

Subject: Request for Targeted Engagement Between Parks Canada and National Certifying Bodies

Dear Ron Hallman,

We are writing on behalf of four national certifying bodies representing thousands of certified outdoor professionals across Canada:

- Association of Canadian Mountain Guides
- Interpretive Guides Association
- Paddle Canada
- Outdoor Council of Canada

Certified outdoor professionals play a vital role in delivering safe, high-quality, and conservation-minded experiences at Parks Canada sites. Through structured programs and consistent standards, these professionals influence visitor behaviour, promote stewardship, reduce pressure on congested areas by guiding visitors toward lesser-known routes, and contribute meaningfully to safety and education. They are a key part of the solution for helping Parks Canada meet its mandate to protect ecological integrity while enabling memorable visitor experiences.

However, the potential of this relationship remains under-leveraged. There is currently no mechanism in place for Parks Canada and the national certifying bodies to engage in focused, two-way dialogue. In some cases, policy gaps or inconsistencies result in guided groups facing greater restrictions than unguided visitors, despite the added value that certified professionals provide. This undermines opportunities for collaboration and limits the full potential of professionally guided experiences to support Parks Canada's objectives.

To address this, we request the establishment of a dedicated engagement process between Parks Canada and the national certifying bodies. A smaller, focused forum would allow for meaningful collaboration that is not possible within larger, mixed-interest stakeholder groups. It would enable targeted conversations on permitting systems, safety messaging, professional standards, and other shared priorities—grounded in the day-to-day realities experienced by certified outdoor professionals and aligned with Parks Canada's operational planning.

In the establishment phase of this process, we propose a short series of meetings to co-develop its purpose, structure, and scope. Once underway, we envision a regular rhythm of engagement, ideally timed around key planning and operational windows throughout the year.

Our four national certifying bodies are committed to advancing high professional standards and look forward to establishing a lasting process with Parks Canada that supports exceptional outdoor experiences for both visitors and the land, from coast to coast to coast.

Sincerely,