

**Ministry of Environment  
including  
Environmental Assessment Office**

**2009/10 – 2011/12  
SERVICE PLAN UPDATE**

September 2009



For more information on the British Columbia Ministry of British Columbia,  
see Ministry Contact Information on Page 33 or contact:

**Ministry of Environment:**

PO BOX 9339  
STN PROV GOVT  
VICTORIA, BC  
V9W 9M1

or visit our website at

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/env>

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## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



The *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* for the Ministry of Environment, the BC Climate Action Secretariat and the Environmental Assessment Office outlines our ongoing commitment to sustainable environmental management and environmental stewardship. Our efforts over the remainder of the 2009/10 fiscal year will continue to concentrate on government priorities related to building a healthy environment, a key foundation for economic prosperity and a good quality of life for British Columbians.

The appointment of a Minister of State for Climate Action highlights the leading role of the Ministry in responding to climate change. The Climate Action Secretariat, developed in 2007 and moved under the Ministry of Environment in 2009, is dedicated solely to leading government's response to climate change.

In June 2008, the government released Living Water Smart, our comprehensive water plan. The plan contains 45 actions and targets to ensure that clean fresh water continues to be available to all British Columbians. The appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary for Water Supply and Allocation further demonstrates our government's recognition of the importance of continued access to, and supply of, this life-sustaining resource.

To ensure the best air quality possible for British Columbians, our government released the BC Air Action Plan setting out 28 actions to reduce pollution from all sources. Work is underway across government to implement both our air and water plans.

We continue to provide our citizens and visitors opportunities for outdoor recreation in our world-class parks system. We are investing in high-quality facilities, strengthening partnerships and collaborating with business, communities and First Nations on park management.

In 2010, BC Parks will showcase British Columbia's natural beauty to the world during the Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games. We will provide first-class winter recreation opportunities; the venue for freestyle skiing and snowboarding events in Cypress Provincial Park, and support communities in their celebrations during the torch relay.

In 2008, we launched the Conservation Framework - an initiative unique in the world. The Conservation Framework sets out three major conservation goals for the province and prioritizes specific actions for species and ecosystem conservation. These actions are based on simple and transparent criteria aimed at improving land- and resource-use decision making, and aligning and maximizing the effectiveness of conservation investments by governments, industry and other organizations. We encourage agencies, industries and other resource users to incorporate Conservation Framework priorities into their business by providing access to several useful tools: a website that publishes priority actions for thousands of the province's species and ecosystems; a web-based tracking tool that captures the progress of these actions on species; and an Internet map

application that allows users to generate lists of priority species and ecosystems for any area of the province.

British Columbia is home to a diversity of marine life and expansive coastlines. As British Columbians, we all have interests in the health and well-being of the oceans. Nearly 170,000 British Columbians earn their living from the ocean, mostly in tourism and recreation; trade and shipping; fisheries, and the high-tech sector. The Ministry is leading the development of a provincial ocean strategy providing clear direction to all ministries having a role in ocean management, such as planning; environmental management; community health, and economic development.

British Columbia continues to be a leader in North America in the development of industry-led product stewardship programs. This year, we will be increasing the number of programs after amending the Recycling Regulation to include more electronics, such as small appliances and lighting equipment.

We are also pursuing greater efficiencies in the delivery of provincial priorities through the Resource Management Coordination Project. Through leadership at the Inter-agency Directors Committees and the Sub-regional Management Committees, Ministry staff are supporting collaborative approaches to First Nations' consultation, compliance and enforcement and Independent Power Proposal reviews. In addition, Ministry staff are seeking greater effectiveness in the use of shared resources and common business functions.

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to perform a vital role through its examination of the potential adverse effects that may result from major developments proposed for British Columbia. The structure of the assessment process means only projects that can be undertaken in a sustainable manner are certified to proceed. Consultation with First Nations and engagement of the public and other interested parties continues to be a central focus of the assessment process.

The February 2009 Speech from the Throne promised we would work towards a single window process for environmental assessments. The Environmental Assessment Office is progressing on this promise by pursuing reciprocal arrangements and equivalency agreements to allow for one thorough, comprehensive and scientific environmental assessment for each project.

The *Ministry of Environment's 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update*, including the Environmental Assessment Office's *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of August 24, 2009 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Barry Penner  
Minister of Environment  
August 24, 2009

## Message from the Minister of State and Accountability Statement



Climate change is far-reaching, touching all facets of society, and is a major concern globally. Its effects in British Columbia could be devastating, impacting our ecosystems, economy, and the high quality of life we have come to expect in our cities and communities. For this reason, it is critical that government act to address climate change.

Climate action has been a key priority since 2007 when the Government of British Columbia committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050. To help meet these long-term goals, the government formed the Climate Action Team, which determined interim greenhouse gas reduction targets of six and 18 per cent below 2007 levels by 2012 and by 2016 respectively, and recommended additional policy options to help reach our 2020 target. The Province's reduction targets have been entrenched in law through the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*. Provincial targets will ensure that our children inherit a prosperous and vital British Columbia.

In 2008, the Province released the BC Climate Action Plan, a collection of policies and programs estimated by independent economic analysis to get the province 73 per cent of the way toward its 2020 target. The Ministry of Environment, through the Climate Action Secretariat, is responsible for coordinating actions across government to ensure the plan is implemented.

The Ministry is setting an example in reducing its impact on the environment by championing a cross-government initiative to be carbon neutral by 2010. The Ministry also maintains the LiveSmart BC website, a comprehensive source of information on the science of global warming, government actions to fight climate change, and ways in which individuals, companies and organizations can do their part to reduce their carbon footprint.

I am honoured to be British Columbia's first Minister of State for Climate Action. The creation of this new ministerial post for Climate Action demonstrates that reducing British Columbia's carbon footprint is a high priority for government. I'll be working with the Premier, the Minister of Environment and all other ministers across government to move the government's climate action agenda forward.

In my role as the Minister of State for Climate Action and under the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act*, I am accountable for achieving the following results for 2009/10:

- a) in collaboration with the Minister of Environment, work across government and with stakeholders and international, national and regional partners to facilitate achieving government's greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- b) work with the Climate Action Secretariat and the Minister of Citizens' Services to lead the development and implementation of a public outreach and strategic engagement program on climate change to mobilize citizens and other partners, including First Nations,

municipalities, other governments, industries, environmental organizations and the scientific community;

c) work with public sector organizations to move toward a carbon neutral public sector; and

d) perform the duties of Vice-Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Climate Action.



