



CANADIAN PARKS COUNCIL
CONSEIL CANADIEN DES PARCS

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

JUNE 2003

OBJECTIVES

- Increase recognition and understanding with respect to the nature and extent of Canada's parks and protected areas and their many benefits.
- Motivate, empower and excite Canadians to be partners and take action in support of parks and protected areas.
 - Kick start, create a buzz
 - Parks belong to all of us, encourage collective action
 - Strengthen links and develop partnerships with community organizations, businesses and individuals who share an interest in ecosystem protection

KEY MESSAGES

- **Parks are yours to enjoy and to protect**
 - Extensive system of parks and protected areas represents most of Canada's natural regions and national marine conservation areas are being developed to conserve representative examples of Canada's marine regions
 - Parks and protected areas are society's treasures
 - A priceless legacy that needs to be used wisely
- **Parks and protected areas are NOT JUST PRETTY PLACES...**
 - ...they have many benefits:**
 - Physical and Spiritual Health (Healthy Parks/Healthy People) (active outdoor pursuits, lowered stress levels, appreciation of nature, recreation)
 - Social/Societal (benefits to non-users, because parks are protected, available to use in future or pass on as legacy)
 - Scientific / Educational (universities, research)
 - Economic (tourism, community development)
 - Environmental /Ecological (biodiversity, habitat conservation-species at risk, carbon sequestration, clean air and water, soil production)
 - Historical (preserving and understanding our history)
 - Cultural (preserving traditions and fostering awareness and appreciation of the people of Canada)
- **It's up to each of us**
 - With the privilege of having and using parks comes the obligation to preserve them for future generations
 - We each benefit from them and must share responsibility for protecting them (stewardship, public trust)

AUDIENCES

While all Canadians and visitors from other countries are potential audiences, this strategy places a particular emphasis on:

- o Park residents and residents of nearby communities
- o Elected officials
- o Park visitors
- o Educators
- o Web-based audiences
- o ENGO's/ Other organizations
- o Active retirees "senior boomers"
- o Youth

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Others who may share an interest in our messages and be willing to join with us in achieving our objectives:

- o Cooperating Associations
- o Trans-Canada Trail
- o ENGOs (e.g. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, World Wildlife Fund Canada, Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association, Canadian Nature Federation and regional ENGOs such as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists)
- o Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (also provincial and territorial agencies with an interest in species at risk, protected areas, etc.)
- o Aboriginal people and organizations
- o Health Ministries and NGO's with an interest in physical and spiritual wellness
- o Municipal and regional governments and conservation authorities
- o Private campground operators
- o Corporate Canada (e.g. Tourism & Hospitality businesses & Natural Resource companies)

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES TO REACHING OUR OBJECTIVES

- o Difficulty in reaching some audiences (e.g. those living at a distance, urban dwellers, new Canadians)
- o Lack of resources at CPC
- o Finding a common language regarding parks and protected areas within CPC
- o Lack of park staff and budgets to carry out objectives
- o Lack of public knowledge regarding parks

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Three strategic actions were identified as priorities for the next three years:

1. Develop Canadian Parks Council Web Site www.parks-parcs.ca
2. Prepare Parks Kit/Interpretive Program
3. Revitalize Canada's Parks Day

1. DEVELOP CANADIAN PARKS COUNCIL WEB SITE WWW.PARKS-PARCS.CA

Develop an amazing web site for the CPC that would address both objectives (increase recognition and understanding, **and** motivate Canadians to take action) and encompass all the key messages. The site could be developed to carry a changing message and theme, and include interactive/high impact materials that would encourage people to visit the site (and return to it on a regular basis).

Audience:

The web site would target all key audiences identified in the Strategy however a particular strength of this action is the ability to reach out to non-park visitors and Canadians living in major urban centres, in a cost-effective way. Particular aspects of the web site would be designed to target specific audiences and promotional activities would be designed to make these audiences aware of the availability of the site.

Web Site Components:

- o Virtual Park Gate - links to CPC member agency web sites with potential for changing features (mpeg clips, wildlife cam real time, etc.)
- o Link to Parks Day program web site www.parksday.ca and www.journeedesparcs.ca
- o On-Line version of Parks Kit – see Parks Kit/Interpretive Program (below)
- o Presentation of new name and visual identity of the Council, description of the role of the Council, its Strategic Priorities, how it operates and a bit of history
- o Honour Roll describing the Council's Awards Program and list of recipients
- o Reference Centre to provide access to Council publications & research reports
- o Other parks-related links NGO's, IUCN/WCPA, etc.

Costing and phasing:

Spring 2003 – contract to design & produce web site, including research, writing, graphic design and development of content [\$15,000].

Winter 2004 – basic site up and running with components such as the Parks Kit to be added later.

Spring 2004 - Print piece (post card, bookmark) that member agencies can use to promote awareness and use of the site. Joint announcement by Canada's parks ministers and **official launch** of site and 2004 Parks Day plans [\$5,000].

Annual Cost associated with maintaining, updating and promoting the site and adding new material to the "changing feature section" each year beginning in 2005 [\$3,000.00].

Responsibility:

National Coordinator and a small working group of parks staff (volunteers from park agencies will be needed).

2. PREPARE PARKS KIT/INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Develop an interpretive program and resource kit for staff to deliver to park visitors and educators to use in the classroom. The kit could be real and/or or virtual (accessible on line for park staff, educators and individuals to use). The Objectives and Key Messages of the CPC Communication Strategy would be the focus of the kit's contents. While the basic kit should remain constant, it should contain several themed items. Beginning in 2005 one of these themes should be emphasized in Parks Day messaging, providing crossover and reinforcement between the Kit and Parks Day.

