

Access and Environment Policy

The Alpine Club of Canada recognizes its responsibility to its members to encourage mountaineering activities, as hereinafter defined, and to advocate and promote the maximization of freedom of mountaineering access within Canada with sensitivity to issues affecting access including environmental concerns and legal considerations. The Alpine Club of Canada has adopted the following procedures and policies for dealing with access and environmental issues.

1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 “ACC” or “Club” means The Alpine Club of Canada and its related sections.
- 1.2 “Access” means the freedom and ability to participate in Mountaineering, as hereinafter defined, and for such purpose, to enter lands and utilize the Mountain Environment as hereinafter defined for the purposes of Mountaineering in that Mountain Environment.
- 1.3 “Board” means the Board of Directors of the ACC from time to time.
- 1.4 “Executive Committee” means the executive committee of the Board.
- 1.5 “Land Owners” means governments, landowners, tenants, land managers, occupants and any person in legal possession or control of land upon which a Mountaineering Environment exists.
- 1.6 “Mountaineers” means persons who support or participate in Mountaineering Activities.

1.7 “Mountaineering” or “Mountaineering Activities” includes rock and ice climbing, hiking, bouldering, camping, trekking, ski touring, wilderness snowboarding and snowshoe touring as well as mountaineering as it is generally understood.

1.8 “Objects of the ACC” are those objects of the ACC defined by its constitution and being:

- (a) The encouragement and practice of mountaineering and mountain crafts and the promotion of these skills through participation in the activities of the Club;
- (b) The education of Canadians in appreciation of their mountain heritage;
- (c) The exploration of alpine and glacial regions and the promotion of scientific study thereof, primarily in Canada, but also in other countries possessing mountain ranges;
- (d) The preservation of the natural beauties of the mountain places and of the fauna and flora in their habitat;
- (e) The promotion of art and literature as applied to mountain regions;
- (f) The dissemination for scientific and educational purposes of knowledge concerning mountains and mountaineering through meetings, publications and library;
- (g) The exchange of information of educational or scientific value, information about equipment and techniques and any other matters of interest, with other mountaineering clubs and organizations having the same or similar objects, throughout the world.

1.9 “Section or Sections ” means the sections or each section of the ACC from time to time; and

1.10 “Mountaineering Environment” means those areas of topography in which “Mountaineering” occurs including mountains, canyons, cliffs, ice cliffs, sport climbing crags, boulders, and wilderness terrain.

2.0 Objectives:

- 2.1 To advocate for and maximize the freedom of Access and the key issues related to Access and, in such capacity:
 - 2.1.1 to promote the protection and conservation of Mountaineering Environments, including national and provincial parks, management areas and related reserves for the purposes of Access and environmental protection; and
 - 2.1.2 to promote the development and implementation of land use policies, laws and regulations for the purposes of legal accessibility to Mountaineering Environments which will:
 - (a) insure Access;
 - (b) consider the interests of Land Owners to allow them to consent to Access for the purposes of Mountaineering Activities; and
 - (c) provide adequate protection for Land Owners.
- 2.2 To promote sound ecological practices by the ACC, its members and Mountaineers generally in the pursuit of their Mountaineering Activities, and to develop an awareness of the impact of their activities on their surroundings.
- 2.3 To promote sound safety and legal practices by the ACC, its members and all Mountaineers in the pursuit of their Mountaineering Activities, and to develop an awareness of the impact of their activities on the legal rights of Land Owners.
- 2.4 To support educational efforts that will enhance Canadians', ACC members and Mountaineers':
 - (a) appreciation of their mountain heritage;

- (b) appreciation of Mountaineering Activities as sports that require the opportunity for free access to lands;
- (c) appreciation of the need for socially, environmentally and legally responsible use of such Access including, where necessary restrictions on Mountaineering in specific places or at particular times where such restrictions are supported by well-founded data.

