanical Park	55	45	5
Wright Park/Mansion	55	45	6
Strawberry Fields	55	45	7
Lourdes Grotto	46	38	8
Asin Hot Springs	38	31	9
Mary Knoll Sanctuary	33	27	10

Camp John Hay, the former Rest and Recreation (R&R) Military base of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East, has been transformed into a very dynamic area that also has a lot to offer in terms of addressing health and wellness tourism. Camp John Hay has created a world class golfing facility comparable to the finest in the world.





Plate 2. Golf Course, Camp John Hay
(Source: www.campjohnhay.com.ph)

Staying true to its original and primary mandate of providing facilities for rest, relaxation and recuperation, Camp John Hay still provides a serene and pollution free area to accommodate simple activities such as walking, jogging, and horseback riding to the more adrenalin pumping paintball, wall climbing and zip lining (Tree Top Adventure) from the tree tops as well as to the more strenuous and newly developed eco – trails that traverse the pine lush forestry of the former military base.

Camp John Hay is currently being developed by the Camp John Hay Development Corporation.

Baguio famed for its picturesque parks, boasts of a host of avenues for health and wellness activities. Burnham Park, particularly the area surrounding Burnham Lake, is still the premiere and ideal place for both residents and tourists to go brisk walking or jogging or just simply taking a walk and sightseeing because of its strategic location in the heart of the city. It is the quintessential park of the city of Baguio providing refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city, the ideal model park for the future development of pocket parks in the city. Moreover, health buffs and enthusiasts alike take full advantage of the different clustered areas in the park to do biking, skating, aerobics such as Taebo, and even traditional Wushu (Plate and). Boating, as well, is seen as one of the most consistent “must do” activity when in Burnham Park.





Plate 3. Local people participating in aerobics exercise at Burnham Park.(October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)



Plate 4. Local people participating in traditional Wushu at Lake Drive, Burnham Park. (October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)



Plate 5. Local people participating in modern dance exercises at Burnham Park. (October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

In terms of food and dining services that cater health and wellness, it is no surprise that one of the top establishments that is seen as a venue for health and wellness is Café by the Ruins. Aside from garnering the highest number of visitor percentage 35 out of 121 or 29% during the survey period and receiving countless positive reviews on



the web, Café by the Ruins truly is a venue for health and wellness, from the relaxing and calm ambiance, an atmosphere designed to loosen up and unwind and experience Baguio's famed morning and afternoon chills brought about by the mountain breeze.

On top of which the Café is also one of the only three (3) outlets of the La Trinidad Organic Practitioners or LaTOP which sells organically grown and produced vegetables and fruits. Organic produce do not use chemicals like pesticides and industrial grade fertilizers that can be detrimental to the overall quality of the produce. Organic farming as well is good for the environment and promotes a sustainable way of utilizing and proper maintenance

of soil.



Plate 6. Café by the Ruins newly renovated and opened October 20, 2012 (October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)



Plate 7. LaTOP products: sayote tops, mustard and chingakang. (October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

LaTOP consists of more or less 100 organic farming practitioners, with member farmers spread across the province of Benguet and neighboring provinces, including farmers coming from La Trinidad and Baguio.



LaTOP would probably be the quintessential offering to health and wellness tourism in Metro Baguio. The embodiment of living a healthy and well lifestyle would begin from eating the right and proper food.

Rose Bowl Steak House and Restaurant, another iconic dining establishment in the city of Baguio boasts of an illustrious history of struggle and success. Rose Bowl, in 1945 then named Rise Bowl was located at Session Road where the DBP building now currently stands, offered their specialty Canton China. Sometime in 1968, the Rise Bowl closed but was later reopened to what Baguio residents and tourist alike are more familiar with as the Rose Bowl Steak House and Restaurant.

Rose Bowl specializes in American and Cantonese dishes cooked by the owner Mr. Nang, one of the specialties of Rose Bowl is their Pancit Canton which is composed of Lingham Noodles. This noodle, Lingham, is said to have come from the oldest Chinese noodle factory. Rose Bowl unknown to many has also gained international recognition from the Traders Leaders Club in Madrid, Spain back in the 1990s besting out almost 8,000 other firms and establishments (Interview with Mrs. Nang, September 2012).

Rose Bowl is now presently located at Gen. Luna Road and with its rich history and quality dishes it is no wonder that tourist and residents alike see Rose Bowl as one of the top places for dining services in the Baguio.

Baguio also boasts as a sanctuary for the spiritually exhausted or to those who would just like to renew or strengthen their faith and/ or just to have a better understanding of one's self. Our Lady of Atonement Cathedral or better known as the Baguio Cathedral offer refuge to those seeking spiritual wellness. The rose window and the twin bell towers of the Baguio Cathedral as well as the original stained windows create an atmosphere of solemnity. The surrounding area around the Baguio Cathedral has now been developed to include a water fountain, an aviary as well as an area for dedication for offertory prayers and personal reflections.





