

St. Lawrence Parks Commission
Anti-Racism Action Plan
2021.2022

THE ST. LAWRENCE
PARKS COMMISSION
AN AGENCY OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

**Parks of the
St. Lawrence**



**Les Parcs du
Saint-Laurent**

LA COMMISSION DES
PARCS DU SAINT-LAURENT
UN ORGANISME DU
GOUVERNEMENT DE L'ONTARIO

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

At the St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC), we are committed to providing a safe, and respectful space where all backgrounds and experiences are embraced.

As an Agency of the Province of Ontario reporting to the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, the SLPC has a primary role to play in addressing and dismantling racist systems and structures. We recognize the histories of colonialism and the systemic racism barriers of the longstanding inequity for Indigenous, Black and racialized people in our community.

Looking ahead to the future, the SLPC has the responsibility to lead by example. We envision a racially equitable and inclusive workplace that commits to making anti-racism a priority. To create change, we must re-examine and expand our own thoughts, perspectives, programs, policies and procedures.

As the General Manager and CEO of the SLPC and Executive Champion of this plan, I am proud of, and committed to the SLPC Anti-Racism Action Plan brought forward, so we may ensure that all members of our community including employees, and guests are served equitably.

I want to thank our passionate group of employees who have volunteered to be part of a cross-functional team to advance this plan forward. This plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated continuously. We will take a collaborative approach, seeking the valuable perspectives of employees, guests, and stakeholders with lived experiences, and ensure their voices are heard through the actions in this plan.

Together we can make the SLPC a more diverse, welcoming, and accessible space that redefines and acknowledges its past, present, and future for bold, meaningful, and positive lasting change.

This is a continuous journey that we must strive towards to further eliminate biases and demonstrate empathy, compassion, and respect to all aspects of what we do for the Commission, as it is a reflection of our society and our history.

Hollee Kew, General Manager & CEO
St. Lawrence Parks Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The sites of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission are located in the area of the Crawford Purchases and acknowledge the long history of First Nations and the Métis in what is now Ontario. We want to show respect for their contributions. We also recognize the neighbouring communities of the Mohawks of Tyendinaga, the Alderville First Nation and the Mohawks of Akwesasne.

Note: SLPC is in the process of updating this acknowledge statement in conjunction with local Indigenous stakeholders and will update this section once this work is completed.

INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Public Service (OPS) Anti-Racism Policy, Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan and the Anti-Racism Directorate's Roadmap to Racial Equity in the Ontario Public Service outlines a whole-of-government approach to identify and address systemic racism. Anti-racism involves consistently assessing structures, policies, and programs, and through monitoring outcomes, ensuring they are fair and equitable for everyone.

St. Lawrence Parks Commission's (SLPC's) Action Plan is built upon these principles and will inform next steps in attracting and developing diverse talent as well as the creation of training and awareness initiatives that will support staff in their day-to-day interactions and develop cultural competencies. The plan will guide policy and program development that is reflective of the cultural makeup of the guests who visit SLPC properties and ensure engagement with key community partners and subject matter experts on thoughtful and sustainable approaches to Anti-Racism.

SLPC's goal is and continues to be to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive place for all, to make every day the best day for those who work at and visit SLPC.

VISION

The St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) envisions a safe, welcoming, racially equitable and inclusive space for its employees, community members, and visitors. Our goal is to build and grow an organizational culture that actively commits to anti-racism actions for its staff and community, which are woven into the fabric of the entirety of the SLPC.

Through acknowledgment and active reflection, listening, learning and ongoing dialogue, the SLPC seeks to dismantle individual, systemic and institutional racism. We will embrace and amplify the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of underrepresented communities, including Black, Indigenous, and racialized people. SLPC will strive to ensure all employees feel safe and supported while advancing an anti-racist approach to all business processes, partnerships, and strategies.