Honourable John Yap  
Minister of State for Climate Action

August 24, 2009

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# Purpose of the Ministry

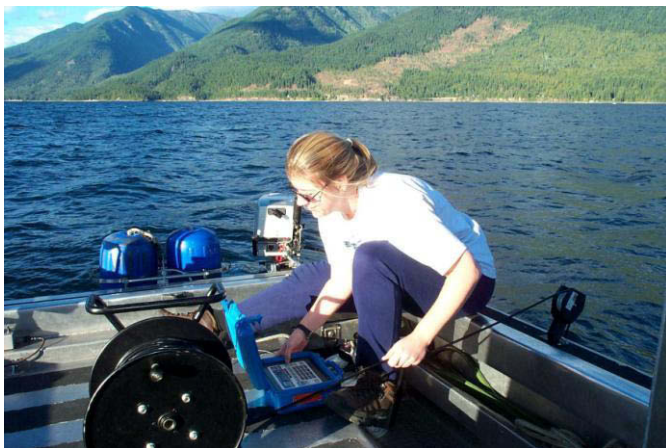
## **The Ministry supports government goals and initiatives**

The Ministry of Environment manages and delivers a wide range of programs and services that support the government's goals and objectives, particularly the Great Goal to "lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none." The Ministry is a leader in implementing the government's climate change initiatives and champions the government's vision of unifying British Columbians in the response to climate change by engaging many areas of government, First Nations, stakeholders and society in this critical effort.

## **The Ministry promotes stewardship and sustainability**

The Ministry of Environment encourages environmental stewardship, engages stakeholders and actively promotes the sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources. The Ministry also promotes sustainable economic activity for the long-term health and benefit of the province and its citizens.

The Ministry strives to enhance environmental protection and stewardship by monitoring air and water quality, reducing and removing wastes and toxins from the environment and emphasizing compliance activities. These efforts ensure safe, high quality water, land and air resources. The Ministry leads the provincial freshwater fisheries through stewardship initiatives and works with the federal and other governments, stakeholders and industry to ensure sustainable marine fisheries and ocean resources. The Ministry manages wildlife in order to optimize the sustainability of populations within ecosystems. Through the parks and protected areas system, the Ministry ensures that healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems are maintained and that outstanding recreation and wildlife opportunities are available to all.



*Ministry of Environment employee Beth Wright collects a water sample from the Georgia Strait*



*A Conservation Officer collects a sample at Goldstream Park on Vancouver Island*

### **The Ministry serves our clients in a responsible way**

The Ministry of Environment serves all citizens of British Columbia in their communities, businesses and workplaces. We also provide service to national and international companies and organizations that engage in business within B.C. We do so through our skilled and experienced staff in over 50 different communities throughout the province, and through effective partnerships with other government bodies, First Nations, industry, associations, communities and environmental groups.

### **The Ministry develops innovative partnerships**

Some programs and services are provided by third-party partners such as park facility operators, and through Ministry-supported projects delivered by organizations, such as BC Hydro, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Bear Aware, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, the Living Rivers Trust Fund, the BC Trust for Public Lands, the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society, the BC Conservation Corps and the Youth Climate Leadership Alliance. This support, in turn, helps fund local programs that enhance the Ministry's ability to fulfill its mandate. The Ministry also participates in cross government initiatives and works hard to establish collaborative relationships with First Nations.

### **The Ministry administers legislation and sets effective standards**

Clear, effective legislation and effective standard setting provide the foundation for delivering Ministry programs and services. The Ministry has significant regulatory responsibilities and administers an extensive list of legislation. (See page 35 for a link to this list.) To promote compliance, the Ministry educates, motivates and employs a variety of strategies to help change behaviour and encourage voluntary compliance with regulatory requirements. Where necessary, the Ministry undertakes activities to enforce the Province's environmental legislation.

*The Ministry reflects the values of the BC Public Service: integrity, courage, teamwork, passion, accountability, service and curiosity. We perform our work with integrity that promotes an objective approach to environmental management. We pursue innovative and collaborative approaches to ensure service excellence. We take pride in the quality of our programs and are motivated to ensure that they serve British Columbians in their communities well. We are committed to maintaining accountability as we strive to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and services, as well as those of our delivery agents, through program evaluation, business reviews, audits and satisfaction surveys.*

# Strategic Context

## Economy

British Columbia's economic climate is unlike any in the province's recent history. We now know that provincial revenues will be significantly less than previously anticipated. This means that government will not have the resources to do everything it did in the past. Despite these conditions, the Government of British Columbia remains steadfastly committed to achieving its environmental priorities. Sustaining our economy, our competitiveness and the high quality of life our citizens enjoy depends on maintaining the health and diversity of the environment.

The Ministry will continue to foster partnerships that support effective program delivery, enhance collaborative initiatives to encourage efficiencies and economies of scale across government agencies and ensure our internal business practices are effective, efficient and aligned to government's key priorities.

## Resource Management Coordination

Over the past number of years, natural resource sector agencies have been exploring better ways of working together to deliver programs and services to the public. In order to sustain key programs and services during the current economic environment and to prepare for the anticipated demographic changes to the labour force that will result in fewer staff, government will be doing more to integrate, collaborate and coordinate resources across agencies. In the year ahead, natural resource sector agencies will increase shared service delivery in regional operations, expanding on existing coordination initiatives such as Front Counter BC and First Nations consultation and strategic engagement and coordination of compliance and enforcement under the Resource Management Coordination Project. The result will be sustainable, efficient and effective delivery of services for citizens.

*Managing staffing costs has always been one of the prime considerations in maintaining overall government affordability, and since 2001 this government has been diligent in reviewing staff spending each year. This is particularly true in these current economic times. All governments are in the similar position of having to balance spending and service levels against revenues that have declined over the past year in this extraordinary fiscal climate.*

*Staffing costs can be managed through removal of unfilled positions, retirements, staff efficiencies gained through coordination and collaboration across government, administrative program changes and, if necessary, a reduction in the staffing budget. In the 2010/11 budget, we will be managing staffing costs in the context of the current economic climate, examining all opportunities to continue to reduce these costs where possible. In the 2009/10 budget, every effort has been made to preserve high staffing levels for frontline services.*

*In future years, government will continue to review its staffing budget to ensure those resources are allocated prudently and efficiently, and toward government's key priorities.*

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The following sections provide an overview of the Ministry's key goals and their supporting objectives, strategies and performance measures.

## **Goal 1: Effective response to climate change**

Climate change has broad global, regional and local significance. Changes in climate drive changes in natural systems that affect economic, environmental and social interests. Most climate scientists agree that the current rapid rate of change is of serious concern and is linked to the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. How we respond to climate change will shape our economy, our society, our communities and our way of life.

The government has made an aggressive commitment to address climate change by addressing its causes (mitigation) and preparing the province for the unavoidable consequences of climate change (adaptation). The Ministry of Environment leads government's cross ministry climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives through the important work of the BC Climate Action Secretariat.

