

**Ministry of Environment  
including  
Environmental Assessment Office**

**2010/11 – 2012/13  
SERVICE PLAN**

**March 2010**



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## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the *2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan* for the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office. The Ministry's ongoing commitment to sustainable environmental management and environmental stewardship is prominently reflected in this plan. Outlined are the Ministry's efforts to act on government's strategic priorities aimed at building a healthy environment—the foundation for the well-being and economic prosperity of British Columbians.

The Ministry remains dedicated to pursuing key climate action initiatives and implementing the Climate Action Plan. In July 2009, the Ministry and the Climate Action Secretariat released the *British Columbia Provincial Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2007*. The report establishes the emissions baseline required to assess the province's progress toward its 2012, 2016, 2020 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction targets under the *Greenhouse Gas Reductions Target Act*. The report groups emissions into six sectors: energy; industrial processes; solvent and other product use; agriculture; land use, land-use change and forestry; and waste. Emissions will be tracked from this baseline to establish trends across these sectors throughout the province, measuring our progress toward a cleaner, greener British Columbia.

The Ministry is continuing to work across government and with external partners to deliver Living Water Smart, B.C.'s comprehensive water plan. The plan commits to changing the way water is governed and managed in British Columbia, including water law and policy reform through the modernization of the *Water Act* by 2012. The plan recognizes that we need to manage water differently in the 21st century and modernize legislation to reflect current principles and knowledge so we can better respond to challenges such as climate change. *Water Act* modernization encompasses four key themes: protecting stream health and aquatic environments; improving water governance arrangements; introducing more flexibility and efficiency in the water allocation system; and regulating ground water use in priority areas and for large withdrawals. Modernization of the *Water Act* is well underway: the Ministry is engaging the public in policy development online through the Living Water Smart blog (<http://blog.gov.bc.ca/livingwatersmart/>) and through stakeholder engagement workshops planned for March and April 2010.

During the next three years, the Ministry will work on strategies that will involve the development and delivery of new initiatives for managing waste and reducing toxins. This approach will protect and enhance the quality of water, land and air throughout British Columbia in a way that contributes to healthy communities, a sustainable environment, and a strong and vibrant provincial economy. Actions include making less waste, recovering resources, reducing emissions, and growing the green economy. British Columbia continues to be a leader in North America in the development of industry-led product stewardship programs. This year, the Ministry will be increasing the number of programs after amending the Recycling Regulation to include more electronic waste, such as cell phones, appliances and fluorescent light bulbs.

During the next three years, the Ministry will continue to implement the Conservation Framework across agencies and sectors in British Columbia to more effectively share stewardship of priority species and ecosystems. The Conservation Framework is a set of decision support tools that use scientific information to identify priority species and ecosystems for conservation. The framework also assigns key actions to each priority species and ecosystem based on the best conservation science available and best estimation of what is required to maintain or recover the species. The Ministry will advance interagency cooperation by piloting an initiative to improve land- and resource-use decision-making. First announced in the August 2009 Speech from the Throne, a Species at Risk Task Force will provide recommendations to the government by June 2010. The task force has been asked to suggest a new defining vision with an overarching measurable outcome that British Columbians can work together to achieve in the next decade.

In 2011, BC Parks will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of British Columbia's first provincial park, Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island. Today, the province's parks and protected areas encompass 14.3 per cent of B.C.'s land mass. BC Parks has plans underway to celebrate this historic 100-year milestone in communities all across the province. The events, activities and programs are designed to engage communities and spotlight BC Parks' outstanding recreation opportunities, important conservation values and significant contributions to the health of the environment and the citizens of British Columbia. The anniversary celebration will endeavour to engage the public in building connections with their parks.

British Columbia is home to a diversity of marine life and expansive coastlines. 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 marine high-tech sector. The Ministry is coordinating the development of a provincial ocean strategy that will provide clear direction to all ministries that have a role in ocean and coastal management, such as planning, environmental stewardship, community health and economic development.

Recreational fish and wildlife opportunities, such as viewing, hunting and angling experiences, account for approximately \$1.3 billion in expenditures, much of which is spent in rural areas of the province. The Ministry sustainably manages fish and wildlife populations for the use and enjoyment of First Nations, B.C. residents and non-residents. The Ministry will continue to enhance sustainable recreational experiences by simplifying and harmonizing regulations.

