

# Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

## Service Plan Summary 2002/03 – 2004/05

### Mission

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection helps British Columbians limit the adverse effects of their individual and collective activities on the environment. The mandate of the ministry is to:

- protect human health and safety by ensuring clean and safe water, land and air,
- maintain and restore the natural diversity of ecosystems, fish and wildlife and their habitat, and
- provide park and wildlife recreation services and opportunities to British Columbians and visitors.

### Strategic Shifts

The ministry plays an essential role in maintaining a healthy environment—which in turn enhances human health, supports economic development and provides a high quality of life. The ministry is changing its business methods to better focus resources where there is the greatest risk to the environment, and to reduce its costs as well as reduce the costs to others of meeting environmental standards.

The ministry will put more emphasis on:

- developing clear environmental standards and performance expectations;
- monitoring and public reporting;
- ensuring positive compliance with expectations; and
- providing a professional corporate enforcement service where required.

Less emphasis will be placed on direct delivery of services and advice.

<i>FROM</i>	<i>TO</i>
Ministry as sole protector of the environment.	Shared stewardship – sharing responsibility for the environment with others as appropriate and emphasizing a ministry staff culture of client service.
Prescriptive approaches using prohibitions and controls.	Setting appropriate environmental standards, and ensuring standards are met.
Unclear accountability for environmental results.	Clear roles for ministry, industry and other stakeholders in the gathering and reporting of environmental information.
Well-developed but single-focus ministry initiatives.	Integrated ministry program delivery based on best available science and an ecosystem-based approach.
Constraints on economic development.	Economic development based on clear, reasonable outcomes, with discretion as to how to achieve these outcomes.
Proprietary information belonging to government.	Public information made available in a transparent, timely and accessible manner.

### Core Business Areas

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection has the following three core business areas:

- **Environmental Protection** of air, water and land quality (delivered by Environmental Protection Division).
- **Environmental Stewardship** of biodiversity, wildlife, fish and protected areas (delivered by Environmental Stewardship Division).
- **Park and Wildlife Recreation** management of hunting, angling, park recreation and wildlife viewing (delivered by Environmental Stewardship Division).

## Major Initiatives

### Environmental Protection

Outdated, prohibitive environmental regulatory processes increase costs for government and private businesses. Inflexible statutory decision-processes result in conflict and litigation (e.g., contaminated sites). Previous priorities for ministry resources, along with increased regulation, have resulted in service backlogs, poor environmental monitoring and reporting systems, and inadequate science and information. The public is increasingly aware of the links between health outcomes and the quality of air and water.

The ministry will provide leadership by setting and enforcing high environmental standards, developing incentives for improved environmental performance, monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions, and encouraging others to accept a greater role in environmental protection. The ministry will put relatively greater emphasis than in the past on mitigating poor environmental quality that directly affects human health. Fewer staff and resources will be directed to low- and medium- risk pollution sources, which will be addressed through guidelines and regulations.

<i>Continue to deliver</i>	<i>Deliver Differently</i>	<i>Discontinue</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airshed planning framework, policy and advocacy (continued opposition to Sumas II power project).</li> <li>• Climate change strategy.</li> <li>• Industry-led pollution prevention planning at large industrial sites.</li> <li>• High-priority monitoring and reporting on air, surface water and groundwater quality (and continued opposition to bulk water exports).</li> <li>• Permitting and inspections of high-risk industrial and municipal discharges and high-risk contaminated sites.</li> <li>• Response to high-risk toxic spill emergencies.</li> <li>• Compliance and enforcement services.</li> <li>• Support other ministries in standard setting for waste management (e.g., agriculture, aquaculture).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify environmental regulations and standards, especially for low- and medium-priority operations.</li> <li>• Improve drinking water protection, through amended <i>Drinking Water Protection Act</i> and groundwater legislation.</li> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive review of contaminated sites administration.</li> <li>• Improve and expand product reuse and recycling (e.g. tires, batteries).</li> <li>• Increase local government control over low-risk floodplain and dyke management.</li> <li>• Increase web-based public information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitting for low/medium-risk waste management sites which will be subject to guidelines and regulations.</li> <li>• Response to low-risk environmental spills.</li> </ul>

### Environmental Stewardship

British Columbia's economy is based in part on use of natural resources (e.g., forestry) and in part on protection of its diverse and unique ecosystems (e.g., tourism). Roles and responsibilities of various levels of government regarding environmental management are not clear. Ministry programs for species management and habitat restoration are not delivering desired outcomes and lack adequate priority setting.

The ministry will work to reduce jurisdictional overlap, integrate and focus programs based on priorities, and develop performance standards and measurements for management of resources. The ministry will facilitate community initiatives to protect and restore their local environment. Fewer staff and resources will be directed to providing advice to industry and local government on habitat and ecosystem protection, and to directly protecting habitat and species where risks are relatively low.

