



Chapter 5: Policies and Procedures

Introduction

This chapter features a series of policies and procedures aimed at assisting staff to define, plan, deliver, evaluate and support effective products.

The selection of these areas of expertise are based on the 1999 report:

Best Practice in Park Interpretation and Education, A Report to the ANZECC Working Group on National Park and Protected Area Management

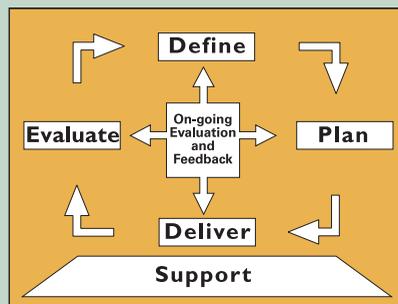
(Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria) available at: www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/best-practice/interpretation/index.html

Although it is over ten years old, this document remains a cornerstone of research on best practice in heritage interpretation and education delivered by park systems across the world.

Each section of this chapter falls under one of the five areas of best practice and includes a series of policies and procedures aimed at assisting staff in following best practice.

The ANZECC Best Practice Model

In 1999, the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) released Best Practice in Park Interpretation and Education. This report contained a model developed based on an intensive study of best practice in 35 state and federal agencies (including Parks Canada and several other Canadian agencies) that deliver interpretation and education services. The model illustrates current best practices in organizing, managing, and delivering interpretation and education services.



Best practice can be divided into five areas: Define, Plan, Deliver, Evaluate and Support.

Define

This stage focuses on the making sure that all key activities and services are defined and understood. As well, all activities must be the agency's foundations (e.g., mission statement, and broader agency objectives).

Plan

Here foundation elements from the define stage are translated into strategic planning for interpretation and education services. Markets are researched and considered, and messages, key audiences, performance standards, and options for service delivery are developed.

Deliver

Here, front line staff, friends groups, and other service providers understand all relevant agency objectives, targets, and performance standards from the previous stage. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Evaluate

Here interpretation services are monitored, measured, evaluated, and improved. The contributions that services make towards achieving agency goals are assessed for effectiveness.

Support

Support includes financial systems, technology, equipment, human resources, and deployment of staff. Core skills are identified, trained for, and maintained at all interpretation and education service levels.

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2. Planning

Policy 2a

Whenever possible, new products will be piloted

Rationale

In recent years, Parks Canada has made a fundamental shift away from an agency-driven messaging approach towards facilitating targeted and meaningful experiences. It is critical that products will engage audiences meaningfully by forging sensory and cognitive connections between their personal interests and Prince Albert National Park.

To do this staff must be innovative and actively experiment with a wide variety of presentation methods and media in order to find those that are effective for different target audience segments. Piloting new products allows staff to try and assess new products before making major commitments in time and funding.

Procedures

2a .1 When developing and delivering pilots of products, staff will use an Action Research or Adaptive Management approach (see sidebar on this page).

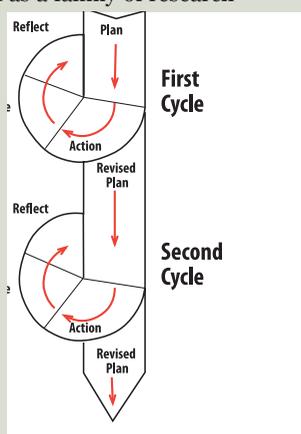
Focus on: Action Research

Action research is inquiry or research in the context of focused efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of a process. It typically is designed and conducted by practitioners who analyze the data to improve their own practice.

Action research has the potential to generate genuine and sustained improvements in education and interpretation products. It gives staff new opportunities to reflect on and assess their product; to explore and test new ideas, methods, and materials; to assess how effective the new approaches were; to share feedback with fellow team members; and to make decisions about which new approaches to include in the team's product plans.

Action research can be described as a family of research methodologies that pursue action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time. It does this by:

- using a cyclic or spiral process that alternates between action and critical reflection
- continuously refining methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles



Policy 2b

All interpretive planning in the park will have a primary focus on audiences and their experiences

Rationale

Parks Canada is working to develop and deploy systems for classifying and recognizing park visitors and outreach audiences so that staff can craft products that correspond to the motivations, needs and interests of park visitors and outreach audiences. Park staff must be aware of current models and methods used by the agency.

Procedures

2b.1 Each year, staff will review any new data on audience segmentation, behaviour, interests and visitation patterns. They will incorporate these data into existing visitor and audience segmentation profiles and use this data to prioritize target audiences and make decisions on location, timing and media and methods to be used to reach each chosen audience segment.

