

Chapter 1

Foundations for HA Services



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Introduction

Benefits of Heritage Appreciation

The benefits of heritage appreciation services can be understood from several perspectives. These services are provided for their utility value (e.g., reducing visitor impacts to parks) and to meet community service obligations to inform the public about the PPA stewardship mandate and its heritage assets.

Heritage Appreciation services can help to achieve departmental mandates and goals as they relate to:

The Protected Area:

- a) foster proper use
- b) minimize impacts to fragile resources through education and carefully distributing visitor pressure
- c) develop advocates and support for site
- d) minimize visitor/neighbor impacts
- e) reduce the need for regulation, enforcement and rescue
- f) encourage sympathetic management of neighboring properties

Beyond Protected Areas:

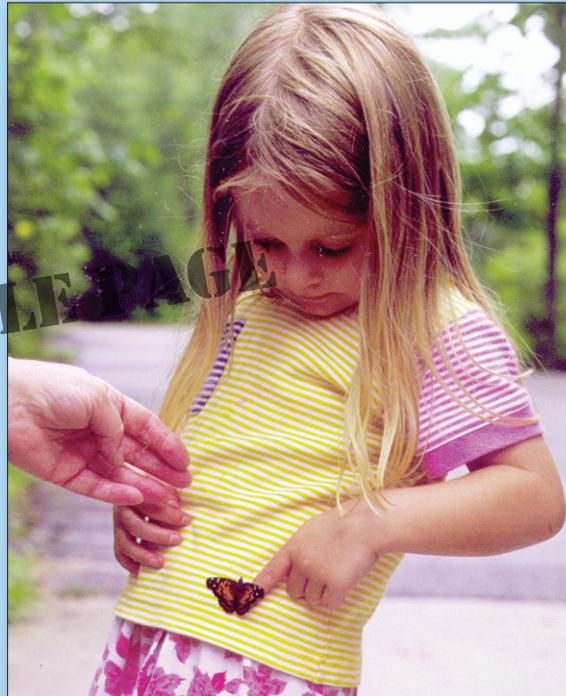
- a) beyond the site to the ecosystem, province of Alberta, country and the planet
- b) produce environmentally aware citizens who value Alberta's natural and cultural heritage, and that of the broader environment
- c) develop advocates and support for values under management
- d) fosters sustainability (changing values and behaviours, consideration for future generations)

For the Agency (PPA):

- a) be visible presence in the community
- b) enhance image of agency
- c) informing the community about purpose and nature of PPA programs
- d) develop advocates and support for PPA programs
- e) encourage public participation in management
- f) celebrate or commemorate deepening bonds of belonging and identity

For the Visitor:

- a) provide needed information
- b) provide a better understanding of what to expect
- c) provide enjoyment and recreation
- d) heighten awareness and appreciation of the values under management
- e) inspire and add perspective to their lives
- f) reduce visitor safety incidents
- g) provide explanation of current resource management practices
- h) promote exploration, experience and life-long learning: "get out there and experience!"
- i) support national/provincial pride and citizenship



For the Tourism Industry:

- a) attract visitors
- b) help to meet the increasing demand for educational visitor experiences
- c) provide interesting and memorable experiences that ensure visitor satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth advertising and repeat visitation
- d) act as substitute experience for places that are fragile and/or difficult to visit, e.g., caves, sacred sites, and topics that are impossible to experience directly, e.g., disease, history



Heritage Appreciation Development Plan

for *Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park-Alberta*

What Are Foundations?

Foundations are the statements that document the intentions and mandate of an agency or program.

EcoLeaders has looked at foundations at two levels:

- Agency Level (Alberta Parks and Protected Areas)
- Park Level (Cypress Hills Provincial Park)

Agency–Level Foundations

PPA Vision, Mission and Program Goals

Alberta government’s commitment towards preserving the province’s natural heritage is embodied by a vision, mission, various goals and a set of guiding principles.

These are the foundation elements that provide sites, regions, programs such as HA and the overall agency with a mandate for their work. These foundations outline in a general way what services —will be provided—they are “the reason for being”. HA staff at CHIP–AB must use these foundations to guide their work. HA services must conform to the PPA foundations and use them as general guidelines to the audiences that are to be addressed and the objectives of their services.

Alberta Parks and Protected Areas has clearly defined high-level foundation statements.

PPA Vision

“Alberta’s parks and protected areas preserve, in perpetuity landscapes, natural features and processes representative of the environmental diversity of the province.”

PPA Mission

As stewards of our environment, the Government of Alberta preserves, protects, and enhances the province’s natural heritage within a network of parks and protected areas. Many of these areas are also tourist attractions, providing a range of outdoor recreation opportunities where Albertans and visitors to the province experience, enjoy and learn about our natural and cultural heritage.

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PPA Program Goals

Preservation - to preserve in perpetuity a network of parks and protected areas that represent the diversity of the province's natural heritage as well as related cultural heritage.

Heritage Appreciation - to provide opportunities to explore, understand and appreciate the natural heritage of Alberta, and enhance public awareness and our relationship to and dependence on it.