Plate 8. Baguio Cathedral circa 1950s
(Source: <http://jackcarino.multiply.com>)



Plate 9. Our Lady of the Atonement Baguio Cathedral.
(October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)





Plate 10. Fountain and Aviary, Baguio Cathedral
(October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)



Plate 11. Prayer and Offertory Area, Baguio Cathedral
(October 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

The Lourdes Grotto similarly offers both a physical and spiritual trek for people looking for a retreat and pilgrimage. A favorite of devotees, the 252 step – climb up to the grotto is but of little consequence for a chance to light a candle below the image of Our Lady of Lourdes to meditate and state your personal intentions may it be for love, life or both. On the other hand, the Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary rather offers a unique experience of navigating a total of 14 different stations around the eco – sanctuary to better understand one’s self in light of the cosmos.





Plate 12. Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary (Source: www.cityofpines.com)

Baguio, aside from already being able to address the physical and spiritual dimensions of health and wellness, also caters to the social dimension of health and wellness with its main annual social attraction that is embodied in the Panagbenga Festival, or the Baguio Flower Festival which is a month long celebration beginning on the first day of February that pays tribute to the city's and province's flowers. Panagbenga is a Kankana – ey term meaning “a season of blooming”, appropriate and iconic that during the months of February the wild sunflowers bloom and litter the roadside going up to Baguio. This festival has been in existence since 1995 conceptualized as a way to bring back and re establish the grandeur that is Baguio after the 1990 earthquake. A proposal then by Atty. Damaso Bangaoet that was well received and fully supported by the community. Floral and Street Parades, street dancing and band competitions and exhibitions are signature events of the Panagbenga. The two – day Street Dancing and Float Parades are but some of the highlights of this festival that attract and entice both foreign and local tourists alike to come and stay in the city, and another main highlight that tourist and even the residents of Baguio look forward to in the said festival is the closing of Baguio's most renowned road to motor vehicles that in turn signals the opening of “Session Road in Bloom”.

Session Road in Bloom is a part of the Panagbenga Festival wherein the most famous road in Baguio is closed from the intersection in front of Maharlika Livelihood Center to the top of Session road rotunda. From the fourth Monday of February to the First Sunday of March, this street is given back to the people where street parties, trade fairs, side walk café's and a whole range of food outlets extend to the streets to offer a wide array of food and other local products to the discerning foreign and local tourists as well as the residents of Baguio. To give back the streets to the pedestrians of the city is a welcomed idea for both residents and tourist alike. In the responses of the surveyed tourist during the Lenten season, a total of 34 out of 121 respondents or 28% given the chance would still prefer seeing the city by means of walking than commuting.



Table 2. Preferred Means of going around Baguio

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION	TOTAL PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS N=121	
Private Vehicle	77	66
Commute	29	25
Walking	34	28

Moreover, the preference of the tourist to see the city by means of walking would be affected by their perceptions of how the traffic situation is currently being handled here in the city as shown in Table 3. The response “No problem” with regards to the traffic situation in the city is describe as getting from one point to another in the city is not hindered by traffic jam due to congestion of streets and volume of motor vehicles plying the streets. “Tolerable” describes the traffic situation as reasonable even with traffic jam due to congestion and volume of motor vehicles plying the streets. “Terrible” describes the traffic situation as awful with traffic jams caused by congestion and volume of motor vehicles plying the streets. A total of 59 responses say that the traffic is Tolerable and 46 say that they see the traffic situation is terrible, while 12 responded saying that here is No

Problem with the traffic situation with in the city.

Table 3. Perception of the current traffic condition in Baguio

TRAFFIC CONDITION IN BAGUIO	TOTAL PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS N=121	
No Problem	12	10
Tolerable	59	49
Terrible	46	38

Stressing the point on the pedestrianization of some of the major streets of the Baguio, the city mayor is supportive of such undertaking but also proposes that the development of alternate routes and creation of parking spaces/ areas would help realize this proposal.



Taking verbatim, one of the comments of the surveyed tourist “Ban all motor vehicles around Burnham Park and all along Session Road. Make Baguio City a truly walkable, healthy, wholesome resort city for all Filipinos” would best say what should be done in the

city.
Health and Wellness Tourism of Metro Baguio

A wide range of health and wellness activities are also currently offered and have a lot of potential prospects within the members of Metro Baguio for health and wellness tourism. The relative spill over of tourists from Baguio provides a market for health and wellness tourism in Metro Baguio particularly in the surrounding municipalities. The acknowledgment of Baguio as the jump off point or the gateway to the other municipalities of the Metro is the key in promoting the Metro Baguio as a haven for health and wellness. The Strawberry Fields of La Trinidad provide an experience in harvesting fresh organically grown and produced strawberries (Personal Interview with Mayor Abalos and Tourism Officer Daodao, May 2012) as shown in Plate . The Bahong Cut Flower area provides another unique olfactory experience for anyone that would venture to see and smell the different flowers being grown such as roses, baby’s breath, anthuriums, carnations, mums and tulips.



