

*Five-Year Review of the Human
Resources Management
Regime of Parks Canada*

FINAL REPORT

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1.0

Executive Summary

1.1 The Review Mandate

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to develop and apply a set of values and principles in the management of human resources in the Agency. This requirement is established in Section 16 (1) (b) of the Act, which states:

“16 (1) The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for establishing a charter for the Agency that sets out the values and principles governing:
(a) the provision of services by the Agency to the public; and
(b) the management of the human resources of the Agency.”

The Act also requires the Agency to conduct an independent review of the consistency with which it applies these values and principles within its human resources (HR) management regime. Specifically, Section 35 (1) of the Act states:

“The Chief Executive Officer must, at least every five years, have prepared by a person or body, other than the Agency or any of its officers or employees, a report on the consistency of its human resources regime with the values and principles that are to govern the management of its human resources.”

In October of 2003, Parks Canada (the Agency) engaged Hay Management Consulting to conduct the formal, independent review required by the Act. This report presents the findings of that review and it fulfills the requirement set out in Section 35 (1) of the Act. Our review was a broad assessment of the consistency of Parks Canada’s human resource regime with the values and principles that the Agency espouses. Our review was not (and was not intended to be) either a comprehensive audit or an evaluation of the HR function.

1.2 Approach and Methodology used in the Review

This is the first such review to be conducted in Parks Canada under Section 35 (1) of the Act. Therefore, the review team had to devise a methodology for conducting the review.

1.2.1 Constructing a conceptual and evaluative framework to guide the work of the review

The review team first created a conceptual and evaluative framework to guide its work. The team determined that an appropriate framework would achieve the following:

- Translate the Agency's values and principles into an operational context that would make these values and principles more readily observable and measurable.
- Provide a roadmap that would focus the work of the review team efficiently and effectively.
- Indicate to Parks Canada stakeholders how the review would be structured and conducted.
- Make clear for Parks Canada staff the information and documentary needs of the review team and thus enable staff to satisfy these information needs efficiently and with least disruption to their activities.
- Provide the review team with a means for organizing its information and findings, and
- Provide a logical structure for reporting the findings of the review.

The review team believed that values and principles could be observed, measured and meaningfully discussed only if they were placed in a functional and practical context. Therefore we needed to place the HR Values and Operating Principles in an applied context that would allow us to review them with Agency stakeholders and to observe and evaluate them in operation within the HR regime. "HR function" provided a clear and readily understood context for rendering the values and principles more concrete and hence "discuss-able", measurable and observable. By "function" we meant the individual functions (e.g., staffing, compensation, learning and development, etc.) that comprise the basis of a HR regime. Our approach was to use HR functions as one of the basic elements for the framework of the review. Therefore, we constructed a two dimensional grid with "function" on one axis and "values and principles" on the other axis.

1.2.2 Building the Review Template

The review team then proceeded to construct a Review Template. The team identified the "functions" that are relevant and appropriate for the HR regime of Parks Canada. This was done collaboratively with input from Parks Canada staff (HR and the Working Group) to ensure that the framework and template were sufficiently comprehensive in both its scope and detail. We selected the following "functions":

- Framework for HR Strategy and Planning
- The HR Policy Framework
- Employment Equity
- Official Languages
- Recruitment and Staffing
- Learning and Development

- Classification, Pay and Compensation
- Managing Conflict in the Workplace
- Labour/Management Relations
- Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Performance Management – Recognition and Rewards

We then cross-mapped the values and principles to each of the selected functions. This required us to analyze each of the HR functions to determine how each of the principles and values would be reflected within that particular HR function and what one would expect to find in a review of that function if the standard of “consistency” was to be met.

1.2.3 Collecting the data

The review team next established data collection requirements and built interview guides designed to capture the information required by the cross mapping. This was a collaborative step in which the review team worked with the Working Group and HR representatives to determine what tests would be reasonable, what information was available, and which stakeholders we needed to consult, interview or otherwise involve in the data collection phase of our work.

The review team ultimately collected data from the following sources:

- We obtained and reviewed policy documents, program descriptions, program reports, strategy papers and other documentary evidence describing the Agency’s HR regime
- We analyzed the HR components of the Agency’s intranet site.
- We analyzed the results of Parks Canada’s Employee Survey
- We conducted interviews that involved approximately 60 stakeholders from within Parks Canada including:
 - Members of the HR Committee of the Executive Board
 - Ex-officio Members of the HR Committee of the Executive Board
 - Management representatives on the Labour Management Consultation Committee
 - HR Directors at Corporate Headquarters and in the field.
 - HR specialists in specific HR functions and disciplines
 - Members of the Working Group struck for this review

- Field Managers with significant HR involvement
- The President of the National Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
- The President of UCTE.
- We conducted 2 focus groups (in Cornwall and Smith Falls) to solicit the opinions of front line staff and to supplement information presented in the Parks Canada Employee Survey.

1.3 The Principal Conclusions of this Review

As a result of its examinations, the review team drew three kinds of conclusions: a general conclusion, several overarching conclusions, and conclusions specific to each value and principle. These are presented below.

1.3.1 Our Overall General Conclusion

Our overall conclusion is that Parks Canada's HR regime is mostly consistent with its values and principles (or is developing in a manner that is consistent with them) but that there are exceptions and areas that require further work. We find that Parks Canada is consistently mindful of its values and principles and that it routinely applies its values and principles in its analytical and decision making processes.

1.3.2 Our Overarching Conclusions

We reached the several overarching conclusions, these being:

1. That the Values and Operating Principles of Parks Canada (or those of any other organization) are not and cannot be absolute or immutable. Values and principles are not like mathematical formulae; their application cannot always be consistent and nor will their application lead to the same (or for that matter to consistent) decisions and results. To have meaning in the world of work, values and principles such as "fairness" or "simplicity" require context and circumstance, and their application requires the exercise of judgement and interpretation by the people involved. Inevitably, circumstance and judgement introduce variability in actual results as well as variability in how those results are perceived. What seems "fair" or "simple" to one person may not appear to be so to another. Thus determining whether a particular value or principle has been observed is both a subjective and relative exercise, dependent on the perspective of the individual and dependant as well on context and situation.

This is a fundamental observation. In our work on this review, some people we interviewed commented that the application of values and principles in similar circumstances would lead to “inconsistent” (i.e., different) results. We conclude that such variability and differences in results are natural, to be expected and in any event, unavoidable, and perhaps even desirable. Principles and values are not meant to supplant judgement and discretion, rather they are meant to guide analysis and to inform decision-making. What is truly important therefore is not whether the organization achieves *consistency in results* through its values and principles but whether the organization in good faith *consistently and regularly applies* its values and principles in its thinking, analysis and decision making.

On this fundamental point, the review finds that Parks Canada does commonly, regularly and routinely keep in mind its principles and values in its analytical and decision-making processes.

2. That the Values and Operating Principles of Parks Canada can and do act at times as interdependent variables. By this we mean that individual principles and values do not always stand independently of each other. The exercise of one principle or value can affect that of another principle or value either positively or negatively. For example, the principle of “Adaptability” (Adjusting to circumstances by encouraging innovation and creativity) and “Simplicity” (Making things as uncomplicated as possible) can at times be competing principles, where one can be achieved but at the expense of the other. Consequently, judgement and circumstance necessarily and understandably come into play. In other circumstances, the values and principles can be complimentary in nature and mutually supportive. For example, in the staffing process the exercise of “Fairness” (Activities and decisions are just, timely, impartial and objective) is a value that sustains and supports another value, “Respect” (Mutual trust, recognition of accomplishment, self-esteem and regard for others). Given that the Agency’s principles and values are at times interdependent, this review found no evidence to suggest that Parks Canada, either in its thinking or in its actions, favours one value over another or that it favours one principle over another. In fact this never entered the thinking or the commentary of those we interviewed. We find that the Agency is consistent and balanced in treating its individual principles and values as equally important, that it does so intuitively, and that it strives for balance when principles compete. Achieving balance in values and principles is a matter that the Public Service Commission has commented on for the “core” public service.
3. That complete implementation of Values and Principles within the HR regime of Agency is a work in progress. Development of the HR regime has been affected in part by the Agency’s limited ability to make the requisite investments of time, money and effort. At the time this review was conducted,

many of the HR programs that would bring greater life and fuller substance to the Agency's values and principles had just been implemented, were in the planning stage, or were on the verge of implementation (e.g., National Classification Review, Orientation, and Alternative Dispute Resolution). This review does not find fault with this. While some might consider the pace of HR program development to have been slow, we find no evidence of "foot dragging." The review recognizes that at the time of its creation the Agency had virtually no corporate HR infrastructure and very few corporate HR resources. These had to be built essentially "from scratch". The review acknowledges that in the circumstances, the Agency had to make choices on where and how it would invest its limited HR resources and capacities. The review finds:

- That the Agency has invested those limited HR resources in a logical manner intended to produce the greatest return on investment.
 - That the Agency has attained and sustained momentum in developing HR programs that support a values and principles based HR regime.
 - That the Agency's senior executive has been and remains meaningfully and significantly engaged in the planning, development and implementation of a values and principles based HR regime in the Agency.
 - That the engagement of both management and HR resources in this undertaking is both genuine and sincere.
4. That acceptance and internalization of the HR principles and HR values of the Agency has been inconsistent and uneven thus far. It would appear that not all management or staff of the Agency have embraced the HR principles and HR values of the organization. We heard much anecdotal commentary from front line employees concerning staffing and management practices that would appear to be in conflict with the Agency's principles and values. Many of these same employees report not perceiving any difference in how HR matters are addressed today when compared to practices in Parks Canada before it became an Agency or before it had a set of HR values and principles. Staff observations made in the Parks Canada Employee Survey reinforce some of these points of view.

