Results at a Glance

Evaluation of the Law Enforcement Program

Objective and Scope

As required by Treasury Board, an evaluation of Parks Canada's Law Enforcement Program must take place every five years. This is the second evaluation of the Law Enforcement Program, with the last having been completed in 2017.

While the program's first evaluation focused on issues related to the program's relevance, alignment with government priorities and achievement of outputs and outcomes, the current evaluation focuses on program level outcomes. Its objective is to assess the performance, coherence, and efficiency of the Law Enforcement Program, taking into account activities and results generated between 2016-17 and 2020-21. The evaluation is guided by the following questions:

Performance

Is the Law Enforcement Program achieving its intended results?

Coherence

To what extent does the Law Enforcement Program leverage external relationships?

Efficiency

To what extent does the Law Enforcement Program deliver results in an efficient way?

Key Findings

Performance

In analyzing the achievement of performance based expectations, evidence illustrates that compliance with law enforcement directives and operating procedures is high, but alignment with program outcomes could be strengthened.

Further, some evidence shows that the response to incidents is appropriate and timely; however, performance data for this outcome was not available.

Evidence also shows that a comprehensive system is in place to track law enforcement activities, and this information is used in priority-setting with field units.

Lastly, the evaluation found that information-sharing practices are in place but could be further formalised. The implementation of intelligence-driven enforcement is in early stages.

Coherence

Parks Canada's Law Enforcement Branch collaborates with a wide array of federal, provincial and municipal law enforcement entities. These partnerships occur both formally (via memorandum of understanding or agreements) and informally.

Generally, roles and responsibilities are clear between Parks Canada and partner agencies, both in terms of written agreements and in day-to-day interactions that are guided by common understanding and built relations between law enforcement personnel. Evidence showed that enhanced reciprocation of resources with external partners could help to further strengthen these relationships.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Parks Canada Agency, as guardians of the national parks, the national historic sites and the national marine conservation areas of Canada, is required to ensure compliance with a number of acts and regulations. These include the Canada National Parks Act, the National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Parks Act and the Rouge National Urban Park Act. The Agency is committed to protecting natural and cultural resources and providing high quality visitor experiences in the national heritage places it administers.

Since its inception in May 2008, the Agency has used its dedicated Law Enforcement Branch (LEB) to deliver law enforcement services to field units in support of the Parks Canada mandate.

A team of professional and highly trained park wardens are peace officers within jurisdictional boundaries and have the powers, duties, and protection provided by law to act as peace officers.

In March 2022, there were approximately 100 park wardens and park warden supervisors in the LEB. In delivering enforcement services to Parks Canada's 33 field units, park wardens strive to protect natural and cultural resources and maintain public safety to ensure high quality visitor experiences.

Efficiency

Findings from multiple lines of evidence showed that while program expenditures have grown, additional resources and technological enhancements were seen as needed, both by program staff and those receiving law enforcement services.

Evidence further showed that access to data has allowed for greater efficiency in annual priority-setting. There are a number of best practices that could inform the application of emerging technology moving forward.

Recommendation	Management Response
Recommendation 1: In order to strengthen the monitoring and communication of program results, the Vice-President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation, should identify key performance indicators and regularly report on the activities of the Law Enforcement Branch, linking these activities to progress towards the achievement of program outcomes.	Agreed. Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate, in collaboration with Strategic Policy and Planning, will identify performance indicators, and will regularly report on activities and outcomes. 1.1 Develop a logic model that identifies activities, outcomes, and key performance indicators: September 2023 1.2 Develop an approach for regular reporting, e.g., through the Performance Information Profile or the Law Enforcement National Reporting Summary: November 2023
Recommendation 2: The Vice-President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation, should explore additional ways to strengthen and enhance external partnerships, with consideration given to first reviewing all existing external partnerships at the national and regional levels in order to identify where new partnerships might be needed and, secondly, providing greater reciprocity to partner organizations, where possible.	Agreed. The Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate will explore ways to strengthen and enhance external partnerships for law enforcement. 2.1 Review and catalogue existing external partnerships: June 2023 2.2 Conduct a gap analysis and prioritize law enforcement partner agreement requirements: December 2023
Recommendation 3: The Vice-President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation, in coordination with the Senior Vice-President, Operations, the Vice-President, External Relations and Visitor Experience, and the Chief Information Officer, should formalise an Agency-wide approach to remotely-piloted aircraft systems, with consideration given to establishing the governance of decision-making and the sharing of resources and technical support between the Law Enforcement Branch and field units.	Agreed. The Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate will work collaboratively with Operations and other key stakeholders to formalize an Agency-wide approach to remotely-piloted aircraft systems. 3.1 Establish RPAS working group that will work to develop a governance model and an updated directive for remotely-piloted aircraft systems: September 2023 3.2 Develop an updated directive for remotely-piloted aircraft systems: March 2025