

Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides

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Jim Morgan
Superintendent
Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada
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October 10, 2014

Dear Mr. Morgan,

Thank you for your letter of response dated May 16, 2014.

The Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides (ACSKG) is concerned because the operating standards currently approved by Pacific Rim National Park Reserve essentially increase the potential for another incident similar to British Columbia's 1993 guided kayak tour fatality. The Transportation Safety Board Marine Investigation Report for this incident is available at: www.acskg.ca/tsb

ACSKG Directors recently completed a review of our operating standards. We are unanimous in our intention to continue upholding the same high standards the ACSKG has promoted worldwide since our 1994 inception.

Twenty years ago, Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve & Haida Heritage Site selected ACSKG standards as their baseline standard for licensed kayak tour operators. Other guide organizations selectively altered their standards to meet the higher ACSKG standards in order to operate in Gwaii Haanas. These high standards remain in effect today.

We appreciate that it would be helpful to Parks Canada if guide certifying organizations unified their standards. This was recently achieved with two of the three sea kayak guide organizations in British Columbia. The Canadian Federation of Ocean Kayak Educators (CFOKE) merged into the ACSKG in 2013. The ACSKG did not alter our operating standards in any way during the CFOKE merger.

A unification of standards between the ACSKG and the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC (SKGABC) seems unlikely, as these two remaining organizations are fundamentally different. A synopsis of the differences is available online: www.acskg.ca/synopsis

Some motivation may be required in order for the SKGABC to raise their standards to a level equivalent to ACSKG standards. For operating standards within Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, the motivation would most appropriately come from Parks Canada itself.

The SKGABC has a long history of raising their standards to ACSKG levels in order to operate within another National Park on the coast of British Columbia. Meanwhile, the ACSKG has no history of selectively altering our operating standards anywhere on Earth. ACSKG standards are principled and firm, yet also entirely attainable and sustainable.

A transition to higher operating standards may be initially awkward or contentious for a few existing tour operators. However, the long-term result of a successful transition to higher standards would provide enhanced risk management for countless future visitors to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

Thank you for your attention to this visitor safety issue. The ACSKG remains available for consultation during Parks Canada's process of re-evaluating appropriate kayak tour operator standards for Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

Sincerely,

Gord Pincock

Gord Pincock
ACSKG Director