On the opposite side of the coin, we repeatedly heard observations that "management did not live up to its values and principles in this case." We found this an interesting choice of words, as if to suggest that the HR values and principles apply only to management in its interactions with staff and not necessarily to staff in its interaction with management, or for that matter, not necessarily to any member of the Agency in his or her interactions with any other member of the Agency. The review team concludes that many management and staff in the Agency may have come to view the Agency's values and principles too narrowly as either "a management code of conduct" that applies only to management within a narrow context of labour –

management relations or human resource transactions. The review team understands that the principles and values were intended to have a much broader and universal application and that they are meant to apply to all in the Agency and across all work of the Agency. If the review team's understanding is correct, then there is still work to be done to ingrain the values and principles to the same extent that the Parks Canada Charter is ingrained in the minds of Agency members.

5. That the process of institutionalizing and internalizing values and operating principles throughout an organization is necessarily a very long term and continuous process. The process of internalization only begins with their adoption. Reaching the point where values and principles become "second nature" throughout an organization requires years of repeated and consistent modeling by top leadership in its words, behaviours and decisions; it requires their institutionalization in the HR programs and processes of the organization; and it requires the recruitment, selection, recognition and promotion of those individuals who best demonstrate the organization's values and principles in their work. In other words, implementing values and principles and achieving consistency in their application and interpretation is a long and gradual process of assimilation and evolution. This being the case, it is exceedingly difficult to measure the extent to which different layers in the organization have embraced and assimilated the Agency's principles and values but we endeavoured to do this in the review. It appears to the review team that there is strong support for and alignment with the values and principles at the top of the organization but that this support and alignment diminishes in degree as one moves down the organization and away from the centre of the organization. At the front line, it appears that the principles and values of the Agency have less visibility and less impact on the working lives of front line staff than is the case elsewhere in the organization. This may well be a reflection of evolutionary nature of the process. The embedding and reinforcement of principles and values throughout the organization (particularly at the front line) will likely be strengthened as the Agency continues to roll out HR programs and services that are built on its values and principles.

The leaders of an organization have the greatest impact on shaping the culture of that organization through their words, behaviours, actions and decisions. Constant demonstration and modeling of the Agency's values and principles by its leaders makes clear to the organization as a whole what the Agency truly believes and values. The review finds that top leadership of the Agency does repeatedly and consistently model the Agency's values and principles. Organization-wide acceptance and implementation of values and principles must be a "top-down" driven process. It is a process that will take much time and reinforcement, and a process that is never truly completed and one that requires perpetual reinforcement. Therefore, the review does not find it unusual that alignment with the values and principles of the organization is strongest at

the top and in the centre of the organization. The challenge confronting the Agency is how to further and more deeply embed and reinforce its values and principles throughout the organization as a whole. The solution to that challenge likely lies in the areas of performance management; promotion, continued HR program and process roll out, reinforcement through communication, and leadership modeling.

1.3.3 Our conclusions specific to each of the values and principles

Our findings and conclusions specific to each of the HR Values and Operating Principles are presented in summary fashion below. These findings are discussed in more detail in the body of the report.

Competence: The review found that the Agency does observe Competency as a value but that there is work to be done with respect to this value. The review found that the Agency does in fact recruit, select and promote employees on the basis of competency. However the review also found that the Agency does not yet have in place all of the corporate, workforce-level HR systems and processes that it needs to ensure that its workforce is appropriately skilled, knowledgeable and competent. The review also found that Agency does not yet approach competency in an integrated or systematic manner

Respect: With respect to “Respect”, the review team found a high degree of consistency and a high degree of attention to this value by Parks Canada. We found that the Agency and its leadership (particularly top leadership) are highly active both formally and informally in celebrating the accomplishments of the Agency’s people both as teams and individuals. We found that Agency management has taken a keen interest in Recognition and that the Agency works hard “at catching people doing things right.” We found that the Agency clearly recognizes and respects employees’ rights to union membership, representation and participation in union activities. We found a well-organized and well-structured approach to Labour Management Consultation and an active LMC environment both nationally and in the field. But we also found that many employees do not feel that they can speak openly within the Agency or that they can use the redress processes of the Agency without fear of reprisal.

Fairness: The review finds that the Agency is reasonably consistent in observing the value of “Fairness.” We found policies and processes in place to institutionalize fairness but we found that many employees do not perceive fairness in the results of those processes. We found a reasonably comprehensive policy framework governing functions in which “fairness” could be at issue, e.g., staffing, classification. We found many fora available to members of the Agency at which issues of fairness can be raised and tabled (labour management consultation committees, occupational health and safety committees, etc.) and that there are well-developed redress mechanisms in place that members of the Agency can use to test fairness (grievance processes, ITPRs, etc.). However, many employees are reluctant to use these fora. We found no evidence of political influence in the staffing processes of the Agency. But we did hear from front

line employees in the field alleging bureaucratic patronage in the appointment and recall of seasonal and casual employees. We found that while most employees believe that the staffing process is fair, fully a third of the workforce believe that the process is not.

Accountability: The review found that there is work yet to be done to more fully implement the principle of “accountability.” We found the use of HR principles and operating values as an accountability mechanism is well entrenched in Parks Canada. We found that the Agency has embedded accountability in its Accountability Framework for People Management. We found that the conduct of the Parks Canada Employee Survey to be an exercise in accountability. On the other hand, we found that a comprehensive, integrated, consistent and universally applied performance management process is not in place in the Agency and that such a system is arguably the single greatest way to implement the principle of accountability.

Efficiency

The review found that the Agency fully embraces the principle of efficiency (i.e., making best possible use of human, time and financial resources).

Effectiveness

That there is little basis on which to comment definitively on “effectiveness” (achieving the expected results) as much of the HR regime has only recently been implemented, or is in the planning stages, or is now in the process of roll-out (including HR strategic framework, learning and development, orientation, alternative dispute resolution, national classification review, etc.) It does however appear to the review team the Agency has been highly effective where it has invested its limited time and attention in the development of its HR regime.

Consistency: The review finds that the Agency does strive to be consistent in the development and application of its HR regime and that it makes efforts, “to act in a similar manner in similar circumstances.” This is evident in several ways, the most notable of which is the National Classification Review.

Adaptability: The review finds that the results for “Adaptability” are mixed. The Agency has taken advantage of its separate employer status to re-engineer its staffing and resourcing processes and to adapt them to its requirements (e.g. adaptations such as competence as opposed to merit, changes in the concept of area of competition, etc). And the Agency has consolidated grievance and appeals processes where possible (e.g., ITPR).

However, the ability of the Agency to innovate in collective bargaining and to develop terms and conditions of employment tailored to the needs of the Agency is limited and constrained by the requirement to have its bargaining mandates approved by the Treasury Board, by its need to maintain comparability to the core public service, and by the requirement that the Agency self-fund the costs of any new terms and conditions of employment that represent significant departures from terms and conditions of employment that prevail in the core public service. The review finds that the constraints

on the Agency's ability to bargain place it at a severe disadvantage in exercising the principle of "adaptability."

Simplicity: The review finds that the Agency has consistently worked at achieving simplicity and that it has been highly successful in streamlining many aspects of its HR regime. The most noteworthy achievement in "simplification" has been the unification of employee representation under a single bargaining agent (Public Service Alliance of Canada) within two components (Transport Component and National Component of PSAC). This represents a vast reduction in administrative complexity compared to the multiple bargaining agent, multiple bargaining unit environment that existed in Parks Canada prior to it becoming an Agency. As previously discussed, the Agency has also made significant progress in unwinding the administrative complexities of the staffing processes that it was formerly obliged to follow when Parks Canada was part of the core public service. Also as previously discussed, the Agency has made significant progress in simplifying, consolidating, and in some case "informalizing" its dispute resolution processes (e.g., introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution, Independent Third Party Review).