Policy 2c

Much of Visitor Experience programming will be designed to engage multiple repeat visitors

Rationale

Recent park surveys indicate that over 80 percent of the visitors are multiple repeat visitors and have visited it many times in their lives. Many of this group visit the park several times in a year and some visits last well over a week. Some families have used the park over several generations.

Procedures

2c.1 Staff will regularly monitor the levels of repeat visitors and modify products accordingly.



Policy 2f

Whenever possible staff will incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in all services and products

Rationale

The park Management Plan and Parks Canada's Corporate plan clearly support the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives.

Policy 2g

Work with members of Aboriginal communities to develop and deliver products that speak to Aboriginal history and culture

Rationale

In the past, Aboriginal history and perspectives were limited. The park Management Plan and Parks Canada's Corporate Plan clearly suggest that this gap will be corrected.

3. Delivering

Policy 3a

Follow Parks Canada branding procedures for all product presentations

Procedures

- 3a.1 Staff will clearly label all materials as National Park products
- 3b.2 Staff will follow the guidelines of Parks Canada's Brand Book
 - use Parks Canada logos, fonts and colours as directed

Policy 3b

Follow best practice in public programming and formal education

Procedures

- 3b.1 Deliver public and education services that are appropriate to target audience age, prior knowledge and interests

School Programming:

- 3b.2 Connect all environmental education services with grade-specific curriculum and learning outcomes as described by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and use inquiry and hands-on learning techniques following current learning theory and best practice

Public Programming

- 3b.3 Design Visitor Experience products for well defined and clearly identified and understood audiences
- 3b.5 Include two-way communication opportunities for conversations and inquiry learning whenever possible

Policy 3c

Update current statistics gathering and reporting system for all products

Procedures

- 3c.1 Wherever possible, participation in Visitor Experience and Outreach products will be recorded in ways to facilitate in-depth analysis so that staff can identify:
 - best locations for delivery
 - best time of day, days of the week, month, and season for delivery
 - optimum duration
 - key influencing factors (e.g., weather)

Policy 3d

Go where the people are

- 3d.1 Deliver Visitor Experience products where people congregate in the park and deliver Outreach products using media methods frequently used by target audiences



4. Evaluation

Policy 4a

All staff will use standard evaluation processes

Procedures

- 4a.1 Evaluations will be based on the product's plan and will look at levels of success in:
- reaching identified target audience segments
 - achieving planned cognitive, behavioural and emotional objectives
 - encourage and enable participants to have a meaningful experience (make their own discoveries and observations, make real contributions to the care of and stewardships of the park)
 - containing accurate, up-to-date information
 - selection of a site suitable and safe for participants while not damaging the park's natural and cultural resources
 - choosing effective media and methods
 - following agency standards for non-personal product design
 - maintaining agency standards for dress and behaviour (for personal products)
 - effective promotion of products

Policy 4b

Evaluations will assist staff in delivering high quality, effective products

Procedures

- 4b.1 All evaluations will:
- highlight successful and innovative components of products content and delivery
 - identify weaknesses and recommend changes that will result in a more effective product
 - in very rare occasions, identify problems that must be addressed before the product is continued

Policy 4c

Evaluation will take place throughout the life cycle of a product

Procedures

Informal Evaluation

The following evaluations processes will be employed regularly throughout the life of the product.

- 4c.1 Short, micro-evaluation by participants at end of the personal products (i.e., at the end of a program, presenter asks for highs and lows from selected participants).
- 4c.2 Self-evaluation form filled out by Visitor Experience staff after first and second delivery of a personal product
- 4c.3 Peer review: Occasional planned review of a product by staff with experience in developing and delivering Visitor Experience and Outreach products.

Formal Evaluation

- 4c.4 For personal products, formal evaluation using a standard evaluation form, will be conducted twice over a season by supervisors
- 4c.5 **Formative Evaluation** will take place during development and production of products. Findings will be incorporated into the finished product. Mock-ups of proposed exhibits, texts, and other components tools may be used

Methods may include:

- small scale samples of visitors and/or others (15-20 minimum is optimal at each stage of testing)
 - interviews
 - workshopping with staff and/or members of target audience segments
- 4c.6 **Remedial Evaluation** is conducted immediately after product or services begins. Its objective is to see how all parts of the product work together

The aims are to:

- check product's effectiveness
- identify needs for maintenance and resources
- improve the product's effectiveness
- provide some early insights into how participants actually use or interact with the product or service

Methods used include:

- observations of participants interacting with the product or service
- informal feedback from participants
- feedback sheets
- surveys and interviews



5 Support

Professional Development and Training

Rationale

Parks Canada's Corporate Plan and the Prince Albert National Park Management Plan stipulate that staff must deliver high quality, effective products. This requires knowledge, skills and experience in formal education, heritage interpretation, life-long learning, museology, use of technology and environmental education. Constant progress is being made in these professions in terms of theory and best practice. To keep abreast of developments and maintain high quality offerings and competitive advantage, staff must follow a path of regular professional development.