### **Objective 1.1: Reduced provincial greenhouse gas emissions**

Reducing the amount of greenhouse gases that are released into the atmosphere is an important step in addressing the causes of climate change and minimizing its impacts on generations to come.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing climate action policy and providing advice, research and planning documents as directed by the Cabinet Committee on Climate Action;
- guiding the successful delivery of the Climate Action Plan across government by providing direction to ministries and Crown agencies and resolving issues;
- developing new regulations for industrial and vehicle tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions;
- assisting other ministries in developing policy, legislation and/or regulations as required;
- leading and coordinating the carbon-neutral public sector initiative;
- working with international, national and regional partners to forward climate action goals;
- developing and facilitating the implementation of a cap and trade system and standardized offsets program;
- consulting with First Nations, municipalities, other governments, industries, environmental organizations, and the scientific community to facilitate their input into the planning process;

- coordinating the development and implementation of a public outreach and strategic engagement program to mobilize citizens and partners to reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions;
- coordinating the Citizens' Conservation Councils on Climate Action;
- supporting the Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development in its low carbon economy development; and
- reporting on provincial greenhouse gas emissions and refining data in the community energy and emissions inventory, which is now available to local governments.

### Performance Measure 1: Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia relative to 2007 levels	67.3 megatonnes (2007 baseline)	6% reduction by 2012	6% reduction by 2012	6% reduction by 2012

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

### Discussion

The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, brought into effect on January 1, 2008, puts into law British Columbia's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020, and by 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050. Under the Act, the Ministry of Environment is responsible for reporting on greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere from all activities in British Columbia, including those resulting from transportation, heating and industry, landfills, agriculture and net deforestation.

Government's Climate Action Plan, released June 2008, details a suite of climate action policies projected to achieve 73 per cent of B.C.'s greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2020. The BC Climate Action Secretariat co-ordinates Climate Action Plan initiatives internally across government and communicates about climate change to the broader public, communities and businesses. The Climate Action Plan is expected to evolve over time and will be reviewed and amended as needed.

Environment Canada's National Inventory Report, which is prepared every year to meet Canada's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, contains the data that is used for this performance measure. The report is published annually, but there is a two-year lag in the data. Baseline data may also be revised due to methodological improvements.

### Objective 1.2: Preparing for unavoidable climate change and its impacts

Taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions now will reduce the impact of future climate change and provide human and natural systems more time to adjust. However, the greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere mean that some ongoing climate change and some impacts are unavoidable.

A comprehensive climate change action plan must therefore include preparing for such impacts or ~~adapting.~~” The Climate Action Secretariat is responsible for coordinating the overall government approach to adaptation, which will help maximize opportunities, and reduce the risks to ecosystems and natural resources, as well as reduce the costs related to these unavoidable impacts for government, communities and businesses. The Ministry of Environment is integrating adaptation into its work, including the management of water, land, air, species, ecosystems and parks and protected areas.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing a government-wide strategy for climate change adaptation;
- coordinating government actions on adaptation;
- supporting and collaborating with research institutions and organizations that can develop and deliver the knowledge and tools decision-makers need to adapt;
- collaborating with Ministry partners, including other ministries, federal agencies, local governments, First Nations, private industry and non-government organizations in preparing for climate change and its impacts;
- applying Ministry climate change adaptation principles to Ministry business; and
- conducting species, ecosystem and landscape level conservation and restoration in a way that anticipates adaptation requirements, maximizes resilience and improves future options for species and ecosystems.



*Connor Lake in Height of the Rockies Provincial Park*

### ***Climate Action Plan***

*The Climate Action Plan is B.C.'s roadmap to a new, prosperous, low carbon economy for the province. It outlines strategies and initiatives to take B.C. approximately 73 per cent toward meeting the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020. The Climate Action Plan also provides information on the many ways British Columbians can reduce energy consumption and save money while reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.*

## Goal 2: Clean and safe water, land and air

### Objective 2.1: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources

Achievement of this objective through effective legislation, innovative approaches to water governance and coordinated watershed-based planning is critical to the environment.

#### Strategy

- A key strategy for this objective is shared water stewardship by leading the implementation of the 45 actions and commitments in government's Living Water Smart Plan.



*North Thompson River*

#### Performance Measure 2: Water quality trends monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of water bodies monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with stable or improving water quality trends	96%	96% or greater	96% or greater	96% or greater

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

#### Discussion

Under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement, 31 provincially significant rivers and streams, including the Fraser, Columbia and Peace, are monitored in British Columbia. This performance measure relies on data collected from 42 monitoring stations to determine whether water quality is stable or improving in each of these key water bodies. By measuring the concentration of variables such as metals, nutrients, pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen, the Ministry is able to identify trends in overall water quality. The Federal – Provincial Water Monitoring Group is working closely with stakeholders to establish new monitoring sites across northern B.C. Additional monitoring sites will improve our ability to determine trends in overall water quality.

Currently, automated surface water and temperature monitors are being installed at 29 of the existing water monitoring sites across the province. This will allow water quality scientists to detect changes in surface water temperatures over time. The establishment of these temperature monitors will

enhance the Province's ability to understand the effects of changing temperatures on the aquatic environment that are driven by climate change.

***Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan***

*Living Water Smart is government's vision and plan to keep our water healthy and secure for the future. Through this plan, government commits to new actions and targets and builds on existing efforts to protect and keep our water safe.*

**Objective 2.2: Reduced contamination from toxins and wastes**

By reducing contamination from toxins and wastes efficiently and effectively, the Ministry will minimize impacts to water, land and air.

**Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- exploring new ways to reduce municipal solid waste disposal;
- supporting the development of a brownfields<sup>1</sup> strategy for B.C.; and
- promoting the development and adoption of integrated pest management practices.



*Collecting water samples at Cheakamus River*

**Objective 2.3: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our air**

By encouraging the use of clean technologies and supporting the establishment of effective emissions standards, the Ministry strives to reduce the impacts of air pollution.

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<sup>1</sup> Brownfields are abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized commercial or industrial properties where past actions have resulted in actual or perceived contamination and where there is active potential for redevelopment.

### ***BC Air Action Plan***

*The government has developed the BC Air Action Plan as part of its broader strategy to lead the world in sustainable environmental management with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none. The plan sets out 28 actions to reduce air pollution, complementing the government's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Ministry is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, industry, communities and other levels of government to implement clean air initiatives that champion clean transportation, clean industry and clean communities.*

## **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of the BC Air Action Plan, which is aimed at continuing to reduce emissions from industry, transportation, urban growth, ports and marine vessels;
- expanding the air quality monitoring network to ensure that it meets or exceeds National Air Pollution Surveillance standards;
- introducing policies that support the use of the cleanest available practices and technologies in all new or expanding industrial facilities; and
- continuing to support, in partnership with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, the development and implementation of local airshed management plans.



*Swan Lake, Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, Saanich*



*Overlooking southern Vancouver Island*

**Performance Measure 3: Clean air standards for industry**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of air emission standards incorporating current Best Achievable Technology practices	3	4	5	6

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Discussion**

The government is working with industry to ensure that business practices support British Columbians' environmental and health priorities, while ensuring economic sustainability. In order to encourage companies to use the cleanest available practices and technologies, the Ministry has implemented a new Best Achievable Technology approach to setting standards for new and expanding industry. Best Achievable Technology standards for air emissions will be set through guidelines, policies, codes of practice and regulations.