Openness: The review found that that the Agency has structures in place to facilitate open communication and dialogue (like the Parks Canada Employee Survey), and has mechanisms to ensure an honest review of decisions (e.g., labour management consultation, ITPR, and Alternative Dispute Resolution). But we found that many employees do not perceive these processes lead to real openness.

The Parks Canada Employee Survey reports "employees' general trust in the organization to treat them fairly is not very high, both overall and in comparison to the Public Service (by 20 per cent, the largest single difference between Parks Canada and the Public Service)." The survey goes on to state that "perceived openness to employee feedback (is a) much weaker area."

If "openness" is tied to "trust," as the review team believes it to be, then there is work yet to be done in implementing this principle. The Parks Canada Employee Survey reports that only "two-thirds (65 per cent) ... trust Parks Canada to treat them fairly".

Subsequent chapters of this report describe how the review was conducted and present the findings, observations and recommendations of the review in greater detail.

2.0

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Parks Canada's mandate and its status as an Agency, explains the purpose and nature of this review, and addresses the development of the HR regime of the Agency.

2.1 Background – Parks Canada – Mandate and Organization

Parks Canada has a mandate to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and to foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations. Parks Canada's employee base consists of approximately 4500 employees, including a substantial group of seasonal employees. The majority of the employees (i.e., about 80%) work in one of the 41 national parks and national park reserves, 2 marine conservation areas or 149 national historic sites managed by Parks Canada. The parks and sites are organized into thirty-two geographically based field-units managed by field unit superintendents (FUS) who are responsible to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) through Annual Business Plans and Reports. Operational human resources services are the responsibility of the Director Generals Eastern Canada and Western/ Northern Canada.

About 10% of the Agency's employees work in service centres located in Halifax, Quebec City, Cornwall/Ottawa, and Winnipeg (with small branch offices in Calgary and Vancouver). The service centres provide technical and professional services to field units (e.g., science, architecture and engineering). National office, less than 10% of the employee base, consists of five directorates (national parks, national historic sites, strategy and plans, human resources and communications) who provide legislative, operational policy, planning, program direction, financial management, and human resources functions and services.

Parks Canada has a very long history that pre-dates its transformation into an Agency. The federal government announced in its 1996 Budget its intention to establish Parks Canada as an Agency, along with two other agencies as pilot Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) agencies. Parks Canada was established as an agency under Schedule II of the *Financial Administration Act* in December 1998. As an independent Agency, Parks Canada at that time became separate from the Department of Canadian Heritage of which it was formerly a component.

At the time this review commenced, the Minister of Canadian Heritage was responsible for the overall direction of the Agency and was accountable to Parliament for all Parks Canada activities. A recent change in ministerial portfolios transferred responsibility for Parks Canada to the Minister of the Environment. This transfer did not affect the legal status of Parks Canada. It remains an Agency with its own corporate governance and management framework, including a human resources regime, which has been tailored to meet its program needs.

2.2 The Legislative Requirements for this Review - A Strategic Level Review

The requirement for Parks Canada to have a set of values and principles that govern the management of human resources in the Agency is established in Section 16 (1) of the *Parks Canada Agency Act*. This sections states:

“The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for establishing a charter for the Agency that sets out the values and principles governing:

- (a) the provision of services by the Agency to the public; and
- (b) the management of the human resources of the Agency.”

The requirement for a review of these values and principles in the context of human resource management is established in Section 35 (1) of the *Parks Canada Agency Act*. This section states that:

“The Chief Executive Officer must, at least every five years, have prepared by a person or body, other than the Agency, or any of its officers or employees, a report on the consistency of its human resource regime with its values and principles that are to govern management of its human resources.”

This report fulfills the requirement for a review set out in Section 35 (1). This review is intended as a broad, strategic level assessment of the consistency of Parks Canada’s human resource regime with the values and principles that govern management of its human resources. This review and this report should not be viewed as comprehensive audit or an evaluation of the HR program.

To understand the findings of this review and to put those findings in context, it is important to appreciate how the HR regime of the Agency differs from the HR regime of the “core” public service.

Parks Canada as an Agency and its Chief Executive Officer have considerably more authority and autonomy for human resources management than is typically the case within the “core” public service, (i.e., that portion of the public service for which Treasury Board at the time exercised the role of Employer and that portion of the public

service to which and within which the Public Service Commission exercised exclusive right and authority to make appointments). The ***Parks Canada Agency Act*** provided the foundation for a different HR regime by conferring on the Agency's Chief Executive Officer many of the authorities for human resources management that in the "core" public service resided with and were exercised by the Treasury Board or the Public Service Commission. Specifically, The ***Parks Canada Agency Act*** states:

- "13. (1) The Chief Executive Officer has exclusive authority to
- (a) appoint, lay-off or terminate the employment of the employees of the Agency; and
 - (b) establish standards, procedures and processes governing staffing, including the appointment, lay-off or termination of employment otherwise than for cause, of employees.
- Right of employer
- (2) Nothing in the *Public Service Staff Relations Act* shall be construed to affect the right or authority of the Chief Executive Officer to deal with the matters referred to in paragraph (1) (b).
- Personnel management
- (3) Subsection 11(2) of the *Financial Administration Act* does not apply with respect to the Agency and the Chief Executive Officer may
- (a) determine the organization of and classify the positions in the Agency;
 - (b) set the terms and conditions of employment, including termination of employment for cause, for employees and assign duties to them; and
 - (c) provide for any other matters that the Chief Executive Officer considers necessary for effective personnel management in the Agency."

Section 13 (3) of the ***Parks Canada Agency Act*** exempts the Agency and its Chief Executive Officer from the following provisions of Section 11(2) of the ***Financial Administration Act***, provisions which in the core public service gave the Treasury Board authority to:

- "(a) determine the requirements of the public service with respect to human resources and provide for the allocation and effective utilization of human resources within the public service;
- (b) determine requirements for the training and development of personnel in the public service and fix the terms on which such training and development may be carried out;
- (c) provide for the classification of positions and employees in the public service;
- (d) determine and regulate the pay to which persons employed in the public service are entitled for services rendered, the hours of work and leave of those persons and any matters related thereto;
- (e) provide for the awards that may be made to persons employed in the public service for outstanding performance of their duties, for other meritorious achievement in relation to those duties and for inventions or practical suggestions for improvements;

- (f) establish standards of discipline in the public service and prescribe the financial and other penalties, including termination of employment and suspension, that may be applied for breaches of discipline or misconduct, and the circumstances and manner in which and the authority by which or whom those penalties may be applied or may be varied or rescinded in whole or in part;
- (g) provide for the termination of employment, or the demotion to a position at a lower maximum rate of pay, for reasons other than breaches of discipline or misconduct, of persons employed in the public service, and establishing the circumstances and manner in which and the authority by which or by whom those measures may be taken or may be varied or rescinded in whole or in part;
- (g.1) provide for the termination of employment of an employee to whom an offer of employment is made as the result of the transfer of any work, undertaking or business from a portion of the public service specified in Part I of Schedule I to the *Public Service Staff Relations Act* to any body or corporation that is a separate employer or that is outside the public service, and establish the terms and conditions under which, the circumstances and manner in which and the authority by which or by whom that termination may be made or may be varied or rescinded in whole or in part;
- (h) determine and regulate the payments that may be made to persons employed in the public service by way of reimbursement for travel or other expenses and by way of allowances in respect of expenses and conditions arising out of their employment;
- (h.1) subject to the *Employment Equity Act*, establish policies and programs with respect to the implementation of employment equity in the public service; and
- (i) provide for such other matters, including terms and conditions of employment not otherwise specifically provided for in this subsection, as the Treasury Board considers necessary for effective personnel management in the public service.”

With respect to “staffing” in the “core” public service, Part II, Section 8 of the ***Public Service Employment Act (PSEA)*** conferred upon the Public Service Commission “the exclusive right and authority to make appointments to or from within the Public Service of persons for whose appointment there is no authority in or under any other Act of Parliament.” In the case of Parks Canada, the Chief Executive Officer was exempt from the authority of this provision of the **PSEA** and was empowered to exercise appointment authority for Parks Canada under Section 13 (1) of the *Parks Canada Agency Act* which states:

- “13. (1) The Chief Executive Officer has exclusive authority to
 - (a) appoint, lay-off or terminate the employment of the employees of the Agency; and
 - (b) establish standards, procedures and processes governing staffing, including the appointment, lay-off or termination of employment otherwise than for cause, of employees.”