We, SLPC, hold accountability for and acknowledge:

- that we function based on colonial structures which are inherently racist and present-day inequities are rooted in historical legacies such as the enslavement of Black/African people and the colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada and globally.
- the past and present culture, processes, and policies within the SLPC have systemically neglected underrepresented communities and have failed to empower and support those voices.
- that to build and grow an organizational culture that actively prioritizes anti-racism, an intergovernmental collective approach is essential. The SLPC will utilize its privilege and influence to advocate for change within the Ontario Public Service and the MHSTCI to enact change and growth as an organization.
- there has been a lack of anti-racism competency and education.
- that there has been a lack of diversity in the SLPC staff complement and that there are systemic barriers that must be investigated, understood, and acted upon to realize a more diverse staff complement.
- the intersectional layers involved in anti-racism as we work towards changing institutional norms in our business practices.
- that we hold responsibility to our local and broader communities to provide safe spaces that represent, involve, inform, and celebrate the lived experiences of its people.

It is through this acknowledgement of complicity and accountability that we move boldly forward with a strong commitment of building an equitable environment of belonging.

PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

DIVERSIFY THE TALENT PIPELINE (Lead: ARAP working group)

To implement recruitment strategies that attract diverse candidate groups and strengthen and/or expand SLPC's talent capacity.

| Actions | Approach | Key Indicators | Timeline | Status |
|---|---|--|---|-------------|
| Collaborate with HR Strategic Business Unit to review and develop recruitment tactics that best attract and break down barriers for Indigenous, Black, and racialized candidates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop enhancements to current recruitment and hiring guidelines and best practices to increase number of candidates from BIPOC communities applying to and securing employment. <input type="checkbox"/> Foster targeted partnerships with community and cultural leaders to expand recruitment outreach efforts. | Attract and hire BIPOC candidates as is evident in 2022 staff complement. | January 2022 – June 2022 (Q4, 2021- Q1, 2022) | In progress |
| Promote and support the use of racially diverse and racially conscious hiring panels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all regular service competitions deploy resources from Diverse Interview Panel (DIP) pilot program. | Use of DIP program in all regular competitions. | April 2021 (Q1, 2021) | Ongoing |
| Enhance collection of socio-demographic data to inform decisions on building internal capacity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Actively promote and educate staff on the benefits of collecting socio-demographic data with a goal to increase current statistics. | Results, once available, show over 50% of SLPC staff have shared their data. | October-December 2021 (Q3, 2021) | Ongoing |
| Actively create an environment that supports racialized employees to attain career aspirations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attract BIPOC candidates. <input type="checkbox"/> Using OPS supports, ensure opportunities for racialized employees to obtain career aspirations. | Increased career talent and developmental opportunities. | January 2022 (Q4, 2021) | Not started |

INCLUSIVE POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT (Lead: ARAP working group)

To undertake robust policy and program review and development including initiatives that identify and remove systemic barriers.

| Actions | Approach | Key Indicators | Timeline | Status |
|---|--|--|--|-------------|
| Create Cultural Advisor position. | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment for temporary assignment to provide dedicated resource to support ARAP. | Successful recruitment of resource. | September 2021 (Q2, 2021) | In progress |
| Develop cultural sensitivity best practice guidelines and new informed judgement matrix to Park regulation enforcement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines and informed judgement matrix are developed and finalized. | New informed judgement matrix is fully implemented. Evidence that the matrix assists in de-escalating incidents. | April 2022 (Q1, 2022) | In progress |
| Develop tourism strategies that are welcoming for all cultures who visit SLPC. | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and develop effective communication tools (signage, lexicons, map books and facts). <input type="checkbox"/> Translation of parks information into the most predominant languages in Eastern Ontario. | Availability of tools and information translated. | Developed in January 2022 (Q4,2021), in use by April 2022 (Q1, 2022) | In progress |
| Consult with leaders of various cultural communities and subject matter experts when developing programming. | <input type="checkbox"/> Use consultants, find pertinent community leaders, create an advisory panel/community contact list to reach out to when creating new programs or initiatives. | Partner list is created, relationships are forged, and regular input is received from these partners on new initiatives. | July 2021-December 2021 (Q2-Q3,2021) | In progress |
| Evaluate programming to ensure narrative is relevant and inclusive to BIPOC communities using tools such as diversity audits. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-groups formed within Historic attractions for significant rethink of programming. <input type="checkbox"/> Parks programming reviewed for inclusivity measures and education. | Evaluative tools developed, and action items established based on audits Reporting occurring on a quarterly basis. | July 2021-March 2022 (Q2-Q4, 2021) | In progress |