Outdoor Recreation - to provide a variety of natural landscape dependent outdoor recreation opportunities and related facilities and services.

Heritage Tourism - to encourage residents and visitors to the province to discover and enjoy the natural heritage of the Alberta through a variety of outdoor recreation and nature based tourism opportunities, facilities and accommodation services.

HA Program Goals at the Agency Level

At the time of writing, new agency-level HA goals were under development and not yet available. Readers should check with the region's HA Team Leader for information on the current status of agency-level goals.

These goals when developed will give further direction toward emphasis, scope and sequence of HA program delivery at CHIP-AB. In the interim, PPA has developed a HA Revitalization Strategy (see below) as a guide for HA staff.

The HA Revitalization Strategy

In April of 2001 Visitor Services Branch of Parks and Protected Areas Division initiated a needs assessment to review interpretive and environmental education services of the Heritage Appreciation (HA) program. A number of issues emerged that required action to improve both the effectiveness of the program and the efficiency. Senior management reviewed these findings and instructed staff to develop a revitalization strategy to set new direction for the program. Through this process the parks management team redefined their expectations for the HA program.

Central to this new approach are:

- all three of the HA program's services:
 - interpretation
 - environmental education
 - information

are critical in raising the public profile of the

parks program with Albertans

- HA staff have to take the programs, activities and messages to target audiences where they are. This means that HA services must take place:
 - where audiences enjoy outdoor recreational pursuits
 - where audiences live and work
- HA must be more financially sustainable. This means:
 - many services will include fees
 - HA staff must be more strategic in choosing which services to deliver, when, how and to whom
 - more partnerships must be developed

Key Outcomes Identified by Senior Management Include:

- more Albertans who value their local parks and protected areas as well as and the PPA network.
- a clear Parks and Protected Areas identity resulting in an increase in public recognition of Alberta PPA's mandate and program goals
- the development of an HA programs that HA staff and management are proud of and that the public loves
- interpretation and education in, and about, parks that represent Alberta's unique natural or cultural heritage
- a focus on providing personal HA services in parks with significant resources and high visitation
 - this will result in the development of several flagship parks that act as regional gateways to PPA properties
 - CHIP-AB is one of these gateway parks
- a focus on developing public appreciation for the environmental diversity of the province through the delivery of services that address major ecological zones or experiences
- interpretive and education programs that are a window to the entire network
- expanded community outreach and partnerships that take HA services to the people—where they are
- services that are accessible in many ways and places
- a concise and consistent program for the delivery of services and information on Alberta's parks and protected areas



Implications of the New PPA Directions

The new directions that PPA has taken require changes in HA services at CHIP-AB. The traditional interpretation model used by PPA has been topic-focused, with a major emphasis on entertainment—especially delivering information to target audiences through evening dramatic presentations.

This approach has been effective in some cases. It can do well in covering the initial steps of the interpretive learning process—awareness, appreciation and to some extent, understanding (see Sidebar: The AAUA Interpretation Model). The main weakness of this approach is that there is little emphasis on active learning such as self-discovery/experiential learning or the application of new knowledge, skills and attitudes to specific issues. As such, it is limited in empowering participants to become involved with park and agency initiatives, let alone meet broader environmental education objectives.

Message-Focused HA Services

In the past, most HA programs and services were message-focused, based on a simple sender-message-receiver model. Here authorities decide what messages will be disseminated to visitors, and language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts directly from HA staff to an audience.

Message-focused delivery alone is not consistent with many of the new mandates of PPA, with current best practices in HA service delivery or with current learning theory.

Best Practice Models

Freeman Tilden was one of the first to study interpretation (see Sidebar: Tilden's Principles of Interpretation). The current entertainment/message-based approach does not fully support all six principles.

- Principle 2: Information is not interpretation
 - there is a strong possibility that some presenters may consider that an entertaining program, chock full of facts, presented to a passive audience is effective interpretation
- Principle 4: Interpretation is not instruction, it is provocation
 - HA services and products may instruct participants (message delivery) but they must also provoke participants to ask questions, look at the familiar in new ways, construct new meanings and if possible, inspire them to take positive actions
- Principle 5: Focus on the whole person
 - message-based approaches concentrate on delivering the message and may not take into account the participant's needs to communicate and share their knowledge, discoveries and points of views, or their prior knowledge, attitudes and behaviour

A Revised Model

Discussions with PPA and CHIP-AB staff have revealed a desire to move forward to meet the new broader mandate of PPA with a deeper delivery model that also focuses on empowering visitors to make hands-on discoveries, develop and follow interests, communicate and share their discoveries, and contribute to park and agency initiatives. There is also a desire to:

- reach audiences outside park boundaries
- to involve park neighbours (landowners and other citizens) in conservation, preservation and sustainability issues
- to develop the overall environmental literacy of Albertans
 - this includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes Albertans need to sustain their environment, lifestyles and communities for the foreseeable future
 - a key part of this will be to better understand and cope with the interactions of their communities with the natural landscapes that they hold dear
 - they will also develop fuller understanding of agency initiatives.