In summary, the *Parks Canada Agency Act* conferred upon the Chief Executive Officer many of the human resource authorities that in the “core” public service were exercised by either the Treasury Board or the Public Service Commission, particularly with respect to:

- Selection, appointment, promotion, and termination
- Training and development
- Organization and job classification
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Performance management
- Collective bargaining
- “any other matters that the Chief Executive Officer considers necessary for effective personnel management in the Agency.”

2.3 HR “Regime” Defined

For the purposes of this review, the term “HR regime” is defined as the complete spectrum of HR roles and responsibilities, strategy, policies, programs, resourcing, structure, implementation and evaluation. This is not a review of the human resource management division or its programs and activities. This is a broader assessment of the extent to which the values and principles of the organization are reflected in the Agency’s human resource management regime and the extent to which these values and principles are consistently applied within that regime.

2.4 HR Values and HR Operating Principles Identified

The HR values and HR operating principles of Parks Canada are:

HR Values

Competence: The knowledge, abilities, personal suitability and other qualities required performing effectively in the workplace. The Agency:

- Commits to employing competent people.
- Maintains and transmits “corporate memory” as an essential part of Agency renewal.
- Invests in individual development and career planning to maintain competencies and to support personal and Agency growth.

Respect: Mutual trust, recognition of accomplishment, self-esteem and regard for

others.

- Respect individual differences.
- Recognize individual and team contributions.
- Respect the need to balance work and personal lives.
- Recognize employees' rights to union membership, representation and participation in union activities.
- Respect and apply principles concerning official languages, employment equity, privacy, health and safety, protection from harassment and discrimination.

Fairness: Activities and decisions are just, timely, impartial and objective.

- Equitable treatment of employees both individually and collectively while respecting diversity.
- Equitable processes supported with attitudes, acts and decisions that are well reasoned.
- Open and honest communication of practices and decisions.
- Staffing decisions and other human resources practices are free from political influence and other forms of patronage.

HR Operating Principles

Accountability: Answerability for carrying out responsibilities in accordance with our HR values and operating principles.

Efficiency: Making the best possible use of human, time and financial resources.

Effectiveness: Achieving the expected results

Consistency: Acting in a similar manner in similar circumstances.

Adaptability: Adjusting to circumstances while encouraging innovation and creativity.

Simplicity: Making things as uncomplicated as possible.

Openness: Ensuring straightforward and honest communication.

2.5 The Evolution of the HR Regime within Parks Canada

At the time Parks Canada became an Agency, the starting point for its HR regime was the regime that it brought with it from the “core” public service. The *Parks Canada Agency Act* essentially provided Parks Canada and its CEO with the authority to shape and

develop the HR regime of the Agency in whatever manner it was determined best suited the organization's requirements. The Act thus provided the opportunity for Parks Canada to tailor its human resources regime to fit its managerial, operating and workforce requirements. Parks Canada viewed this as an opportunity to move from a "layered, hierarchical organization with a traditional command and control leadership culture with dispersed, complex accountability, and with complex, public service-wide human resource systems and processes..."¹ to a less complex, values-based regime that fits the needs of the new agency and its 24/7 highly seasonal, operating environment.

2.5.1 Initial Progress in Developing an HR Regime from Inception of Agency to mid-2001

The transformation to a HR regime tailored to the Agency was a large and complex undertaking that required substantial investments of time and effort. In the first two years of Agency status, Parks Canada made progress towards developing its own HR regime. In the first two years of Agency status, the following was achieved:

- Formulation of the Agency's HR values and HR operating principles
- Implementation of a de-layered, decentralized organization structure for the Agency.
- Development, approval and implementation of new human resources frameworks and policies for staffing, employee recourse, and health and safety, joint union-management working groups.
- Establishment of a framework for dispute resolution and a process for independent third party review.
- Definition and delegation of human resources decision-making authorities.
- Approval for a single bargaining unit from the Public Service Staff Relations Board.
- Certification of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) as the sole bargaining agent.
- Implementation of labour management consultation
- Commencement of collective bargaining.
- Creation of a Corporate HR function and organization and development of a fully functioning network of human resources staff to provide advice and service.²

¹ *HR Plans and Priorities, May 2001, page 2*

² *Summarized from a briefing document prepared by Parks Canada HR.*

The HR focus in the initial years of Agency status was to put in place the framework for HR and the key structures, policies and processes that would enable the Agency to carry on its business and to serve its publics. These initial steps in the development of the HR regime were to get the organization “up and running” from an operational perspective. In subsequent years, the Agency addressed other HR initiatives designed to give greater substance and depth to its HR regime.

2.5.2 Priorities for the HR Regime from Mid-2001 to 2004

For the period mid 2001 through 2004, Parks Canada identified the following key HR priorities to be accomplished:

Compensation and Classification

1. Develop agency compensation strategy and tools
2. Complete development and implement senior management classification and compensation system/plan
3. Identify and implement new agency classification system
4. Re-design pay processes and procedures and terms and conditions of employment following first collective agreement and conversion to new classification system.

Labour and Employee Relations

1. Adjust agency-wide labour management consultation framework to reflect Public Service Labour Relations Board decision.
2. Achieve needed exclusions and designations
3. Implement integrated dispute resolution strategy:
 - a. Implement independent third party review (ITPR) system
 - b. Work with the national ADR champion to introduce Agency-wide alternate dispute resolution (ADR) system, including training, network and tools.
4. Establish and maintain labour costing system
5. Undertake two rounds of collective bargaining and implement results
6. Negotiate conversion to new classification system.

Recruitment and Advancement

1. Develop and implement employment equity strategy
2. Support senior management functional heads in developing targeted recruitment/retention/succession planning/training strategies for respective functional area

3. Work with central agencies and other Part 2 agencies to eliminate barriers to public service-wide mobility.
4. Develop Employment Equity infrastructure: National Occupation Classification Code (NOC), Self ID data collection, Employment Equity plan and progress reporting within a corporate standardized reporting system.
5. Adapt staffing policy and system to revised compensation and classification system.

HR Planning, Training and Development

1. Design orientation program.
2. Assist identified functional leads to assume functional roles for their respective core work streams.
3. Establish national qualification standards and development and succession plans for human resources community.

Accountability

1. Develop human resources accountability framework for Parks Canada, corporate reporting tools and key performance measurement indicators and tools.
2. Develop and implement automated human resources systems and processes that generate efficiencies (e.g. automated transaction processing tools, virtual human resources applications, and integrated databases).

Service Delivery

1. Complete national classification reviews of all remaining jobs
2. Establish appropriate funding to provide basic level of service pending streamlined classification system, collective agreements and automation. Realign national HR structure with HR Priorities and Plans.
3. Determine on-going resource requirements post-build
4. Conduct targeted process simplification
5. Research best practices and support designated executive champion in design of recruitment/succession strategy for senior management.
6. Strengthen advisory support to establish equally accessible advice and coordination service standards monitoring and performance mechanisms in pay and benefits, classification and grievances.³

³ *Ibid*

Progress has been made on many of these priorities, as discussed in the body of the report.

The next chapter explains the methodology that we used to examine this HR Regime followed by several chapters that speak to the consistency with which Parks Canada applies its HR Values and Operating Principles within this HR Regime.

3.0 Approach and Methodology

3.1 “Regime” and “Consistency” defined

The task of the review team was to determine the extent to which the HR regime of the Agency was “consistent” with the Agency’s HR values and HR operating principles. Therefore, the review team had to define “**HR regime**” and “**consistency**”.

For the purposes of this review, the team defined “HR regime” as the collected HR strategies, roles and responsibilities, policies, programs, resources, and structures that together result in the productive use of people in achieving the Agency’s objectives and in satisfying employees’ needs.

To us, “consistency” had two dimensions, these being “alignment” and “application”. “Alignment” examines whether HR functions and programs have been developed with the principles and values in mind, and have been designed to support and sustain the values and principles of the organization. “Application” examines whether HR programs and functions are operated in a manner consistent with the values and principles of the organization and whether the intended results are obtained.

3.2 A Framework for the Review

Having defined “consistency” and “HR regime”, the next order of business was to determine how to test the “consistency” with which the Agency applies its principles and values within its HR regime. To our knowledge, this is the first review of its kind to have been conducted within the federal government. Therefore, the review team had to devise a conceptual and evaluative framework to guide its work.

The review team determined that an appropriate framework would achieve the following:

- Translate the Agency’s values and principles into an operational context that would make these values and principles more readily observable and measurable.
- Provide a roadmap that would focus the work of the review team efficiently and effectively.
- Indicate to Parks Canada stakeholders how the review would be structured and conducted.