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to perform a vital role through its assessment of the 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 continue to be key elements of the assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office will be resolute in its pursuit of reciprocal arrangements and equivalency agreements with the federal government to meet government's promise of a single environmental assessment process for each project. In November 2009, the Environmental Assessment Office signed an agreement with the federal government to delegate the federal

environmental assessment process for the proposed Northwest Transmission Line Project to the Environmental Assessment Office. This is the first time this power has been used.

The Ministry of Environment's *2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan*, including the Environmental Assessment Office's *2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan*, was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives of the plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Penner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Honourable Barry Penner  
Minister of Environment  
March 2, 2010

## Message from the Minister of State and Accountability Statement



Climate change demands action. In British Columbia, climate change is impacting our ecosystems, our economy and our communities. The Province is taking strong action and a coordinated approach to reducing the causes and addressing the impacts of a changing climate.

The Ministry of Environment, through the BC Climate Action Secretariat, is working across government to deliver on the Climate Action Plan, positioning British Columbia as a leader in driving broader climate action internationally and stewarding an economic vision for the province. The Climate Action Plan is B.C.'s roadmap to achieving our aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets of 33 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050.

The Ministry is leading greenhouse gas reduction initiatives across all sectors of the economy and working with industry and stakeholders to identify relevant policies that support reduction targets, including market mechanisms such as cap and trade. A cap and trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions works by setting an overall cap on the total amount of emissions that are allowed, and lowering the cap over time to reduce overall emissions. Government is leading by example through its commitment to a carbon neutral public service by 2010 and is motivating British Columbians to take action on climate change. We also continue to develop policies that lay the foundation for innovation and business solutions to drive British Columbia toward a green economy.

Our leadership on climate action has encouraged others to act. Through focused relationship building, British Columbia has become an integral member on several international climate action initiatives, including the International Carbon Action Partnership, the Western Climate Initiative and The Climate Registry. Additionally, British Columbia belongs to the Pacific Coast Collaborative and works directly with west coast U.S. states – from Alaska to California – to address shared climate challenges and to drive a regional low carbon and clean energy future.

Climate change is a global problem that requires unprecedented international cooperation and local action. As British Columbia's first Minister of State for Climate Action, I will continue to work 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 2010/11:

- a) work, in collaboration with the Minister of Environment, across government and with stakeholders and international, national and regional partners to facilitate the achievement of government's greenhouse gas reduction targets;

- b) work with the Climate Action Secretariat 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 the Climate Action Secretariat and the Ministry of Citizens' Services and 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 and Clean Energy.



Honourable John Yap  
Minister of State for Climate Action  
March 2, 2010

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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 Province's environmental and economic goals. The Ministry is responsible for leading 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 all areas of government, First Nations, stakeholders and society in this critical effort. The Ministry also promotes recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing and exploring B.C.'s parks.

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

The Ministry of Environment encourages environmental stewardship, engages stakeholders and the public, and actively promotes the sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources. The Ministry works with other organizations to promote 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, emphasizing compliance activities and using enforcement options where appropriate. These efforts ensure safe, high-quality water, land and air resources. The Ministry is responsible for managing provincial freshwater fisheries through stewardship initiatives and works with federal partners 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, which covers approximately 13 million hectares (or 14.3 per cent of the province), the Ministry ensures that healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems are maintained and protected, and that outstanding recreation opportunities are available to all.

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

The Ministry of Environment serves all citizens of British Columbia in their communities, businesses and workplaces. The Ministry also provides services to national and international companies and organizations that engage in business within British Columbia. Clients are served by the Ministry's 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 projects delivered by organizations, such as the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Bear Aware, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, BC Hydro and the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society. 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.



*Rangers on horseback on the Earl Grey Pass trail near Toby Creek, British Columbia*



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

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

Clear, effective legislation and 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 38 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's Conservation Officer Service undertakes activities to enforce the Province's environmental and public safety 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**

The Economic Forecast Council estimates that British Columbia's real GDP contracted by 2.6 per cent in 2009. The Council projects a return to growth for B.C. in 2010 and 2011, with real GDP expected to increase by 2.9 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively, in those years. Risks to B.C.'s economic outlook include a double-dip recession originating in the U.S., slower than anticipated global demand resulting in reduced demand for B.C.'s exports, a Canadian dollar valued above the current forecast, and further weakening of the U.S. dollar resulting in significant disruptions to global commodity and financial markets.