<i>Continue to deliver</i>	<i>Deliver Differently</i>	<i>Discontinue</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Provincial Biodiversity Strategy.</li> <li>• Park Management planning.</li> <li>• Industry-led identification of potential Wildlife Habitat Areas (under Forest Practices Code).</li> <li>• Industry-led recovery strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonize with federal government on protection of species at risk and stream protection measures.</li> <li>• Implement integrated Living Rivers Strategy for protection and restoration of watersheds.</li> <li>• Implement area-based planning for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational planning and referrals regarding wildlife, fish and habitat.</li> <li>• Freshwater fishing industry development grants, partnerships</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for species at risk.</li> <li>Protection for priority fish and wildlife habitat.</li> <li>Response to known significant threats in protected areas (e.g. pine bark beetle).</li> <li>Compliance and enforcement services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protection of species and habitats.</li> <li>Involve local communities in protection and restoration of local ecosystems.</li> <li>Integrate environment stewardship activities and conservation functions inside and outside protected areas.</li> <li>Set environmental standards in a revised Forest Practices Code focusing on results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and advice.</li> <li>Response to low-risk human-wildlife conflicts.</li> <li>Environmental Youth Team.</li> </ul>
---	---	--

### Park and Wildlife Recreation

There is strong public support for the province’s world-class park system. Park and wildlife recreation serve to stimulate tourism and support the provincial economy, and also are a unique part of cultural life in British Columbia, especially in rural communities. Opportunities exist for increasing wildlife- and park-related opportunities for small business, especially in rural communities.

The ministry will increase opportunities for public involvement in park management, diversify sources of funding for parks and ensure greater connection between fees and services and benefits. Fewer staff and resources will be directed to providing services where recreational use is low or where costs cannot be recovered (cost recovery will be largely dependent on the management/resourcing model adopted for parks, and hunting and fishing).

<i>Continue to deliver</i>	<i>Deliver Differently</i>	<i>Discontinue</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hunting and angling authorizations, based on known population data.</li> <li>Facilities for camping and recreation in designated parks.</li> <li>Wilderness recreation management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new management model for park and wildlife recreation that connects fees with services and opportunities, and allows greater public involvement in decision-making.</li> <li>Develop new funding and management approach for fish hatchery operations.</li> <li>Increase opportunities for commercial recreation service delivery in appropriate parts of the park system.</li> <li>Increase local community and First Nations involvement in park management through a different management structure, such as an Authority.</li> <li>Increase web-based hunting and angling licence services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camping and recreational facilities in lower use parks (number depends on the new management model).</li> <li>Charging less than market rates for park services.</li> <li>Many inquiries will be directed to web-based information.</li> </ul>

### Ministry Resources (million \$)

	Fiscal Year				Percentage Change
	(restated estimates) 2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
Ongoing Operating Expenditures	\$167.266	\$162.494	\$143.993	\$127.007	-24%
One-time funding	\$47.000				
Total Operating Expenditures	\$214.266				
FTEs	1298	1138	930	897	-31%

One-time funding in 2001/02 includes \$45 M for Britannia Mine remediation and \$2 M for grizzly bear programs.

## Attachment 1

### Government Priorities relating to Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

The first priority of the provincial government is to encourage a strong, private-sector economy that maintains high environmental standards and assures exemplary environmental stewardship. This responsibility for environmental stewardship is shared across all government ministries.

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection directly supports this government priority by providing leadership in adopting and advocating a science-based, principled approach to environment management that ensures sustainability, accountability and responsibility.



#### New Era Commitments Achieved

➤ **No logging or mining in Parks.**

The government has publicly re-confirmed this legislation and policy.

➤ **Lifting grizzly bear moratorium.**

Limited hunt in September 2001 and Spring 2002. Report of scientific panel in December 2002.

➤ **Ensure decisions on new parks are made in public.**

Open Cabinet approval for proceeding on a federal-provincial agreement and funding a new Gulf Islands national park.

#### New Era Commitments included in 2002/03 – 2004/05 Service Plan

➤ **Acquire and protect Burns Bog.**

The ministry is working, through the Ministry of Finance, with landowners on purchase negotiations.

➤ **Living Rivers Strategy.**

The ministry is working with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management on practical programs to improve British Columbia's river systems with scientifically-based standards for watershed management, and on developing effective partnerships for management, enhancement and restoration of fish habitat.

➤ **Comprehensive groundwater legislation.**

The ministry is working with the Ministry of Health Planning on an action plan to improve the protection of drinking water from the source to the tap.

➤ **Oppose Sumas II power project.**

The ministry is continuing work with legal counsel in presenting British Columbia's case to Washington State.

➤ **Maintain ban on bulk water exports.**

The government has publicly committed to maintain the legislation establishing the ban.

➤ **Streamline Forest Practices Code**

The ministry is working closely with the Ministries of Forests and Sustainable Resource Management on Forest Practices Code revisions.

#### Key Projects included in 2002/03 – 2004/05 Service Plan

➤ **New/revised legislation to deliver on New Era directions.**

The ministry will present amendments or develop new legislation as appropriate.

➤ **Improvement plan for threatened airsheds.**

The ministry is identifying critical airsheds and actions required for ensuring their protection.

➤ **Pollution Prevention Planning Initiative**

The ministry will facilitate the development of pollution prevention plans at large industrial sites.

➤ **Extending Product Stewardship**

The ministry will foster improvements to, and expansion of, product reuse and recycling programs.

➤ **Biodiversity Strategy**

The ministry will develop a Biodiversity Strategy to guide conservation of natural ecosystems.

➤ **Strategic use of information technology for client service**

The ministry will enhance web-based services to provide public information and service client needs.