

**Ontario Recreational Canoeing  
and Kayaking Association**

**Strategic Plan**

**2010-2012**

**Draft – For Discussion**

**April 28, 2009**

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## Strategic Plan At A Glance

### Vision

Leaders in Recreational Paddling.

### Mission

ORCKA promotes positive paddling experiences for everyone by developing safe, competent and knowledgeable paddlers and advocating for the conservation of the natural environment.

### Core Business

Meeting the paddling needs of our members.

### Goals

#### 1. Program Development and Delivery

Develop and deliver high quality canoeing and kayaking instruction and certification programs that meet the needs of the paddling public.

#### 2. Strategic Partnerships

Create and maintain mutually beneficial working partnerships to achieve our mission and assist other organizations in achieving their success.

#### 3. Government Relations

Influence provincial and federal government decisions on trail policy, legislation and regulations that relate to safety, instructional standards and conservation of the paddling environment.

#### 4. Membership

Deliver value for membership to achieve consistent levels of membership retention and growth.

#### 5. Marketing and Communication

Communicate effectively with the ORCKA membership and the paddling public to achieve and maintain a higher public profile.

#### 6. Governance

Maintain a governance model that is financially viable, reflective of the needs of the membership and keeps pace with changes in the broader paddling community.

## Introduction

In January 2009 the Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association embarked upon a strategic planning process that would result in a renewed focus for 2010 through 2012.

*This plan outlines the goals and strategies that will focus the “strategic” work of the association and position it to continue to be successful in the future. It is an “ambitious” scope of work and the key to achieving success will be influenced by the availability of volunteers and financial resources. The Implementation section outlines the approach that the Board will be taking to ensure that the ‘work’ of this plan is achieved.*

The strategic planning process included the following steps:

- A comprehensive review of existing documentation and reports related to the delivery of canoeing and kayaking instructional and certification programs and supporting resources.
- Project Initiation meeting with the Chairperson Strategic Planning Committee, conference call with committee members and input session with full board.
- Telephone input interviews with:
  - Board members: Gordon Haggert, Marty Tannahill, Jim Wood, Sylvain Ducharme, Francis Boyes, Pat Hawkins, Bruce Hawkins
  - James Raffan, Canadian Canoe Museum
  - Bonnie Campbell, Barrie Canoe Club
  - Patrick Connor, Ontario Trails Council
  - Grant Linney, Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario
  - Dan Andrews, Trans Canada Trail Ontario
  - Blair Doyle, Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia
  - Alan Thomson, Recreational Canoeing Association of British Columbia
- Surveys to: Membership (1200 distributed, 234 returned); Chairpersons (16 distributed, 7 returned); Regional Representatives (18 distributed, 5 returned).
- Board Planning Meeting April 5, 2009.
- Membership On Line Discussion Forum May 2009.
- Presentation To AGM September 2009.

The input obtained throughout the process formed the baseline information for the board to make strategic decisions, to re-position the association for the next three years. A detailed analysis of the input is available for review upon request.

## **Vision Statement**

Leaders in recreational paddling.

## **Mission Statement**

ORCKA promotes positive paddling experiences for everyone by developing safe, competent and knowledgeable paddlers and advocating for the conservation of the natural environment.

## **Core Business Statement**

Meeting the paddling needs of our members (with an underlying theme of financial sustainability).

## **Goals and Strategies**

### **1. Program Development and Delivery**

#### Goal:

Develop and deliver high quality canoeing and kayaking instruction and certification programs that meet the needs of the paddling public.

#### Strategies:

Years One, Two and Three:

1. Solicit participant and instructor input at the completion of each course delivered adjusting content and delivery as required.
2. Coordinate annual Instructor Forums to provide a venue for sharing best practices and developing unique program delivery ideas.
3. Develop and deliver new canoeing and/or kayaking instructional programs and resources.

#### Expected Results:

- Programs that consistently achieve a 90% level of participant satisfaction.
- Programs that consistently achieve a 90% level of instructor satisfaction.
- One new instructional program and/or resource developed and delivered each year.
- One Instructor Forum delivered annually.

### **2. Strategic Partnerships**

#### Goal:

Create and maintain mutually beneficial working partnerships to achieve our mission and assist other organizations in achieving their success.