## **Cross Ministry Resource Management Coordination**

The Ministry is working collaboratively with all the ministries involved in the management of Crown land and natural resources to ensure the coordination of people and resources for excellence in public service. This collaboration offers the opportunity for alignment of resources to promote economic development and community resiliency, while ensuring environmental standards are met and environmental sustainability is achieved. Opportunities to improve the efficiency of service delivery will also help meet the budget and demographic challenges facing government.

# 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 action on 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. Many 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.



*Connor Lake in Height of the Rockies Provincial Park*

## 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 and Clean Energy;
- guiding the successful delivery of the Climate Action Plan across government;
- 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; and
- coordinating the development and implementation of a public outreach and strategic engagement program to mobilize citizens and partners to reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions.

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

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia relative to 2007 levels <sup>1</sup>	6% reduction by 2012 (63.3 megatonnes)	6% reduction by 2012 (63.3 megatonnes)	6% reduction by 2012 (63.3 megatonnes)	6% reduction by 2012 (63.3 megatonnes)

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** Emissions levels for 2007 were 67.3 megatonnes.

<sup>1</sup> Emissions data for 2008 will be available in the spring of 2010.

## 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. Interim targets have been set for 2012 and 2016 and are reflected in the table above. 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 British Columbia's greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2020. The BC Climate Action Secretariat coordinates Climate Action Plan initiatives across government and communicates about climate change to the broader public, communities and businesses.

The data for this performance measure are taken from Environment Canada's *National Inventory Report: Greenhouse Gases and Sinks in Canada*, which is prepared every year to meet Canada's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The report is published annually, but there is an 18-month lag in the data. Baseline data also may 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." Adaptation will help maximize the opportunities and reduce the risks related to climate change and its impacts on ecosystems, communities and the built environment. Through the BC Climate Action Secretariat, the Ministry is coordinating development and implementation of the provincial Adaptation Strategy, which includes initiatives to enhance knowledge and tools, mainstream adaptation into government business, and address adaptation in key sectors. The Ministry of Environment is integrating adaptation into its own business areas, including the management of water, land, air, species, ecosystems and parks and protected areas.

## **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of government's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy;
- supporting and collaborating with research institutions and organizations to develop and deliver the knowledge and tools decision-makers need to facilitate adaptation;
- 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;
- developing new approaches to water management that address the impacts from a changing water cycle, including increased risk of flood and drought;
- continuing to build robust observation networks that contribute to increased understanding of the direction and pace of climate change in British Columbia; and
- conducting species, ecosystem and landscape level conservation and restoration efforts in a way that anticipates adaptation requirements, maximizes resilience and improves future options.

## Performance Measure 2: Number of provincial ministries that include a strategy on climate change adaptation in their Service Plans

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of provincial ministries that include a strategy on climate change adaptation in their Service Plans	4	6	8	10

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

### Discussion

The Ministry of Environment, through the BC Climate Action Secretariat, is responsible for leading and coordinating climate change adaptation across government. The new Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which was released by government in February 2010, aims to accomplish the following:

1. Build a strong foundation of knowledge and tools to help public and private decision-makers across British Columbia prepare for a changing climate.
2. Make adaptation a part of the B.C. government's business, ensuring that climate change impacts are considered in planning and decision-making across government.
3. Assess risks and implement priority adaptation actions in key climate sensitive sectors.

A core deliverable under (2) above is that ministries will consider climate change impacts by incorporating adaptation strategies into their Service Plans and business planning, where relevant. This performance measure is intended to support the government's increased focus on identifying and addressing key vulnerabilities related to climate change.

The four ministries that currently include adaptation in their service and/or business plans are the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Forests and Range, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and Ministry of Community and Rural Development. For more information on the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy please go to: [www.livesmartbc.ca/attachments/Adaptation\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.livesmartbc.ca/attachments/Adaptation_Strategy.pdf).



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

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

A safe and sustainable supply of high-quality water is vital to our communities, economy and environment. Achievement of this objective through effective legislation, innovative approaches to water governance and coordinated watershed-based planning is critical to the environment.

#### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- motivating shared water stewardship by leading and coordinating the implementation of the actions and commitments in *Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan*;
- working with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport to protect sources of drinking water;
- modernizing water laws in collaboration with partners, including First Nations and other levels of government; and
- recognizing water flow requirements for ecosystems and species.



Water monitoring on the Thompson River

### Performance Measure 3: Water quality trends monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 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, 32 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.