2.5 To seek alternatives where ecological, legal and recreational viewpoints conflict, and to employ knowledge, flexibility, dialogue and co-operation to procure a balance between ecological integrity and use, recreational or otherwise, of the Mountaineering Environment.

2.6 To provide input to national, provincial and local governments when they are formulating environmental, legal or other plans and policies which may effect Access or other Objects of the Club so that Access, not inconsistent with well-founded restrictions, may be maintained and optimum use may be made of sometimes limited resources.

3.0 Activities:

3.1 The Access and Environment portfolio will undertake the following activities to achieve the above objectives.

3.1.1 To advocate positions founded on the best interests of Access using well founded arguments taking into consideration the environment and the reasonable concerns of Land Owners and other users of the Mountaineering Environments;

- 3.1.2 To facilitate communication for the resolution of conflicts among differing uses and users of the Mountaineering Environments.
- 3.1.3 To maintain an archive of historical summaries of ACC's:
 - 3.1.3.1 Access and environmental activities, both successful and unsuccessful, for the purpose of education and as a public resource for advocacy on Access and environmental issues as they arise from time to time;
 - 3.1.3.2 Activities and research thereon describing the impact of the ACC activities on the environment and detailing efforts to lessen such impacts and the results of those efforts;
 - 3.1.3.3 In conjunction with the ACC Activities portfolio and the ACC Publications portfolio and with the assistance of Club members, Mountaineers and other mountain users to create and maintain record of the history of Mountaineering in particular Mountain Environments for use as an educational and advocacy resource;.
- 3.1.4 To use the resources of the ACC, its members, and other Mountaineering organizations to educate the public and decision makers concerning Access;
- 3.1.5 To develop for Board approval a set of values, principles and priorities regarding the impact of Mountaineering on other stakeholders in the shared Mountain Environment;
- 3.1.6 To provide comments to the Board concerning any project of the Club that may have an Access or environmental impact;

3.1.7 To develop, in cooperation with the other ACC officers and committees of the national club and each Section as required, a strategy to improve communication among the national club, the Sections, various volunteers and other access and environmental organizations in an effort to pool knowledge, experiences and resources;

3.1.8 To compile an annual report describing the ACC's activities and the impact of the ACC activities as the basic source of information to use in the ACC's fundraising efforts.

4.0 Activities and Advocacy Management

4.1 Except as limited herein, the majority of the activities and advocacy efforts on Access and Environment issues will be performed by the Sections, as coordinated by the national committee known as the National Access and Environment Coordinating Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "NAECC").

4.2 Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following items will, unless authorized by the Board, be the responsibility of the national club through the Board and the executive committee:

4.2.1 issues relating to national parks and any other region or area of Canada under the control, directly or indirectly, of the federal government or a combination of the federal government and any provincial government;

4.2.2 issues relating to any hut or facility controlled, directly or indirectly, or operated by the national Club from time to time;

4.2.3 issues relating to any activity managed, directly or indirectly, by the national Club from time to time;

- 4.2.3 issues relating to any national corporate member or sponsor.
- 4.3 Each Section with Access and environment issues is encouraged to form a Section access and environment committee for consistency and to insure a proper delegation of responsibility. The Section access and environment committee will operate under the guidance of and be responsible to the Section executive, the NAECC, the executive committee through the VP Access and Environment and the Board.
- 4.4 The NAECC shall consist of the VP Access and Environment, as chair, and the chair of each Section's access and environment committee or, if a Section has no such committee, such responsible member of the Section executive as the Section's executive may nominate.
- 4.5 The Access and Environment chairs (or in the case of a section not creating an access and environment Committee, the responsible member of the Section executive nominated by the Section executive) of each of the Sections shall provide at least two reports per year of their activities to the VP Access and Environment:
- 4.5.1 One report shall describe the Access and environment activities of the Section under the name ACC for the months January to June of each year, and must be submitted to VP Access and Environment prior to the end of August in any year.
- 4.5.2 The second report shall describe the Access and environmental activities of the Section under the name of the ACC for the months of July to

December of each year, and must be submitted to VP Access and Environment prior to the end of February following the period.