The first air emission standard incorporating current Best Achievable Technology is a Code of Practice for the slaughter and poultry processing industries.<sup>2</sup> The Ministry developed two new standards in 2008. The first of these is a guideline for emissions from wood-fired electrical power generation, which was brought into effect in the summer of 2008. This guideline sets out Best Achievable Technology emissions standards for the combustion of wood for generating electricity.<sup>3</sup> The second new standard developed in 2008 governs emissions from wood-burning boilers used in agricultural operations. Ministry staff collaborated with the greenhouse industry and local governments on a regulatory amendment to adopt the new standards. In 2009/10, Best Achievable Technology emission limits will be developed for pellet-plant manufacturing operations.

The Ministry also plans to develop Best Achievable Technology emission standards for new and expanding asphalt plants and industrial boilers. Many of these standards will support the government's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020.

**Objective 2.4: Effective management of environmental risks**

Events such as oil spills and floods can present risks to public health and safety, property and the environment. Although not all environmental risks are avoidable, effective management can help to reduce these risks. The Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment.

<sup>2</sup> More information on this Code of Practice is available at:  
[www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/codes/slaughter/index.htm](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/codes/slaughter/index.htm).

<sup>3</sup> More information about emissions standards is available at:  
[www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/pulp\\_paper\\_lumber/wood\\_fired.htm](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/pulp_paper_lumber/wood_fired.htm).

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- responding effectively to high-risk environmental emergencies;
- reducing the risk to public health and safety and the environment through effective management and response programs, and compliance and enforcement strategies and actions;
- managing the environmental risks of human-wildlife interactions through proactive and reactive strategies; and
- managing the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites and regulating the remediation of all contaminated sites.

## Goal 3: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems

### Objective 3.1: Well-managed, integrated and accessible information on species and ecosystems

The collection, storage, management and distribution of scientific information on native species and ecosystems provide for effective research and contribute to the understanding of the status of native species and ecosystems.



*Great blue heron, southern Vancouver Island*



*Shooting star (Dodecatheon hendersonii), a southern British Columbia perennial*

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- employing the Conservation Framework to collect, assess and distribute information on species and ecosystems, including their conservation status, associated threats, priority ranking and progress against recommended management activities;

- assessing the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems and related risks and threats within parks and protected areas; and
- providing guidelines and standards for the protection and conservation of species and ecosystems, including inventory, monitoring and reporting on achievements.

### **Objective 3.2: Well-managed parks and protected areas**

Parks and protected areas help to ensure the protection of native species and ecosystems, provide outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, and contribute to meeting our environmental, social and economic goals. Our world-class parks system provides a legacy for future generations.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- collaborating with First Nations and communities in protected areas planning and management to ensure long-term protection of natural, cultural and recreational assets;
- increasing and promoting partnerships to expand the opportunities and involvement in stewardship initiatives;
- addressing high-priority conservation framework and ecosystem management issues such as fuel build-up from the mountain pine beetle infestation and implementing the mountain caribou recovery strategy; and
- strengthening the role of parks and protected areas in adapting to climate change.

### **Objective 3.3: Conserved, maintained and enhanced native species and ecosystems**

Ministry programs conserve biodiversity, maintain and enhance native ecosystems and achieve a balance between the needs of wildlife and the needs of people. The Ministry encourages others to accept a greater role in environmental stewardship and facilitates community initiatives to protect and restore native species and ecosystems.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of the Conservation Framework to set priorities for species and ecosystem recovery and management action;
- continuing to work with and expand partnerships, including those with First Nations, to identify, protect and restore species and ecosystems;
- continuing to develop and implement

#### ***Conservation Framework***

*The Conservation Framework is British Columbia's new approach for maintaining the rich biodiversity of the province. Developed by the Ministry of Environment in collaboration with other scientists, conservation organizations, industry and government, the framework provides a set of science-based tools and actions for conserving species and ecosystems in B.C.*

guidelines, policies, standards and legislation for the protection, conservation and management of species and ecosystems; and

- providing leadership in species-at-risk status ranking and legal designation, and preparing and implementing recovery plans.

#### Performance Measure 4: Completed designations under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actuals	2009/10 Targets	2010/11 Targets	2011/12 Targets
Number of completed designations by the Ministry of Environment under the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i> , including Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs), Ungulate <sup>1</sup> Winter Ranges (UWRs) and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds (FSWs)	WHAs – 1,207 UWRs – 65 FSWs – 31	WHAs – 1,304 UWRs – 75 FSWs – 46	WHAs – 1,454 UWRs – 83 FSWs – 56	WHAs – 1,604 UWRs – 91 FSWs – 66

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** The number for UWRs specifies the number of ungulate winter range packages; each package may have as few as 1 to more than 1,000 winter ranges. Thus, when monitoring progress in this area, it is important to also consider the amount of area designated.

<sup>1</sup> An ungulate is a hoofed mammal such as a caribou, moose, bison or goat.

#### Discussion

Designations under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* provide special management for species and plant communities affected by forest and range activities on Crown land. These designations help to conserve native species and protect their habitat. They also provide much needed certainty to the forestry and range sectors. It is important to measure Ministry progress in establishing environmental standards for the protection and restoration of species and their habitats under the Act.

The Ministry's legal designations are for Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs), Ungulate Winter Ranges (UWRs) and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds (FSWs).

The number of WHAs and UWRs has steadily increased as shown in the table on the following page. The number of FSWs, a designation measured since 2006, is also expected to increase annually over the next several years.



*Female elk, southern interior*

	<b>FSWs</b>	<b>WHAs</b>	<b>UWRs</b>
March 31, 2009	31 FSW designations	1,207 WHA designations approved covering 1,045,475 hectares	65 UWR designations approved covering 6,200,237 hectares
March 31, 2008	31 FSW designations	1,084 WHA designations covering 764,932 hectares	54 UWR designations approved covering 4,598,086 hectares
March 31, 2007	31 FSW designations	917 WHA designations approved covering 743,863 hectares	48 UWR designations approved covering 3,601,200 hectares
March 31, 2006	17 FSW designations	414 WHA designations approved covering 668,424 hectares	35 UWR designations approved covering 2,658,725 hectares
March 31, 2005	n/a	320 WHA designations approved covering 658,935 hectares	28 UWR designations approved covering 2,284,917 hectares
March 31, 2004	n/a	160 WHA designations approved covering 49,120 hectares	15 UWR designations approved covering 913,462 hectares

## **Goal 4: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment**

### **Objective 4.1: British Columbians understand the effect of their actions on the environment**

In order to foster an environmentally conscious society, people must become aware of the relationship between their actions and the impact on their health, and on the lives of other people and species with which they share the environment. As British Columbians continue to make the connection between their activities and environmental impacts, they are much more likely to set a higher environmental standard for their own actions and those of others.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with stewardship organizations to increase environmental awareness; and
- promoting outdoor activities to foster a connection to and an appreciation for the natural environment.