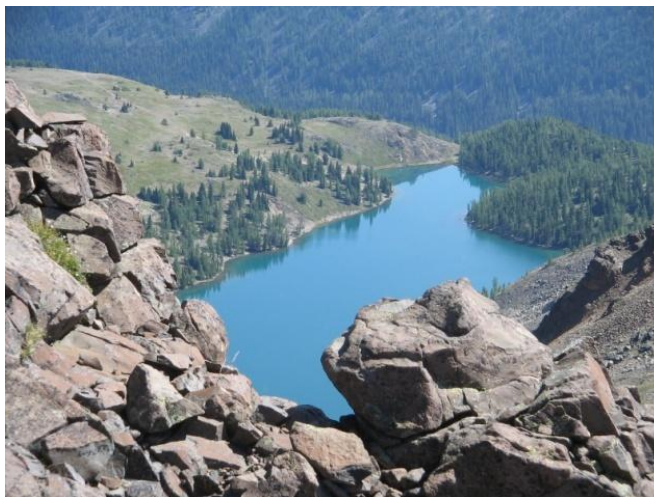
By measuring the concentration of variables, such as metals, nutrients, pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen, the Ministry is able to identify trends in overall water quality. The results of this measure provide a good indication of the outcomes of water protection efforts and stewardship of the province's water resources. In addition, the information helps inform authorizations for water use and helps establish further water monitoring requirements.

### ***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. The plan uses a variety of measures, such as planning, regulatory change, education and incentives, to ensure that the province's water resources are protected and sustainable.*

This year, the Federal-Provincial Surface Water Monitoring Group is conducting a network review in order to make improvements to the monitoring network. As part of this review exercise, a new trend monitoring station on the Skeena River will be included in the network. The Skeena is one of British Columbia's five major rivers, and this change will increase geographic coverage of the province. The network review will ensure that surface water quality trend monitoring is conducted in an efficient and effective manner to assist with the management of provincial aquatic resources.

Data collected from the Federal-Provincial Surface Water Monitoring Program is used in a variety of reports, including the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators' annual Water Quality Index report. This report can be accessed at: [www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=68DE8F72-1](http://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=68DE8F72-1).



*Cathedral Provincial Park and Protected Area, south Okanagan*

## **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 Brownfield<sup>1</sup> Renewal Strategy for British Columbia;
- promoting the development and adoption of integrated pest management practices; and
- promoting increased accountability for hazardous waste management.

#### ***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 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.*

## **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.

### **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;

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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.

- expanding the coverage of 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.



*Bugaboo Provincial Park, southeastern British Columbia*

#### **Performance Measure 4: Clean air standards for industry**

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of air emission standards incorporating current Best Achievable Technology practices	4	5	6	7

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** Target numbers are cumulative.

#### **Discussion**

The government is working with industry to ensure that business practices support British Columbians' environmental and health priorities, while ensuring economic sustainability. The Best Achievable Technology approach encourages new and expanding industry to use the cleanest available practices and technologies. The standards for air emissions are set through guidelines, policies, codes of practice and regulations. Current standards are listed below.

- In 2007, a code of practice for the slaughter and poultry processing industries was developed.<sup>2</sup> This code sets out requirements for handling associated waste material via landfill or incineration. Emission standards are set for incineration in the event that this is deemed to be the most effective option.

<sup>2</sup> More information on the code of practice for the slaughter and poultry processing industries 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).

- In 2008, a guideline for emissions from biomass-fired electrical power generation was developed,<sup>3</sup> which sets emissions standards for the combustion of biomass for generating electricity.
- In 2008, a standard that governs emissions from wood-burning boilers used in agricultural operations was developed in collaboration with the greenhouse industry and local government.<sup>4</sup>

In 2010, a guideline for emissions from pellet plant manufacturing operations will be finalized. The Ministry also plans to develop new Best Achievable Technology emission standards for waste-to-energy from municipal solid waste. These standards will support the government's goal to protect air quality and human health.

## **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 the impact of these risks. The Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment.

### **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;
- managing the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites and regulating the remediation of all contaminated sites; and
- managing fire interface in communities adjacent to parks and protected areas.

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<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).

<sup>4</sup> More information on the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation (Part 6–Agricultural Emissions) is available at:  
[http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20e%20--/environmental%20management%20act%20%20sbc%202003%20%20c.%2053/05\\_regulations/10\\_131\\_92.xml](http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20e%20--/environmental%20management%20act%20%20sbc%202003%20%20c.%2053/05_regulations/10_131_92.xml).

