

Wilderness Tourism Association



BRITISH COLUMBIA | CANADA



Code of Conduct

April 30, 2009

Wilderness Tourism Association



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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