BUILDING COMPETENCY – EDUCATION AND AWARENESS (Lead: ARAP working group)

To educate and build awareness of SLPC’s diverse customer base, individual bias, and systemic racism through training initiatives, giving staff the tools to be better equipped to identify and challenge racism.

| Actions | Approach | Key Indicators | Timeline | Status |
|--|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Develop and implement multi-year, multi-cultural sensitivity training for staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify facilitators and/or key cultural leaders to lead training sessions for staff to gain a better understanding of Muslim and Indigenous cultures with additional topics to come later. <input type="checkbox"/> Examples include: ICCT training, virtual presentations by Imam with focus on support to Parks and Recreation portfolio. | Completion of training followed by discussion groups led by supervisors. | January - March 2022 (Q4, 2021) | In progress, some completed |
| Develop SLPC Learning Toolkit for staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff will be provided with a collection of foundational training and additional resources to support continuous learning about systemic racism and racial discrimination. <input type="checkbox"/> These learning tools will be housed on SLPC’s online employee Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion site under learning resources. | 100% compliance for mandatory training components. Over 50% of staff surveyed indicate they have taken some of the additional resources available on EDI site. | September 2021 – March 2022 (Q2, 2021- Q4, 2022) | In progress |
| Support staff training on unconscious bias awareness and how it contributes to racism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research and secure vendor of record for this training <input type="checkbox"/> Note: All management staff have completed training. Next steps will be to train all regular represented staff. | 100% of regular service, represented staff have received training. | January 2022 and ongoing (Q4, 2021+) | Not started |
| Implement mandatory Human Rights training for all staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of “Call it Out” training for all staff. | 100% compliance for all staff employed for at least six months. | April 2021 (Q1, 2021) | Ongoing |

COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS (Lead: ARAP working group)

To collaborate with community partners, cultural leaders, and other ministries across the Ontario Public Service on anti-racism initiatives.

| Actions | Approach | Key Indicators | Timeline | Status |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Engage in partnerships with municipalities that span SLPC properties on anti-racism initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Share land acknowledgement research with municipal partners with overlapping lands. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide anti-racism social media toolkit for municipal partners. | Shared understanding of traditional territories and treaties in St. Lawrence Corridor. | December 2021 (Q3, 2021) | In progress |
| Partner with Ministry of Indigenous Affairs on public education campaigns that inform and educate Indigenous history across SLPC properties. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Treaties Recognition Week campaign with IAO. Created social media content that was based on IAO toolkit. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue established partnership with IAO in 2021. | Followers of SLPC (as well as internal staff) are educated on the significance of treaties. | October 2021 (Q3, 2021) | Ongoing |
| Engage in thoughtful, meaningful discussions with community stakeholders and cultural leaders to ensure their voice is heard through the actions of the plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engage Akwesasne and Tyendinaga Councils through student research opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Engage Akwesasne Councils on history /relationship with Upper Canada Village (UCV). <input type="checkbox"/> Engage First Nation communities and organizations on the development of land acknowledgement statements for SLPC properties. | <p>Indigenous research students employed by SLPC.</p> <p>Understanding is developed on historical relationship between UCV and neighbouring Akwesasne.</p> <p>Indigenous voice embedded in SLPC programming.</p> <p>Robust and finalized land acknowledgements across SLPC.</p> | <p>July 2021 (Q2, 2021)</p> <p>January - March 2022 (Q4, 2021)</p> | In Progress |
| Open and transparent sharing with stakeholders with respect to ARAP actions and results. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post SLPC Anti-Racism Action Plan online (public and employee facing). <input type="checkbox"/> Land acknowledgment training for SLPC Board and staff. | <p>Action plan will be shared transparently to create accountability.</p> <p>Significance of land acknowledgements understood.</p> | <p>Q1, 2021 (May 2021)</p> <p>Q4, 2021 (January - March 2022)</p> | <p>Completed</p> <p>In progress</p> |

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING AND MEASURING PROGRESS

An evidence-based approach will be used to identify areas of focus and results.