## **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.

#### **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;
- providing high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences;
- increasing and promoting partnerships to expand the opportunities and involvement in stewardship initiatives;
- addressing high-priority conservation framework and ecosystem management issues; 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 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.

#### **Conservation Framework**

*The Conservation Framework uses clearly defined scientific criteria to determine priorities and the most appropriate management actions for species and ecosystems of conservation concern. The tools within the Conservation Framework use the best available data from provincial, federal and global databases to assess species and ecosystems for conservation action. Developed by scientists from universities, conservation organizations and government, the approach used by the Conservation Framework has been endorsed by internationally renowned conservation scientists.*



*Broadleaf willow-herb (centre) and leatherleaf saxifrage (on either side), Garibaldi Provincial Park*



*A cub in Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary*

## Performance Measure 5: Changes in the conservation status of native species

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast (breeding birds)	2010/11 Target (mammals)	2011/12 Target (vascular plants) <sup>1</sup>	2012/13 Target (fishes/reptiles/ amphibians)	2013/14 Target (invertebrates)
Changes in the status of five groups of species over five years	Improved: 10 Declined: 33 Status quo: 276	No decline	No decline	No decline	No decline

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

<sup>1</sup> Vascular plants are plants with specialized conductive tissues that transport water from the roots to the leaves and nutrients to all parts of the plant. This group excludes mosses, lichens and liverworts. Currently, there are insufficient data to report on these lesser known groups.

### Discussion

Changes in the status of native species of plants and animals in British Columbia is an important indicator of the Ministry's efforts to protect biodiversity and conserve native species. The year 2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations, and this performance measure coincides with indicators and targets set by the World Conservation Union to reduce the current rate of global biodiversity loss.

Every species in the province has a conservation status rank, which is a measure of its risk of becoming extinct in British Columbia. Status ranks are assigned on a scale of one to five: (1) critically imperiled, (2) imperiled, (3) vulnerable, (4) apparently secure, or (5) secure. Ranks are assigned by the BC Conservation Data Centre based on science-based criteria and factors such as rarity, trends in populations or habitat, and threats. These status ranks are foundational to the Conservation Framework, which prioritizes species and ecosystems for conservation and recommends conservation actions. The Conservation Data Centre re-assesses each species on a five-year cycle, and each year reviews the ranks for different groups of species. This performance measure follows a similar cycle, reporting on a different group of species each year over a five-year period (e.g., breeding birds one year; mammals the next year).



*The Clark's nutcracker is currently ranked secure*

Species status changes slowly and this measure may require time to show a response to environmental change or management actions. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment is not the sole custodian of the province's biodiversity; the trend in this measure reflects the work of the Ministry in the context of shared stewardship with other governments, First Nations, industry and others. Factors outside of British Columbia, such as those that affect the status of migratory birds, also influence the biodiversity within the province's borders.



## **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 understand the relationship between their actions and their health, as well as how their actions affect the health of other people, species and ecosystems. 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 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.



*A mountain goat is rescued from a crevice off Highway 97 in the Okanagan*

### **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 communication, consultative processes and volunteer initiatives that engage stakeholders, clients and partners;
- promoting sustainable natural resource management through collaborative management;
- using the Living Water Smart blog to promote shared water stewardship;
- maintaining the Our Environment website to inform, engage and support clients, partners and staff in environmental stewardship initiatives ([www.env.gov.bc.ca/OurEnvironment/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/OurEnvironment/)); and
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance activities to protect the environment.

### 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>5</sup> through changes such as 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 6: Industry-led stewardship programs

Performance Measure	2009/10 Actual	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs	9	11	11	11

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** Target figures are cumulative. The target is two new categories every three years.

<sup>5</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 47 per cent while continuing to maintain stringent environmental standards.

## Discussion

In October 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment endorsed the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility, which aims to have industry-led product stewardship programs in place for all forms of packaging and printed materials by 2015. Industry-led product stewardship requires producers (manufacturers, distributors and retailers) to be responsible for the life cycle management of their products, including collection and recycling. This places the responsibility for end-of-life product management on the producer and consumers of a product and not the general taxpayer or local government.



*Recycling: an environmental best practice*

For this measure, the Ministry is counting the number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs. British Columbia is the North American leader in developing producer responsibility programs and already has programs for some of the products within the broad categories identified in the Canada-wide Action Plan. For a link to the complete list of products go to: [www.recycling.gov.bc.ca](http://www.recycling.gov.bc.ca).