Heritage Appreciation Development Plan

for *Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park-Alberta*

Sidebar: What is Experiential Education?

Experiential education is a “process” or “method” that can be used to teach. This process can take place in any location and does not require the learner to be outdoors. The Association for Experiential Education (AEE) defines the term as:

“... a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences.”

This definition is followed by 12 principles, including these three learning principles:

- Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis
- The results of the learning are personal and form the basis for future experience and learning
- Opportunities are nurtured for learners and educators to explore and examine their own values

The AEE definition embraces constructivist learning theory as well as the traditional practice of learning by doing. Also experiential education requires the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results.

Experiential education is learning where students are active participants in their learning—not just passive recipients of information. In experiential education the learner:

- acts
- understands the effects or consequences of the action,
- extends his/her understanding of the specific action/reaction relationship to the general principle that applies to a broader range of actions/reactions,
- applies his/her understanding to a new situation within the range of the general principle.

How to Get There

The means to achieve these aims will be through a combination of the techniques of experiential education (see Sidebar: What is Experiential Education), inquiry learning (see sidebar: What is Inquiry Learning), life-long learning, and environmental education.

In on-going learning-focused approaches, learning focuses on the introduction of multiple ideas and discussion and debate. Contemporary educational theories now recognize that learners need to be active. Knowledge, according to the academic literature, is not transmitted directly from some outside source to the learner, but rather is constructed and re-constructed by the learner.

Concepts such as environmental literacy and education for stewardship and sustainability models must be understood and used. These complex concepts typically include feelings of responsibility, sense of place, vigorous debate, and skills for questioning, analysis and addressing environmental issues (*National Project for Excellence in EE*, Finlayson 2002, in press, UK Sustainable Education Advisory Panel, 1999-2003).

Two-way Learning

The EPA's new direction involves more community outreach. New communication and learning models will be needed. Current good practice community involvement approaches used in landholder contact by stewardship groups and sustainability program providers generally incorporate two-way learning, where agencies gain knowledge from community members as well as vice versa.

Sidebar: What is Inquiry Learning?

Inquiry is the process of finding answers to questions. The skills of science inquiry include asking questions, proposing ideas, observing, experimenting, and interpreting the evidence that is gathered. Observation and evidence are key elements.

An inquiry may be initiated in a variety of ways. It may be based on a question brought to the classroom by a teacher or student; or it may arise out of an activity, an interesting observation, an unexplained event or a pattern that appears worth pursuing. Engagement in inquiry is not a linear process; it can have a variety of starting points, and the steps followed may vary from one inquiry activity to another. When an unexpected observation is made or a procedure does not work, there is opportunity for new ideas to emerge and a new set of procedures to be followed.

Alberta Elementary Science Curriculum 1990

Scientific inquiry refers to the diverse ways in which scientists study the natural world and propose explanations based on the evidence derived from their work. Inquiry also refers to the activities of students in which they develop knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, as well as an understanding of how scientists study the natural world.

Inquiry is a multifaceted activity that involves making observations; posing questions; examining books and other sources of information to see what is already known; planning investigations; reviewing what is already known in light of experimental evidence; using tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data; proposing answers, explanations, and predictions; and communicating the results. Inquiry requires identification of assumptions, use of critical and logical thinking, and consideration of alternative explanations. Students ... should develop the capacity to conduct complete inquiries.

National Science Education Standards 1996 developed by the US National Academy of Sciences.

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Conclusion

The new delivery system for HA Services can no longer be just a simple sender, message, receiver model. The new delivery system must also incorporate inquiry learning, and experiential education where HA staff facilitate discovery and encourage questioning through hands-on activities, and perhaps longer-term workshops and courses. They must also provide opportunities for two-way communications where participants can ask questions and share their discoveries, experiences and expertise with HA staff and other participants. Finally, the new delivery system should focus on target audiences—in particular HA staff must know what their audience already knows, what they already feel and believe and how they behave. Knowing this, HA staff can craft offerings that are both appealing and satisfying to their audiences as well as interesting and intellectually challenging.

The Challenge

Moving from the current to the new delivery model will not happen over night. The new model is more complicated. It does not necessarily rely on being entertaining, and cannot rely on a passive audience. The new model is based on a merging of interpretation and education. One of the tools for understanding and applying this new approach is the new PPA Stewardship Model.

This model was developed by EcoLeaders to aid HA staff in embarking on the new directions required by Alberta PPA.

It builds on the AAUA interpretation model discussed previously and has been approved and adopted for use at CHIP-AB by senior HA staff, who gave the model its name.

The PPA Stewardship Model

This model is based on the Environmental Stewardship Scale developed by Parks Canada’s Environmental Education and Heritage Interpretation Task Force in March 1992. The model focuses on levels of understanding, support and action in the field of environmental stewardship (see Sidebar: The PPA Stewardship Model).

The model represents a learning progression in environmental stewardship ranging from unsupportive

