Evaluation of the Law Enforcement Program
Final Report

JANUARY 2023

Parks
Canada

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Table of contents

Contents	Page

Tables and figures

Acronyms and abbreviations

Table 1: Acronyms and abbreviations

CCG	Canadian Coast Guard
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
GoA	Government of Alberta
IEM	Incident and Event Management
LEB	Law Enforcement Branch
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRS	National Reporting Summary
PAEC	Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft System
SDA	Service Delivery Agreement
WED	Wildlife Enforcement Directorate

Introduction

Program description
Law Enforcement Program

Parks Canada, as guardian 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. Parks Canada 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, Parks Canada has used its dedicated Law Enforcement Branch (LEB) to deliver law enforcement services to field units in support of the Parks Canada mandate. Table 2 on the following page outlines the Law Enforcement Program's logic model of intended outcomes.

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.

The national coordination of law enforcement is undertaken by three distinct functions:

- The Policy, Training & Standards Unit develops, review and updates national policies, directives and procedures;
- Strategic Programs proactively provides strategic intelligence related to incident trends and or law enforcement techniques to support program delivery; and

- Operations oversees the delivery of the national law enforcement program in the field, directed at priorities established through service delivery agreements (SDA) with each field unit.

The LEB also supports, and is supported by, Parks Canada's Compliance Program. In 2008, Parks Canada introduced the Compliance Guidelines (then referred to as the Prevention Guidelines), which laid out roles and responsibilities. The Law Enforcement Program supports the Compliance Guidelines (2018) through prevention measures (e.g., education, patrols) as well as through enforcement measures.

In 2016, Parks Canada implemented the Integrated Compliance Planning Process. The process was designed in collaboration with the LEB to provide a framework for assessing compliance requirements and implementation and to help field units prioritize on-the-ground actions.

Logic model

Table 2: Law Enforcement Program logic model

Inputs	Activities/Outputs	Immediate/Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
Law Enforcement Branch (LEB) -Approx. 30 park warden supervisors -Approx. 70 park wardens -Approx. 14- national office program support staff, including managers. Parks Canada field unit staff who contribute to compliance priority setting and monitoring. LEB Financial Resources -10.9M in 20/21 Materials and equipment funded by both the LEB and Parks Canada field units.	LE Program Administration -Directives, standards, policies and procedures developed and implemented. -Staff recruited, trained and certified according to standards. -Information required for program management identified, and recorded in appropriate systems. -Reports on trends and results produced.	LE Program Administration Law enforcement is conducted in a safe and professional manner; program risks are effectively managed. The Law Enforcement Program has information and intelligence to achieve compliance, analyze trends, and make continual improvements.	The Law Enforcement Program contributes to the Parks Canada mandate to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.
	Partnerships and advice Partnerships and agreements with field units and external partners developed (e.g., Service Delivery Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding). Expert advice provided to field units to; -improve compliance programs -increase law enforcement efficiency -improve law enforcement outcomes.	Partnerships and advice Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear The extent and limitations of law enforcement services are understood by all parties. Effective compliance and enforcement priority planning reduces the need for law enforcement and increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the Law Enforcement Program.	
	Law Enforcement -Awareness/Education -Visitor Experience role -Patrol -Surveillance -Warnings (verbal, written) -Investigations -Evictions -Charges -Arrests -Searches -Seizures -Advice, Guidance, Referrals -Legal proceedings	Law Enforcement Incidents are deterred and/or compliance is achieved. Response to incidents is appropriate and timely. Obligations for law enforcement service delivery are fulfilled.	

Past recommendations and progress made

Key issues identified through the 2017 evaluation related mostly to the program's national and local management framework and related tools. While the existing management framework was deemed adequate for program management, review and refinement of this framework was recommended to reflect changes and lessons learned since the Law Enforcement Program began operations in 2009 and to address ongoing gaps in delivery.

A total of five recommendations were made and subsequently approved by program management.

The evaluation proposed a review of the Law Enforcement Program's management framework to ensure accountability and the ongoing management of program risks. Significant progress has since been made on the suggested reviews.

It was also recommended that the Law Enforcement Program review its performance measures and monitoring plan to ensure that deliverables and intended outcomes are clear and meaningful for performance management. These improvement measures have been undertaken.

Further, the program committed to ensuring that appropriate controls are implemented to ensure the integrity of law enforcement data in the Incident and Event Management (IEM) system. An assessment of data integrity, completeness, and consistency has been conducted and system improvements are continuously implemented as needed.

The past evaluation also recommended a review of the need for strategic intelligence to support the Law Enforcement Program. Since then, the LEB established a path forward, including implementation of a strategic intelligence program and staffing a strategic intelligence advisor.

Lastly, it was recommended that the LEB review management accountabilities for the Law Enforcement Program's materials and equipment to determine whether they effectively meet operational needs. These reviews were completed and it was determined that no additional operational standards were required.