- Make clear for Parks Canada staff the information and documentary needs of the review team and thus enable staff to satisfy these information needs efficiently and with least disruption to their activities.
- Provide the review team with a means for organizing its information and findings, and
- Provide a logical structure for reporting the findings of the review.

We started with the proposition that values and principles are observable and measurable only when they are placed in a functional and practical context. Therefore we needed to place the HR Values and Operating Principles in an applied context that would allow us to meaningfully discuss them with Agency stakeholders and to observe and evaluate them in operation within the HR regime. “HR function” provided a clear and readily understood context for rendering the values and principles more concrete and hence “discuss-able”, measurable and observable. By “function” we meant the individual functions (e.g., staffing, compensation, learning and development, etc.) that comprise the basis of a HR regime. Our approach was to use HR functions as one of the basic elements for the framework of the review. Therefore, we constructed a two dimensional grid with “function” on one axis and “values and principles” on the other axis.

3.3 Building the Review Template

The review team then proceeded to construct a Review Template. The team:

Identified the “functions” that are relevant and appropriate for the HR regime of Parks Canada. This was done collaboratively with input from Parks Canada staff (HR and the Working Group) to ensure that the framework and template were sufficiently comprehensive in both its scope and detail. We settled on the following “functions”:

- Framework for HR Strategy and Planning
- The HR Policy Framework
- Employment Equity
- Official Languages
- Recruitment and Staffing
- Learning and Development
- Classification, Pay and Compensation
- Managing Conflict in the Workplace
- Labour/Management Relations
- Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Performance Management – Recognition and Rewards

Cross-mapped the Values and Principles to each of the Functions. This involved an analysis of each of the HR functions to determine where one could expect that each of the principles and values would be reflected within that HR function.

Established data collection requirements and built interview guides designed to capture the information required in the cross mapping. This was a collaborative step in which the review team worked with Working Group and HR representatives to determine what tests would be reasonable, what information was available, and which stakeholders we needed to consult, interview or otherwise involve in the data collection phase of our work.

3.4 Data Collection

The review team collected data from several sources:

- We obtained and reviewed policy documents, program descriptions, program reports, strategy papers and other documentary evidence describing the Agencies HR regime
- We analyzed the HR components of the Agency's intranet site.
- We analyzed the results of Parks Canada's Employee Survey
- We conducted interviews that involved approximately 60 stakeholders from within Parks Canada including:
 - Members of the HR Committee of the Executive Board
 - Ex-officio Members of the HR Committee of the Executive Board
 - Management representatives on the Labour Management Consultation Committee
 - HR Directors at Corporate Headquarters and in the field.
 - HR specialists in specific HR functions and disciplines
 - Members of the Working Group struck for this review
 - Field Managers with significant HR involvement
 - The President of the National Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
 - The President of UCTE.
- We conducted 2 focus groups (in Cornwall and Smith Falls) to solicit the opinions of front line staff and to supplement information presented in the Parks Canada Employee Survey.

Subsequent chapters of this report address the findings of the review for each of the HR values and HR operating principles.

4.0

HR Value: “Competence”

4.1 “Competence” defined

Parks Canada defines “**Competence**” as: The knowledge, abilities, personal suitability and other qualities required to perform effectively in the workplace. The Agency:

- Commits to employing competent people.
- Maintains and transmits “corporate memory” as an essential part of Agency renewal.
- Invests in individual development and career planning to maintain competencies and to support personal and Agency growth.

4.2 Where the Review Team looked for evidence of “Competence”

Recruitment, selection and promotion within the “core” public service were governed by “merit” as defined by the Public Service Commission under the *Public Service Employment Act (PSEA)*. On becoming an Agency, Parks Canada was no longer bound by the requirements of the PSC or the PSEA and thus was not required to operate its appointment systems on the basis of “merit” as defined by this Act. Section 10 of the *Public Service Employment Act* defined “merit” as follows:

“10. (1) Appointments to or from within the Public Service shall be based on selection according to merit, as determined by the Commission, and shall be made by the Commission, at the request of the deputy head concerned, by competition or by such other process of personnel selection designed to establish the merit of candidates as the Commission considers is in the best interests of the Public Service.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), selection according to merit may, in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations of the Commission, be based on the competence of a person being considered for appointment as measured by such standard of competence as the Commission may establish, rather than as measured against the competence of other persons.”

Section 12 (1) of the PSEA provided further elaboration,

“12. (1) For the purpose of determining the basis for selection according to merit under section 10, the Commission may establish standards for selection and assessment as to education, knowledge, experience, language, residence or any other matters that, in the opinion of the Commission, are necessary or desirable having regard to the nature of the duties to be performed and the present and future needs of the Public Service.”

In choosing “Competence” as a value and in committing itself to employing competent people, the Agency adopted a value that was quite similar to merit; indeed the PSEA defines “merit” as a “standard of competence”. The Agency chose to define competence as the “knowledge, abilities, personal suitability and other qualities required to perform effectively in the workplace.” This is essentially the PSEA definition of “merit”. The difference between “merit” and “competence” lies not in the substance but rather in the treatment. Merit as defined by the PSEA was absolute, meaning that that an unconditional standard for appointment had to be met; whereas the Agency more flexibly applies “competence” as a relative term. Thus the Agency has greater flexibility than was previously the case in determining selection processes, selection tools, and ultimately in the selection of successful candidates.

In the world of HR (in both public and private sectors) “competence” has taken on special meaning over the last decade. Organizations have constructed entire HR regimes that are based on competency models (organization-wide competencies, group and community competencies, and role competencies) and have created processes that are integrated by these competency models. “Competencies” have been embraced by the HR profession as a way of aligning HR planning with corporate strategy and priorities and as way of integrating selection and recruitment, performance management, learning and development, succession planning and compensation. Indeed, some work has been done within the Agency applying this concept of “Competency”.

However, the Agency does not use “competencies” in the sense of a competency-based HR regime (although the review team at the outset of review understood the term in its current and common usage.) Thus, we looked for an over-arching competency-based framework and competency models that linked and integrated various HR functions. In recruitment and staffing processes, we looked for the use of competency models and competency-based selection techniques (e.g., critical incident interviews, behavioural event interviews, and competency based performance information) as a means of identifying, selecting and promoting competence. In Learning and Development (L&D), we were looking for competency based systems and processes designed to ensure that workforce of the Agency is appropriately skilled, knowledgeable and competent to perform the work and deliver the services of the Agency. We looked for a collective, competency-based needs analysis of the Agency’s workforce in relation to the Agency’s operational and strategic priorities. We looked for competency based L&D programs at the collective level and for competency based plans at the individual level that took into account Agency business priorities, that translated these into competency requirements, and that cascaded these into selection, development and performance management

processes. We also looked for retention, succession planning, and mentoring programs that would enable the Agency to fulfill its objective of “maintaining and transmitting corporate memory as an essential part of Agency renewal”.

Further, we looked for competence in additional area or the HR regime like the ability to delivers bilingual service, that management has the ability to administer collective agreements, etc.

4.3 What the Review Team found with respect to “Competence”

The review team found that the recruitment, selection, development, promotion, and performance management processes used by the Agency are little different than the processes it used when it was part of the core public service. Significant progress has been made by the Agency in streamlining and making more efficient some of these processes (principally in staffing) but the *professional techniques* used by the Agency have not kept pace with organizations elsewhere in the federal jurisdiction and in the private sector that have developed and applied integrated, competency based HR processes. The Agency has not developed and implemented the systems and programs it needs to fully address its value of competency.

The review found:

- That the Agency does not yet have in place all of the corporate, workforce-level HR systems and processes that it needs to ensure that its workforce is appropriately skilled, knowledgeable and competent to perform the work and deliver the services of the Agency. Progress is being made. At the time of our review, a corporate learning function was just being built. A Director of L&D had just been hired with a mandate to develop an overall corporate learning strategy. Some corporate programs that instil competence as a value have been implemented. For example, corporate programs have been launched in such areas as Orientation and Alternative Dispute Resolution.
- The Agency does not yet approach the value of competency in an integrated or systematic manner (for example, it does not use competency-based models and competency based techniques to integrate its recruitment, selection, promotion, development, and performance management processes). Some competency profiles have been developed in some communities (e.g. the Heritage presentation community). This is not to say that competency models are the sole or only legitimate means of instilling this value in the HR regime of Agency or that progress has not been made. The Agency has used other mechanisms to embed the notion of competence, including generic skill outlines and common standards for selection in jobs. At this point, the recruitment, selection, promotion, development, and performance management processes of the Agency (the processes that are most associated with competence) are not integrated.