Policy 5a

The park will maintain membership in related professional associations

Rationale

Staff have limited contact with other professionals in their field. Membership in professional associations such as Interpretation Canada and the Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association provide many avenues of contact, professional development and idea sharing. This can result in higher quality products.

- 5a.1 Staff, through the park or by individual membership, will belong to at least two professional associations with direct connection to the delivery of products.
- 5a.2 Encourage and enable all permanent staff to attend capacity building events (workshop, conference) organized by national and provincial professional associations.

Policy 5b

Staff will support a culture of on-going professional development

Procedures

- 5b.1 Through contact with a variety of professional associations, staff will identify key personal professional development needs and recommend their inclusion in their annual learning plans.
- 5b.2 Based on core competencies identified in 5a.1, senior staff will assess the capacity of current staff annually and identify areas where additional professional development are required.

Policy 5c

Focus some professional development on understanding target audiences

Rationale

Gaps in staff knowledge and understanding of key audience segments have been identified. These audience segments include;

- Aboriginal communities
- new Canadians
- Youth (ages 13-18, and 18-34)

It is essential for staff to understand these key target audiences if they are to provide meaningful interpretive and educational products.

Procedures

- 5c.1 Staff will work with experts to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture through close consultation with the park's Aboriginal Affairs Manager to find elders and specialists who can speak on traditional values, community structure and teaching and learning techniques.
- 5c.2 Staff will work with the Social Monitoring Specialist, Western & Northern Service Centre to:
 - find current literature on the social structure, attitudes and values of new Canadians and youth
 - identify gaps in current knowledge and commission research in these areas



Policy 5g

Regularly review and assess new technology used in interpretation and by Canadians

Rationale

Staff must know current trends in use of technology by:

- staff of parks and museums and nature centres as effective interpretive products
- target audiences in order to select appropriate media for products.

Procedures

- 5g.1 Regularly identify new technology and assess its potential for use as a delivery tool for products
- 5g.2 Look for examples of successful deployments of these technologies in the fields of heritage interpretation, education and communications

- 5g.3 Look for in-house expertise and/or partners with expertise and/or professional consultants with knowledge, skills and experience with this new technology to act as advisors
- 5g.4 If technology looks promising, develop a pilot to test the concept
- 5g.5 Regularly review current technology literature for information on how Canadians use technology in learning, navigation and entertainment. File all relevant documents in the park's digital library
- 5g.6 Work with national office and regional specialists to find published reports and/or develop terms of reference for research to be conducted by partners or contractors on how people in Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada use technology and electronic devices in their daily lives, and how these technologies can be applied to the delivery and distribution of Outreach and Visitor Experience products. File all relevant documents in the park's digital library.

6. Collaboration

Rationale

Both Parks Canada's Corporate Plan and the park's Management Plan encourage the development of appropriate collaborations and partnerships. Staff must work to develop effective, meaningful collaborations and partnerships in the development and delivery of products.

Policy 6a

Use great care when choosing new partners

Procedures

- 6a.1 When considering a new collaborator or partner use the partner selection criteria identified in Chapter 4, Collaborations and Partnerships
- 6a.2 When considering a new partner, start with a simple collaboration and assess the partner's collaboration potential. See Collaboration Continuum section of Chapter 4
- 6a.3 Each year, review and update criteria for selecting collaborators and partners.
- 6a.4 Each year, review the list of potential collaborators in Chapter 4. Add new potential partners to be considered and remove any from the list that have been found to be unsuitable

Policy 6b

Work to enable and encourage the best possible quality of partner products

- 6b.1 Invite all partners and perhaps some potential partners to attend Parks Canada training and workshops that take place in or near the park
- 6b.2 Invite all partners to join the same professional associations to which the park's staff belong

Policy 6c

Staff will follow Parks Canada's guidelines for developing and maintaining partnership agreements

Procedures

For all new collaboration and partnership agreements.

- 6c.1 Consult with park partnership liaison staff to get up-to-date information on Parks Canada policy and procedure



7. Stewardship

Rationale

Both Parks Canada's Corporate Plan and the park's Management Plan encourage the involvement of the public in the development and delivery of effective and meaningful stewardship activities.

Policy 7a

Work with park management and resource conservation staff to develop public-participation park stewardship projects

Procedures

- 7a.1 Staff will select one existing provincial stewardship initiative and partner with the sponsoring agency (e.g., Nature Saskatchewan) to develop a pilot product in the park

