REVIEW OF SIGN GUIDELINES AND MANUALS WITHIN THE CANADIAN PARKS COUNCIL

2019

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Introduction

In the interest of creating formal guidance on park signage, Ontario Parks put forward a request for information to Canadian Parks Council members in the summer of 2018. Park agencies were asked whether they had a manual or similar guidance for symbols and sign specifications. Several responses were received and are outlined in the following document.

Responses vary from agency to agency based on their environment, policy and legislation. Please be advised that not all details are provided in this document. One should contact the respective agency to obtain further information.

Ontario Parks would like to thank the park agencies that provided responses to our inquiry. We hope that this information will prove valuable.

Overview of Jurisdictional Scan Results

Table 1. Summary table for each of the responding agencies' guidance on signage.

Agency	Guidance?	Details	Contact Information
Ontario Parks	No	- No guidance or manual for park signage - History of information sharing between Ontario Parks and Parks Canada from 1980s-2000s, including Parks Canada manuals. - Inconsistencies across the province in sign color, symbol use, and wording.	Amanda Schroeder Policy Development Intern Amanda.Schroeder@ontario.ca
Alberta Parks	Yes	- Sign manual finalized in 2010. - Features sign specifications and a symbol set based on universal symbols. - Includes specifications used for: - Identification signs - Guidance signs - Education signs - Park Boundaries - Orienteering signs - Colors are used to convey meaning for signs - Font developed to increase readability and accessibility	Chantal Danylyshen Acting Wayfinding Specialist ABParkSigns@gov.ab.ca
Manitoba Parks	Yes	- Have directives and sign manual governing the use of signs, including: - On-site signs - Interpretive signs and exhibits - Trailhead structures and signs - Commercial signs - Features symbol set and sign specifications - Signage specific to a beach safety program	Kelly-Anne Richmond Manager, Planning & Protected Areas Kelly-Anne.Richmond@gov.mb.ca

Agency	Guidance?	Details	Contact Information
Nova Scotia Parks	Yes	• Guidance on park signage • No agency-specific symbol set • Nova Scotia Parks has adopted Parks Canada's symbols	Clinton Pinks Landscape Architect Pinkscw@gov.ns.ca
Saskatchewan Parks	No	• No guidance or manual for park signage	Robin Campese Executive Director, Visitor Experiences robin.campese@gov.sk.ca
Parks Canada	Yes	• Sign manual finalized in 2017, with routine updates. Includes sign specifications, symbol set, word bank, etc. • Sign colors and shapes based on CSA Standard Z-321. • Symbols are developed through comprehension testing based on ISO standards. • Does not yet include guidance on trailhead signs or interpretive signs.	Gerald Boulet Design Advisor, Brand Experience Branch gerry.boulet@pc.gc.ca

Ontario Parks

Presently, Ontario Parks does not have a sign manual or policy guidance on park signs. A recent project was launched in late 2017 to create formal guidance on Ontario Parks signage in order to address inconsistencies across the province.

Alberta Parks

Alberta Parks finalized a sign manual in 2010 to create consistency in how messages are communicated across the province. The sign manual includes content on sign standards, specifications, and symbols. Features of Alberta Park's sign guidelines include:

- Sign manual addresses signs for park identification, guidance, education, park boundaries, and orienteering.
- Standards on color, typography, identifiers, symbols and grid formats.
- Color to indicate the meaning of different messages:
    - Blue for permissive
    - Red for prohibited
    - Yellow for warnings
- Specific fonts for increased readability and accessibility
- Symbol set based on universal symbols
- Plan and program management

Manitoba Parks

Manitoba Sustainable Development has policies and a provincial park sign manual to govern the use and maintenance of signs in parks. Multiple policies provide details on interpretive signs, trailhead signs, on-site signs, and commercial signs. Other features include:

- Sign specifications and building materials
- Care and maintenance instructions
- Duty of care, including responsibility for the construction, installation, maintenance and damage reporting of each sign type.
- The approval process for commercial signs, including:
    - Acceptable color and design
    - Required font sizes for the road speed
    - Acceptable locations
- A detailed beach safety program, featuring:
    - Symbol set for the recommended, emergency, hazard and prohibition signs
    - Sign layout and design
    - Sign messaging, including French signage

Nova Scotia Parks

It was reported that Nova Scotia does not have a sign manual for provincial parks but does have some guidelines for park signage.

Later discussions with Gerald Boulet (Parks Canada) confirmed that Nova Scotia provincial parks have adopted the Parks Canada symbol set.

Saskatchewan Parks

It was reported that Saskatchewan Parks currently does not have a sign manual or internal guidance on park signs. The agency is looking to undertake a project to update signage in Saskatchewan provincial parks in the future.

Parks Canada

Signage is under the Government of Canada's federal identity program, so Parks Canada must manage their signage under this framework. Parks Canada has an in-depth sign manual called the *Parks Canada Identity Program Exterior Signage Standards and Guidelines*. Version 1 was published in March 2007 and is available online [here](#). Parks Canada employees have access to the manual through an internal website, where the document receives regular updates.

The manual provides details on most aspects of park signage except for trailhead and interpretive signage. Features include:

- Symbol set adapted from the National Standard of Canada CAN/CSA-Z321, which uses 6 classes of symbol to convey meaning using shape and color.
  - Prohibition symbols are circular with red
  - Mandatory symbols are circular and black
  - Caution symbols are triangular and yellow
  - Danger symbols are triangular and red
  - Emergency symbols are square and green
  - Guidance symbols are square and blue
- Symbols undergo intense comprehension testing based on ISO standards
  - Caution and Danger symbols must score a comprehension rate of at least 80%
  - Information symbols must score a comprehension rate of at least 60%
- Detailed sign specifications:
  - List of materials for signs and posts
  - Mounting instructions for different types of signs
  - Duty of care, including responsibilities for installation and maintenance
  - Sign sizes and dimensions
  - Sign placement based on road speeds and road types
- Layout specifications, including a grid layout and the appropriate placement of symbols, directional arrows and messaging
- A message bank for signs, including French translations