Product categories are broad and can include a large number of varied products. The electronic and electrical product category, for example, includes such diverse items as computers, small appliances, power tools, and cell phones.

The target for this measure is two new product categories every three years.

The Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility is divided into Phase one and Phase two. Phase one includes recommended programs in place by 2015: packaging and printed materials; electronics and electrical products; mercury-containing products (including lamps); household hazardous and special wastes; and automotive products. Phase two includes recommended programs in place for 2017: construction and demolition materials; furniture, textiles and carpet; and appliances, including ozone-depleting substances.

Of the products in the Action Plan, British Columbia currently has programs for electronic and electrical products (including appliances and mercury-containing products), some household hazardous and special wastes and some automotive products. In 2010/11, British Columbia will consider developing new programs for the remaining products from the Action Plan, such as adding packaging or expanding the programs for household hazardous waste and automotive products.

## **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;
- operating the hydrometric network<sup>6</sup> to obtain information to support water management;
- responding in a timely manner to water licence applications, based on reviews that ensure optimal environmental, social and economic outcomes;
- reviewing water laws to improve the protection of stream health and aquatic environments, provide opportunities for community involvement and provide incentives for efficient water use;
- regulating ground water use in priority areas and for large withdrawals;
- supporting communities engaged in multi-stakeholder watershed management plans;
- promoting and facilitating multi-stakeholder watershed 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;

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<sup>6</sup> The B.C. hydrometric network is an environmental monitoring system that collects river and lake level data from over 450 locations in British Columbia. The data are essential to good planning for hydroelectric power production, dams, dikes, roads, bridges, floodplain areas and pipeline crossings.

- 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.

### Performance Measure 7: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of recorded park visits and visitor satisfaction level:				
• Park visits	19.5 million	19.8 million	20.1 million	20.5 million
• Visitor satisfaction level	80%	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment

**Note:** The satisfaction rating is based on a satisfaction survey that is completed by users of campgrounds and day-use areas around the province and is based on nearly 1,200 respondents.

### 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. 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 B.C.'s parks.

Since 1985, the Ministry has monitored the effectiveness of services provided 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 Ministry is employing a new methodology in its annual satisfaction survey. This new methodology consists of an online survey that increases cost-effectiveness and reduces the use of paper. The change in methodology may result in targets being revised once data from the 2010 survey has been compiled and analyzed.



*Sea lions in Juan de Fuca Provincial Park*

The Ministry has revised its targets to better reflect projected increases in the number of park visitors based on improved data collection and analysis methods. The previous target of increasing park attendance by 20 per cent between 2004/05 and 2010/11 has been replaced with a new target of 20.5 million by 2012/13, an increase of approximately one million additional visitors over three years. However, there are many factors outside of the Ministry's control that influence park visitation: weather conditions, major construction projects, natural events (such as forest fires), and economic issues such as the high Canadian dollar. Additionally, the expectations of British Columbians are changing. 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 with provincial, federal and local government partners and stakeholders on issues and activities, such as fisheries management, seafood development, coastal planning and habitat conservation.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing a cross government approach to managing B.C.'s ocean and coast;
- undertaking initiatives, such as third-party certification of B.C.'s fisheries, to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of B.C.'s seafood products in domestic and international markets;



- representing B.C.'s interests in the federal decision-making process to ensure a fair share of federal and cross government programs and sustainable management of B.C.'s ocean and marine resources;
- collaborating with neighbouring jurisdictions to enhance the value and success of ocean conservation actions and achieve sustainable fisheries management goals; and
- reporting out on key indicators related to ocean and coastal management.

## Performance Measure 8: Fisheries in the eco-certification process

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of commercial B.C. fisheries in the Marine Stewardship Council's eco-certification process	8	8	9	10

**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. This performance measure supports government's aim to ensure a sustainable future for B.C.'s commercial fisheries and seafood sector, and its socio-economic contributions to British Columbians.



*Fishing boats off the coast of Prince Rupert*

Assessments are completed through a scientific certification program by an independent body that follows the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's guidelines for sustainable fisheries and fisheries eco-labelling. Certification takes approximately two years to complete. Eight fisheries are in the full assessment process: sockeye salmon, pink salmon, chum salmon, halibut, sablefish, spiny dogfish, hake and albacore tuna.