## **Objective 4.2: Shared environmental stewardship is a priority for all British Columbians**

The Ministry recognizes that in order for shared stewardship to be successful, it is necessary to work in partnership with First Nations, industry, communities, environmental groups and other government bodies.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- recognizing, promoting and enhancing shared stewardship through consultative processes and volunteer initiatives that engage stakeholders, clients and partners;
- promoting sustainable natural resource management through collaborative management; and
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance activities to protect the environment.



*Dr. Brenda Beckwith explains First Nations stewardship of Garry oak ecosystems, Beacon Hill Park, Victoria*

## **Objective 4.3: Industry and client groups implement best environmental management practices**

Sustainable environmental management practices not only protect the environment, they reduce costs (by using resources and energy more efficiently), and lay the foundation for good corporate citizenship.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;
- continuing to research and collaborate with key stakeholders on product categories suitable for inclusion in the B.C. Recycling Regulation;
- continuing to explore opportunities to reduce regulatory burden<sup>4</sup> through changes such as

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<sup>4</sup> British Columbia continues to make regulatory reform a priority across government, making it easier for businesses to operate and succeed in B.C., while still preserving regulations that protect public health, safety and the environment. Regulatory reform has been and will continue to be undertaken throughout the Ministry as the organization pursues its move to a results-based regulatory approach. Since 2001, the Ministry has reduced its regulatory requirements by 42 per cent while continuing to maintain stringent environmental standards.

implementing codes of practice to replace permit-based authorization frameworks, while promoting best environmental management practices and maintaining stringent environmental standards; and

- encouraging compliance by reporting those in non-compliance with Ministry environmental standards and/or regulatory requirements.

### Performance Measure 5: Industry-led stewardship programs

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs	9	9	11	11

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** Target figures are cumulative.

### Discussion

Industry-led stewardship programs require producers (manufacturers, distributors and retailers) to be responsible for the life cycle management of their products, including collection and recycling. Stewardship programs support investment in the B.C. recycling industry and mean that less waste ends up in landfills for local governments to manage. Industry-led product stewardship programs are good examples of how shared stewardship can produce superior environmental results.

For this measure, the Ministry is counting the number of post-consumer product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs. Post-consumer categories refer to the waste that is produced by consumers at the end of a product's life cycle, such as old tires. In 2007, new industry-led product stewardship programs for electronic products were initiated. This brought the total number of programs in place to 9 — electronic products, tires, paint, used oil products, beverage containers, pharmaceuticals, solvents and flammable liquids, domestic pesticides, and gasoline. After consulting with stakeholders on next products to regulate, the government announced in April 2008 its intention to regulate mercury-containing light bulbs and thermostats and to expand the electronics product category. Following this announcement the Recycling Regulation was amended in December of 2008. This amendment expanded the electronics product category to include a variety of electrical products such as cameras and cell phones. The target for this measure is two new categories every two years.



*Recycling – a best environmental management practice*

## **Goal 5: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources**

### **Objective 5.1: Wise management and continued benefits of water and air**

British Columbia's water and air resources sustain a full range of economic, community and ecosystem needs. The Ministry seeks to ensure that all British Columbians will continue to benefit from the wise and prudent management of these resources.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- promoting increased community and stakeholder involvement at the local level;
- responding in a timely manner to water licence applications, based on reviews that ensure optimal environmental, social and economic outcomes;
- reviewing legislation to improve the protection of ecology, provide opportunities for community involvement and provide incentives for efficient water use;
- supporting communities engaged in multi-stakeholder watershed management plans;
- promoting and facilitating multi-stakeholder airshed management plans; and
- continuing to support local air quality projects.

### **Objective 5.2: Optimize outdoor and economic opportunities from British Columbia's parks, fish and wildlife**

British Columbia's parks, fish and wildlife provide a variety of unique outdoor opportunities for residents and visitors in the form of recreation, camping, marine and freshwater angling, hunting and wildlife viewing. Engaging in these activities promotes an appreciation of B.C.'s landscape, native species, ecosystems and the environment as a whole.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- optimizing stewardship and economic opportunities with First Nations, local communities, non-profit groups, private land owners and others;
- developing strategic plans for parks, fish and wildlife management that promote exceptional outdoor opportunities, while ensuring long-term protection of natural resources;
- developing and implementing marketing strategies to promote active living through park visitation;
- offering the public increased opportunities for park recreation;
- providing angling licences through electronic licensing and developing the provision of hunting licences through a similar framework;

- working in partnership with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC to recruit and retain anglers through the promotion and delivery of high quality urban, rural and wilderness recreational fishing opportunities;
- developing new opportunities for marine angling in the Georgia Basin through net pen rearing of juvenile pink salmon;
- streamlining the provision of commercial licences (e.g., for guides, trappers and fur traders) through process improvement and regulation simplification focused on client service standards; and
- promoting awareness of contributions to the Park Enhancement Fund.



*Bowron Lake Provincial Park*



*Stemwinder Provincial Park*

## Performance Measure 6: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

Performance Measure	2004/05 Baseline	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of recorded park visits and visitor satisfaction level:					
Park visits	18.3 million	19.6 million	20.6 million	22.0 million	22.0 million
Visitor satisfaction level	80%	84%	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** Recorded park visits: The number of recorded visits to B.C. parks was approximately 19.8 million based on attendance data submitted from April 2007 through March 2008. Visitor satisfaction: 84 per cent. The satisfaction rating is based on an extensive satisfaction survey that is conducted in campgrounds and day-use areas around the province and is based on nearly 5,000 respondents. The five-year rolling average for 2004/2005 of approximately 80 per cent is based on the Visitor Satisfaction Index rating of the reporting years of 2000/01 to 2004/05.

## **Discussion**

Provincial parks provide protection for representative landscapes and habitat for native species. Parks also provide recreational services and opportunities that contribute to local economies, promote active living and support an appreciation for the environment. B.C.'s parks system is the single largest recreation enterprise in the province and one of the best in the world. The number of visitors to provincial parks is used to measure the contribution of parks to the government's priorities of healthy communities, tourism and the economy. These data are intended to provide a reasonable indication of the trend in the level of use of public outdoor recreation opportunities available in British Columbia's parks.

Since 1985, the Ministry has monitored the effectiveness of providing services in provincial park campgrounds and day-use areas by conducting an annual satisfaction survey with a random sample of park visitors. The results of this survey are used by Ministry staff and park facility operators to assess and improve on park services.

The target of increasing park attendance by 20 per cent between 2004/05 and 2010/11 remains a key focus for the Ministry and attendance has been steadily increasing over the past few years. However, there are many factors outside of the Ministry's control that influence park visitation. These factors include weather conditions, major construction projects, natural events (such as forest fires), proximity to wildlife such as grizzly bears and the cost of fuel. The expectations of British Columbians are changing and the services required in our parks are changing too. Work is continuing under the 2006 Parks for People Strategy to ensure that services and programs are responsive to visitor needs and demographic trends.