About the evaluation

Evaluation questions

1. Is the Law Enforcement Program achieving its intended results?

2. To what extent does the Law Enforcement Program leverage external partnerships?

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

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's 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. This streamlined approach to the evaluation was developed as a result of consultations with the Law Enforcement Branch, who subsequently provided support and feedback during the evaluation.

Data from multiple lines of evidence were collected for the evaluation. These included:

- Review of relevant documentation;
- Database analysis of the Law Enforcement National Reporting Summary (NRS);
- Surveys of park wardens/park warden supervisors and field unit/park superintendents (see Annex 1 for survey methodology);
- Interviews with Parks Canada staff and external partners; and
- Case study on the application of innovative technology in law enforcement.

Data presented in this evaluation represent a national aggregate and are meant to provide a program-level overview of achievement of outcomes. The data do not reflect the variability among the law enforcement regions and specific detachments.

Key
findings

Performance

Expectations	Findings
Obligations for law enforcement service delivery are fulfilled	Evidence shows that while compliance with law enforcement directives and operating procedures is high, alignment of activities with program outcomes could be strengthened.
Response to incidents is appropriate and timely	While some evidence was found to support the achievement of this outcome, performance measurement data on appropriate and timely response to incidents was not available.
Program has information to ensure compliance, analyze trends and make continual improvements	Evidence shows that a comprehensive system is in place to track law enforcement activities, and this information is used in priority-setting with field units.
Incidents are deterred and/or compliance is achieved	Evidence shows that information-sharing practices are in place but could be further formalised. The implementation of intelligence-driven enforcement is in early stages.

Service delivery agreements

Indicator: Extent to which commitments in service delivery agreements are delivered

Evidence shows that implementation of service delivery priorities is consistent over the period under review.

The Law Enforcement Branch outlines its priorities in each field unit through a service delivery agreement (SDA), detailing the type and level of law enforcement service to be delivered to the field unit for a specified period of time. For the period under review, there is consistency on a national level with regard to the hours spent on the most common priorities found in service delivery agreements across all regions, namely the illegal collection or killing of flora or fauna as well as front-country campground priorities (Figure 1).

In 2020-21, non-SDA incidents represented 22% of the total number of incidents nationally. This figure is consistent with findings from the previous evaluation, where 78% of recorded incidents were related to SDA priorities, showing that almost one quarter of law enforcement response is not linked to SDA priorities.

Additionally, data show a positive trend when comparing proactive (events) to reactive (incidents) activities, demonstrating a decrease in reactive work with an increase in proactive work related to SDA priorities. For instance, in 2016-17, 48% (15,475) of reported hours were spent on incidents compared to 52% (16,977) spent on events. In 2020-21, the gap is larger, with 32% (12,805) hours spent on incidents and 68% (27,051) hours spent on events. A longer time series would be needed in order to confirm any correlation between these two variables.

Figure 1: Hours logged by service delivery agreement priority, 2020

Source: Law Enforcement Branch Dashboard – National Reporting Summary
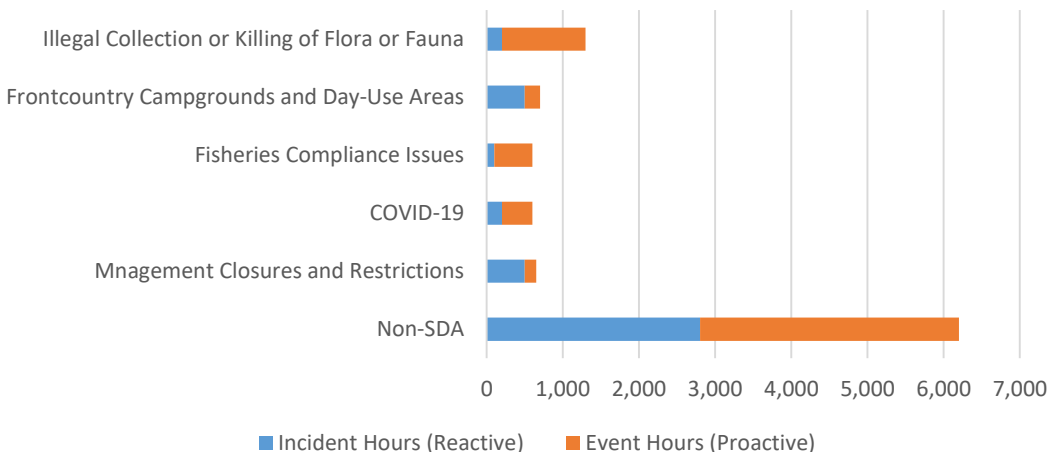
Law enforcement obligations and outcomes

Indicators: Extent to which wardens comply with directives/operating procedures and meet professional standards;

Extent to which law enforcement obligations align with intended outcomes

Evidence shows that while compliance with law enforcement directives and operating procedures is high, alignment with program outcomes could be strengthened.

