

# OWN YOUR FRIDAY

## Nature Canada's Nourishing Work Week

### People First

At Nature Canada, we have always valued people as the source of our success. We are dedicated to building a country where threatened species and ecosystems are protected and restored, and the natural world is embraced by all Canadians. It's a big job and we do it well, but we recognize that there's a price for our passion. In the environmental non-profit advocacy sector, we are prone to burnout, poor work life balance, and eco-anxiety. Post-COVID, through remote and hybrid work, we have learned the value of flexibility in minimizing stress and balancing our professional and personal life.

In recognition of this, Nature Canada has implemented a four day work week to leverage the benefits of flexibility and balance for staff and the organization. Since July of 2024, Fridays are your own - to do what is most nourishing for you. We hope that owning your Friday will empower you with more choice so that you decide what you need to do or not do to feel at your best.



### The 100-80-100 Model

The model we are following is what is known as the 100-80-100 model - that is 100 percent of the pay, 80 percent of the hours, 100 percent of the productivity. In order for this model to be successful, it is important that we:

- Continually prioritize and re-prioritize our work for maximum impact
- Regularly look for efficiencies (e.g. reduction of meeting times)
- Utilize our technology and systems (e.g. use of Asana)
- Maintain realistic timelines and outcomes (e.g. in our work plans and campaign rollout docs).





## Our Objectives

- Reduce burnout and support work-life balance
- Attract and retain high performing staff
- Maintain productivity and impact

Surveys show that 17% of charities in Canada have a four day work week with full pay. Many in our sector have adopted this policy, including David Suzuki Foundation, Nature NB, Ecology Action Centre, and Wildlands League. Nature Canada wishes to be an employer of choice and we believe that this policy will help us tackle burnout, support work life balance, and increase our ability to attract and keep amazing staff.

## The Groundwork

We have put in the foundation for a four day work week at Nature Canada by maintaining a hybrid work policy, documenting our campaign work and processes, using technology such as Slack and Asana to stay coordinated, minimizing and clarifying internal meetings, and creating individual annual work plans. We make it a priority to focus on the most impactful work, rather than all the possible work.

## The Benefits

Research shows that four day work week policies allow employees to be more productive and focused because they are well rested. With an equity lens, a four day work week creates a more equitable workplace that balances work and family/other commitments which could make employment more accessible for groups that face barriers to employment (e.g. single parents, women, people with disabilities or chronic health conditions). There are natural creativity, energy, and focus gains from more time off.

### The benefits of a four day work include:

- Increased employee wellbeing and reduction of burnout
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased employee retention and recruitment
- A more equitable working environment, especially for caregivers
- Reduced sick days
- Increased personal health
- Increased creativity and time for reflection

## The Challenges

A four day work week also includes some challenges:

- Fewer hours means less time to get things done
  - Evidence suggests that efficiency increases, with key actions such as reducing meeting time and blocking focus time.
  - We check in regularly to ensure that we are not feeling overwhelmed and offer assistance in prioritizing and finding efficiencies.
- Meetings with external partners
  - Many other groups have also moved to either four day work weeks or avoiding meetings on Fridays.
- If there are Friday meetings that are unavoidable, the lieu time policy should be followed. Staff will need to be flexible when it comes to meeting and working with partners.
- Busy times are already overwhelming
  - We recognize that our work is sometimes at a crescendo (e.g. Nature on the Hill, High Fundraising season, Field work) and plan accordingly.
  - We plan for busy times and either bring on more capacity temporarily, offer lieu time to be taken during slow times, or further prioritize our work.



## Our Pilot

By piloting the four day work week from July of 2024 to January of 2025, we examined whether this model is right for Nature Canada. The pilot gave us a chance to experience more time to fully step back from our work, deeply and regularly, to have time to recharge. During the pilot, we worked together as a team to ensure that we had solid plans in place to make a four day week successful. We invested in training to aid in finding meeting efficiencies. We talked about the psychological safety and trust required for success in managing our workload in a shorter time frame. We spent time together to decide how best to measure our productivity and set goals for ourselves. We deepened our skills in using Asana to help us manage our time and

tasks. And we gathered weekly feedback to hear any concerns and ideas to ensure that our four day work week pilot was a success.

After the pilot concluded, we conducted a robust evaluation. Based on the feedback we heard, we made a few tweaks, including adjusting how we handled short weeks due to holidays and field work for an extended time. We also reduced the number of staff retreats. We realized that our lieu time policy is already strong and effective for when working on a Friday is unavoidable. And we acknowledged that sometimes we may make a personal choice to do some work on Fridays and that is ok, as long as we are not putting any expectations on team members to do the same.



## Lieu Time Policy

In any circumstance that may require an employee to work additional hours, it must be discussed with, and approved in writing, in advance, by the employee's supervisor.

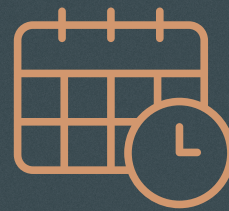
In advance of the additional time being incurred, the Employee is required to provide their supervisor in writing with:

- The nature of the work to be performed outside of standard hours,
- An estimation of the hours to be incurred,

- The facts to explain that the work cannot be performed before a deadline within the standard hours,
- An agreement on the related deliverable at the end of the task,
- A plan as to when the lieu time will be taken.