Plate 13. Strawberry Fields, La Trinidad
(February 2013, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

The mountain climbing, eco – trail provided by Mt. Cabuyao and Mt. Sto. Tomas but more collectively referred to as Mt. Sto. Tomas in Tuba and Mt. Ugo in Itogon are surely a challenge welcomed to the more energetic,



adventurous and thrill seeking tourists. Proven by the successful hosting of the recently concluded ultra marathon sponsored by NorthFace named “The NorthFace 100” where the city of Baguio, together with the municipalities of Itogon and Tuba graciously and enthusiastically participated in, leaving an impression to the organizers of that Metro Baguio is the perfect place to institutionally conduct and host such event .



Plate 14. Mt. Cabuyao, Tuba showing the twin radar at the peak of the summit (November 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

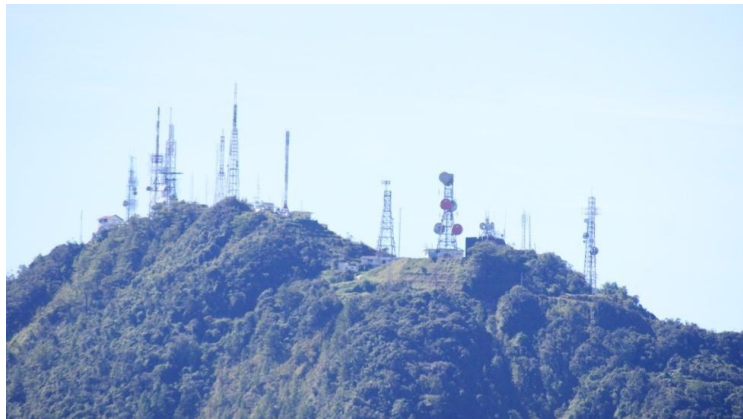


Plate 15. Mt. Sto. Tomas, Tuba showing the different towers for information and communication and considered ideal for mountain climbing and hiking. (November 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

In March 2012, the Mt. Ugo climb attracted 210 participants, the largest by far to trek the said mountain and stay for 3 days and 2 nights (Interview with Tourism Officer of Itogon Ms. Flordeliza Diase, May 2012). A clear indication that eco tourism is a very viable and marketable tourism activity that caters to health and wellness here in the Metro.



The Bengaongao and Paterno Cave in Tublay would be a spelunker's delight, being able to explore the stalagmite and stalactite filled age – old caves. Making Tublay the first choice for cave exploration when in Metro Baguio. minutes away from Baguio.



The acclaimed medicinal sulfuric waters from the naturally flowing hot springs in the 1300 level of Itogon and that of the Asin Hot Springs in Nangalisan, Tuba are a treat for tourists in search of a place to unwind, relax and or just looking to wash their worries away. 38 out of 121 or 31% of tourists who come up to the Metro still prefers water related activities such as swimming. The beauty of this, is that with just a stone throws away from Baguio (being the jump off point) tourists can enjoy the tropic weather and experience the medicinal benefits of the free flowing hot springs and still be just at the minimum 45

Plate 17. Asin Hot Springs, Tuba
(November 2012, photo by Patrick John Santiago)

In terms of organic farming the Lily of the Valley, RLD Farm, AAU Farm, the Garden of

Life, Master's Garden in La Trinidad offers a variety of outdoor activities aside from the typical sightseeing activities. The Lily of the Valley organic farm actually offers home stay and overnight camping for visitors, while RLD Farms offer a unique experience of trekking which includes walking on top of a pipe and through a hanging bridge, AAU farms offers a commanding vantage point of La Trinidad and a picturesque view of an organic farm terrace. In Metro Baguio, a combination of organic farming as well as organic dining and sightseeing tours can be arranged for a full experience of Health and Wellness Tourism.



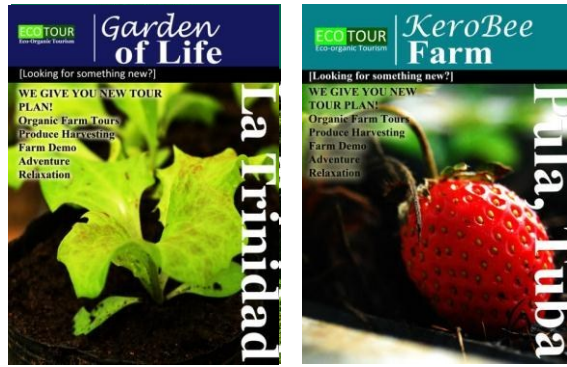


Plate 18. Informational Materials of Organic Farms in Tuba and La Trinidad
 (Source: organicfarms.multiply.com)

On the other hand, the municipality of Tuba also showcases other organically grown produce such as the Kerobee Farm which markets natural honey, and grows organic teas as well as vegetables where visitors can observe firsthand how organic produce is handled. The VnL farms in Tuba provide a scenic view overlooking the Lingayen Gulf and La

Union where tourists and visitors can take leisurely walks while taking in the beauty of its fruit orchard. Imperial and Apunan Farms in Tublay which offers organically grown and produced fruits and vegetables and homestay services including camping and bonfire at affordable prices.

Furthermore, La Trinidad's St. Paul Seminary and the Bell Church and the Our Lady of Cavadonga Church , the Mt. Sto Tomas Pilgrimage Site in Tuba, and the Benedictine Convent in Itogon provides a place for retreat and sanctuary to tourists interested in finding and/ or developing spiritual well – being.