These findings are addressed in Recommendation 1.

Compliance with directives and operating procedures

Evaluation findings indicate a high level of compliance of park wardens with law enforcement directives and operating procedures. Despite resource constraints being expressed, the program maintains a robust training regime, and data from the National Reporting System show a consistent year over year entry of incidents into the system.

Since the previous evaluation, two interim standards have been introduced regarding water operations and the use of hard body armour, and one change to the Law Enforcement Administration and Operational Manual took place in 2019 regarding park warden response to public peace situations. This change is further discussed on page 25.

Alignment of law enforcement obligations with intended outcomes

An analysis of data from the National Reporting Summary showed a clear link between incidents and events recorded and service delivery agreement (SDA) priorities. Data also showed that priorities varied across law enforcement regions and the field units they provide services to, a finding corroborated by key informant interviews. Currently, no national-level annual report is produced which links these regional law enforcement priorities with overall program outcomes. This type of roll-up report would help the program demonstrate its overall impact and benefit to Parks Canada.

The Law Enforcement Branch is currently in the process of renewing the Directive on Law Enforcement, which may lead to changes in the structure of service delivery agreements with field units. This renewal presents not only an opportunity to streamline the process of establishing agreements with each field unit but also the possibility of aligning regional priorities with national priorities, facilitating future reporting on the achievement of program outcomes.

Incident response

Indicator: Extent to which demands are met in an appropriate and timely manner

Timeliness and appropriateness of response to incidents

Survey findings from both park wardens and supervisors and field unit respondents with respect to the timeliness and appropriateness of the program's response to incidents were positive. Regarding appropriateness, approximately 75% of park wardens/supervisors and 69% of field unit respondents agreed that incident response from the Law Enforcement Branch is appropriate. For timely response to incidents, 62% of park wardens/supervisors and 54% of field unit

respondents agreed that this outcome was being achieved.

As part of the analysis of the program's National Reporting System, data regarding response times was sought. Presently, only 10 protected heritage areas regularly make use of the Parks Canada's dispatch system, making an analysis of the program's response times difficult. Future consideration of program outcomes could benefit from a focus on performance measurement indicators for timeliness and appropriateness of incident response.

Use of program information

Indicator: Evidence that performance data has been used to adjust/improve the program
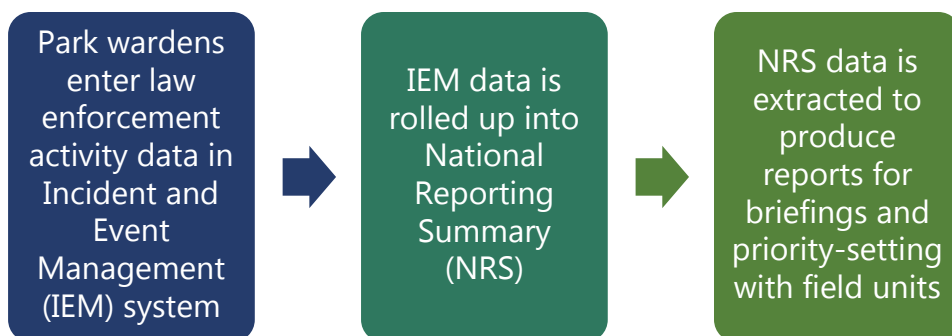
Evidence shows that a comprehensive system is in place to track law enforcement activities, and this information is used in priority-setting with field units.

Since the previous evaluation, the program has implemented an Incident and Event Management (IEM) system, allowing park wardens to enter and track information on activities. The National Reporting Summary (NRS) is a dashboard that provides centralized and field unit level roll-up of law enforcement activities entered in the IEM system. Evaluation findings were positive regarding the utility of these two systems as an improved foundation for tracking information throughout the Law Enforcement Branch.

With respect to the use of performance data to adjust and improve the program, evidence of this was provided by park warden supervisors, who access the information to brief regional managers.

Additionally, regional managers confirmed using the NRS data in the preparation of meetings with field unit managers on annual priority setting. Priority-setting meetings with the field unit are designed to report and review what park wardens achieved in the previous year and focus on work planning for the next season. These findings are further supported by survey results, showing that park warden supervisors were most likely to agree with the outcome statement that information is used to make improvements to law enforcement activities at the local level. As mentioned previously, no annual national report on the achievement of program results is currently produced; therefore, evaluation findings are limited to the regional level.

Figure 2: Flow chart of law enforcement activity data entry and use

Park wardens enter law enforcement activity data in Incident and Event Management (IEM) system

→

IEM data is rolled up into National Reporting Summary (NRS)

→

NRS data is extracted to produce reports for briefings and priority-setting with field units

Information - sharing with Compliance Program

Indicator: Evidence that Law Enforcement and Compliance Programs are engaged in information-sharing

Evidence shows that information-sharing practices with field units are in place but could be further formalised.