Quantitative data will include but not be limited to:

- OPS Employee Experience Survey
- Employee sociodemographic data collected
- OPS Pulse Survey
- Recruitment metrics – new hire data
- Succession Planning metrics and associated career opportunities

Qualitative data will include but not be limited to:

- Positive impacts from inclusive policy and program development and tourism strategies
- Visitor comments and dialogue, ensuring it is reflective and inclusive of under-represented groups

REPORTING

SLPC will submit a finalized plan to the Anti-Racism Directorate by March 31, 2021 and thereafter, report annually on progress by the end of each fiscal year.

OUR COMMITMENT

- We will remain accountable to all priorities in this plan.
- We will take pro-active steps to embed anti-racism through policy and program development.
- We commit to looking at things differently, taking active, conscious steps to combat racism, learning together as an organization and leading change.
- We will communicate often to all staff, Board of Commissioners, bargaining agents and other stakeholders on the progress and achievements in this plan.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountability: In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals, organizations and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible.

Anti-racism approach: Anti-racism is a process, a systematic method of analysis and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent, and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups, and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Bias: A predisposition, prejudice, or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes.

Colonialism: Is a practice of domination which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Settler colonialism, such as in the case of Canada, is the unique process where the colonizing population does not leave the territory, asserts ongoing sovereignty to the land, actively seeks to assimilate the Indigenous populations and extinguish their cultures, traditions and ties to the land.

Colonization: The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area.

Culture: The customs, beliefs, behaviours and/or achievements of a particular time and/or people; behaviour within a particular group.

Cultural Competence: An ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures, particularly in human resources, non-profit organizations, and government agencies whose employees work with persons from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds. Cultural competence has four components: awareness of one's own cultural worldview, attitudes towards cultural differences, knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, cross-cultural skills (developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures).

Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within an individual, group or organization. Diversity includes such factors as age, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background, and expertise.

Equity: Fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. As distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life.

Inclusion: Appreciating and using our unique differences – strengths, talents, weaknesses, and frailties - in a way that shows respect for the individual and ultimately creates a dynamic multi-dimensional organization.

Inclusive: Inclusive processes, policies, services, programs, and practices are accessible to and useable by as many people as possible, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, language, etc. An inclusive environment is open, safe, equitable and respectful. Everyone can

enjoy a sense of trust, belonging and involvement, and everyone is encouraged to contribute and participate fully.

Indigenous: Means ‘native to the area’. Currently the preferred collective name for the original people within Canada and their descendants. This includes First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit.

Intersectionality: The way in which people’s lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, opportunities, and/or power imbalances. In the context of race and Indigenous identity, this means recognizing the ways in which people’s experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one group, may vary depending on the individual’s or group’s relationship to additional overlapping or intersecting social identities, like religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, disabilities, or citizenship and immigration status. An intersectional analysis enables better understanding of the impacts of any one systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors.

Oppression: Refers to discrimination that occurs and is supported through the power of public systems or services, such as health care systems, educational systems, legal systems and/or other public systems or services; discrimination backed up by systemic power.

Privilege: Unearned advantage (i.e., access to social, economic, and political benefits) afforded to the “socially dominant’ group; White privilege – refers to those unearned advantages granted to people who are deemed White.

Race/Racialized/Racial identity: Race is a term used to classify people into groups based principally on physical traits (phenotypes) such as skin colour. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., “socially constructed”), with significant consequences for people’s lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place and can overlap with ethnic, cultural, or religious groupings.

Racial disparity: Unequal outcomes in a comparison of one racial group to another racial group.

Racial disproportionality: The overrepresentation or underrepresentation of a racial group in a program or system, compared with their representation in the general population.

Racial equity: Is the systemic fair treatment of all people that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone.

Systemic racism: Consists of organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, or procedures that exclude, displace, or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers for them to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others.