Plate 19. Bell Church, La Trinidad – Baguio
 (February 2013, photo by Patrick John Santiago)



A whole gamut of festivals is also present in Metro Baguio. The Strawberry Festival in La Trinidad that celebrates one of the most prized produce of the municipality is held annually during the month of March, boasts of having also the world's biggest strawberry shortcake as acknowledged by the Guinness Book of World Records.



Plate 20 . World's Largest Strawberry Shortcake, La Trinidad
(Source: <http://outoftownblog.com/strawberry-festival-2012/>)

The Kagam – Us of Tuba is a traditional thanksgiving festival, which features the traditional cañao ceremony, celebrated during the month of October (Personal Interview with Tourism Officer of Tuba, Magdalena Niwane, May 2012). The Balitok and Kintoman

Festivals of Itogon, Balitok being the local term for “Gold” and Kintoman, a known native variant of rice in the Cordilleras are highlighted in the said festivals launched in December of 2011 (Personal Interview with Tourism Officer of Itogon, Flordeliza Diase, May 2012). Moreover, the city and the different municipalities comprising Metro Baguio have potentially so much more to offer in terms of health and wellness tourism. Based from the survey conducted among identified tourists and guests, Table 4 shows the preferred health and wellness tourism activities of the respondents if they will return to the Metro.

The development of these potential areas of health and wellness tourism would solidify the main aim/ goal of this particular study to make Metro Baguio the/ a Haven for Health and Wellness Tourism.



Table 4. Preferred activities in Metro Baguio by tourist on their return visit.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN METRO BAGUIO		TOTAL RESPONDENTS N=121	PERCENTAGES
City	Eco Trails/Tours	55	45
	Native Spa Treatments	47	39
	Zip lining	43	36
	Walking tours of the	38	31
	Pools and Resorts	37	30
	Mountain Biking	37	30
	Cloud Catching	32	26
	Organic Dining	31	25
	Skyathlon	22	18
	Holistic/Spiritual	21	17
Retreats			
	Spelunking	17	14
	Aerobics, Wushu	17	14

Eco Trails and Tours is an avenue of for health and wellness tourism that Metro Baguio can capitalize on. The vast and untapped natural resources in terms of mountains suitable for trekking, climbing and camping is abundant in Metro Baguio, the potentials to develop and focus efforts on ecologically based tourism should be taken advantage of.

The development of the Heritage Hill as an eco – park sanctuary in Baguio City, the on – going development of the Shilan Eco – Park (Personal Interview with Mayor Abalos, May

2012 and other Communal Forests in La Trinidad, Mt. Bidawan and Mt. Pigungan in Itogon (Personal Interview with Mayor Camantilles, May 2012) are some of the potential areas for development of health and wellness tourism that would cater to the number one (1) preferred activity of tourist that is the Eco Trails and/ or Tours. 45% of tourists during the survey period actually prefer to try eco – trails and tours if given the chance on their next visit to the Metro.

Mountain Biking and hiking treks are also preferred activities of 37 out of 121 or 30% and 22 out of 121 or 18% of tourists surveyed, respectively. A clear indication that the development of eco tourism, which includes mountain



trails and treks for biking and hiking and other outdoor related activities, is the primary agenda in terms of promoting health and wellness tourism in the Metro.

Conversely 39% of tourists 47 out of 121 tourists preferred spa treatments particularly the native or traditional spas. Based on this, to underscore the preference of tourists to experience native or traditional spa treatments could also be the rallying point for the promotion of health and wellness tourism in Metro Baguio. Traditional massages and the avenue of letting tourist experience unique cultural rituals and traditions are but some of the possibilities that would both cater to health and wellness tourism in this culture rich

Metro which is Metro Baguio.

Development Communication: Health and Wellness Tourism

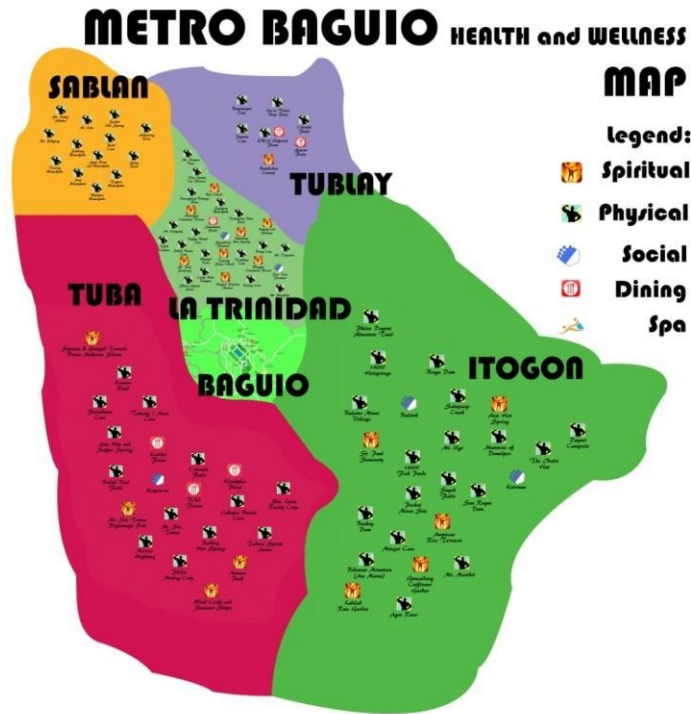
Through merging the idea of promoting Metro Baguio as a Haven for Health and Wellness Tourism is perceived as the catalyst for development since it would require participation from all stakeholders of tourism.