Overall, the implementation of the 2018 Compliance Guidelines and the Mobile Law Enforcement (MLE) application has and could continue to strengthen information-sharing between law enforcement and field units; however, work remains to be done in this area. As noted in the formative evaluation of the Compliance Program, the voluntary nature of the Compliance Guidelines and low uptake of a mobile application for tracking compliance incidents (linked to the MLE) limits the potential for enhanced integration between law enforcement and field units, both in terms of planning and information-sharing.

Interview findings pointed to the integration of law enforcement staff in field unit management meetings as a practice helpful for enhancing communication and coordination. In the survey of park wardens and park warden supervisors, respondents were asked to identify key challenges faced by the program. One common theme was around the need to clarify the role of the LEB to those working in field units in order for all staff to fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the LEB.

Survey results showed an uncertainty on both sides regarding information-sharing. While a majority (52%) of park wardens and park warden supervisors were confident that the LEB was reliable and timely in sharing information with the field units, they were less confident that the field units were providing information in a reliable and timely manner with the LEB (Figure 3). In the field units, a majority of park and field unit superintendents felt adequately informed of law enforcement response, while a third of respondents reported not feeling adequately informed.

Figure 3: Park warden/supervisor perceptions of information-sharing between the Law Enforcement Branch and field units
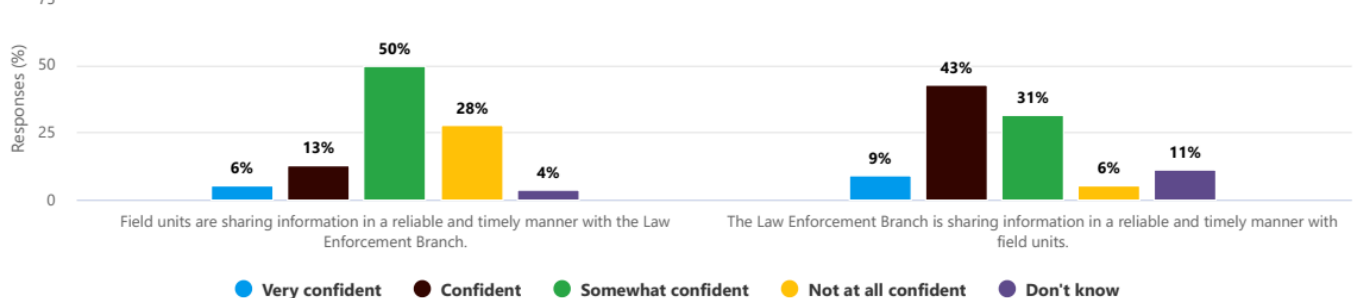
Intelligence-driven enforcement

Indicator: Evidence that strategic intelligence has led towards preventative action and risk mitigation

Evidence shows that the implementation of intelligence-driven enforcement remains in its early stages.

Intelligence-driven enforcement is defined as a process and methodology for interpreting and analyzing raw data. This allows for an analysis of information coming from diverse sources in order to improve program outcomes by better focusing limited resources on targeted actions to prevent and mitigate risks.

Although progress has been made in developing the intelligence program since the last evaluation (see page 9) and some examples of reactive intelligence-based enforcement were noted (see text box below), the program remains in its early stages of development and was not permanently resourced at the time of the evaluation. Evaluation findings from interviews with key stakeholders and survey findings reflect the modest progress in the program made to date.

Various options exist for further developing and formalising the intelligence capability of the Law Enforcement Branch. These include the establishment of roles and responsibilities, right-size resource allocation, centralized and updated repository of program documents, and development of an intelligence training plan. Parks Canada continues to take steps towards the implementation of intelligence-based enforcement.

Photo: nationalparkstraveler.org

Intelligence in action

In 2022, Parks Canada law enforcement officers recovered 45 fossils that had been removed from the Burgess Shale in Yoho National Park. Park wardens launched an investigation following a tip from the public. Multiple organizations were involved in the operation, including RCMP, Longueuil Police Department, Royal Ontario Museum and Parks Canada park wardens from British Columbia, Alberta and Québec.

Coherence

Expectations

Findings

Partnerships and agreements with external partners are developed and have clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities

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 MoU 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.

Law enforcement partnerships

Indicators: Evidence that relevant external partners have been identified and engaged; Number of formal agreements in place

Evidence shows that the LEB effectively collaborates with many federal, provincial and municipal law enforcement entities, through both formal and informal agreements.

Law enforcement partners

There is clear evidence that the LEB collaborates with many federal law enforcement entities, including, but not limited to: Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). The nature of these partnerships primarily includes information/resource sharing, training, and ad hoc joint patrols. For instance, agreements were recently put in place with DFO and ECCC for intelligence and information sharing. Survey results illustrated that the LEB also collaborates with provincial and territorial natural resource and wildlife entities, as well as other stakeholders, based on regional needs. A majority of survey respondents selected 'Don't know/not applicable' regarding the effectiveness of partnerships with municipal and First Nations police services. Evidence gathered through a document review and internal interviews suggests there is a desire to seek opportunities for new partnerships.

