



WTA CODE OF CONDUCT

Recommended Best Practices for our Members

PART I

Code of Conduct for BC's Wilderness Tourism Operators

In the spirit of environmental stewardship and Reconciliation, wilderness tourism operators are adopting practices that will ensure the sustainability of the industry and the natural/cultural environment upon which wilderness tourism depends.

1. Promote Wilderness Appreciation and Enjoyment

Provide experiences that foster enjoyment, appreciation, and sensitive use of wilderness.

2. Provide Quality Guest & Employee Experiences

Meet or exceed customer expectations and provide a positive, inclusive and safe work environment.

3. Conserve Natural, Indigenous and Cultural Resources

Contribute to the ongoing vitality of valued natural resources and cultural places.

4. Adopt Environmentally Sustainable Practices

Use the best available practices for sustainable tourism, development and operation.

5. Foster Relationships with First Nations, Local Communities, Businesses and Governments

Create agreements and foster relationships that contribute to ongoing socio-economic benefit for local, regional and host communities.

6. Respect Indigenous & Cultural Values

Ensure the presentation of local traditions and practices represent authentic cultural values.

7. Marketing Responsibly

Provide accurate information that leads to realistic expectations and responsible operations.

8. Advocate for Sustainable Wilderness Tourism

Knowledgeably advocate for wilderness tourism that is sustainable—environmentally, socially and economically.

PART II

Guidelines for Practice of Code of Conduct

Section 1: Promote Wilderness Appreciation and Enjoyment

Principle

Provide experiences that foster enjoyment, appreciation, and sensitive use of wilderness.

Guidelines for Practice

- Demonstrate an informed ecological conscience
- Promote individual and collective responsibility for environmental health
- Build awareness of the natural and cultural history of the areas visited
- Acknowledge the traditional and unceded territories of the First Nations where your operations take place.
- Provide information about responsible company practices

Section 2: Provide Quality Guest & Employee Experiences

Principle

Meet or exceed customer expectations and provide a positive, inclusive and safe work environment.

Guidelines for Practice

- Foster an atmosphere of equity, diversity and inclusion
- Comply with accepted standards of practice
- Comply with national, provincial and association safety standards
- Offer engaging presentations about the heritage of areas visited, from a natural and cultural perspective that ethically share about local First Nations communities
- Support advanced education and training for staff
- Provide opportunities for feedback

Section 3: Conserve Natural, Indigenous and Cultural Resources

Principle

Contribute to the ongoing integrity of valued natural resources and cultural places.

Guidelines for Practice

- Be a steward of the environment
- Conserve the natural diversity of ecosystems
- Value and sustain current and future generations of all species
- Protect and restore wildlife habitats
- Commit to responsible and sustainable practices with respect to wildlife viewing
- Contribute directly to conservation projects
- Provide clients with opportunities to be involved in stewardship and Reconciliation activities

- Be informed about, contribute to, and if possible conduct, research that expands the knowledge base for sustainable tourism
- Avoid buying goods made from threatened or endangered species
- Support purchases of Indigenous and locally made products (that comply with the point above)
- Contribute to and advocate for the protection, enhancement and restoration of natural and cultural resources (this would include private land and businesses)

Section 4: Adopt Environmentally Sustainable Practices

Principle

Use the best available practices for sustainable tourism, development and operation.

Guidelines for Practice

- Minimize environmental footprint
- Adopt a precautionary risk management approach; be proactive rather than reactive
- Practice sustainable and efficient use of natural resources (water, food, fuel, etc.)
- Practice the 3 R's of consumption: reduce, reuse and recycle
- Follow environmentally responsible practices to dispose of waste materials
- Minimize pollution (including noise)
- Comply with federal, provincial and association regulations and practices for protection of habitat and species

Section 5: Foster Relationships with First Nations, Local Communities, Businesses and Governments

Principle

Provide ongoing socio-economic benefit for local, regional and host communities and work cooperatively towards shared stewardship goals.

Guidelines for Practice

- Work with local communities to meet local needs
- Work with First Nations, local businesses and governments towards shared stewardship goals
- Honour local practices and protocols
- Employ local people where appropriate and available
- Buy locally produced goods, food, equipment and services, wherever possible
- Educate local communities about the value of wilderness tourism

Section 6: Respect Indigenous & Cultural Values

Principle

Understand local traditions and practices and present authentic cultural values.

Guidelines for Practice

- Ensure that staff are knowledgeable and respectful of First Nations, local cultures and values

- Communicate responsibly about First Nations and local cultures to avoid stereotypes and pan-Indigenous messaging
- Employ guides and interpreters who are well versed in local cultural values
- Understand and uphold First Nations and cross cultural agreements
- Respect the cultural intellectual property of local communities
- Avoid disrupting ceremonial activities

Section 7: Market Responsibly

Principle

Provide accurate information that leads to realistic expectations.

Guidelines for Practice

- Market accurately so that visitors have realistic expectations- accurately portray products in advertising, press releases and communications
- Ensure that marketing information is consistent with responsible practices (ex wildlife viewing)

Section 8: Advocate for Sustainable Wilderness Tourism

Principle

Knowledgeably advocate for wilderness tourism that is sustainable—environmentally, socially and economically.

Guidelines for Practice

Support development and use of sector best management practices

- Use the best available practices for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable operations
- Share information about best available science and practices, acknowledging the value of traditional ecological knowledge of the local First Nations communities
- Stay informed about relevant political, land/marine management and environmental issues
- Support ongoing development of the wilderness tourism knowledge base
- Participate in policy development and initiatives
- Seek innovative solutions and approaches
- Show leadership by honoring commitments
- Make a commitment to Reconciliation and implement [Call to Action 92](#) into business practices

Implementation

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually at the WTA Annual General Meeting, revised as required, and re-ratified by the board of directors.

Last updated July 2023