Having identified areas that address health and wellness tourism in Metro Baguio was the first step in the promotion of Metro Baguio as a Haven for health and wellness Tourism. Baguio City alone has many offerings already in terms of health and wellness tourism, as well as the inclusion of existing and potential areas for development in health and wellness tourism offerings of the members of Metro Baguio.

Packaging Metro Baguio in terms of health and wellness tourism resulted in the following development of Health and Wellness Tourism Maps.



Map

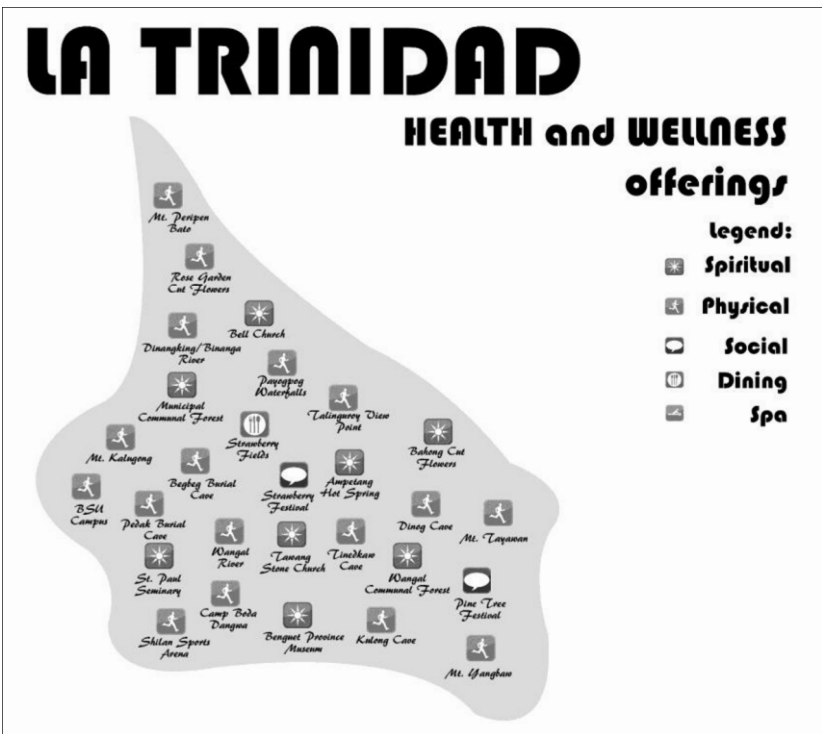


2. The map of Metro

(BLISTT) areas where tourism is a business operation (Patrick John Santiago, December 2012)

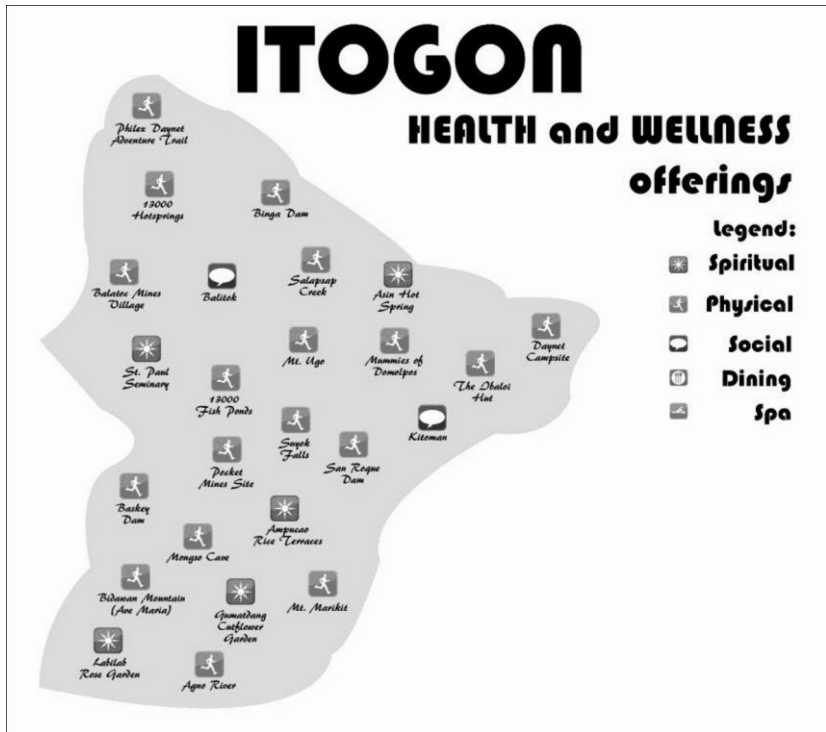
Baguio showing the different health and wellness potential opportunity for





