

BC Parks Community Involvement Framework

Introduction

British Columbia has one of the world's most significant and diverse parks systems - the third largest park system in North America and the largest provincial park system in Canada. Over 14% of the provincial land base has been entrusted to BC Parks for management in perpetuity.

Part of BC Parks' strategy to manage this public legacy includes proactively engaging the community at large, including the development of initiatives with other Ministries and/or levels of government, First Nations, individuals, not-for-profit groups and corporate entities to assist in managing the long-term health and enjoyment of B.C.'s provincial parks and protected areas.

The provincial parks and protected areas system is dedicated to the protection of natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Inherent in this mandate is the requirement to deliver on the objectives of protecting natural environments and the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities.

The BC Parks Community Involvement Framework has been created to ensure the long-term sustainability of the parks and protected areas system economically, socially and environmentally. The model will enhance delivery of BC Parks program goals through identifying additional resources to support:

- The provision of quality interpretation/education programs.
- Maintenance of existing facilities.
- Capital construction of new facilities.
- Specific conservation initiatives aimed at maintaining and restoring ecological integrity within the provincial parks and protected areas system.
- Ongoing inventory of both cultural and natural resources within the provincial parks and protected areas system.

Program Objectives

BC Parks is seeking to engage in relationships that augment resources to increase capacity for service delivery, build support, awareness, and enhance service delivery in parks and protected areas. There are a number of reasons for taking this approach:

- 1) Engaging communities in the planning and management of the provincial parks and protected areas system will ensure long-term support, wise management, use and enjoyment of the system.
- 2) Key provincial goals are to increase environmental sustainability, improve fitness levels of B.C. residents, and increase employment and economic activity with a specific interest in increasing tourism and park visitation.
- 3) Creating partnerships will result in mutual benefits for all participants. BC Parks' objectives are to build support, understanding, management, use and enjoyment of the parks and protected areas system.
- 4) Provide a mechanism for BC Parks and participants to pursue common interests.
- 5) Contributes to a social licence for commercial partners.

Principles of the BC Parks Community Involvement Program

Relationships will be with Ethical Entities.

BC Parks will enter into agreements with organizations whose mandate and activities are supportive of the BC Parks Program Plan. The environmental, ethical and community record of the partner must be able to withstand public review. BC Parks will use screening criteria on all potential partners similar to that of the Ethical Funds group. BC Parks will partner with those groups or individuals that fit into all of these categories: non-tobacco, non-munitions, non-nuclear, non-alcoholic (exceptions may be made at the Director level for B.C. based producers and those that support agri-tourism), progressive stakeholder relations, human rights, and equal opportunity and progressive environmental practices.

Check the Ethical Funds site at www.ethicalfunds.com for more information.

Activities Must be Consistent with Ministry of Environment Objectives.

Activities must be supportive of the BC Parks Program Plan and are neutral or add value to the goals and objectives of the Divisions of the Ministry of Environment and Provincial Government in general.

Initiatives will be Subject to Cost/Benefit Analysis.

Cost/benefit analysis of partnership initiatives will be undertaken to ensure proposals maximize benefits to both BC Parks and the potential partner.

Resources will supplement Government Funding

Resources gained through partnership will be in addition to government funding of BC Parks programs.

Recognition to be Appropriate

Recognition for relationships will be commensurate with the benefit provided.

Transparent Reporting

All financial activities related to this framework will be reported on an annual basis.

Community Involvement Categories

Volunteers:

Overall objective is to increase the number, quality and value of volunteer initiatives in parks and protected areas and enhance the government's ability to manage parks and protected areas. The use of volunteers increases links to and understanding of the community and gains valuable stewardship support for recreation and conservation initiatives.

First Nations Partnerships:

BC Parks is pursuing opportunities to enhance relationships with First Nations through the provincial parks and protected areas system, through Collaborative Management Agreements and other means.

Community Partnerships:

Overall objective is to increase the involvement of communities in the BC Parks and Protected Areas system through building long-term community support for the provincial parks and protected areas system and forming effective partnerships at the provincial, regional and local levels that increases the roles of communities in park and protected area planning and management.

Partnerships/Sponsorships/Donations:

In order for BC Parks to be successful with this facet of the Community Involvement Framework, the terms of the partnerships must be clearly defined for all involved. Partnerships are defined as a relationship between individuals or groups that are characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, as for the achievement of a specified goal.

There are many kinds of partnerships that involve different benefits to different types of partners. An example is the Land Acquisition Program where BC Parks works with partners to acquire land for parks, protected areas, ecological reserves, wildlife management areas and other conservation lands.

Formal Corporate Partnerships are collaborative relationships where the risks and benefits associated with the outcomes of the agreement are shared between all parties. BC Parks engages with key partners on activities and projects designed to increase, enhance or leverage existing program resources. The public has an expectation that BC Parks will choose partnerships that meet a defined park and protected area need and are ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.

Formal Society Partnerships are cooperative agreements between BC Parks and a formal incorporated society, such as non-profit charitable organizations, where both parties enter into the agreement with equal goals and objectives. BC Parks engages with societies on projects designed to enhance service delivery.

Sponsorship is traditionally defined as financial support of an event or activity. Agreements with sponsors who want to make a significant contribution across the entire parks and protected areas system will allow BC Parks to take advantage of special opportunities that arise from time to time. The contributions will benefit BC Parks as well as the sponsor, and the activities will be consistent with the objectives of the parks and protected areas system.

Bequests/Donations can be made to BC Parks in one of the following manners:

British Columbia Parks Fund – A trust fund established with the Vancouver Foundation in which the Vancouver Foundation will, upon the advice of an Advisory Group, disburse the funds (principal) from the trust to entities outside of government to undertake tasks and initiatives that support the management of the parks and protected areas system.

British Columbia Parks Permanent Fund – A trust fund established with the Vancouver Foundation in which the Vancouver Foundation will, upon advice of an Advisory Group, disburse the income (investment income, not principal) from the trust to entities outside of government to undertake tasks and initiatives that support management of the protected area system.

The Park Enhancement Fund (the Fund) is a new financial tool to better manage donations and other contributions to BC Parks. The Fund is a special account, set up under Ministry of Finance legislation, that enables money to be carried over fiscal years and allows it to be used to fund multi-year projects. It will support BC Parks in attracting donations and other contributions by providing a simple, transparent mechanism to retain and reinvest money in the parks system. The Fund will provide assurance to partners and donors that their contributions will be spent in accordance with their wishes and for prescribed purposes. Unspent balances will not be lost to general revenues, as can happen currently.

The Fund will take in revenue from:

- Protected areas stumpage.
- BC Parks promotional and educational products (i.e., sales and advertising revenues).
- Gifts (e.g., donations and bequests).
- Partnerships, including money received for the transfer of intellectual property (as in micalendar) and money received under broader agreements.

Recognition

Recognition will be based on the nature of the gift/project/donation involved and will be decided on a case by case basis. Acknowledgements may include (but are not limited to): printed or electronic acknowledgement, recognition at a special event, an in-park sign or plaque, or other structure, and/or other thank you gifts/acknowledgements. If the object/gift/donation is between zero and \$10,000 dollars, and a thank you letter is sent, the region or section will determine who will sign the letter on a case-by-case basis. If the gift/donation is over \$10,000, the Director of Visitor Services will determine who will sign any thank you letter to be provided.