#### Strategies:

1. Incorporate partnership development consideration in every program related board decision.
2. Develop working partnerships with other associations:

- a. Year One:
  - i. Establish an Ad Hoc Sponsorship Committee to develop and execute a strategy to solicit incentives and sponsorships from manufacturers and retailers of canoeing and kayaking equipment.
  - ii. Ontario Trails Council (OTC): trail stewardship, mapping, environmental issues.
  - iii. Canadian Canoe Museum (CCM): promotion of canoeing and kayaking culture.
  - iv. Trans Canada Trail Ontario (TCTO): volunteer network to deal with environmental issues.
- b. Year Two:
  - i. Ontario Parks (OP): promote programs to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadians.
  - ii. Ontario Camps Association (OCA): program development and delivery.
- c. Year Three:
  - i. Trans Canada Trails Ontario (TCTO): trail development and stewardship.
  - ii. WCA: environmental issues.
  - iii. Manufacturers and retailers: promote ORCKA at time of purchase.

Expected Results – Year One:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated with partnership associations that outline roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes.
- Five incentives/sponsorships negotiated and delivered to the membership.
- Cultural promotion campaign developed and executed.
- Measureable progress from each MOU.

### **3. Government Relations**

Goal:

Influence provincial and federal government decisions on trail policy, legislation and regulations that relate to safety, instructional standards and conservation of the paddling environment.

Strategies:

Year One:

1. Environment Committee develop a position paper on addressing environmental issues that relate to the canoeing and kayaking paddling environment and submit to the provincial government.
2. Strengthen the role of Regional Representatives in addressing local and regional environmental issues.

Year Two:

1. Work with the OTC and TCTO through the Regional Trail Committee network to create a critical mass of volunteers for advocating on environmental issues.

Year Three:

1. Develop a leadership strategy for addressing future environmental issues that directly impact the canoeing and kayaking community.

Expected Results - Year One

- Environmental position paper established and a position paper submitted to the Ministries of Health Promotion and Natural Resources.
- Regional Representatives submit local paddling environment issues and suggested solutions to board for consideration and inclusion in an ORCKA position paper.

#### **4. Membership**

Goal:

Deliver value for membership to achieve consistent levels of membership retention and growth.

Strategies:

Year One:

1. Create a supplementary promotional database of participant information from previous courses and promote value of membership in ORCKA.
2. Membership Committee develop and execute a membership recruitment and retention strategy.
3. Develop a ‘members only’ section on the web site.

Year Two:

Incorporate membership incentive program that has value for existing and potential new members.

Establish an “Ad Hoc Volunteer Coordinating Committee” to develop a volunteer management and succession planning strategy.

Year Three:

Conduct membership satisfaction survey and report results to the board.

Expected Results – Year One

- Existing levels of membership maintained over previous year.
- 10% increase in membership.
- New membership recruitment and retention strategy implemented.
- Web site section for membership initiated.

## **5. Marketing and Communication**

### Goal:

Communicate effectively with the ORCKA membership and the paddling public to achieve and maintain a higher public profile.

### Strategies:

#### Year One:

1. Complete enhancements to existing web site that incorporates “membership only section”.
2. Assess current communication with membership and make enhancements as required.
3. Create a joint marketing program with the Canadian Canoe museum to promote the value of membership in ORCKA and the culture of canoeing.

#### Year Two:

1. Develop a comprehensive marketing program to better inform the paddling public of the programs, services and resources that ORCKA delivers.
2. Host a series of on-line discussion forums accessible to both members and non members.
3. Work with other similarly positioned organizations (OTC, OCA etc.) to jointly promote association programs, services, resources and products.

#### Year Three:

1. Membership promotion partnerships formed with manufacturers and retailers of canoeing and kayaking equipment.
2. Partnership with Tourism Toronto and the Sport Alliance of Ontario to promote the sports of canoeing and kayaking.
3. Attend relative trade shows to promote ORCKA and the sports of canoeing and kayaking.

### Expected Results – Year One

- Members only section operational on ORCKA web site.
- Timely communication with the membership of board decisions and other topical canoeing and kayaking information.
- Joint marketing program executed in conjunction with the Canadian Canoe museum.

## **6. Governance**

### Goal:

Maintain a governance model that is financially viable, reflective of the needs of the membership and keeps pace with changes in the broader paddling community.

### Strategies:

#### Year One:

1. Establish an Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan and to report on progress being made to the board.

2. Incorporate governance changes necessary to implement the goals and strategies of the strategic plan.
3. Conduct a critical analysis of the financial requirements of the association to implement the strategic plan, and, establish an Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee to develop a Long Term Financial Plan to ensure the association continues to generate the resources necessary to achieve its mission.
4. Assess the necessity and the feasibility of an Executive Director as a component of the Long Term Financial Plan.
5. Review current methods of involving the membership in the planning and delivery of services and in the decision making process of the association.
6. Develop a board member/committee member succession planning strategy.