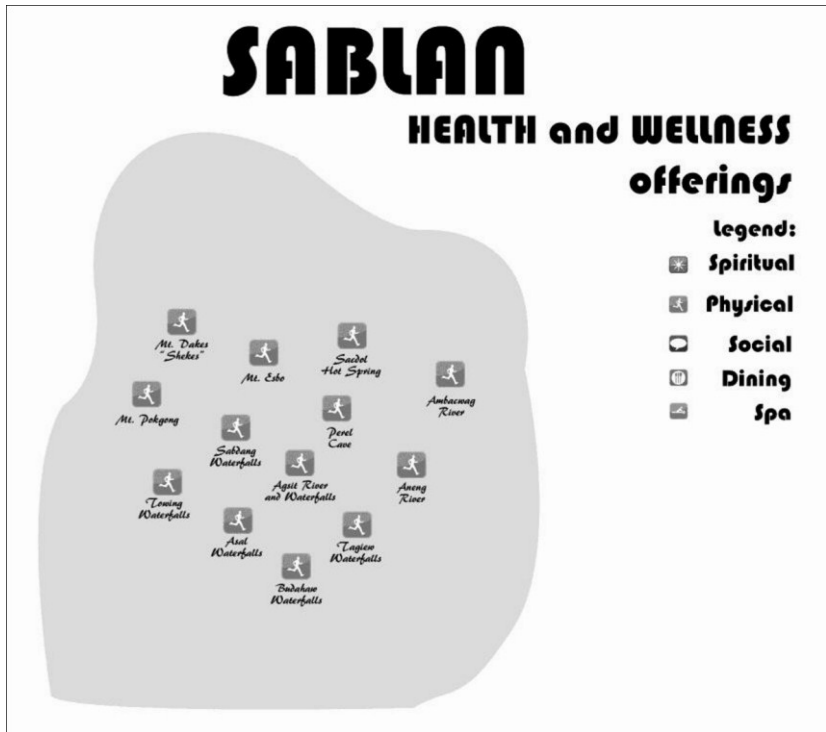
Map 4. Map of the municipality La Trinidad, Benguet showing the different health and wellness tourism related activities (Patrick John Santiago, December 2012)





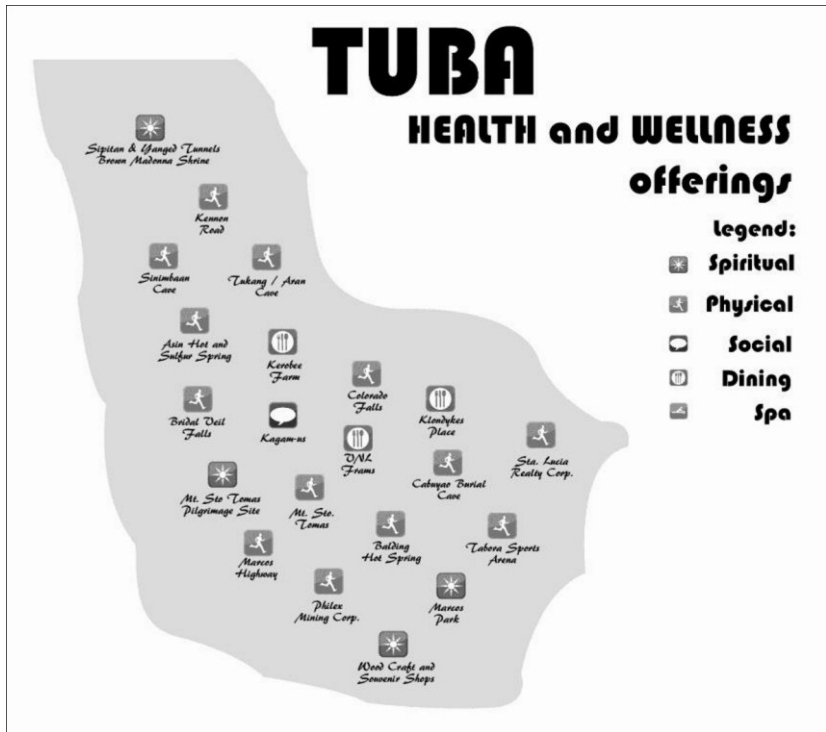
Map 5. Map of the municipality of Itogon, Benguet showing the different health and wellness tourism related activities (Patrick John Santiago, December 2012)