Number of formal agreements in place

A variety of formal agreements, including MoU, special designations and intelligence-sharing agreements exist between the LEB and aforementioned partners. Currently, there is no centralized repository of formal agreements between the LEB and external partners. Evidence gathered suggests these agreements largely occur on a regional basis, meaning they are administered in the regions. They are not regularly renewed or revisited.

Evidence gathered further suggests the formal agreements, specifically those with federal counterparts, could benefit from being reviewed. During the internal interviews, it was noted that there is confusion among certain staff about who to contact within various partner agencies. A renewal of the national MoU with the RCMP, for instance, may provide clarity as to the key players and responsibilities between partners.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities with partners

Indicator: Clarity of roles and responsibilities, governance structures and dispute resolution mechanisms with external parties

Evidence demonstrates that the roles and responsibilities are clear between Parks Canada and partner agencies.

Roles and responsibilities

Formal or otherwise, agreements with partners are seen as clearly defined by the personnel who leverage them. Through interview data gathered at the regional level, law enforcement staff had a deep understanding of their roles, responsibilities and capacity to work with partner agencies. Respondents in a survey of park wardens cited a number of factors that contribute to building successful partnerships, including strong communication, responsiveness, information-sharing and investing in building relations. Formal agreements reviewed clearly outlined details of partnerships and address potential issues such as dispute resolution.

Additionally, Parks Canada has developed formal agreements on information-sharing with both Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as Environment and Climate Change Canada. These relationships have also helped to solidify broader relations within the intelligence community, leading to involvement on working groups and training opportunities (i.e., participation in Pacific and Yukon regional intelligence meeting on environmental crimes). Such meetings touch on subject matter of direct relevance to Parks Canada.

Quality of agreements with partners

Indicator: Perceived quality, completeness, and adequacy of agreements by parties

While partnership agreements are largely viewed as successful by partners, a number of areas were noted for a need for improvement, including reciprocation of resource sharing.

These findings are addressed in Recommendation 2.

Successful partnership agreements

There is agreement among interviewed Parks Canada staff on the importance of partnerships, both formal and informal, to the mandate of the Law Enforcement Branch. As a small branch with a broad range of responsibilities, the LEB is dependent on partnerships. A survey of field unit/park superintendents demonstrated that 71% of respondents were in agreement with the statement that the LEB is effective at leveraging partnerships; however, park wardens and supervisors survey results were lower, with 35% in agreement with the same statement. From the perspective of external law enforcement partners, there are many factors contributing to successful partnerships. Key among them includes the building of relations, communication and clarity of shared purpose in moments such as heightened risks or when quick response is required.

Internal and external interviews illustrated that partnership agreements are largely viewed as being clear, and that there are areas that could be improved to further leverage these valuable relationships. This includes creating circumstances to allow the LEB to more easily reciprocate the support it receives from other agencies. In terms of what actions could be taken to work more effectively with external partners on law enforcement, the most frequently cited suggestion among interviewees was a loosening of policy restrictions that would allow wardens to participate in activities with other agencies and provide reciprocal assistance to external partners when needed. It was felt that current policies were too restrictive on the activities of law enforcement officers outside of park boundaries.

Increased structure with respect to law enforcement external partnerships would add some clarity and better prepare law enforcement agencies for major enforcement events. Renewed commitments with law enforcement partners on a national level would help solidify the roles and responsibilities of these partnerships going forward.

Efficiency

Expectations	Findings
Inputs are adequate to produce the program's expected outputs and outcomes	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.
Law enforcement resources are optimized in order to efficiently deliver activities and achieve outcomes	Evidence showed that access to data has allowed for greater efficiency in annual priority setting. In addition, data from the case study illustrate a number of best practices that could inform the application of emerging technology moving forward.

Program efficiency

Indicator: Evidence that inputs are adequate to produce expected outputs and outcomes

Evidence showed that while program expenditures have grown, additional resources for staffing and technological enhancements were seen as needed.

Use of program resources

The Law Enforcement Program operates on a budget of approximately $10 million per year (Table 3). Salary costs make up roughly 80% of total program expenditures, and for the five-year period between 2016-17 and 2020-21, program expenditures grew by 21%. From 2018-19 to 2020-21, the LEB spent an average of 8% more than the branch's initial allocation, resulting from internal transfers from other branches.

Evaluation findings from survey and interview data show general agreement that the program makes efficient use of resources. There is also agreement that available resources have not kept pace with the increasing needs of the program, stemming from the creation of new parks, additional legislation and increasing law enforcement expectations.