- 4.5.3 If a Section has conducted no Access or environment activities during any applicable period it shall file a nil report.
 - 4.5.4 The VP Access and Environment shall cause the report of the VP Access and Environment, including the semi-annual reports of each Section to be compiled and reported to the NAECC, the Executive Committee and the Board no less than twice each year.
- 4.6 Each Section shall be permitted to develop positions on any issue of local concern to a Section and advocate that position, except as:
- 4.6.1 limited by this policy;
 - 4.6.2 where the position conflicts with this policy; or
 - 4.6.3 conflicts with a policy created or a position taken by another Section, the NAECC or the Board.

The NAECC will mediate any apparent conflict of a Section policy or position with subsections 4.6.1, 4.6.2, and 4.6.3 and attempt to resolve the conflict. If the mediation by the NAECC of an apparent conflict is not successful, the decision of the Board, or in the absence of the Board, The Executive Committee as to:

- 4.6.4 whether a Section policy or position conflicts with subsections 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3; and

4.6.5 the adoption of a position advocated by a Section as the position of the ACC where two or more Sections disagree on positions on an issue: shall be final

Where a Section's policy or position is finally determined to be in conflict, members from the Section may advocate the position but must clearly declare publicly that the policy or position is not that of the ACC and such members may not use the name of the ACC in advancing the position.

4.7 A Section may propose that the ACC take a position on an issue or be responsible for advocacy on an issue by proposing such issue or position to the NAECC for discussion and recommendation , in the case of urgency, to the Executive Committee or, in the absence of urgency, directly to the Board for discussion and adoption or rejection, modified or not.

4.8 The VP Access and Environment or the Executive Committee may propose an ACC position on Access or environment issues consistent with their role within the Board. The Board must approve any position advocated by the VP Access and Environment or the Executive Committee inconsistent with Board policy.

4.9 The name of the ACC will not be used by the VP Access and Environment, the Executive, and any Section publicly or in any manner that would undermine a position adopted by the Board. Nothing herein shall limit the ability of any of them or of any ACC member to debate or attempt to change the position of the Board within the rules of governance of the ACC.

5.0 Fundamental Principles

5.1 Positions advocated by the ACC will be based on the following general principles:

5.1.1 Freedom of Access to the Mountaineering Environment, and Mountaineering in a responsible and sustainable way should be allowed .

5.1.2 While Mountaineering and the enjoyment of nature are essential ingredients for nurturing the human spirit, nature should be respected.

5.1.3 Where potential, actual, or perceived conflicts between these positions occur, knowledge, flexibility, dialogue, and cooperation should be employed in order to establish whether any restriction on Access is appropriate, and in implementing any such restriction.

5.2 These general principles are supported by other more specific principles:

5.2.1 Some parts of Mountaineering Environments have considerable importance for the conservation of birds, animals, and plants.

5.2.2 Parts of Mountaineering Environments are very diverse in nature; in some parts, high conservation measures are not required to be taken in Mountaineering Activities, and in other parts which are highly environmentally sensitive, Access for Mountaineering is not important. .

5.2.3 Mountaineering is only one of a number of activities that may endanger the survival of particular species of birds, animals, and/or plants on a particular crag or cliff.

5.2.4 Decision-makers should not misuse restrictions.

5.2.5 Mountaineers should accept restrictions on Mountaineering Activities in specific places and at particular times when these restrictions are supported by well-founded data. Mountaineers should comply with but advocate against restrictions on Mountaineering Activities when such restrictions are not supported by well-founded data.

5.2.6 Mountaineers should follow minimum-impact principles.

5.2.7 Mountaineers, the ACC, the authors of Mountaineering guides and all users of the Mountaineering Environment have special responsibilities for fostering sustainable Mountaineering Activities through example, awareness raising, and education.