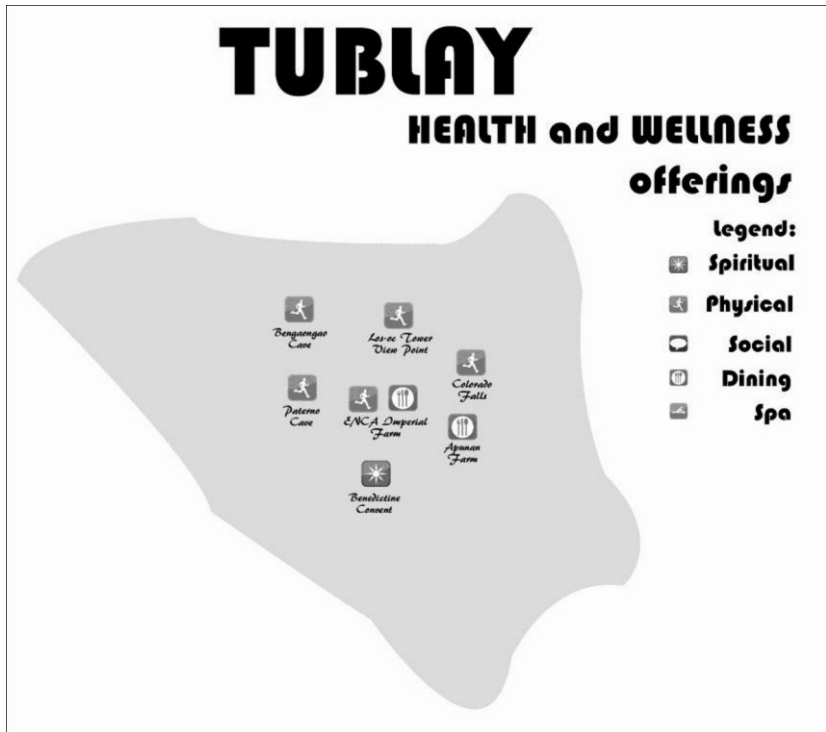
Map 6. Map of the municipality of Sablan showing the different health and wellness tourism related activities (Patrick John Santiago December 2012)





Map 7. Map of the municipality of Tuba, Benguet showing the different health and wellness tourism related activities (Patrick John Santiago, December 2012)





Map 8. Map of municipality of Tublay, Benguet showing the different health and wellness tourism related activities (Patrick John Santiago, December 2012)

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The promotion of Metro Baguio as a Haven for health and wellness tourism was the focus of this research particularly in the existing and potential areas of the Baguio – La Trinidad – Itogon – Sablan – Tuba – Tublay area or more commonly known as BLISTT, referred herein as Metro Baguio

Data gathering, analysis and interpretation was conducted between April and May of 2012 through key informant interviews, photo documentation, observations and survey questionnaire. The city and municipal mayors, together with their tourism officers were the main source of information as to the status and offerings of each area in terms of tourism particularly in terms of health and wellness tourism.

All the mayors welcomed and accommodated the request to have a documented interview except for Mayor Arthur Baldo of Sablan, Benguet

Due to logistical and occupational constraints of the researcher, efforts to get an interview with the Municipal Mayor of Tublay were exhausted to the conduct of a phone interview with the tourism officer of Tublay – Mr. Ricky Moresto.

On the other hand, with the help of the Hotels and Restaurants Association of Baguio (HRAB) headed by Mr. Anthony De Leon (General Manager of the Baguio Country Club) Through the Baguio Country Club and the participating member establishments of HRAB, the survey questionnaires were administered to a total of 121 identified tourists and guest of Metro Baguio during the Lenten Season from April 2 to

April 13, 2012.

In the promotion of Metro Baguio as a haven for health and wellness tourism particularly in the health and wellness dimensions of physical, spiritual and social through the thrusts of social marketing and social mobilization the following are the major findings of this study.

Metro Baguio caters to the physical dimension of health and wellness tourism in terms of the providing avenues to conduct the following activities:

1. Exercising, walking, jogging, biking, wushu and taebo are activities that encourage physical exercises for the body aside from the fact that its temperate climate it is conducive for such activities within the city of Baguio.
2. Rest and Relaxation from the natural hot springs located in Tuba and Itogon.
3. Organic dining because of fresh organically grown and produced vegetables and fruits made available to the tourist from La Trinidad and other municipalities of Benguet.
4. Spelunking/ Cave exploration activities provided by Tuba and Tublay.
5. Eco – Trails/ Trekking and Mountain Climbing provided by Tuba and Itogon.



Metro Baguio caters to the spiritual dimension of health and wellness tourism in terms of the providing avenues to conduct the holistic, reflective activities and avenues for retreats. Lourdes Grotto, Baguio Cathedral, Dominican Heritage Site (former Diplomat Hotel), and the Maryknoll Sanctuary located within the city of Baguio. The Bell Church located at the boundary of La Trinidad and Baguio, The Station of the Cross at Mt. Santo Tomas in Tuba and the Ave Maria Shrine which is currently in progress in Itogon.

Metro Baguio caters to the social dimension of health and wellness tourism in terms of the providing avenues to conduct social interactions, cultural understanding and promotion in terms of festivals and other social events. The Panagbenga (Baguio Flower Festival) hosted by the city of Baguio. The Strawberry and Adivay Festival hosted by the municipality of La Trinidad. The Balitok and Kintoman Festivals; initiated by the municipality of Itogon and the thanksgiving festival, Kagam – us of Tuba in the province of Benguet are also emerging festivals that appeal to health and wellness tourism.

Conclusions

1. Metro Baguio as a haven for health and wellness tourism has a number of current and potential offerings in terms of health and wellness tourism, from basic physical activities that promote health and wellness (including organic dining, eco trails) to holistic, reflective, retreats addressing spiritual wellness, to providing avenues of social and cultural interactions (such as festivals) that develops social wellness.