# Resource Summary

## Ministry Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2009/10 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2010/11 Estimates	2011/12 Plan	2012/13 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Environmental Stewardship .....	30,631	28,281	27,603	27,603
Parks and Protected Areas .....	31,486	30,831	29,728	29,728
Water Stewardship .....	15,908	15,164	14,370	14,370
Environmental Protection .....	2,937	9,304	10,166	10,166
Compliance .....	15,692	15,327	15,264	15,264
Climate Action .....	6,888	6,487	6,312	6,312
Executive and Support Services <sup>2</sup> .....	29,008	29,710	28,892	28,892
<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>132,550</b>	<b>135,104</b>	<b>132,335</b>	<b>132,335</b>
Park Enhancement Fund.....	400	500	500	500
Sustainable Environment Fund.....	29,305	22,555	20,305	20,305
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>162,255</b>	<b>158,159</b>	<b>153,140</b>	<b>153,140</b>



Core Business Area	2009/10 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2010/11 Estimates	2011/12 Plan	2012/13 Plan
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
<b>Executive and Support Services<sup>3</sup></b> .....	13,005	12,810	11,982	13,135
<b>Park Enhancement Fund</b> .....	400	400	400	400
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>13,405</b>	<b>13,210</b>	<b>12,382</b>	<b>13,535</b>

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2010/11 *Estimates*.

<sup>2</sup> These amounts include the offices of the Minister, Minister of State and the Deputy Minister, as well as the budget for the Ministry's corporate services, which include overhead, Strategic Policy and Corporate Services Division. The 2009/10 restated estimates reflect a change in funding model for corporately provided operations support such as accommodation, most information technology, freedom of information, corporate accounting services, payroll, and corporate sustainability. Funds previously held in ministries for these activities were centralized into Shared Services BC, the existing delivery body for these services.

<sup>3</sup> Capital expenditures identified under Executive and Support Services include \$10.98 million for land improvements in parks and protected areas.

Core Business Area	2009/10 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2010/11 Estimates	2011/12 Plan	2012/13 Plan
<b>Other Financing Transactions (\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b> .....				
<b>Habitat Conservation Trust - Receipts</b> .....	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
<b>Habitat Conservation Trust - Disbursements</b> .....	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000
<b>Net Cash (Requirements)</b> .....	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
<b>Total Net Cash Source (Requirements)</b> .....	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2010/11 *Estimates*.

# 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 following: the Hospital Appeal Board and the Health Professions Review 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 *Integrated Pest Management Act*, the *Water Act*, the *Wildlife Act*, the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Cap and Trade) Act*, the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Renewable and Low Carbon Fuel Requirements) Act* and the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Vehicle Emissions Standards) 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

Core Business Area	2009/10 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2010/11 Estimates	2011/12 Plan	2012/13 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000) .....	2,091	2,088	2,086	2,086
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000) .....	100	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2010/11 *Estimates*.

# Ministry Contact Information

Regional Office	Telephone	Fax	Website
Victoria – Headquarters	250 387-1161	250 387-5669	<a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/env/">www.gov.bc.ca/env/</a>
<b>Coast Region</b>			
<b>Queen Charlotte Islands/West Coast Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Sub-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: Bella Coola/Hagensborg, Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Queen Charlotte City, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet			
<b>South Coast Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Sub-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>Southern Interior Region</b>			
<b>Cariboo/Thompson /Okanagan Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Regional Offices:</i> Kamloops Penticton Williams Lake	250 371-6200 250 490-8200 250 398-4530	250 828-4000 250 490-2231 250 398-4214	<a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/</a> <a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/</a> <a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/">www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/</a>
Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt, , Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton, Vernon, 100 Mile House, Quesnel			
<b>Kootenay/Boundary Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Sub-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, Grand Forks, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke			

Regional Office	Telephone	Fax	Website
<b>Northern Region</b>			
<b>Skeena Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Sub-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, Terrace/Lakelse Lake			
<b>Omineca Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Sub-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 Sub-Region</b>			
<i>Main Sub-Regional Office:</i> Fort St. John	250 787-3411	250 787-3490	<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			

## Hyperlinks to Additional Information

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/vision\\_mission\\_values.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/vision_mission_values.pdf)

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/org\\_chart.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/org_chart.pdf)

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/core\\_business.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/core_business.pdf)

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/leg.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2010/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 continued for the Environmental Assessment Office when government proclaimed the new *Environmental Assessment Act* in December 2002.

