

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 will pilot a four day work week to leverage the benefits of flexibility and balance for staff and the organization. Starting in July, Fridays will become 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 will be piloting 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. The pilot will run until January 2025. Engaging in a pilot will make sure we get it right and our collective impact is not reduced. During and after the pilot, we will gather feedback to evaluate how it is going. At the conclusion of the pilot, there will be a decision point as to whether we continue this policy, alter it, or go back to five day work weeks.



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 already moved to a four day work week with full pay. Many in our sector have already 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 implementing 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 already dramatically improved the ways in which we are working at Nature Canada by implementing a hybrid work policy, documenting and clarifying our campaign work, implementing technology such as Slack and Asana, reducing and clarifying internal meetings, and creating individual work plans. We are making it a priority to focus on the most impactful work, rather than all the possible work.

The Benefits

Research shows that 4 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

The shift to a four day work week will also include some challenges:

- Fewer hours means less time to get things done
 - Evidence suggests that efficiency will increase, with key actions such as reducing meeting time and blocking focus time.
 - We will check in regularly during the pilot 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, lieu time will be offered to compensate. 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).
 - We will 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, we can determine whether this model is right for Nature Canada. The pilot will give us a chance to experience more time to fully step back from our work, deeply and regularly, to have time to recharge. After the pilot concludes, we will conduct a robust evaluation. Other models are out there and we will remain open to tweaks or

even a complete roll back to five day weeks if that seems like the best outcome. A pilot gives a chance to try out owning our Fridays as an experiment. As we move through the pilot, we will need to commit to being open and transparent, engage in many conversations, and suggest adjustments along the way.

How it can work

There is a lot of research and case studies that we are drawing on in order to fine tune our pilot. Based on others' experiences, we know that in order to be successful, we must:

- Continue to refine how we prioritize our work
- Look for efficiencies (e.g. reduction of meeting times)
- Utilize our technology and systems (e.g. better use of Asana)
- Maintain realistic timelines and outcomes (e.g. in our work plans and campaign rollout docs).

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



Next steps

As we head toward the pilot timeframe, we will work together as a team to ensure that we have solid plans in place to make a four day week successful. We will invest in training to aid in finding meeting efficiencies. We will talk about the psychological safety and trust required for success in managing our workload in a shorter time frame. We will also spend time together to decide how best to measure our productivity and set goals for ourselves. We will deepen our skills in using Asana to help us manage our time and tasks. And we will gather feedback - we will want to hear your feedback, concerns, and ideas to ensure that our four day work week pilot is a success.



Own Your Friday

Fridays will be 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 currently operates on a 37.5-hour work week, normally consisting of 7.5 hours per day, exclusive of lunch break, Monday through Friday. Lunches are one half hour in length and there are two paid 15 minute breaks each day. Lieu time accrues after 37.5 hours and for non-managerial staff, overtime accrues after 44 hours. Both must be approved in writing in advance by the supervisor.

During the pilot, Nature Canada staff will be expected to work 30 hours per week, Monday through Thursday. Lunch remains one half hour in length and there are two paid 15 minute breaks each day. Lieu time will accrue after 30 hours and for non-managerial staff, overtime will still accrue after 44 hours. Both must be approved in writing in advance by the supervisor.

We will have no expectation of anyone to work on Friday, unless there is an external meeting that is

immovable. In that case, lieu time will be offered if approved in advance. 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 now if we need to work on a weekend.

All salaries will remain the same. Staff are still expected to adhere to the hybrid work policy of three days per week in person in the office. Vacation accrual will be prorated in order to account for the reduced hours. Other tweaks to days off are outlined below with the goal of balancing time off with sufficient working days.

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

	Current	Pilot 4DWW
Weekly hours of work	37.5	30
Lieu time	After 37.5 hours of work	After 30 hours of work
Overtime	After 44 hours of work	After 44 hours of work
Sick days	10 days	8 days: Renamed Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing Days
Personal days	5 days	2 days; renamed Personal Emergency Leave
Paid Holidays	12 days (10 public holidays, plus TRC day & Easter Monday)	11 days (Choose between Easter Monday or August Civic Holiday)
Vacation days	<p>Less than 5 yrs of service: Accrue at 1.67 days per month</p> <p>Five or more years of service: Accrue at 2.08 days per month</p> <p>Ten or more years of service: Accrue at 2.50 days per month</p>	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 (3 working days in 2024)	Typically closed, Lieu time offered for mandatory work (2 working days in 2024)
Potential work days in the year (262 working days in Ontario in 2024; reduces to 210 with 4DWW)	200-211	155-166 (~45 day difference)

Notes:

Personal days were intended to create better work life balance for employees. Volunteering in the community was encouraged to create connections with local charities, especially the Indigenous food bank. Our switch to a four day work week will displace the need for these.

We have removed one non-stat holiday to avoid too many short weeks.

Two emergency days are still provided.

Previously vacation accrual only increased after five years of service. We will now move to an additional day of vacation for each year worked.