Survey responses from park wardens and park warden supervisors provided suggestions as to how the program could improve its efficiency. Warden capacity was the primary area where respondents identified an opportunity for enhanced efficiency, while the other most frequently mentioned suggestions pertained to the need for additional administrative support for park wardens and supervisors as well as technological investments. Field unit survey respondents also pointed to the overall resource constraints of the program, especially in regards to the application of technologies such as video surveillance.

Table 3: Law Enforcement Program expenditures and initial allocation, 2016-17 to 2020-21

Expenditure type	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Salary	7,383,675	6,893,169	9,607,033	8,117,560	9,087,538
Goods & services	1,212,855	1,727,693	1,689,433	2,107,452	1,856,015
Total expenditures	**8,596,531**	**8,620,862**	**11,296,467**	**10,225,012**	**10,943,553**
Initial allocation	9,084,603	9,514,757	9,537,998	9,948,524	10,772,406

Program efficiency

Indicators: Evidence of management flexibilities and constraints; law enforcement resources are optimized in order to efficiently deliver activities and achieve outcomes
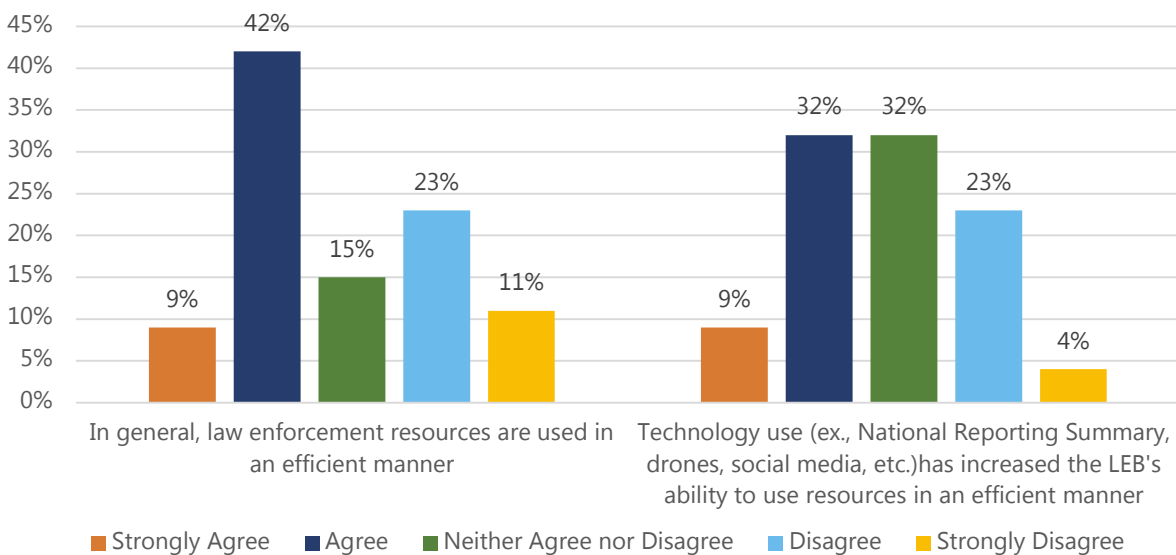
Evidence shows that management flexibilities have occurred and that access to data has allowed for greater efficiency in annual priority setting.

In spite of resource constraints noted by law enforcement and field unit staff, evaluation findings identified management flexibilities in making key changes to program policy and operations, which were reported as enhancing program efficiency. Specifically, improvements were noted in the following:

- The introduction of the NRS for recording activities and creating visual reports, allowing regional managers to visually compare the number and type of incidents that park wardens are responding to across the various sites within their regions and make operational adjustments based on the data.

- A policy change allowing for increased response to Criminal Code incidents. Since 2019, park wardens have had increased ability to respond to situations where there is risk of serious injury or death. This increased latitude applies to situations such as highway traffic enforcement, domestic assault or assault against park staff/visitors, theft, vandalism and request for backup from the police service of jurisdiction.

Nonetheless, while some efficiencies have been achieved, survey results related to technological innovation point to lower levels of agreement with the use of technology to increase efficiency within the LEB (Figure 4). The following pages examine one area of technological innovation, drones, in the law enforcement context.

Figure 4: Park warden/supervisor survey results on program efficiency

In general, law enforcement resources are used in an efficient manner: Strongly Agree 9%, Agree 42%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 15%, Disagree 23%, Strongly Disagree 11%

Technology use (ex., National Reporting Summary, drones, social media, etc.) has increased the LEB's ability to use resources in an efficient manner: Strongly Agree 9%, Agree 32%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 32%, Disagree 23%, Strongly Disagree 4%

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

Law enforcement evaluation case study:
application of technological innovation on law enforcement

Case study findings

Evidence shows there are a number of best practices that could inform the application of emerging technology moving forward.

The findings in this case study are addressed in Recommendation 3.

Background

Maintaining law enforcement standards in national parks and national historic sites in Canada is challenging. Technological advancements offer potential opportunities to assist law enforcement by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of incident responses. Evolution in data acquisition, sensing and image capture technologies including remotely-piloted aircraft systems (RPAS or drones) and standalone cameras, data transmission and communication technologies, present new potential in supporting law enforcement activities.

Currently, drones are being used by Parks Canada staff for law enforcement purposes such as monitoring activities. While this use is still in its early stages of implementation, these experiences point to potential new applications of technology for law enforcement purposes at Parks Canada. Recreational drone flying is prohibited across all Parks Canada locations.

Objective

The goal of the case study was to present a perspective on the impact technological innovation is having on law enforcement practices and performance as it pertains to Parks Canada. As such, the case study examined the potential for further upfront investments in technology to lead to improvements in efficiency and law enforcement standards over the long term. In order to do so, the case study situated the Parks Canada's current technological capabilities and their application through a comparison to other federal and provincial law enforcement agencies: the Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC); the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO); and the Government of Alberta (GoA) Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Services. To help structure the case study, it focused on the deployment of drone technologies as a key example of innovative technology as well as the contextual issues surrounding their use.

Case study findings

Drone Usage at Parks Canada

Currently, Parks Canada staff are using or planning to use drones in a variety of contexts: law enforcement, visitor experience, ecological integrity monitoring, visitor safety, and external relations. Within the Law Enforcement Branch, only a small number of wardens have extensive experience operating drones with an advanced license, while some wardens have acquired their basic license.

In the absence of a Parks Canada-specific drone directive, Transport Canada rules and regulation are the key point of reference to guide drone use for park wardens, while field unit superintendents have the authority to approve all drone flights in locations under their auspices. In addition, the LEB put in place an interim guide on drone use in 2021 to address applicable legislation, certification and purchase requirements, and roles and responsibilities. It does not address the life span of the drones, building of staff capacity in drone use and the sharing of drones between LEB and field units.

In order to coordinate drone activity within Parks Canada, a temporary position was put in place in 2022 within the Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation (PAEC) directorate. Although this position was not continued, the coordinator put in place an internal drone chat, where staff from across Parks Canada (including law enforcement) can share information on drone use. The coordinator role also allowed for a brief partnership with ECCC , where training sessions for staff on the scientific uses of drones were organized.

Examples of drone use in law enforcement within Parks Canada vary, from checking on the proximity of boats with whales to enforcing the closure of restricted areas by communicating with people through a speaker attached to the drone. Other potential areas of drone use include information gathering, assessing dangerous situations before entering, and dropping payloads.

There is an opportunity to strengthen administrative capacity, guidance and coordination to support the use of drones within Parks Canada. There have been a number of positive developments such as a drone community of practice, but evaluation findings demonstrated that much drone activity is happening in an ad hoc manner without structured

Case study findings

Comparison with other law enforcement agencies:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Canadian Coast Guard

CCG uses drones for multiple purposes including ice monitoring in the Arctic, environmental response , search & rescue, ecological monitoring, and assisting other government departments. CCG is making drones a part of its broader technological capability, for example, putting infrared camera equipment on drones operated from CCG helicopters, integrating drones into CCG satellite communications hub, and allowing images to be transferred to and between vessels. This also enables collaboration with other government departments to share relevant data to agencies.

Since 2021, CCG has a new section in place to oversee drone purchase and activity. A study was conducted covering the use of drones in CCG, including a review and analysis of data collection needs, operational requirements and the need to embed these autonomous systems into a broader intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance program.

Environment and Climate Change Canada – Wildlife Enforcement Directorate

WED enforces federal wildlife legislation designed to protect plant and animal species and is comprised of roughly 60-80 enforcement officers across the country. The directorate started using drones in 2021 for a variety of activities, primarily for surveying large land mases, taking baseline photos, and the regulatory enforcement of poaching. In the Prairie and Northern Region of WED, a Technology Working Group was established to identify technologies that could be useful to officers in the field and then to test them and make recommendations, allowing for strategic and justified purchases, not only of drones but other technology such as tablets. A temporary National Drone Working Group has also operated within WED, providing support to the regions on technical information and recommendations on drone purchases.

Alberta Government – Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Services

The GoA RPAS Policy and Directive (2020) identifies federal regulations and provincial policies to be respected to ensure safe drone flight and compliance with all necessary aviation laws. The objective of the policy is to outline a governance structure and consistent direction regarding RPAS procurement, operations, information management, and liability for GoA employees as well as to ensure compliance with applicable requirements.

The GoA has created a position responsible for overseeing drone use by all departments. In addition, lead pilots are assigned to each department that use drones, including Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Services. These pilots form a committee on drone use, making recommendations on issues for their respective management teams, who in turn bring suggestions to the RPAS Governance Committee, made up of senior-level officials.

Case study findings

Best practices

Key themes noted across departments are outlined below.