A confirmation of hours worked must be provided to the Director of Finance to add to the employee's record.

\*See Personnel Policy for more detail.



### Tips:

- Plan your Monday before the end of day on Thursday
- Schedule time for daily/weekly workload planning
- Block time for focus time
- Use Google calendar to block time
- Use Asana to manage tasks
- Continue to reduce and shorten meetings
- Answer email in batches, rather than react to them as they arrive in your inbox

## Own Your Friday

Fridays are your day - Own your Friday! Use it for things like volunteering in the community, spending time in nature, resting, household chores, personal appointments, and whatever else you want! If doing a bit of work feels most nourishing to you, go for it - we won't offer lieu time but it's your choice. However, we encourage you to make the most of Fridays doing non-work, nourishing activities.





## The Details!

Nature Canada still operates on a 37.5-hour work week; however, as an added benefit, we have instituted a 4 day work week policy which reduces the standard work week to 30 hours in most weeks. Generally, the organization closes on Fridays, providing the staff a day off.

With the four day work week, Nature Canada staff are expected to work 30 hours per week, Monday through Thursday. Lunch is one half hour in length and there are two paid 15 minute breaks each day. Lieu time may accrue after 30 hours and for non-managerial staff, overtime will accrue after 44 hours. Both must be approved in writing in advance by the supervisor. See the Personnel Policy for more details.

There is no expectation for permanent staff to work on Friday, unless there is an external meeting that is immovable, in case of travel, or some other exceptional case in discussion with your manager. In that case, the lieu time policy must be followed. Managers may request Friday work on occasion, and a written request with notice must be provided. You have the opportunity to discuss this request with your manager if needed.

When possible, non-work obligations should be shifted to Fridays or outside business hours. Occasionally you may want to work on Friday and shift your day off to a different day - this is possible in conversation with your manager, similarly to how we function if we need to work on a weekend. Recurring personal Friday work should prompt reflection, and consistent team-required Friday work highlights potential performance, management, or workload issues. Staff are encouraged to have

these conversations with their manager or the Executive Director. If you are making a personal choice to work outside of regular hours, the use of tools such as email scheduling and slack message scheduling is highly encouraged.

Developing proficiency in the tools (e.g. Asana) and processes (e.g. Campaign Roll out documents, work plans) is expected. These tools are critical to the success of a four day work week, particularly in how we work together across teams.

For staff conducting fieldwork, they are required to suspend their four day work week schedule for trips lasting more than seven days. Fieldwork involves on-site activities generally outdoors to gather data, conduct research, or implement conservation efforts directly in the field.

To avoid the challenges of shortened three day work weeks due to paid holidays, the four day work week will not apply during these weeks. Instead, a five day work week will be observed, with the holiday included as one of the five days. Staff will be given the flexibility to adjust their schedules in consultation with their manager. For example, if a holiday falls on a Monday, staff may choose to work Tuesday through Friday or Monday through Thursday to maintain their usual routine. If the holiday falls on a Friday, it will be observed as the holiday, with no additional time in lieu. This approach allows staff to maintain flexibility while accommodating the holiday within the same week.

Staff are expected to adhere to the hybrid work policy of three days per week in person in the office. Vacation accrual is prorated in order to

account for the reduced hours. Other details are outlined below with the goal of balancing time off with sufficient working days.

All staff are eligible except for summer students who may be mandated to work 35 hours due to funding requirements or temporary staff who may be brought on to add capacity.

Nature Canada’s four day work week policy is an additional benefit implemented at the discretion of

the Executive Director to ensure alignment with organizational needs while supporting staff well-being. This policy does not impact existing employment agreements but will be accompanied by an additional letter outlining the terms, designed to ensure clarity and mutual agreement among all participating staff.

Feedback is highly encouraged! Consider providing feedback at your one on ones with your manager, in the staff survey, at skip level meetings, or anytime!

	5DWW	Pilot 4DWW
Weekly hours of work	37.5	30
Lieu time	After 37.5 hours of work	After 30 hours of work, with written pre-approval
Overtime	After 44 hours of work	After 44 hours of work
Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Days	10 days	8 days
Personal Emergency Leave	5 days	2 days
Paid Holidays	12 days (10 public holidays, plus TRC day & Easter Monday)	No change
Working weeks of Paid Holidays		4 days of work, in conversation with your manager.
Fieldwork		4 day work week does not apply for trips lasting more than 7 days
Vacation days	Less than 5 years of service: Accrue at 1.67 days per month  Five or more years of service: Accrue at 2.08 days per month  Ten or more years of service: Accrue at 2.50 days per month	Accrue at 1.33 days per month plus 1 day per year of service to a maximum cap of 30 days.
Vacation roll over (starting in 2025)	10	8
Christmas to New Year’s	Typically closed, Lieu time offered for mandatory work	Typically closed, Lieu time offered for mandatory work