- That staffing in the Agency remains at this point largely a position-specific activity but is evolving towards more collective processes (e.g., the use of pre-qualified pools for certain levels like PM 06 and PCX and the increasing usage of generic skill sets for similar work across the agency.)
- That performance assessment is sporadically done within the Agency and that as a consequence of this the Agency is not able to collectively monitor or manage the competency development needs of its workforce or, to consistently address competency development needs or career planning at either a program level or at an individual level.
- That there are few comprehensive or significant succession planning, formal mentoring, or retention programs yet in place that would allow the agency to preserve, maintain and transmit its corporate memory. Some early work has been done (e.g., functional leads initiative) to address knowledge transfer and succession planning for some key functions.

These observations are reinforced by the findings of the Parks Canada Employee Survey which state:

“Formal evaluations of performance do not seem to be performed on a regular basis, given that almost half of employees report that they have not had an evaluation in the previous 12 months.”

“Training and, to a larger extent, career development are among the greatest concerns reported by employees in the survey. On the positive side, most employees say that they get the training that they need to do their job and barriers to career development are no more prominent at Parks Canada than they are in the Public Service. On the other hand, opportunities to develop and apply skills needed to advance one’s career, opportunities for advancement; on-the-job coaching and assistance with career planning and identification of learning needs are all weaker areas at Parks Canada. Only 44 to 54 per cent of employees indicated that these are in place and results are lower across the board than in the Public Service (where numbers also were not particularly positive). Further, only one in four employees at Parks Canada report the existence of a training plan. These fairly negative results suggest a need for improvement in the way that employee competence is supported at Parks Canada”.

This is not to say that the Agency does not value competence or that its workforce is not competent. Quite clearly the Agency values knowledge and ability, and its people are in fact capable and dedicated. The Agency does in fact recruit, select and promote employees on the basis of competency. Its managers are trained to select for competency; corporate opportunities are available for employees to further develop their skills, and the agency is well able to serve its clientele and in the official language of its clientele. The essence of our observations on this matter is that the Agency does not yet have in place

systems and processes that would allow it to focus and leverage its investments in competency building in a corporate, structured and systematic way.

Selection processes aside, the review found that the Agency demonstrates “competency” in a variety of areas. The review finds highly experienced, “competent” staff heading up the various HR functions. The review finds that the Agency is well able to deliver services to the public bilingually, and that the public generally rates the quality of service provided by Parks Canada staff quite highly (an indication of competence). The review notes that employees report in the Parks Canada Employee Survey that supervisors are well versed in the administration of collective agreements. However, the same survey reports concerns about an absence of on-the-job coaching and developmental opportunities that affect competence levels.

5.0

HR Value: “Respect”

5.1 “Respect” defined

Parks Canada defines “**Respect**” as: Mutual trust, recognition of accomplishment, self-esteem and regard for others.

- Respect individual differences.
- Recognize individual and team contributions.
- Respect the need to balance work and personal lives.
- Recognize employees’ rights to union membership, representation and participation in union activities.
- Respect and apply principles concerning official languages, employment equity, privacy, health and safety, protection from harassment and discrimination.

5.2 Where the Review Team looked for evidence of “Respect”

In order to examine “Respect”, the review team looked for evidence to suggest that the opinions of individuals were valued. We looked for formal and informal recognition of individual and team contributions. We looked for evidence that the Agency encourages a positive balance in the personal and work lives of its staff. We looked for evidence that the Agency respects employees’ rights to union membership and representation. We looked for evidence of application of Agency concern for matters of official languages, employment equity, privacy, health and safety, protection from harassment and discrimination

5.3 What the Review Team found with respect to “Respect”

With respect to “Respect”, the review team found a high degree of consistency and a high degree of attention paid to this value by Parks Canada. We found:

- That the Agency and its leadership (particularly top leadership) are highly active both formally and informally in celebrating the accomplishments of the Agency’s people

both as teams and individuals. We found the Agency has built a multi-faceted Rewards and Recognition Program that includes:

- A CEO Award of Excellence that operates on a structured and continual (rather than annual) basis.
- A CEO People Management Award
- Long Service Awards (for 15, 25 and 35 years of service)
- Appreciation Awards (available to any manager to recognize the accomplishments of staff.)
- Functional Community awards (intended to recognize excellence within communities such as Heritage Presentation, Historic Sites, and Human Resources.)
- That Agency management has taken a keen interest in Recognition and that the Agency works hard “at catching people doing things right.” In our review we noted several examples of senior management informally acknowledging and publicly celebrating the achievements of staff at all levels through newsletters and other vehicles.
- That the Agency clearly recognizes and respects employees’ rights to union membership, representation and participation in union activities. We found a well organized and well structured approach to Labour Management Consultation and an active LMC environment both nationally and in the field. We found no evidence to suggest that employees are constrained from seeking representation or are constrained from participating in union activities. We found in conducting this review that we were encouraged to speak directly and confidentially with senior union officials, and we found that the employee focus groups arranged for us for this review included a good representation of employees active in their union who were quite willing to voice their opinions to us. The Parks Canada Employee survey reports, *“Parks Canada employees appear confident that fairness and respect exist within their individual work unit, but are less confident that it permeates the overall organization. Most employees feel that everyone in their work unit is accepted equally, that their supervisor treats them with respect, and that their supervisor understands and respects the provisions of the collective agreement. The respect of supervisors is by far the most positive aspect of working life, according to a large number of staff. In fact, supervisors’ respect of the collective agreement is viewed more positively than in the Public Service.”*

However, while employees were willing to speak candidly and openly to the review team, employees do not necessarily feel that they can do so using the processes of the

Agency without fear of reprisal. As the Parks Canada Employee survey reports, only half of the employees in the Agency believe that they can:

“initiate a formal redress process without fear of reprisal, the result is nonetheless disturbing, given that only one in two employees believe this to be the case and that the ability to initiate formal redress is another key driver of overall satisfaction with the job. These findings point to some weakness related to the HR values of respect and fairness.”

- That the Agency has a highly organized and highly active Occupational Health and Safety Program and that this receives considerable management time and attention. This program (overseen by a National Occupational Health and Safety Policy Committee) contains a well structured policy that includes the following components: leadership, planning, implementation, monitoring and recording, review, correction and continuous improvement. The program includes a well articulated prevention dimension. The Parks Canada Employee Survey reports that:

“The organization is seen to be strongly committed to occupational health and safety. As noted, most employees agree that their supervisors are committed to this issue. Furthermore, fully two-thirds of the employees have taken occupational health and safety training in the last three years, and most are satisfied with this training. Finally, most employees know where to go for help with health or safety issues at work.”

- That the Agency has developed and implemented its own Dispute Resolution System that includes an Independent Third Party Review (ITPR) dimension.
- That with respect to employment equity, the Agency has completed a workforce analysis that shows:
 - That Aboriginal Peoples are well represented in the workforce of the Agency
 - That Persons with Disabilities are appropriately represented in the Agency;
 - That Women are somewhat underrepresented
 - That Visible Minorities are underrepresented in semi-skilled manual worker and professional occupations
- That the Agency has conducted an Employment Systems Review and found no real systemic barriers to the employment of members of employment equity groups although there are practical difficulties in attracting members of these groups due to the seasonal nature of a large component of the workforce and due to the remote locations of much of the work of the Agency. Nonetheless, the Agency has

committed itself to narrowing the representation gaps for Women and Visible Minorities as best it can acknowledge these practical challenges.

- That the CEO and Chief HR Officer have committed that 25% of all new hires will be drawn from Employment Equity groups.
- That with respect to official languages, the Agency has met the requirements of the Official Languages Act. (See OL Annual Review Report 2001/02) No significant gaps in compliance, capability or service were identified. The Agency ensures respect for official languages by designating a senior executive to champion official languages (in recent years, the CAO Strategy and Plans and presently, the Chief Human Resources Officer.) In national committees, the Agency encourages participants to speak in the language of their choice and the responder can also speak in the language of their choice. At Management Committee, Official Languages requirements are routinely considered in decision-making and Official Languages issues brought to the table receive serious consideration. Agency budgets for translation are significant and allow for easy access to information in both languages. The Agency web site (parkscanada.gc.ca or parcscanada.gc.ca) was developed to meet the requirements of the policy on the use of the two official languages on electronic networks. All content was produced in separate English and French versions. There were more than 2.5 million visits to the website. Visitor Information Surveys are conducted at 114 eligible locations over a repeating five year cycle. This survey provides an ongoing client feedback system regarding language of service. The number of public complaints related to official languages has been minimal. Some field units have received awards from the Commissioner of Official Languages.

