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Living our Values

Values and Ethics Code

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Managers are responsible for providing a copy of
Living our Values to any Parks Canada team member
who does not have access to the intranet.

Front cover image
Ivvavik National Park, 2014



Living our Values

Values and Ethics Code



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Message from the **President & CEO**

As Parks Canada team members, we demonstrate dedication and passion in every aspect of our work. Our core values are at the heart of what we do, how we do it, and most importantly how we connect and interact with others.

We each play a role in promoting a **safe, healthy and respectful** workplace that is free from harassment and discrimination, including anti-Black racism. We also work with – and learn from – Indigenous peoples and Elders. We acknowledge the past, continue to build collaborative relationships to manage national historic sites and national parks, and foster opportunities for Indigenous peoples. How we treat each other and the people we serve defines who we are as an Agency. Being welcoming is part of the Parks Canada brand.

The Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code provides us with guidance for creating healthy and respectful workplaces as we work collaboratively towards our goals and collective success.

“Living our Values” means being open and sensitive to lived experiences and the realities of others, particularly those that may be different from our own. It means listening with respect, curiosity, open-mindedness, self-reflection and a desire to understand and genuinely connect with others. Expanding opportunities for equity-seeking groups makes us stronger.

I am grateful to the working group and so many other Parks Canada team members from different regions and functions, including the union, who worked together in supporting the development of this refreshed Code. It presents values that reflect our Agency’s unique identity and culture, as well as our shared commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation in all areas of our work.

Collaboration and dialogue are critical to our collective success. I encourage you to use this Code to have conversations with your colleagues about expected behaviours and actions that bring out the best in each of us, and help us become the diverse, inclusive and welcoming Agency we aspire to be.

Ron Hallman

President & Chief Executive Officer

Parks Canada Agency



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Parks Canada cornerstones: **Mandate, Vision** and **Core Values**

OUR MANDATE

What we do together

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

OUR VISION

What we want to achieve together

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

OUR CORE VALUES

How we work together

Our Core Values – respect for people, equity, diversity and inclusion, integrity, engagement and excellence – provide a common framework for our actions as Parks Canada team members and our collaborative work to fulfill our Mandate and our Vision.

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Objectives of the Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code

The Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code **promotes a common understanding and awareness of the core values and expected behaviours** that guide us as employees at every level of the Agency in our day-to-day activities and actions. Committing to these values enhances the ethical culture of the Agency, contributes to public confidence in the integrity of the public service, and encourages collaboration and dialogue among our team members while supporting one another and serving Canadians, our communities and the public interest.

The Code is how we implement the Agency's core values as individual team members. The Agency's Values and Operating Principles guide the ways in which our core values are implemented, and together with the Code, form the basis for ensuring that the integrity of our human resources policies, practices and procedures are upheld¹.

¹ HR Regime Review, Final Report, p.9

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Parks Canada **Core Values** and **Expected Behaviours**

RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

Treating each person we meet with **respect, fairness, dignity, empathy, sensitivity and kindness** contributes to a healthy and respectful workplace and a welcoming environment for the partners we work with and the public we serve. This also ensures the safety and well-being of employees and promotes collaboration, openness and transparency.

- We respect our differences while acknowledging the value each individual contributes to the benefit of others.
- We work together with our colleagues and partners in a spirit of openness, honesty and transparency that encourages engagement, collaboration and respectful communication.
- We express our needs and interests while valuing those of others.
- We value diversity and the benefits of combining the unique qualities and strengths of a diverse workforce and society.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Being a successful and innovative agency is rooted in our ability to create inclusive spaces where staff and visitors with a variety of perspectives and experiences feel a sense of belonging. This also means providing fair and equitable access to opportunities for under-represented people including: Black, Indigenous, people of colour, the Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+ (2SLGBTQ+) community, and people living with disabilities.

