

Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides

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Mark Young
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Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada
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March 9, 2015

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter to the Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides (ACSKG), dated February 2, 2015.

The ACSKG has not received or discovered any specific reference to guide/client ratios within the minutes of the meetings you refer to in your letter. Additionally, we have not found any minutes of consultations referencing wilderness first aid requirements for guides licensed by Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (PRNPR). As a result, ACSKG directors now consider that critical aspects of PRNPR's current operating standards have been implemented without a public record of ACSKG consultation. Consequently, ACSKG directors consider PRNPR's current operating standards exist without having undergone sufficient consideration to relevant industry standards affecting visitor safety.

ACSKG directors had long assumed that PRNPR was upholding the same high baseline standards for licensed kayak outfitters that Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve has maintained for over twenty years. Perhaps our original assumption was incorrect, or perhaps PRNPR's standards were somehow altered without a record of ACSKG consultation.

Regardless, at the moment ACSKG directors have little desire to further investigate the historical origins of PRNPR's current standards. Instead, we believe it is in everyone's best interest to look forward and proceed transparently while thoroughly reviewing PRNPR's sea kayak guide requirements and operating standards.

Transparency is very important to the ACSKG. In accordance with this principle, a record of our correspondence to PRNPR is available online: www.acskg.ca/prnpr

In order to discuss guide and outfitter safety issues with representatives of Parks Canada and the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of British Columbia (SKGABC), two ACSKG directors are preparing to attend the meeting arranged for March 27, 2015 in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

So that we may utilize our limited meeting time most effectively, we ask that two essential items of business are confirmed by email at least one week prior to the meeting, by March 20, 2015:

First, we ask for assurance that the meeting minutes will be released for public record once PRNPR, the SKGABC and the ACSKG have all been provided with opportunities to correct and amend the meeting minutes, and all parties are satisfied that the approved minutes accurately represent the meeting. We understand this will require the SKGABC's prior approval. In order for ACSKG directors to attend the meeting and maintain our principles, we ask that you seek the SKGABC's approval in advance and provide the ACSKG with confirmation of this by March 20, 2015. Thank you.

Second, if there is *any* record of ACSKG consultation with PRNPR specifically concerning guide to client ratios, or first aid requirements for guides operating in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, we ask that this record is provided to the ACSKG at least one week prior to our March 27 meeting. If no such record is provided, we ask that Parks Canada discontinues referencing ACSKG consultation in regards to these specific operating standards.

ACSKG directors would like to initially submit the following items for inclusion in the meeting agenda:

- Our primary agenda is to inform Parks Canada that directors of the Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides are concerned because we believe the operating standards currently approved by Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada increase the potential for another incident similar to British Columbia's 1993 guided kayak tour fatality.
- We suggest a brief review of the Transportation Safety Board Marine Investigation Report for this 1993 incident, available at: www.acskg.ca/tsb
- We suggest discussion on how inappropriate guide to client ratios, partially resulting from group separation, likely contributed to the fatal outcome of this incident.
- We suggest brief discussion on rapid onset immersion hypothermia. (The condition that is perhaps most likely to kill capsized kayakers in the North Pacific.)
- We suggest discussion on how having two certified guides per trip will:
 - Enhance each guide's ability to prevent incidents.
 - Enhance each guide's ability to appropriately respond to incidents.
 - Increase opportunities for assistant guides to gain valuable experience.
- We suggest discussion on how PRNPR's visitor safety would be appropriately enhanced by adopting the same baseline standards long upheld in Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve.
- We suggest discussion regarding PRNPR approving the SKGABC-ACSKG Sea Kayak Guide Certification & Water Classification Equivalence document available at: www.acskg.ca/equivalence
- We suggest brief discussion on Parks Canada's goal to increase visitation and how this national mandate may affect implementing new and appropriate operating standards for Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.
- We suggest a brief discussion regarding aspects of Canada's 2015 federal election and how the election may affect PRNPR's ability to implement new and appropriate operating standards in a timely manner.

Thank you for arranging this meeting and for offering, on behalf of Parks Canada, to partially reimburse ACSKG director's travel expenses.

Sincerely,

Gord Pincock

Gord Pincock
ACSKG Director

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