2. Metro Baguio caters to the three (3) basic dimensions of health and wellness which are Physical Wellness, Spiritual Wellness and Social Wellness.

3. In the promotion of Metro Baguio as haven for health and wellness tourism, the primary challenge is the development of accommodation facilities and road networks for accessibility. The opportunities for the development of eco – sports & adventure tourism of Metro Baguio are potentially high considering the vast untapped natural resources of Metro Baguio.

4. The promotion of Metro Baguio's health and wellness tourism provides a new focal point in further enhancing tourism activities in the region as well as providing a new roadmap in the course of developing and discovering new potentials in boosting tourism. The promotion of Metro Baguio's health and wellness tourism provides opportunities



to strengthen socio – economic and socio – political ties and creates avenues to develop partnerships among the different stakeholders of tourism from the most basic levels of the citizenry to the major decision/ policy makers.

Recommendations

1. That a tourism campaign be proposed and formally created to promote Metro Baguio as a Haven for health and wellness tourism.
2. That the said tourism campaign focuses on the three (3) core dimensions of health and wellness which are the Physical, Spiritual and Social. Particularly on development of social activities to encourage and invite tourist to the municipality in the light of festivals, particularly for Tublay and Sablan.
3. That the Metro Baguio tourism concerns, in general, as identified by the City and Municipal Mayors as well as the different Tourism officers be addressed as a priority in the development framework of BLISTT.
4. That an effective system/ mechanism be conceptualized/ studied to accurately monitor and gather data in terms of tourist arrivals in the different tourism offerings of Metro Baguio.
5. That a concrete development plan be organized and institutionalized to centralize efforts in promoting health and wellness tourism in the whole of Metro Baguio.
6. That a study be conducted to assess and create a sustainable, tangible development plan/ campaign to realize the Metro Baguio (BLISTT) development cooperation in terms of Health and Wellness Tourism.
7. That a study be designed to further look into the major role/ contribution of development communication as an integral partner in tourism development for the region/ country.

Development Communication as an essential element in the promotion of Metro Baguio as a Haven for Health and Wellness Tourism, through development communication the social idea of a Metro Baguio and the potentials of working together to achieve the idea of possibly owning the title of being a Haven for Health and Wellness and promoting this idea through social mobilization was validated.

The identification of Metro Baguio as a suitable area for development, from its rich history to the documentation of its current status in tourism and the acknowledgement of different institutions of people and the



existence of a Metro Baguio community were fundamental in constructing a road map to the promotion of Metro Baguio as a haven for health and wellness tourism.

Equally as essential was the identification of the potentials of Metro Baguio’s Health and Wellness tourism activities that were pegged on three (3) basic dimensions of health and wellness, the physical, spiritual, and social served as a guidepost in the attainment of this study’s objective.

Metro Baguio’s tourism has a wellspring of potentials to develop and promote in line with Health and Wellness Tourism, with most, if not all, members of Metro Baguio catering and offering health and wellness tourism activities particularly in the physical, spiritual, and social dimensions of health and wellness.

Having identified these factors and incorporating them into a workable framework through development communication, as defined in this study, the promotion of Metro Baguio as a Haven for Health and Wellness Tourism can be realized.

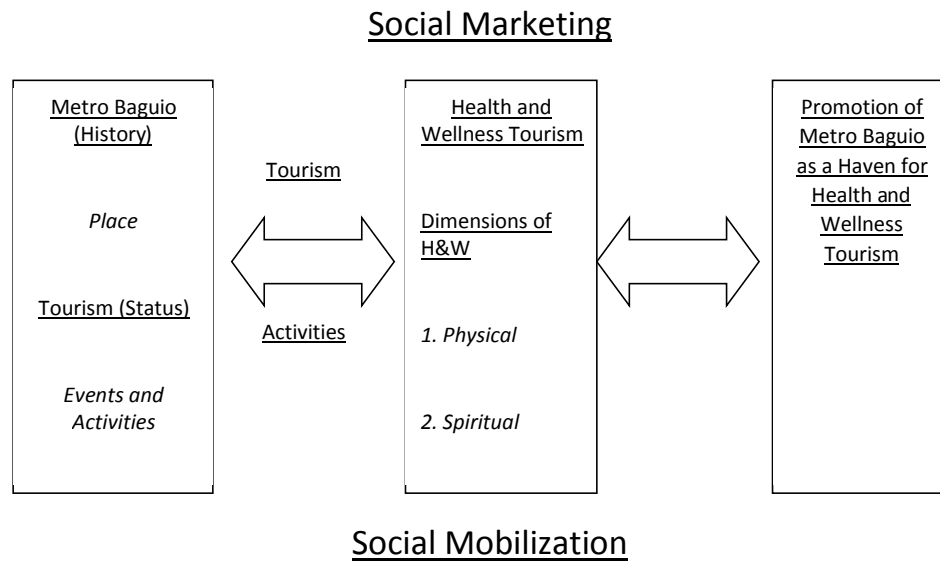


Figure 3. Promotion Framework of Metro Baguio as Haven for Health and Wellness Tourism



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