## **Objective 5.3: Collaborative management and use of marine and ocean resources**

British Columbia's marine fisheries and ocean resources provide great economic and social benefits to the citizens of the province. The Ministry works in close collaboration with the Integrated Land Management Bureau, which is responsible for provincial marine planning, and with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, to represent British Columbia's interests and to ensure that ocean and marine resources are managed in a sustainable manner.

## **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- undertaking initiatives, such as third-party certification of British Columbia's fisheries, to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of British Columbia's seafood products in domestic and international markets; and
- representing British Columbia's interests to ensure a fair share of federal and cross government programs, initiatives and activities to promote research, exports and investment for our seafood sector.

## Performance Measure 7: Fisheries in the eco-certification process

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of commercial British Columbia fisheries in the Marine Stewardship Council's eco-certification process	6	7	8	9

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** Target figures are cumulative.

### Discussion

The Marine Stewardship Council is an independent, global, non-profit organization that provides eco-certification to well-managed fisheries around the world. Marine Stewardship Council certification is considered to be the gold standard for fisheries' sustainability, and third-party eco-certification is increasingly becoming a requirement for fisheries to maintain access to global markets. The Council's label of approval also reflects consumer preference for seafood products that contribute to healthy sustainable stocks.

Assessments are completed through a scientific certification program by an independent body consistent with United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's guidelines for sustainable fisheries and fisheries eco-labelling. Certification takes approximately two years to complete. A total of six fisheries are in the full assessment process for eco-certification.

This new performance measure supports the government's desire to ensure a sustainable future for B.C.'s commercial fisheries and seafood sector, and its socio-economic contributions to British Columbians. It replaces the previous performance measure on the number of marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process.



*Fishing boats off the coast of Prince Rupert*

## Ministry of Environment Resource Summary Table

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) numbers for each ministry are currently being reviewed across government and therefore are not reported in this Service Plan Update. FTEs are routinely reported in the Public Accounts and more detailed information will now be publicly reported in a new Annual Report on the Corporate HR Plan, released each fall. For more information, see the Budget and Fiscal Plan documentation.

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Stewardship .....</b>	34,714	30,768	28,534	27,855
<b>Parks and Protected Areas<sup>2</sup> .....</b>	33,913	31,582	30,927	29,824
<b>Water Stewardship .....</b>	14,925	15,993	15,842	15,048
<b>Environmental Protection<sup>3</sup> .....</b>	7,468	3,110	2,134	746
<b>Compliance .....</b>	16,725	15,764	15,399	15,338
<b>Executive and Support Services .....</b>	53,931	49,304	49,873	48,889
<b>Subtotal .....</b>	161,676	146,521	142,709	137,700
<b>Park Enhancement Fund .....</b>	400	400	500	500
<b>Sustainable Environment Fund .....</b>	29,305	29,305	29,305	29,305
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>191,381</b>	<b>176,226</b>	<b>172,514</b>	<b>167,505</b>

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Stewardship .....</b>	371	0	0	0
<b>Parks and Protected Areas<sup>2</sup> .....</b>	14,330	10,980	10,980	10,980
<b>Water Stewardship .....</b>	109	0	0	0
<b>Environmental Protection .....</b>	245	0	0	0
<b>Compliance .....</b>	974	0	0	0
<b>Executive and Support Services<sup>4</sup> .....</b>	2,032	2,025	1,623	969
<b>Subtotal .....</b>	<b>18,061</b>	<b>13,005</b>	<b>12,603</b>	<b>11,949</b>
<b>Park Enhancement Fund .....</b>	300	400	400	400
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>18,361</b>	<b>13,405</b>	<b>13,003</b>	<b>12,349</b>

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 *Estimates*.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include Park Enhancement Fund.

<sup>3</sup> Does not include \$28 million in funding from the Sustainable Environment Fund.

<sup>4</sup> Includes capital funding for specialized equipment and vehicles allocated to Core Business Areas in 2008/09 Restated.

## BC Climate Action Secretariat Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Climate Action Secretariat <sup>2</sup> .....</b>	15,644	7,132	6,892	6,717
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>15,644</b>	<b>7,132</b>	<b>6,892</b>	<b>6,717</b>
<b>Office Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund)(\$000)</b>				
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 *Estimates*.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include \$1.305 million in funding from the Sustainable Environment Fund.

## Environmental Appeal Board and Forest Appeals Commission

The Environmental Appeal Board (Board) and Forest Appeals Commission (Commission) are independent, quasi-judicial tribunals jointly administered by the same office. They hear appeals of government decisions under several provincial statutes concerned with natural resource management, environmental quality and public health protection.

As well, the Board and Commission administer other tribunals including: the Hospital Appeal Board for the Ministry of Health Services; the Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board for the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport; and the Industry Training Appeal Board for the Ministry of Advanced Education.

The Board has statutory authority to hear appeals from administrative decisions under the *Environmental Management Act*, the *Health Act*, the *Integrated Pest Management Act*, the *Water Act* and the *Wildlife Act*. The Commission has statutory authority to hear appeals from administrative decisions made with respect to a variety of matters regulated by the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*, *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Forest Act*, the *Range Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and the *Private Managed Forest Land Act*.

While the Board and the Commission operate independently from the Ministry of Environment, their budget vote is the responsibility of the Ministry. Therefore, they are not considered one of the core business areas accountable to the Minister of Environment, but they are included in the Resource Summary of this Service Plan.

It is further noted that the Oil and Gas Appeal Tribunal, which was enacted under the *Oil and Gas Activities Act*, is scheduled to come into force in April 2010 and may have the same membership as the Board and the Commission.

## Environmental Appeal Board and Forest Appeals Commission Resource Summary Table

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) numbers for each ministry are currently being reviewed across government and therefore are not reported in this Service Plan Update. FTEs are routinely reported in the Public Accounts and more detailed information will now be publicly reported in a new Annual Report on the Corporate HR Plan, released each fall. For more information, see the Budget and Fiscal Plan documentation.

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000) .....	2,092	2,091	2,088	2,086
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000) .....	15	100	0	0

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 *Estimates*.