A large majority of employees believe that the right to use either official language in the workplace is respected. As the Parks Canada Employee Survey reports, *“most employees agree that they are free to use either official language in meetings and training. A total of 85 per cent agree that training offered by the Agency is available in the official language of their choice, and a similar proportion agree that they feel free to use the official language of their choice in meetings in their work unit (87 per cent) or outside their work unit (81 per cent). Questions regarding training that is offered in the language of choice and use of language in meetings (inside and outside the work unit) are answered similarly.”*

- That with respect to harassment and discrimination, the Parks Canada Employee Survey reports *“Although the reported incidence of harassment and discrimination at Parks Canada is marginally lower than reported in the Public Service, nonetheless, one in five to one in seven employees did report one or the other. Two-thirds of Parks Canada employees are satisfied with the way their work unit responds to matters related to harassment and discrimination (which is higher than satisfaction reported in the Public Service overall), and a slightly greater proportion agrees that the Agency works hard to create a workplace which prevents harassment and discrimination.”*

The review team concludes that the Agency has been effective and consistent in observing the HR value of Respect.

6.0

HR Value: “Fairness”

6.1 “Fairness” defined

Parks Canada defines “**Fairness**” as: Activities and decisions are just, timely, impartial and objective.

- Equitable treatment of employees both individually and collectively while respecting diversity.
- Equitable processes supported with attitudes, acts and decisions that are well reasoned.
- Open and honest communication of practices and decisions.
- Staffing decisions and other human resources practices are free from political influence and other forms of patronage.

6.2 Where the Review Team looked for evidence of “Fairness”

“Fairness” is a difficult value for the review team to comment on. It is difficult to both observe and to measure and it is a value that is relative and perceptual. What seems “fair” to one person may not appear to be so to another. Thus determining whether the Agency consistently applies Fairness as a value is subjective and relative, depending on context, circumstance and the perspectives of those involved.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, we sought to examine “Fairness” in the following ways:

- Do the HR policies and procedures of the Agency clearly articulate roles, responsibilities, and authorities?
- Are there recourse processes available in the Agency for those who believe that “unfairness” has occurred?
- Is staffing in the Agency free from political influence and other forms of patronage?
- Are staffing and promotion processes seen by stakeholders to be fair, open and consistent? Is diversity respected in the staffing process?

- Do employees in the Agency *perceive* fairness in the way that the Agency is managed?
- Are opportunities for learning and development open to all employees on an equitable basis?
- Are employees performing similar work in different locations paid equitably?
- Are supervisor and managers perceived to be fair in their interpretation and application of collective agreements?

6.3 What the Review Team found with respect to “Fairness”

The review finds that the Agency is consistent in observing the value of “Fairness.” Specifically, the review finds:

- That the HR policy framework of the Agency is reasonably comprehensive and that the Agency has worked and continues to work to fill in the gaps in its policy framework. At its inception as an Agency, Parks Canada largely “borrowed” the HR policy framework in place in the core public service and then worked to tailor that framework to its own requirements. The policy framework is an important determinant of fairness in that HR policies identify the positions and practices of the Agency, set out roles and responsibilities for the implementation of policy, and define expected outcomes. Policies provide a standard by which members of the Agency can judge whether due process has been followed and whether intended outcomes have been achieved, in other words whether “fairness” has been observed. In our work, the HR policies (e.g., staffing, official languages, occupational health and safety, etc.) that review team examined do provide clarity on process, roles, responsibilities and authorities and meet the requirements for “fairness” in terms of providing structure. The review team acknowledges that there is still work to do on the policy development front in areas such as learning and development and classification.
- That there are many fora available to members of the Agency at which issues of fairness can be raised and tabled (labour management consultation committees, occupational health and safety committees, etc.) and that there are well developed redress mechanisms in place that members of the Agency can use to test fairness (grievance processes, ITPRs, etc.).
- That there is no evidence to suggest political influence in the staffing processes of the Agency. We did however hear from front line employees in the field some allegations of bureaucratic patronage in the appointment and recall of seasonal and casual employees. However, the review team has no means of substantiating these

allegations, or their extent. On the subject of “fairness” in staffing, the Parks Canada Employee Survey had this to say, *“Close to half of all employees (48 per cent) have participated in a competition in the last three years. Of those who have participated in a competition, over half agree that these competitions were run in a fair manner. Just over six in ten (62 per cent) feel that the competitions were fair, while one-third (32 per cent) believe that these were unfair, and the balance (six per cent) do not know. The perception of fairness in competitions at Parks Canada is similar to that found in the broader Public Service.”*

- That with respect to “equitable treatment of employees both individually and collectively while respecting diversity” the Agency has taken active steps to ensure equitable treatment of both official languages and to ensure the equitable treatment of members of employment equity target groups in staffing processes.
- That staff perceptions of “fairness” are mixed. The Parks Canada Employee Survey reports that *“Parks Canada employees appear confident that fairness and respect exist within their individual work unit, but are less confident that it permeates the overall organization.*

Employees’ general trust in the organization to treat them fairly is not very high, both overall and in comparison to the Public Service (by 20 per cent, the largest single difference between Parks Canada and the Public Service).

Most elements of the supervisor relationship are also seen in a positive light, which contributes positively to quality of work life. These results all point to a high level of respect and fairness promoted at Parks Canada.”

- That there appear to be concerns about equitable opportunity for learning and development as the Parks Canada Employee Survey states, “Career development (and the part that supervisors play in helping to plan careers), as well as some key elements of fairness and respect (related to perceptions of fairness and consistency of treatment), as well as the perceived openness to employee feedback are much weaker areas.”
- That employees performing similar work in different locations are not yet necessarily paid equitably due to delays in implementing a large scale, national classification review. (Implementation was delayed by the need to replace the UCS as the job evaluation plan and subsequently by a public service wide freeze on salary changes as a result of reclassification). However this national review is now well down the road of implementation and it will address and resolve any classification anomalies and related pay anomalies. In our discussions we found that management and staff were supportive of the objectives of the national classification review but were critical of pace of progress on this initiative.

- That supervisors and managers are perceived to be fair in their interpretation and application of collective agreements. In fact, this was highlighted in the Parks Canada Employee Survey that stated, *“Most employees feel that everyone in their work unit is accepted equally, that their supervisor treats them with respect, and that their supervisor understands and respects the provisions of the collective agreement. The respect of supervisors is by far the most positive aspect of working life, according to a large number of staff. In fact, supervisors’ respect of the collective agreement is viewed more positively than in the Public Service.”*

7.0

HR Operating Principles

This chapter presents the review team's findings with respect to the HR Operating Principles, those principles being

Accountability:	Answerability for carrying out responsibilities in accordance with our HR values and operating principles.
Efficiency:	Making the best possible use of human, time and financial resources.
Effectiveness:	Achieving the expected results
Consistency:	Acting in a similar manner in similar circumstances.
Adaptability:	Adjusting to circumstances while encouraging innovation and creativity.
Simplicity:	Making things as uncomplicated as possible.
Openness:	Ensuring straightforward and honest communication.

7.1 Accountability

The review team finds:

That the use of HR principles and operating values as an accountability mechanism is well entrenched in Parks Canada. We found that the consideration of HR values and principles has gained much “traction” as a key part of collective and individual management decision-making and that generally the use of HR principles and operating values have become well entrenched at middle and senior management levels of the organization. We find the acceptance and implementation of values and operating principles as an accountability tool to be even more pronounced in decision review processes where contentious decisions are subjected to *ex post facto* scrutiny. We found among HR professionals that the values and principles serve as a constant reference point in the development of policies, the design of HR programs, and in the application and implementation of policies and programs. At the employee level, we found that

employees routinely use the HR values and operating principles to hold their supervisors and managers to account for their decisions and actions. For example, we found that the Agency has embedded accountability in its Accountability Framework for People Management and we found that the conduct of the Parks Canada Employee Survey to be an exercise in accountability. On the other hand, while the use of values and principles as accountability mechanism may be well-accepted “accountability” itself as a principle is not yet fully entrenched. For example, the single greatest indicator that work remains to be done on “accountability” is that a comprehensive and consistently applied performance management process is not universally in place in the Agency.

7.2 Efficiency

The review team finds:

That the Agency fully embraces the principle of efficiency (i.e., making best possible use of human, time and financial resources). Whether it does so as a matter of principle or by virtue of necessity is a moot point. We find the organization to be cost conscious and extremely careful in investing its human and financial resources. When the Agency was set up as a stand alone organization, it was not able to bring with it sufficient corporate HR staff or corporate HR systems and it was not funded to build the corporate HR infrastructure that a stand-alone organization requires. Additionally, on-going program funding shortages mean that the organization must continue to be careful in investing its human and financial resources. Further development of the HR regime could mean diverting resources that would otherwise be directed to the delivery of services to the public and to the presentation and preservation of historical and natural assets. For this reason, it appears to the review team that many corporate HR functions are “thinly” staffed in comparison with comparable functions in other organizations outside of the Agency. Consequently, the Agency has not been able to develop its HR regime as fully or as quickly as it might have wished. Compensating for this perhaps, the review team noted an exceptionally high and generous investment of senior executive time and involvement in discussing and setting HR priorities, and in the planning, development and roll out of HR policies and programs. To the review team, this demonstrates commitment by the Agency to efficiency in making the maximum investment that it can make within its limited resources to develop its HR regime.