- We create and foster a supportive work environment that proactively seeks out, welcomes, respects, builds trust, and values diversity with respect to gender identity and expression, age, ancestry and cultural identity or background, physical abilities or mental health.
- We ensure that people from equity-seeking groups with a diversity of lived experiences have **equal opportunities** to contribute to and influence decisions and access to career development, advancement and other opportunities.
- We address racist, biased, and discriminatory behaviour, practices and systemic barriers in the workplace through daily actions and tangible support, allyship, mandatory trainings, engagement and collaboration at all levels of the Agency.
- **Collaboration with Indigenous peoples is fundamental to the well-being of protected heritage areas.** Connection

to ancestral territories and homelands is fundamental to the well-being of Indigenous cultures and communities. We work in partnership with the Elders, the people and leadership of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and commit to acknowledging our past and ensure that our path of reconciliation is one that we undertake with respect and humility. We are committed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

INTEGRITY

We work in an **open, honest, fair and ethical** manner that bears the closest public scrutiny, ensures public trust and is consistent with the Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code. We help ensure Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians and our Minister by carrying out our duties in accordance with legislation, policies and directives in a non-partisan and impartial manner free from political influence, and following the direction of Parks Canada management.

- We provide management and elected leaders with the information, analysis and advice they need to make decisions, always striving to be open, candid, non-partisan and impartial. We also provide service and information to the public in a manner that is non-partisan and free from political influence.

- We never use our official roles to inappropriately obtain an advantage for ourselves or to advantage or disadvantage others.
- We take all possible steps to prevent and resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest between our official responsibilities and our private affairs.
- We accept responsibility for our actions, share lessons learned, and identify inappropriate conduct in order to build and maintain trust and accountability.

ENGAGEMENT

Parks Canada's success requires a collective and concerted effort that happens when we facilitate team building and collaboration, to develop and share knowledge and expertise. Parks Canada team members are passionate.

- We openly seek, receive and offer feedback and advice in a timely manner and in a way that is honest, respectful and clear.
- Rather than focusing exclusively on the achievement of outcomes, we also consider the impacts of actions and behaviours chosen to achieve a result.
- We actively create and maintain professional and mutually beneficial working relationships with Parks

Canada team members, stakeholders, partners, and the public in a manner that upholds Parks Canada values for all parties involved.

- We welcome and explore new ideas and opportunities that align with the Parks Canada mandate in consultation with interested parties.

EXCELLENCE

Our collective success depends on creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that promotes teamwork, learning and innovation. As stewards and storytellers of Canada's natural and cultural resources we design, deliver and continually strive to improve the quality of our policies, programs and services.

- We take the time to recognize and acknowledge competence, effort and results to encourage ourselves and enable others to see and value their own contributions.
- We make the best use of available resources to meet Parks Canada's objectives and priorities in a socially and environmentally responsible way, including collaborating with Indigenous communities.
- Rather than striving for perfection in our work and decision-making, we focus on giving our best. We seek the best available evidence and consider Parks Canada's priorities, including our conservation and recreation responsibilities, science and traditional knowledge.

- As stewards and leaders in environmental change and innovation, we collaborate with our Indigenous partners and value Indigenous knowledge. We develop, use and share best practices in our operations and research. We promote Indigenous rights and traditions, and strive to support vibrant Indigenous cultures and healthy communities.



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Other **Ethical Considerations**

Besides values and expected behaviours, Parks Canada employees make other ethical considerations in their work.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND USE OF INFORMATION

We comply with the Government of Canada's [Access to Information Act](#) and [Privacy Act](#) and other legislation, directives and procedures that apply to personal or official information under the Agency's control.

- We access official information only if authorized and required for work. We never use this information for personal use, gain or financial benefit either for ourselves, our relatives or anyone else. We don't destroy or change a record, make a false record or hide a record, nor ask or advise someone else to do so.
- All information exchanged in the course of our duties must be gathered by legal means, be true, fair and not designed to mislead. During and after our employment we are required to keep in strict confidence all information we obtained about employees and clients to which the public does not have access. We disclose this type of information only if specifically authorized to do so by legislation or the Agency guidelines or by a court of law. In social or public settings, we take care not to discuss confidential, personal or sensitive information.

- When we leave the Agency's employment, we do not take or retain any official records or documents, including paper documents, electronic or digital information, videos, etc. unless authorized by the delegated authority.

USE OF ELECTRONIC NETWORKS AND OTHER PARKS CANADA ASSETS

- Parks Canada's electronic network is a cost-effective tool for providing information, communications, serving the public, Agency visibility and gathering job-related information, among other uses. As employees, we use the network effectively, and are careful not to expose the Agency or ourselves to potential harm.
- The electronic network is for official use only. However, limited personal use is allowed as long as it doesn't affect our productivity or that of our colleagues, or impose a storage burden on computer systems. We comply with all related legislation, policies and guidelines.
- As employees, we don't use the network for private business, personal gain or profit, political activity, sending chain letters or abusive messages, etc. The use of other Parks Canada assets, such as vehicles, are to be used for official purposes only.

DUTY OF LOYALTY

- As with other Canadians, federal public servants enjoy Freedom of expression which is entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, as public servants we are also required to demonstrate loyalty to our employer (the Government of Canada) and be – and to be seen to be – objective and impartial in fulfilling our responsibilities. This means we use caution when making criticisms of the government.
- As Parks Canada employees, signing a petition or publicly speaking out against a policy, direction, position or program of our Agency could bring into question the real or perceived ability to perform our official duties in a completely objective and impartial manner. Generally, the more closely our official duties and place of employment are related to the issue, the higher the risk that our objectivity and impartiality will be questioned.
- When balancing our right to freedom of expression with the importance of our duty of loyalty to our employer and impartiality of the public service, we should consider the following:
 - › the nature of our official duties;
 - › the visibility of our position within the Agency and the public service as a whole;

- › the object of the criticism or public statements (i.e. is it critical of a policy, direction or program of the Agency? Of another department?); and
 - › the impact of our action and/or criticism (i.e. could it question our impartiality or objectivity as a Parks Canada employee? As a public servant?).
- Parks Canada team members who wish to run for political office at the municipal, provincial/territorial or federal level require permission of the Public Service Commission. The Department's Political Activities Representative, who is also the Senior Official for Values and Ethics, provides guidance on political and non-candidacy political activities.
 - For further guidance, refer to the Treasury Board Secretariat document [Duty of Loyalty](#).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

As Parks Canada employees, we cannot publicly comment on the Agency's position on any subject unless it is part of our official duties.

- All media inquiries are referred to identified Field Unit spokespeople, External Relations or the National Communications Team.

- When authorized to comment publicly, we make every effort beforehand to obtain accurate information and facts by consulting with the appropriate colleagues and stakeholders to address sensitivities and remain within the scope of our knowledge and expertise. We avoid expressing personal opinions on the Agency's policies and programs, limiting our public comments to factual information.

RESPECT AND COURTESY

- We sometimes face difficult situations when working with external and internal partners, stakeholders and visitors, yet we remain professional and respectful, even in times of personal stress and in the face of provocation. We never make abusive, derisive, threatening, insulting, offensive or provocative statements or gestures to, or about, another person.
- Similarly, we expect our team members will be treated with respect. In situations when this does not occur, and where appropriate, we can work to de-escalate conflict in a respectful manner or request that the other party(ies) remain respectful. In most cases, we can even postpone an interaction to a later time, when tempers have cooled.
- When performing unwelcome activities, such as conducting compliance activities or explaining unpopular decisions, we are likely to experience difficult client relations from

which we cannot withdraw. Training and support are available from the [Office of the Ombud](#) and the [Quality Visitor Experience Team](#) to increase conflict management skills for dealing effectively with difficult situations.

OFF-DUTY CONDUCT

As representatives of the Government of Canada, we consider the impact of our actions even outside work hours, while on seasonal lay-off, on paid or unpaid leave. Off-duty activities and conduct, including outside of work employment, are usually considered a private matter. However, it could become a work-related matter if it affects the public's confidence in and respect for Parks Canada and the Government of Canada, or puts us in a conflict of interest or conflict of duties situation by:

- harming the Agency's reputation or programs;
- rendering us unable to perform our duties in a satisfactory manner;
- leading other employees to refuse, be reluctant to or be unable to work with us;
- rendering us guilty of a serious breach of the [Criminal Code of Canada](#) and thus renders our conduct injurious to the general reputation of the Agency and its employees. For example, the nature of criminal charges may be incompatible with the duties of a peace officer;

- making it difficult for the Agency to manage its operations efficiently and/or to direct its workforce efficiently.

USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- We understand that comments, criticisms, pictures, videos and personal information that we share on social media are not private. While interacting on these platforms, we consider our duty of loyalty, security of information, the reputation and professionalism of the Agency and the government, and respect for colleagues.

Parks Canada team members each play a role in strengthening the ethical culture of the Agency. When ethical issues arise, particularly when we aren't sure what action to take, we are encouraged to discuss them with our supervisor.

The Office of the Ombud is available as an impartial, confidential and independent resource to address work-related concerns and issues through informal processes such as dialogue or mediation. **The Values, Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion team** can help you with conflict of interest and when a breach of the values or expected behaviours has been identified.



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Application of the Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code

Accepting and adhering to these values and expected behaviours is a condition of employment for all Parks Canada team members, upon signing their letter of offer.

Team members continue to be governed by the Code while on leave, including (but not limited to) paid leave, leave without pay and seasonal lay-off. Contractors, volunteers, and students are also required to comply with the spirit of this Code.

A breach of this Code may result in investigation and subsequent corrective actions, including disciplinary measures of varying degrees up to termination of employment.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARKS CANADA TEAM MEMBERS

All Parks Canada team members apply this Code's Core Values and expected behaviours in their day-to-day actions and responsibilities. Inform your manager when you are involved in a situation that has the potential to contravene the Code and damage the Agency's reputation. Remain vigilant and seek the necessary advice and guidance to promptly resolve any situation that may appear to be in breach of the Code.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARKS CANADA LEADERSHIP

Ethics in the workplace is a shared responsibility. Management decisions support an ethical culture, and each Parks Canada team member is responsible for embodying the Agency's values in their behaviour and daily actions. This means:

- always striving to do the right thing in each situation;
- exemplifying our organizational values in our decision making and actions;
- maintaining open, positive communications and working relationships with members of their team, other colleagues and external partners;
- discussing our ethical concerns;
- reporting illegal activities and wrongdoing;
- disclosing and resolving possible conflict of interest situations in which we find ourselves;
- checking with our managers and the Values Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion team when we are uncertain about any aspect of this Code; and
- being prepared to cooperate in investigations regarding violations of this Code.

Supervisors/managers demonstrate ethical leadership by:

- acting with transparency, fairness and objectivity in all transactions and work activities, including staffing, contracting, etc.;
- exemplifying our Agency's values and integrating them into policies, programs and work practices;
- fostering a climate of trust and respect, which expects and supports ethical behaviour and in which concerns may be raised through open dialogue without fear of reprisal;
- recognizing and reconciling competing values;
- making commitments that are reasonable and achievable, and following through on them;
- foreseeing consequences of actions and decisions;
- being alert to and dealing with undesirable conduct properly and in a timely fashion;
- taking responsibility for our actions and decisions, and holding ourselves and our teams accountable;
- promoting and recognizing excellence and ethical conduct, and encouraging personal and professional development in a learning environment;

- promoting, exemplifying and recognizing best practices that contribute to a healthier workplace; and
- protecting from reprisal employees who disclose any breach of this Code in good faith.