# Ministry Contact Information

Regional Office	Telephone	Fax	Website
<b>Victoria – Headquarters</b>	250 387-1161	250 387-5669	<a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/env/">www.gov.bc.ca/env/</a>
<b>Vancouver Island Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Nanaimo	250 751-3100	250 751-3103	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/</a>
Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet			
<b>Lower Mainland Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Surrey	604 582-5200	604 930-7119	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/</a>
Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, North Vancouver, Sechelt, Powell River			
<b>Thompson Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Kamloops	250 371-6200	250 828-4000	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/</a>
Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt			
<b>Okanagan Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Penticton	250 490-8200	250 490-2231	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/</a>
Other offices: Grand Forks, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton/Manning Park, Vernon			
<b>Kootenay Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Offices:</i> Cranbrook Nelson	250 489-8540 250 354-6333	250 489-8506 250 354-6332	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/</a>
Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke			
<b>Cariboo Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Williams Lake	250 398-4530	250 398-4214	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/</a>
Other offices: 100 Mile House, Bella Coola/Hagensborg, Quesnel			

Regional Office	Telephone	Fax	Website
<b>Skeena Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Smithers	250 847-7260	250 847-7591	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/skeena/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/skeena/</a>
Other offices: Atlin, Burns Lake, Dease Lake, Queen Charlotte City, Terrace/Lakelse Lake			
<b>Omineca Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Prince George	250 565-6135	250 565-6629	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/omineca/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/omineca/</a>
Other offices: Vanderhoof, Mackenzie, Mount Robson, Fort St. James			
<b>Peace Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Fort St. John	250 847-7260	250 847-7591	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/peace/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/peace/</a>
Other offices: Chetwynd/Moberly Lake Park, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson/Liard Hotsprings, Atlin			

## Hyperlinks to Additional Information

The Ministry of Environment's vision, mission and values can be found here:

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009/vision\\_mission\\_values.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009/vision_mission_values.pdf)

The Ministry of Environment's organizational chart can be found here:

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009Update/org\\_chart.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009Update/org_chart.pdf)

Descriptions of the Ministry of Environment's core business areas can be found here:

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009Update/core\\_business.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009Update/core_business.pdf)

A listing of the legislation administered by the Ministry of Environment can be found here: called

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009Update/leg.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009Update/leg.pdf)

# Environmental Assessment Office

## Purpose of the Office

The Environmental Assessment Office was created in 1995 to coordinate the assessment of proposed major projects in British Columbia in accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. This role was continued for the Environmental Assessment Office when government proclaimed the new *Environmental Assessment Act* in December 2002.

Environmental assessment examines the potential for adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage, and health effects from the construction, operation and, where required, decommissioning stage of a project. For any project requiring an environmental assessment certificate, the proponent must complete an environmental assessment review and receive a certificate before provincial agencies can issue approvals for the project under other provincial enactments.

Under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, projects become reviewable in three ways:

1. Projects in the following sectors that meet or exceed the size thresholds established in the Reviewable Projects Regulation (B.C. Reg. 370/2002) are automatically subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act*: industrial, mining, energy, water management (dams, dykes, and reservoirs), waste disposal, food processing, transportation and tourism (destination resorts).
2. Project proponents may also apply to the Environmental Assessment Office to have their project reviewed under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.
3. The Minister of Environment may also order the assessment of a project if the Minister believes the project has the potential for significant adverse effects and where it is in the public interest to do so.

The environmental assessment process administered by the Environmental Assessment Office provides for:

- opportunities for First Nations, local government, government agencies, and all interested parties to provide input and identify issues;
- an accountable and transparent decision-making process with easy access to key assessment information;
- consultations with First Nations to address and, where appropriate, accommodate potential effects on established or asserted aboriginal rights and title;
- technical studies to identify any potentially adverse environmental, social, economic, heritage, or health effects of a proposed project;



- strategies and measures to avoid, prevent, or reduce potential adverse effects through mitigation or project redesign;
- preparation of a comprehensive assessment report summarizing issues and findings at the conclusion of the process;
- preparation of a recommendations document, with reasons, that provides advice on whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate for a proposed project; and
- assignment of conditions and follow-up or compliance reporting requirements to a proponent in an environmental assessment certificate.

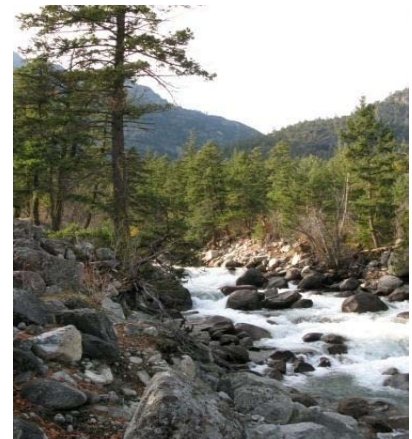
## Strategic Context

In the last several years, the Environmental Assessment Office has experienced a significant growth in the number of proposed projects entering the assessment process. While the global economic uncertainty in recent months may lead to some moderation in the number of projects entering the process, British Columbia's economy is expected to recover more quickly than other jurisdictions and a significant demand for assessment of major projects is expected to continue. The estimated potential capital investment value for projects in the environmental assessment process in 2008/09 exceeded \$30 billion.

Energy and mining project proposals will continue to comprise the majority of projects in the assessment process and will use the bulk of the Environmental Assessment Office's resources. Energy projects represent a wide diversity of power sources such as hydro, wind and biomass. Project proposals for new mines, primarily in the northwest and northeast, are expected to continue to enter the environmental assessment process at a significant rate. In addition to energy and mining, projects from other sectors such as oil and gas, tourism, transportation and waste management are also expected to continue to enter the assessment process in coming years.

In conducting its assessments, the Environmental Assessment Office is guided by the evolving case law and government policy related to the obligations of the Crown to consult with First Nations. Among other things, the Environmental Assessment Office seeks First Nations' input on its project-scoping decisions and procedural orders, it encourages and helps fund First Nations' participation in technical working groups, and makes provisions for First Nations' discussions outside of working groups where necessary. The Environmental Assessment Office also actively encourages proponents to meet with First Nations at their earliest opportunity to learn about First Nations' communities and First Nations' interests and concerns.

Because there are a significant number of projects that require assessment under both provincial and federal law, the Environmental Assessment Office works closely with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to minimize duplication and overlap and to maximize efficiencies wherever possible. While considerable progress has been achieved, more work remains to be done.



*Proposed Kwoiek Creek  
hydroelectric project site*

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

## **Goal 1: The environmental assessment process is effective and efficient**

Given its comprehensive nature, the environmental assessment process necessarily requires a significant investment of time and resources by all participants. As a result, it is essential to ensure that the process is as effective and efficient as it can be. The Environmental Assessment Office has a strong national reputation for conducting effective and efficient reviews, and it is important to preserve and build upon that success. In particular, it is essential to continue work with the federal government to truly eliminate duplication where possible, and to harmonize processes in those cases where both federal and provincial assessments are undertaken.

### **Objective 1.1: Ensure the process is easy to understand and complexity is minimized**

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- entering into agreements with the federal government to use existing legislative tools to minimize duplication and to continue enhancing harmonization through joint work plans and joint staff training;
- engaging First Nations early in the process, providing capacity funding, and making procedural decisions that are timely and principled;
- ensuring that project information is made widely available through the electronic Project Information Centre (e-PIC) and consultation activities such as open houses;
- reviewing and streamlining policy documents, practices, and procedures; and
- establishing clear service standards and commitments to proponents, First Nations and the general public, through the Environmental Assessment Office's new Fairness and Service Code.

**Performance Measure 1: Application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process are completed within 180 days**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days:				
• B.C. process only, and	100%	100%	100%	100%
• joint B.C./Canada process	71%	80%	80%	80%

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office

### Discussion

This performance measure is a simplified version of two performance measures that existed in previous plans. The performance measure recognizes that there may be additional delays where federal and provincial reviews are undertaken and harmonized, but the target set for completion reflects only that of the provincial review.