7.3 Effectiveness

The review team finds:

That there is little basis on which to comment definitively on “effectiveness” (achieving the expected results) as much of the HR regime has only recently been implemented, or is in the planning stages, or is now in the process of roll-out (including HR strategic framework, learning and development, orientation, alternative dispute resolution, national classification review, etc.) It does however appear to the review team the Agency has

been highly effective where it has been able to invest time and attention in the development of its HR regime (e.g., Occupational Health and Safety, Employee Orientation Program). In these areas, feedback that this review examined from Agency members has been extremely positive. The exception is the National Classification Review that has been cited by management and staff alike as unduly slow and problematic. The review team however understands the extenuating circumstances that have affected the National Classification Review (i.e., the need to replace the Universal Classification System as the job evaluation plan and delays occasioned by the recent public service wide freeze on salary changes through reclassification).

7.4 Consistency

“Consistency” is defined as acting in a similar manner in similar circumstances. It is not within the mandate of this review to question the Agency’s choice of values or principles but perhaps we might be allowed the following *obiter dictum*: To our way of thinking, “consistency” is an outcome rather than a principle. Consistency does not guide or inform the behaviour of either the individual or the collective; rather it is the product of a well developed policy framework, and the result of the application of processes and precedent. As we said earlier in this report, to have meaning in the world of work, values and principles require context and circumstance, and their application requires the exercise of judgement and interpretation by people involved. Inevitably, circumstance and judgement introduce variability (inconsistency) in actual results as well as variability (inconsistency) in how those involved perceive the results. In our opinion, variability and differences in results (even in similar circumstances) will naturally occur, are to be expected and in any event, are unavoidable. We would be concerned if “consistency” (acting in a similar manner in similar circumstances) were to override adaptability (which could be defined as thinking and acting in new and innovative ways in old and familiar circumstances). We would also be concerned if “consistency” were to replace judgement and discretion in decision-making, even in similar circumstances. “Consistency”, like “fairness,” is made conspicuous by its absence, not by its presence.

Having said this, the review finds:

That the Agency does strive to be consistent in the development and application of its HR regime and that it makes efforts, “to act in a similar manner in similar circumstances.” This is evident in several ways. The most notable effort to achieve consistency is the National Classification Review the purpose of which is to bring national consistency to the structure, organization and valuing of work across the Agency. The Agency also seeks to achieve consistency in its HR regime through adoption of an HR Strategic Framework that brings consistent and integrated direction to the development and implementation of HR policies and programs. The HR policy framework itself is a major tool used to achieve consistency. The Agency also works to achieve consistency through its various decision review and dispute resolution processes, a principle objective of which

consistency in decisions in similar circumstances. The Agency works to achieve consistency through the collection and application of precedent in such areas as labour relations. Through various recognition and communications vehicles (awards, newsletters, intranet site), Agency leadership communicates a consistent message about what is important and what the Agency values. Lastly, through orientation and training and various other learning initiatives both local and national, the Agency reinforces consistency.

7.5 Adaptability

Adaptability is defined as “Adjusting to circumstances while encouraging innovation and creativity”. The review finds:

That the results for “Adaptability” are mixed. Parks Canada has taken advantage of Agency status to re-engineer its staffing and resourcing processes and to adapt them to its requirements (e.g. adaptations such as competence as opposed to merit, changes in the concept of area of competition, etc). And the Agency has consolidated grievance and appeals processes where possible (e.g., ITPR).

However, the ability of the Agency to innovate in collective bargaining and to develop terms and conditions of employment tailored to the needs of the Agency is limited and constrained by the requirement to have its bargaining mandates approved by the Treasury Board, by its need to maintain comparability to the core public service, and by the requirement that the Agency self-fund the costs of any new terms and conditions of employment that represent significant departures from terms and conditions of employment that prevail in the core public service. The review finds that the constraints on the Agency’s ability to bargain place it at a severe disadvantage in exercising the principle of “adaptability.”

7.6 Simplicity

“Simplicity” is defined as making things as uncomplicated as possible. The review finds:

That the Agency has consistently worked at achieving simplicity and has been highly successful in streamlining many aspects of its HR regime. The most noteworthy achievement in “simplification” has been the unification of employee representation under a single bargaining agent (Public Service Alliance of Canada) within two components (Transport Component and National Component of PSAC). This represents a vast reduction in administrative complexity compared to the multiple bargaining agent, multiple bargaining unit environment that existed in Parks Canada prior to it becoming an Agency. As previously discussed, the Agency has also made significant progress in unwinding the administrative complexities of the staffing processes that it was formerly

obliged to follow when Parks Canada was part of the core public service. Also as previously discussed, the Agency has made significant process in simplifying, consolidating, and in some case “informalizing” its dispute resolution processes (e.g., introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution, Independent Third Party Review).

7.7 Openness

Openness is defined as ensuring straightforward and honest communication. Note that the Agency incorporates “honest” in its definition of “openness.” This being the case, the review team believes that there is a strong correlation between “openness” and “trust”. The review found that the Agency has structures in place to facilitate open communication and dialogue (like the Parks Canada Employee Survey), and has mechanisms to ensure an honest review of decisions (e.g., labour management consultation, ITPR, and Alternative Dispute Resolution). But we found that many employees do not perceive these processes lead to real openness.

The Parks Canada Employee Survey reports that “employees’ general trust in the organization to treat them fairly is not very high, both overall and in comparison to the Public Service (by 20 per cent, the largest single difference between Parks Canada and the Public Service).” The survey goes on to state that “perceived openness to employee feedback are much weaker areas.”

If “openness” is tied to “trust,” as the review team believes it to be, then there is work yet to be done in implementing this principle. The Parks Canada Employee Survey reports that only “two-thirds (65 per cent) ... trust Parks Canada to treat them fairly”.

This concludes our review of the consistency of the Agency’s human resources regime with the Agency’s values and principles.

The appendix that follows lists the names and titles of persons in Parks Canada who were interviewed for the purposes of this review. This list does not include the names of participants in the focus groups conducted as part of this review.

Appendix

The persons listed below (in alphabetical order by last name) were the principal interviewees in this review. Some of these individuals were interviewed on multiple occasions on different aspects of the HR regime. In some cases, principal interviewees invited members of their staff to participate in interviews with the review team.

Barlow, Jim: Superintendent Coastal British Columbia
Bird, Chip: Superintendent, Newfoundland and Western Labrador
Borsa, Leah: ADR and Conflict Management
Bourgault, Anne Marie: Employment Equity
Brooker, Heather: President, National Component, Public Service Alliance of Canada
Cameron, Christina: DG, National Historic Sites
Chateauvert, Sylvie: Occupational Health and Safety
Claydon, Pauline: Classification
Emmett, Kathryn: Executive Director, Northern Parks
Fay, Mike: Chief Administrative Officer
Fisher, Bill: Executive Director, Mountain Region
Fortin, Gaby: DG, West and Northern Canada
Fournier, Sylvie: Manager, Operational Services National Historic Sites Branch
Gadd, Andrew: Director HR Strategy, Research and Systems
Girard, Wendy: Strategic HR Advisors Western and Northern Canada,
Girouard, Sylvain: Staffing
Godin, Denis: Strategic HR Advisor Eastern Canada
Johanson, Mart: Executive Director, Service Centres
Katz, Susan: Director, Legislation and Policy Branch
Lafontaine, Richard : Director Labour Relations, Compensation, Occupational Health Safety
Larouche, Alexandre: Senior Legal Counsel
Latourelle, Alan: Chief Executive Officer
Latreille, Michel: Chief Human Resources Officer
Lepine, Diane: Learning and Development, Performance Management, Rewards and Recognition.
Lopoukhine, Nik: DG, National Parks
Marleau, Suzanne: Director Classification and Organizational Design
Martin, Luc: Chief of Staff to the CEO
Nardi, Frank: Staffing
Perkins, Terry: Senior Financial Officer
Racette, Nicole: Director, Communications
Sheedy, Carol: DG, Eastern Canada

Stewart, Doug: Superintendent, Eastern Ontario
Tremblay, Laurent: Executive Director (Québec)
Weninger, Josie: Superintendent SouthWest NWT
Whitfield, Carol: Superintendent, Cape Breton
Whitmore, Tina: Occupational Health and Safety
Wing, Mike: President, UCTE
Wong, Mike: Executive Director, EI Branch