Examples of Behaviours to Avoid

Expected behaviours help define how to live our organizational values. The following are examples of behaviours that harm the workplace atmosphere and have a direct impact on productivity and employee well-being:

- abusing power;
- attempting to cover up mistakes;
- hiding information from colleagues;
- blaming others or previous regimes;
- showing disrespect for diverse opinions or beliefs;
- mistreating others and bullying of any kind;
- tolerating abusive behaviour by others;
- participating in gossip;
- being cynical or aggressive;
- showing favouritism, bias or preferential treatment;

- placing personal or work unit goals ahead of Government of Canada objectives;
- allowing emotions to sway judgment.

As visible role models, supervisors and managers lead by example, set the tone for ethical conduct, and as such are held to the highest standards.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARKS CANADA'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

As supervisors and managers, every member of the Senior Management Committee plays a lead role in demonstrating their commitment to the Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code by ensuring its principles and behaviours are modeled within their Directorates.

As members of the Senior Management Committee, they are responsible for establishing Parks Canada's strategic direction and upholding Parks Canada Values and Ethics by incorporating them into the policies, guidelines, processes and standards under their responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OMBUD

In addition to their responsibilities as a member of the Parks Canada team, as a supervisor, manager, and ex-officio member of the Senior Management Committee, the Ombud is responsible for establishing a safe place for employees to raise workplace concerns without fear of reprisal. They ensure that independent and confidential informal conflict management services exist to support informal resolution to workplace ethical concerns, and to raise identified systemic issues related to values and ethics to the Senior Director of Values, Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion and the PCEO.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF VALUES, ETHICS, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Pursuant to the Public Service Act, Parks Canada has a designated official responsible for Values and Ethics and for disclosures of wrongdoing. In addition to their responsibilities as a Parks Canada team member, supervisor, manager, and member of the Senior Management Committee, the Senior Director is responsible for fostering a sustained dialogue on values and ethics and providing advice and guidance related to ethical dilemmas, conflicts of interest and the application of the Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code. They must establish and implement an internal mechanism to receive disclosures of wrongdoing under the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act and provide the necessary support and advice for the development of policies and guidelines.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In addition to their responsibilities as a Parks Canada team member, supervisor, manager, and member of the Senior Management Committee, the PCEO plays the lead role with respect to values and ethics. They have a legal obligation to establish the Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code and to ensure its application and implementation. The PCEO listens to Parks Canada team members, seeks their input and supports their vision of the values and ethics required for the organization's success.

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Resources

The Parks Canada Core Values support existing tools that provide cultural and ethical direction for Parks Canada team members.

To ensure the Agency remains impartial and effective:

- [Duty of Loyalty](#)
- [Public Service Employment Act \(Part 7\)](#)

To ensure assets and property are used to serve the public interest:

- [Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act](#)
- [Directive on Service and Digital](#)

To ensure public trust in Parks Canada:

- [Parks Canada Conflict of Interest and Post Employment Policy](#)
- [Process for Declaring a Conflict of Interest](#)
- [Conflicts of Interest: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

To ensure privacy and confidentiality is maintained and respected:

- [Access to Information Act](#)
- [Privacy Act](#)

To ensure compliance with existing legislation and laws:

- [Values and Operating Principles](#)
- [Canada National Parks Act](#)
- [Park Warden Code of Conduct](#)
- [Parks Canada Agency Act](#)

To foster trustworthy and fruitful relationships:

- [Parks Canada Agency Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy](#)
- [Quality Service Standards for our Visitors](#)
- [Office of the Ombud](#)



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RESPONSIBILITIES

As an Agency, Parks Canada is a separate employer within the Canadian federal government. As such, its Values and Ethics Code aligns with the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector of the Government of Canada. This Parks Canada Values and Ethics Code came into effect in June 2023.