Significant progress was made with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in 2008/09 on a range of initiatives designed to minimize duplication and enhance harmonization. For example, the Environmental Assessment Office has entered into an agreement with the National Energy Board to accept National Energy Board assessments under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* as equivalent to provincial reviews, thereby removing the need for the Office to review these projects or aspects of them. This agreement was entered into under the authority of section 27 of the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Similarly, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency have also recently entered into a broader agreement committing to further use of such creative legislative tools. This includes the identification of a pilot project for which the federal review responsibilities would be delegated to the Province, with each government having authority to make final decisions. The agreement also deals with matters such as joint training, detailed joint work plans and staff exchanges.

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to work toward simplifying its policies and enhancing its public outreach. This includes the recent development of a Fairness and Service Code, which sets out a number of commitments that the Environmental Assessment Office makes to proponents, First Nations and the general public. It also sets out service delivery standards and principles that guide the Environmental Assessment Office. This document is available on the Environmental Assessment Office website.

**Objective 1.2: Ensure the Crown's duties to First Nations are discharged and that First Nations are engaged in environmental assessments**

**Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring early communication and consultation with all First Nations potentially affected by a proposed project;
- providing First Nations with capacity funding;
- supporting the First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group; and
- acknowledging that First Nations have rights regarding consultation and accommodation that are different from other participants in the environmental assessment process.



*Proposed Nascall River hydroelectric project site*

**Performance Measure 2: Percentage of potentially affected First Nations engaged in the environmental assessment process**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of potentially affected First Nations engaged in the environmental assessment process	79%	80%	80%	80%

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office

## **Discussion**

This performance measure is a modification of a prior measure that was based solely on First Nations' participation in project working groups. The revised performance measure recognizes that potentially affected First Nations may participate in an environmental assessment through the working group and through other direct discussions with the Environmental Assessment Office. The target has been increased from 75 per cent to 80 per cent.

The Environmental Assessment Office takes numerous steps to facilitate First Nations' participation in environmental assessments wherever possible. This includes the provision of capacity funding and an opportunity to participate in working groups (comprised of representatives from various governmental agencies and local governments), wherever First Nations wish to do so. The Environmental Assessment Office supports the First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group, whose purpose is to build capacity within First Nations to assist with their participation in the environmental assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office is required to meet the Crown's consultation and accommodation duties to First Nations – a duty which exists in addition to whatever other opportunities First Nations may have as interested participants in an environmental assessment. For this reason, the Environmental Assessment Office consults First Nations at the outset of the assessment process and discusses the manner and degree of consultation to be undertaken.

In most cases, the Environmental Assessment Office's process and related discussions will afford a manner and degree of consultation that is at the high end of the consultation –spectrum.” This includes significant exchange of information and dialogue regarding potential adverse effects on established or asserted aboriginal rights and facilitating modifications to the project or related commitments where necessary to accommodate First Nations' interests. The Environmental Assessment Office also affords First Nations an opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment Office's draft First Nations' consultation analysis at the end of a review, as well as the opportunity to present their views on a project (in their own words) directly to ministers, alongside the Environmental Assessment Office's analysis and recommendations.

## **Goal 2: The environmental assessment process is valued**

In addition to being effective and efficient, environmental assessments must be valued. Value is achieved by ensuring that the full range of issues and interests has been considered and that ministers are duly informed when deciding about both the benefits and potential adverse effects of a project when deciding whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate. This is particularly important in circumstances involving large-scale projects, for which there are often divergences of view and considerable public interest.

**Objective 2.1: Demonstrate that all interests and perspectives are considered.****Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring that all assessment reports consider the potential environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects of a project, as required by the *Environmental Assessment Act*;
- meeting on a regular basis with the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee to receive feedback and suggestions for improving the environmental assessment process and ensuring it is valued; and
- soliciting and duly considering proponent feedback.

**Performance Measure 3: Satisfaction with the assessment process**

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2010/11 Target
Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process	64%	N/A*	80%	N/A*	80%

\* BC Stats conducts a proponent survey every two years. The next survey's results will be available in spring 2010.

**Discussion**

This measure addresses the level of proponent satisfaction with the environmental assessment process by asking proponents to rate the Environmental Assessment Office on a scale of 1 to 10, regardless of where they are in the process. The survey is undertaken every two years. The results of our next survey will be available in spring 2010. The Environmental Assessment Office also seeks proponents' views on the delivery of the environmental assessment process through periodic telephone interviews and meetings with all proponents that are actively engaged in, or that have recently completed, the environmental assessment process.

**Objective 2.2: Ensure that the benefits of environmental assessment are recognized****Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- demonstrating transparency in decision making and clarity of process; and
- engaging in outreach with First Nations, industry associations and the general public regarding the benefits of the environmental assessment process.

## Performance Measure 4: Requests to opt in to the assessment process

Performance Measure	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of requests to “opt in” to the environmental assessment process	10	2 or more	2 or more	2 or more

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office

### Discussion

This is a new performance measure that is based on the premise that project proponents would not seek to opt in to the environmental assessment process unless they feel it provides value. More specifically, it presumes that an assessment of value involves consideration of whether the process enhances the sustainability of the project, whether it enhances public support or acceptance, whether it provides significant confidence that the Crown’s duty to consult and accommodate has been discharged and whether it assists in the coordination of other regulatory agencies (federal and provincial).



*Proposed Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell mining project site*

When the Environmental Assessment Office added this performance measure to the 2009/10 Service Plan, it anticipated five requests in 2008/09. The Environmental Assessment Office actually received ten requests. While the number of future opt-in requests may also vary from year to year due to factors such as global economic conditions and project timing, the Environmental Assessment Office expects to receive two or more opt-in requests annually over the next three fiscal years.

Although not subject to a specific performance measure, the Environmental Assessment Office receives and responds to recommendations provided by the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee. This committee is co-chaired by the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and includes a range of organizations representing environmental and industry interests, as well as the First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group. The committee’s recommendations deal with a range of topics, including refinements to policy and methods to enhance public and stakeholder participation in the environmental assessment process.

## Environmental Assessment Office Resource Summary Table

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) numbers for each ministry are currently being reviewed across government and therefore are not reported in this Service Plan Update. FTEs are routinely reported in the Public Accounts and more detailed information will now be publicly reported in a new Annual Report on the Corporate HR Plan, released each fall. For more information, see the Budget and Fiscal Plan documentation.

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Assessment Office .....</b>	10,450	9,396	9,407	9,407
<b>Total .....</b>	10,450	9,396	9,407	9,407
<b>Office Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund)(\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Assessment Office .....</b>	56	0	0	0
<b>Total .....</b>	56	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 *Estimates*.

# Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

For more information on the Environmental Assessment Office:

**Environmental Assessment Office:**

First Floor

836 Yates Street

PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria BC V8W 9V1

**General Inquiries:**

Telephone: 250 356-7441

Fax: 250 356-7440

Email: [eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca)

Website: [www.eao.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca)