

# Wilderness Tourism Association



## **Code of Conduct**

**April 30, 2009**

# Wilderness Tourism Association

## **Part 1: Code of Ethics for BC's Wilderness Tourism Operators**

In the spirit of environmental stewardship, wilderness tourism operators are adopting practices that will ensure the sustainability of the industry and the natural/cultural environment on which wilderness tourism depends.

1. **Promote Wilderness Appreciation and Enjoyment**  
Provide experiences that foster enjoyment, appreciation, and sensitive use of wilderness.
2. **Provide Quality Guest Experiences**  
Meet or exceed customer expectations.
3. **Conserve Natural and Cultural Resources**  
Contribute to the ongoing integrity of valued natural resources and cultural places.
4. **Environmentally Sustainable Practices**  
Use the best available practices for sustainable tourism, development and operation.
5. **Relationships with Local Communities, Businesses and Governments**  
Provide ongoing socio-economic benefit for local, regional and host communities.
6. **Respect Cultural Values**  
Understand local traditions and practices and present authentic cultural values.
7. **Responsible Marketing**  
Provide accurate information that leads to realistic expectations.
8. **Sustainable Wilderness Tourism**  
Knowledgeably advocate for wilderness tourism that is sustainable; environmentally, socially and economically.

## **Part 2: Code of Practice for BC's Wilderness Tourism Operators**

### **Section 1: Promote Wilderness Appreciation and Enjoyment**

#### **Principle**

*Provide experiences that foster enjoyment, appreciation, and sensitive use of wilderness.*

#### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Demonstrate an informed ecological conscience
- Promote individual and collective responsibility for environmental health
- Build awareness of the natural and cultural history of the areas visited
- Use a variety of interpretive approaches to educate guests including verbal, written, visual and interactive information materials
- Provide information about responsible company practices

### **Section 2: Provide Quality Guest Experiences**

#### **Principle**

*Meet or exceed customer expectations.*

#### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Support advanced education and training for guides, staff and managers
- Comply with accepted standards of practice
- Comply with national, provincial and association safety standards
- Offer engaging presentations about the natural and cultural heritage of areas visited
- Provide opportunities for feedback on client experiences

### **Section 3: Conserve Natural and Cultural Resources**

#### **Principle**

*Contribute to the ongoing integrity of valued natural resources and cultural places.*

#### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Be a steward of the environment
- Conserve the natural diversity of ecosystems
- Value and sustain current and future generations of all species
- Protect and restore wildlife habitats
- Commit to responsible and sustainable practices with respect to wildlife including the separation of wildlife viewing and hunting activities in time and/or space.
- Contribute directly to conservation projects
- Provide clients with opportunities to be involved in stewardship activities
- Be informed about, contribute to, and if possible conduct, research that expands the knowledge base for sustainable tourism
- Avoid buying goods made from threatened or endangered species
- Avoid merchandise of significant cultural or heritage value
- Support and advocate the protection, enhancement and restoration of natural and cultural resources (this would include private land and businesses)

## **Section 4: Environmentally Sustainable Practices**

### **Principle**

*Use the best available practices for sustainable tourism, development and operation.*

### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Minimize environmental footprint
- Adopt a precautionary risk management approach; be proactive rather than reactive.
- Practice sustainable and efficient use of natural resources (water, food, fuel, etc.)
- Practice the 3 R's of consumption: reduce, reuse and recycle
- Follow environmentally responsible practices to dispose of waste materials
- Minimize pollution (including noise)
- Comply with federal, provincial and association regulations and practices for protection of habitat and species

## **Section 5: Relationships with Local Communities, Businesses and Governments**

### **Principle**

*Provide ongoing socio-economic benefit for local, regional and host communities and work cooperatively towards shared stewardship goals.*

### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Work with local communities to meet local needs
- Work with local businesses and governments towards shared stewardship goals
- Honour local practices and protocols
- Employ local people where appropriate and available
- Buy locally produced goods, food, equipment and services, wherever possible
- Educate local communities about the value of wilderness tourism

## **Section 6: Respect Cultural Values**

### **Principle**

*Understand local traditions and practices and present authentic cultural values.*

### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Ensure that staff are knowledgeable and respectful of local cultures and values
- Communicate responsibly about local cultures
- Employ guides and interpreters who are well versed in local cultural values
- Understand cross-cultural and First Nations agreements

## **Section 7: Responsible Marketing**

### **Principle**

*Provide accurate information that leads to realistic expectations.*

### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Market accurately so that visitors have realistic expectations
- Accurately portray products in advertising, press releases and communications
- Ensure that marketing information is consistent with responsible practice

## **Section 8: Sustainable Wilderness Tourism**

### **Principle**

*Knowledgeably advocate for wilderness tourism that is sustainable; environmentally, socially and economically.*

### **Guidelines for Practice**

- Encourage use of this Code of Conduct
- Support development and use of sector Best Management Practices
- Use the best available practices for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable operations
- Share information about best available science and practices
- Stay informed about relevant political, land/marine management and environmental issues
- Support ongoing development of the wilderness tourism knowledge base
- Participate in policy development and initiatives
- Seek innovative solutions and approaches
- Show leadership by honouring commitments

### ***Implementation***

*This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually at the WTA Annual General Meeting, revised as required, and re-ratified*