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Parks Canada/Via Email Only

The Professional Association of Wilderness Guides and Instructors (PAWGI) is a not-for-profit professional association and certification agency which was formed in 1998 under Section 2 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Its structure was later formalized with registration under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act.

PAWGI is the only professional association in Canada with formal agreements with other agencies and associations in Africa and Europe. PAWGI is also the most multicultural association in North America, with technical directors from various countries, including Africa, Australia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States. PAWGI has published the only wilderness guiding manual in Canada (ISBN: 9780981174693). PAWGI has also developed environmental guidelines for various agencies, including Public Works Canada, and published various other resources pertaining to wilderness guiding.

PAWGI published high standards have ensured an impeccable track record among certification holders worldwide for almost two decades. For example, even assistant guides (CAG) know about wilderness hazards such as flash flooding so they never caused the death of clients through gross negligence. Certification holders are also sufficiently familiar with bear behavior as to not cause an attack on a group of children under their care. Overall, PAWGI standards have ensured a level of safety and professionalism no other association or agency has managed to achieve to date.

PAWGI association with people of Norse faith, whose religious views against gay oppression, against First Nations abuse, or against forced Christianization, led to the ire of some Christian extremist, should be of no concern to Parks Canada under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which strictly prohibits discrimination based on religious grounds.

We trust Parks Canada will therefore endeavor to process permit applications from PAWGI certification holders as fairly and quickly as the agency processes applications for other operators with no certification or affiliation, with debatable safety records (that sometimes involve the death or grievous bodily harm of clients), but whose religious views may be more consistent with those of Parks Canada staff.

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