Audiences:

- o Young park visitors and their families
- o Educators and students
- o Web-based learners
- o Local communities / youth groups

Components:

- o Reference materials (articles, images maps, etc.) describing the nature and extent of Canada's parks and protected areas
- o Information on benefits of parks
- o Activity sheets
- o Changing messages (an annual theme that could be shared with the messaging for parks day that year)
- o Curriculum links
- o Teacher activity guides
- o Program outlines

Costing and phasing:

Fall 2004 - Contract to research and develop kit contents [\$15,000].

Spring 2005 – Produce and distribute kit (in print and/or on-line) [\$30,000].

Summer 2005 – Launch event (Possible joint announcement by parks ministers on Parks Day) to publicize the availability of the kit and encourage its use [\$5,000].

Responsibility:

National Coordinator and a small working group of parks staff (volunteers will be needed from park agencies).

3. REVITALIZE CANADA'S PARKS DAY

Drawing on both the new web site and the parks kit, Canada's Parks Day should be recreated to form a dynamic and well-rounded event with stronger parks messaging.

In addition to meeting the two objectives of the CPC Communication Strategy, Parks Day has its own objectives which continue to be relevant:

- o To provide an opportunity for park staff and visitors to participate in the celebration of the principle and purpose of parks and their role in natural and human heritage preservation in Canada.
- o To provide a mechanism for park agencies to focus attention on major achievements and to announce new initiatives (parks, facilities, services, special events).

Parks Day messages and activities should emphasize:

- o Why parks are created.
- o The role of parks in natural and human heritage conservation, including the global significance of parks.
- o How people can play a role in the stewardship of our parks.

Audiences:

- o Park visitors
- o Park residents and residents of nearby communities
- o Park Staff

Costing and phasing:

For 2003 and 2004, continuity should be maintained by continuing park activities, as in 2002. Online event registration via web-site should continue and additional support should be provided to event hosts (e.g. online poster, planning guide, etc.).

Spring 2003 – Contract to develop planning guide, media templates, poster and other resources for on-line distribution via the web site to event hosts [\$3,000].

Contract to coordinate Parks Day [\$7,000], server space, domain registrations, printing and mailing Parks Day materials to event hosts [\$3000].

Spring 2004 – Contract to coordinate Parks Day [\$7,000], server space, domain registrations, printing and mailing Parks Day materials to event hosts [\$3000].

Spring 2005 – Contract to produce and distribute theme item (linked to Parks Kit) [\$15,000]. Contract to coordinate expanded Parks Day [\$10,000.00].

Summer 2005 Revitalized Parks Day should be launched along with the Parks Kit. A joint announcement by Canada's parks ministers could be part of launch [\$5,000].

Responsibility: Parks Day Coordinator (contractor), CPC National Coordinator, agency coordinators and event hosts. Ontario Parks will be asked for the continued assistance of their webmaster in maintaining Parks Day Web Site.

POTENTIAL FOR CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Each of these strategic actions has potential for sponsorship. This should be developed with an emphasis on building long-term relationships with a few key sponsors.

Potential benefits to be offered to sponsor:

- o Company logo and acknowledgement on CPC and Parks Day web sites (beginning in 2004).
- o Development of on-line Parks Day contest to promote web site and sponsor's product/service.
- o Company logo and acknowledgement on Parks Day theme piece (beginning in 2005).
- o Company logo and acknowledgement in printed and on-line versions of the parks kit (beginning in 2005).

Costing and phasing:

Summer/Fall 2003 – Prepare Sponsorship Strategy to be reviewed and approved at CPC meeting October 2003.

Winter 2003 – Contract to develop sponsorship package and seek indications of corporate interest [\$5,000].

Summer 2004 – Contract to secure sponsorship agreements [\$5,000].

Responsibility:

National coordinator and small working group to work with contractor to secure sponsors.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES, COSTS AND TIMING

	2003	2004	2005
Web Site -develop -launch -update/maintain	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$3,000
Parks Kit -develop -produce/distribute -launch/promote		\$15,000	\$30,000 \$5,000
Parks Day -develop resources -theme item (printed) -annual coordination -postage/printing	\$3,000 \$7,000 \$3,000	\$7,000 \$3,000	\$15,000 \$10,000 \$5,000
Sponsorship Dev't.	\$5,000*	\$5,000	
Total Costs	\$33,000	\$35,000	\$68,000
CPC Funds	\$33,000	\$28,000	\$28,000
Sponsor Contributions		\$7,000	\$40,000

* Note: Release of this funding is conditional on the approval, by CPC, of a Sponsorship Strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This strategy was prepared by Nancy Chave (BC), Heather Gosselin (NU), Susan Hruszowy (NS), Gary Lindfield (PC), Elaine Peebles (PC) Kevin MacLaren (PE), Jocelyne Ouimet (MB), Ted Ritzer (AB), Gail Ross (BC), Sally Robinson (YT), Mary-Anne Wihak (SK), Kathy McPherson (ON) assisted by John Good (CPC) and Susan Gesner and Erica Jeffery (Gesner & Associates, Environmental Learning) during a workshop held in November 2002.

Particular thanks are extended to Kathy McPherson, who chaired the working group, and to Ontario Parks for hosting the workshop at the Frost Natural Resources Centre.