Years Two and Three:

1. Explore the feasibility of accessing government funding programs and where applicable complete the required application process.
2. Complete a review of the effectiveness of ORCKA governance in relationship to the expectations of the membership.
3. Review the progress being made on the implementation of the strategic plan and develop new governance approaches as required.
4. Adjust governance structure accordingly with the need for an Executive Director.

Expected Results – Year One

- Adjustments to association governance completed within the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2010.
- Long term sustainability plan completed by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2010.

## **Governance General**

The association will continue to operate as a “working board” as this model has proven to be successful in the past. The existing structure will be used as a basis for plan implementation with the addition of the following Ad Hoc Committees in the years indicated:

- Year One
  - Strategic Planning Implementation Committee
  - Sponsorship Committee
  - Sustainability Committee
- Year Two
  - Volunteer Coordinating Committee

The Past President position will be expanded to include the overseeing the implementation of the strategic plan through the work of a newly appointed Strategic Planning Implementation Committee.

Consideration will be given during the first year of plan implementation to review the role of the Executive Committee with the intent to “streamline” decision making at the board level. It is intended to identify key areas where the existing board gets “bogged down” in the decision making process and introduce refined methods of getting information to the board and the extent to which decisions require full board discussion prior to the decision being made.

An aggressive volunteer recruitment strategy will be initiated by the Executive Committee to solicit involvement from the membership in the implementation of the strategic plan. Supplementary to this task will be the development of a succession planning strategy so replacements for board and committee members are available when required.

The Regional Representative Role will be reviewed to equip this group of individuals with the tools and expertise to contribute to the promotion of membership services, board/membership communication and for the conservation of the paddling environment.

In the future the board will regularly inform the membership of decisions that impact program development and delivery, of potential conflicts of interest and other membership service decisions to ensure board operations continue to be “transparent” and in the best interest of the membership.

Long term sustainability is fundamental to achieving the mission, and to this end appropriate strategies have been included in the strategic plan to ensure the association continues to be viable well past the term of this plan.

## **Implementation**

The position of Past President will be delegated the task of coordinating the ongoing implementation of the plan. A Strategic Planning Implementation Committee will be appointed that has Board representation to assist the Past President as required.

Reporting progress to the Board through the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis will be completed to ensure that the various committee initiatives remain on target and achieve what was originally thought to be possible.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for taking the steps necessary to oversee the work of the Past President and the Strategic Planning Implementation Committee and report as required to the full board. The extent to which the strategies can be implemented will be influenced directly by the level to which existing service delivery can be maintained and the availability of financial and volunteer resources. The degree to which members will be involved will depend on their current and anticipated commitments. In years two and three other changes in the degree to which volunteers are involved will be incorporated into the governance structure.

Initially the Strategic Planning Implementation Committee will be required to review the 2010 strategies and develop an overall Implementation Operations Plan, identifying the framework and the extent to which volunteers will be involved, timing and the assignment of financial resources. In the future it will continue to be important to identify who in the organization will be responsible for providing leadership for each strategy.

The governance structure will be reviewed to determine if existing committees can take on additional workload or if new Ad Hoc Committees are required to assist in implementing the plan as work progresses.

Essential to the future success of ORCKA will be the communication of plan contents to the membership and other key stakeholders. Communicating the highlights of quarterly strategic plan reviews will provide the mechanism through which these stakeholders can be kept informed of the progress being made.

This plan must be reviewed each year prior to budget establishment to allocate financial resources, ensure the association is on track with plan implementation and provide an opportunity for the membership to “insert” initiatives to address new gaps in service and/or changes in the canoeing and kayaking service environment.

Measuring board, committee and volunteer performance throughout the implementation process will be critical to success. In the absence of a current measurement system, the Strategic Planning Implementation Committee will need to establish milestones and expected results in consultation with individuals involved in the implementation of each strategy. The Past President in turn will be responsible for the documentation of progress and taking remedial action if required.