Community of practice

The RPAS Governance Committee is very visible to the public, including a website where Alberta's drone policy is publicly accessible. The ECCC WED Technology Working Group was able to test and purchase drones and examine other technological questions with access to some financial resources and subsequently share the group's experiences. At Parks Canada, the Drone Chat Group would be the closest comparison of a coordinated mechanism that gives park wardens an opportunity to provide input and share ideas on drone use.

Governance

The CCG and the GoA have embraced a centralized approach to promoting the use of drones, while insisting on high standards on matters such as training and drone performance. At Parks Canada and ECCC, individual directorates and branches have the latitude to develop drone operational capacity.

Privacy concerns

Law enforcement agencies are all concerned by privacy issues related to drone use. ECCC currently follows accepted societal agreements in terms of 'expectation of privacy' – what can be seen from a road or what a plane flying overhead would see is generally accepted. Departments and agencies are awaiting regulatory changes from Transport Canada on flying drones beyond a line of sight, carrying potential new uses for drones by law enforcement agencies.

In conclusion, with other departments and agencies, one can observe the prioritisation of clear policies and strategies, guidelines for training of drone operators, the definition of strategic uses of drones within agency operations, and centralised administrative support. These factors allow field level users such as law enforcement officers direct input on drones to improve their application, contributing to the overall efficiency of the law enforcement function.

Recommendations and 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.

For key findings related to the above recommendation, please refer to the following sections of the report:

- Law enforcement obligations and outcomes, pg. 14
- Incident response, pg. 15
- Use of program information, pg. 16

Management Response

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.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible positions
1.1 Develop a logic model that identifies activities, outcomes, and key performance indicators.	September 2023	Director, Law Enforcement Branch Director, Planning and Performance
1.2 Develop an approach for regular reporting, e.g., through the Performance Information Profile or the Law Enforcement National Reporting Summary.	November 2023	Director, Law Enforcement Branch Director, Planning and Performance

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, exploring greater reciprocity to partner organizations, where possible.

For key findings related to the above recommendation, please refer to the following sections of the report:

- Law enforcement partnerships, pg. 20
- Quality of agreements with partners, pg. 22

Management Response

Agreed. The Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate will explore ways to strengthen and enhance external partnerships for law enforcement.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible position
2.1 Review and catalogue existing external partnerships.	June 2023	Director, Law Enforcement Branch
2.2 Conduct a gap analysis and prioritize law enforcement partner agreement requirements.	December 2023	Director, Law Enforcement Branch

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 a Parks Canada-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.

For key findings related to the above recommendation, please refer to the following sections of the report:

- Program efficiency, pg. 25
- Case study findings, pg. 28-30

Management Response

Agreed. The Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate will work collaboratively with Operations and other key stakeholders to formalize a Parks Canada-wide approach to remotely-piloted aircraft systems.

Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible position
3.1 Establish a RPAS working group that will work to develop a governance model and an updated directive for remotely-piloted aircraft systems.	September 2023	Director, Conservation Strategy
3.2 Develop an updated directive for remotely-piloted aircraft systems.	March 2025	Director, Conservation Strategy

Annex

Annex 1: Online survey methodology

Survey design

Two surveys were administered concurrently as one line of evidence in the evaluation. One survey was sent to field unit superintendents/site superintendents while the other was tailored to park wardens/park warden supervisors.

The surveys were conducted using an online survey software. The questions were both quantitative and qualitative, allowing respondents to answer some open-ended questions. Feedback on the questions was provided by program staff and the survey links were pretested internally to ensure no technical issues existed and that the question flow, skips, and categories were logical. The pretest confirmed that the length of the survey was appropriate and that the technical aspects of the surveys were functional.

Field unit survey

The survey of field unit/site superintendents was deployed on April 25, 2022 with one reminder sent. The closing date of the survey was May 13, 2022. The survey was sent to 35 field unit or site superintendents with a reusable link.

Of those, 23 surveys were completed and six were partially completed. Of the 29 survey results received, 14 were from field unit superintendents, six were from site superintendents and nine were categorized as 'other'. Respondents who selected 'other' include resource conservation managers, executive directors and visitor experience managers. There was a balanced representation of respondents in each law enforcement region, with more participants in Ontario and Quebec (34%).

Park warden survey

The park warden survey was deployed on April 13, 2022 and closed on April 29, 2022. The survey was sent to 77 park wardens and park warden supervisors. Of those, 51 surveys were completed and an additional three were partially completed, resulting in a response rate of approximately 70%.

Of the survey results received, 65% were from park wardens and 35% were park warden supervisors. Alberta and British Columbia had the greatest number of respondents (33%), followed by Quebec and Ontario (31%), Atlantic (22%) and Prairies and North (13%).

Surveys were sent to:

- 35 field unit/site superintendents

- 77 park wardens and park warden supervisors