The table following outlines the assignment of Year One Strategies:

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Committee/Person</b>
<b>Program</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete a comprehensive review of canoeing and kayaking program content every five years.</li> <li>2. Coordinate annual Instructor Forums to provide a venue for sharing best practices and developing unique program delivery ideas.</li> <li>3. Develop and deliver new canoeing and/or kayaking instructional programs and resources.</li> </ol>	Chair Program Services, V.P Instruction, V.P. Program V.P. Program  V.P. Program
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporate partnership development consideration in every program related board decision.</li> <li>2. Ad Hoc Sponsorship Committee</li> <li>3. OTC partnership negotiation</li> <li>4. Canadian Canoe Museum joint promotion</li> <li>5. Trans Canada Trail environmental issues</li> </ol>	President  President Chair Environment Chair Promotion Chair Environment
<b>Government Relations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Position paper environmental issues</li> <li>2. Strengthen Regional Representative role</li> </ol>	Chair Environment/Gov't Liaison Chair Regional Development
<b>Membership</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Database of past participant information</li> <li>2. Membership recruitment and retention</li> <li>3. Members only section on web site</li> </ol>	Office Administrator Chair Membership Chair Information Technology, Membership
<b>Marketing &amp; Communication</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Web site enhancements</li> <li>2. Communication process enhancements</li> <li>3. Joint marketing with Canadian Canoe Museum</li> </ol>	Chair Information Technology, Membership V.P. Communications, Promotions Chair Promotions
<b>Governance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appoint Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Implementation Committee</li> <li>2. Governance changes to implement strategic plan</li> <li>3. Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee appointment and monitoring</li> <li>4. Assessment of feasibility of hiring an Executive Director</li> <li>5. Review current methods of involving the membership in the planning and delivery of services and in the decision making process of the association.</li> <li>6. Develop a board member/committee member succession planning strategy.</li> </ol>	President  President, Board Members President, Chair Business Affairs  Sustainability Committee, Board members Executive Committee  Executive Committee

## Board Meeting Input – April 15, 2009

### ***Vision Statement***

#### *Decisions Reached*

Vision Statement:

Leaders in paddling.

#### *Input from the Environmental Scan and Board Planning Meeting*

Suggested wording for a new vision statement

- Leaders in recreational paddling
- Paddling leadership
- The leader of paddling excellence
- Dedicated to paddling excellence
- Leading premier excellence
- Preserving paddling excellence
- Open, transparent, accessible
- Recognized
- Working with other organizations
- Is ORCKA the members or the board members only (organizational members, instructors)
- Best paddling association
- Impeccable natural environment – paddling, waterways
- ORCKA be the best recreational paddling association in Canada
- The best paddling association in Canada
- Identify with Ontario
- Ontario paddling standard
- Leading Ontario paddlers
- Working for Ontario paddlers
- Voice of Ontario paddlers
- Home of Ontario paddling
- Setting paddling standard for Ontario

Vision key element suggestions:

- Education
- National focus
- Organized, serve members
- Current, proven, relevant program
- Impeccable safety
- Instructor, organizational members
- Recognition
- Ontario paddling standard
- Open
- Fair
- Financially secure
- Igniting passion
- Standards
- Leadership
- Member based
- Public appeal
- World class
- Engaged board
- Flexible
- Integrity
- Paddling outreach
- Respect
- Environmental preservation
- Adaptive
- Influential
- Rational
- Excellence
- Proactive
- Collaboration
- Accessible

### ***Mission Statement***

#### *Decisions Reached*

Mission Statement:

ORCKA promotes positive paddling experiences for everyone through the development of safe, competent and knowledgeable paddlers and advocating for the conservation of the natural environment.

*Current Mission Statement:*

To promote accessibility of paddling experiences for everyone, the development of safe, competent and knowledgeable recreational paddlers, igniting the passion for a journey of paddling experiences and the preservation of the paddling environment.

Suggested changes:

- Add the word “promote” before ...the development of safe...
- Add “ORCKA” before ...To promote...
- Add the words “promote accessibility to” before...paddling experiences...
- Add the word “advocate” somewhere in the body of the statement
- Add the words “promote conditions for excellence paddling” somewhere in the body of the statement
- Add the words “preserve the paddling heritage” somewhere in the body of the statement

*Input from the Environmental Scan and Board Planning Meeting*

Comments and suggested changes:

- We are not promoting accessibility or environmental issues
- Not advocating enough to government (rights of paddlers)
- Public at large – no focus (people who just want to paddle)
- Igniting the passion???
- Doesn't describe the “how” we do it
- Safety, environmentally responsible
- Advocate new paddling venues
- Stick to developing safe, competent, knowledgeable recreation paddlers
- Research and develop new technical standards
- More action on paddling heritage

Potential Mission Statement wording:

- ORCKA promotes positive paddling experiences for everyone by:
  - Developing safe , competent and knowledgeable paddlers
  - Advocating for conservation of the natural environment
  - Helping to preserve paddling heritage and culture

**Core Business**

*Decisions Reached*

Core Business Statement:

Meeting the needs of our members (with an underlying theme of financial sustainability).

The Board decided that the following core business statement would be used as the basis for the strategic planning decisions:

*Input from the Environmental Scan and Board Planning Meeting*

- Paddling instruction program and related administrative support
- Promotion of safety of paddling
- Providing resources, credible training to other organizations
- Promote safe, informed paddling
- Being instructional centre of paddling knowledge in Ontario and the world
- Educate and develop recreational paddlers
- Promote safe canoeing by established

- Balanced budget
- Advocacy
- Networking forums for members
- standards of certification
- Monitor government policies
- 

### ***Strategic Opportunities***

Key Strategic Opportunities:

*Decisions Reached:*

The Board decided that the following key strategic opportunities would be used as the basis for the strategic planning decisions:

- Financial viability
- Membership recruitment, retention – value of membership, cost, paddling public
- Strategic partnerships with other organizations
- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadians – ethno/cultural
- Be seen as the voice for Ontario paddlers
- Environmental issues/public interest in same
- Communication with members
- Market the good products that we have
- Volunteer management

*Input from the Environmental Scan and Board Planning Meeting*

- Financial viability
- Governance
- Market the good products that we have with a broad message
- Communication with members
- National focus/recognition
- Volunteer management
- Expand instructor base
- International programs (offer)
- Improve relationship with Paddle Canada
- Youth organizations
- Membership recruitment, retention – value of membership, cost, paddling public
- Recreational paddlers (RPAC)
- Be seen as the voice of Ontario paddlers
- River Rescue Program – seen as the industry standard
- Environmental issues/public interest in same
- Strategic partnerships – Other organizations, Ontario Parks
- Research and development and programs
- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadians – ethno/cultural

### ***Goals and Strategies***

*Input from the Environmental Scan and Board Planning Meeting*

- Program
  - Intent: maintenance, development, administration and research and development
  - Strategies:
    - Annual program evaluation – instructor comments on each course, participant comments on the web page
    - 5 year program review
    - Instructor forums/gatherings
      - Share best practices and unique ideas
      - Ideas for the delivery of programs
    - Research and development
      - One new product each year (e.g. cookbook, how to instructor manual)
- Partnerships
  - Intent: strategic partnerships to work on the environment, heritage and culture of canoeing, promoting programs, incentives with manufacturers and retailers

- Strategies:
  - Partnership policy and procedures
  - Follow through on commitments from the office
  - Establish ad hoc committee of experts to develop a strategy to approach retailers and manufacturers and raise funds for operations
  - Approach the Ontario Trails Council, Trans Canada Trails Ontario, WCA to work on environmental issues
  - Approach the Ontario Camps Association, OPHEA, Ontario Parks and local school boards to develop and promote programs
  - Approach the Canadian Canoe Museum to promote culture and heritage of canoeing and kayaking
  - Provide links on web page to other similarly positioned organizations to promote their programs, events and post organizational information
  - Approach Ontario Parks to promote to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadians
- Advocacy
  - Intent: environment (legislation, direct involvement in the improvement of trails)
  - Strategies:
    - Partner with other organizations (with member support) that fit criteria of policy and procedures) to deal with government legislation and regulations that affect the canoeing and kayaking community
    - Take initiative with local and regional organizations and Conservation Authorities and/or establish a network of volunteers to deal with environmental issues
    - Initiate “adopt a waterway” program, develop a high profile and promote
    - Determine role of ORCKA Regional Representatives
- Membership
  - Intent: increase numbers, retention of existing, management of membership services, define value of membership
  - Strategies:
    - Membership recruitment and retention strategy
      - Include tangible incentives (e.g. t-shirts, discounts) when sign up
      - Marketing program to answer/promote what is in “it” new for members
      - Emphasis on previous participants in ORCKA programs
      - More responsive to members (e.g. FAQ section on web site, members only section)
    - Volunteer management
- Marketing and Communication
  - Intent: better explain ORCKA to the membership and the public, selling ORCKA to the public
  - Strategies:
    - New user friendly web site (for public and the membership)
    - Product placement strategy
    - Public:
      - Advertising strategy to reach the general public
      - Point of Purchase materials written and placed in key places like tourism information kiosks
      - Hosting web based discussion groups

- Articles in trade magazines
- Attendance at trade shows
- Community newspapers
- Plug into the OTC network
- Manufacturers of equipment
- Press releases
- Dealer base – have Point of Purchase materials available when people purchase equipment
- Use the database of past members and participants
- Partnership with the Sport Alliance of Ontario and Tourism Toronto