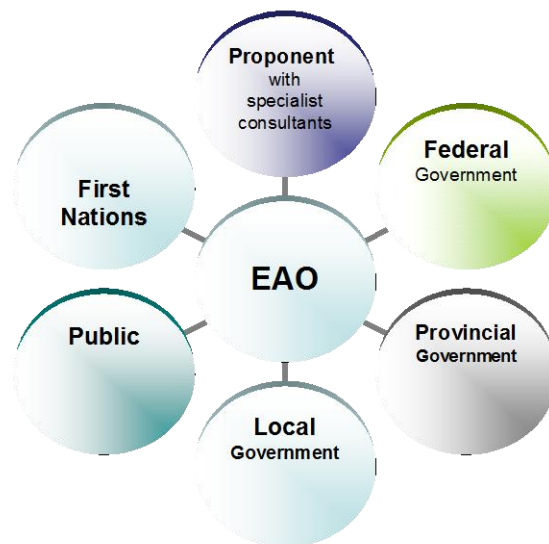
Environmental assessments examine the potential for adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects from the construction, operation and, where required, decommissioning stage of a project. For any project requiring an environmental assessment certificate under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the proponent must successfully complete an environmental assessment and receive a certificate from the Environmental Assessment Office before other provincial agencies can issue permits and approvals for the project.

There are three ways a project can be designated reviewable under the *Environmental Assessment Act*:

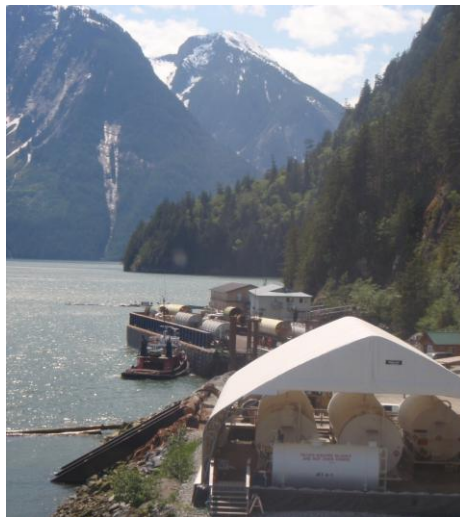
- Projects in the following sectors that meet or exceed the size thresholds established by the Reviewable Projects Regulation (B.C. Reg. 370/2002) are automatically subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act*: industrial, mining, energy, water management (dams, dykes, and reservoirs), waste disposal, food processing, transportation and tourism (destination resorts);
- The Minister of Environment may 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; and
- Project proponents may also apply to the Environmental Assessment Office to have their project reviewed under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

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;
- consultation 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 to ministers on whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate for a project; and
- assignment of conditions and compliance reporting requirements to the proponent in an environmental assessment certificate.



*Barge landing at the East Toba River  
Montrose Creek Hydroelectric Project  
near Powell River*



## Strategic Context

Over the last several years, the Environmental Assessment Office has experienced a significant growth in the number of projects entering the environmental assessment process. While recent global economic uncertainty may cause some moderation in the number of projects entering the process, British Columbia's economy is anticipated to remain strong relative to other jurisdictions, leading to an expected and continued significant demand for environmental assessments. The estimated potential capital investment value for projects in the environmental assessment process in 2010/11 will exceed \$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. The 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 conducting its assessments, the Environmental Assessment Office is guided by 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, encourages and helps fund First Nations' participation in technical working groups, and makes provisions for First Nations' discussions outside of working groups where necessary, including government-to-government consultation. 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. The Environmental Assessment Office also provides First Nations the opportunity to include their own submissions in the materials provided to ministers to support their decision-making with respect to a proposed project.

Because a significant number of projects 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. Considerable progress has been achieved and more remains to be done.



*Bear Mountain Wind Park Project near Dawson Creek*

# 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 effective and efficient. The Environmental Assessment Office has a strong, national reputation for conducting effective and efficient assessments, 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 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) on the Environmental Assessment Office's website ([www.eao.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/)) and through 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 Fairness and Service Code.

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

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Percentage of application reviews in the B.C. environmental process completed within 180 days:				
• B.C. process only	83%	100%	100%	100%
• joint B.C./Canada process	100%	80%	80%	80%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office

## Discussion

This performance measure, introduced in the 2009/10 Service Plan, is a simplified version of two performance measures that existed in previous plans. The performance measure recognizes that there may, in some cases, be additional delays where federal and provincial reviews are undertaken and harmonized, but sets a target very close to that which exists for provincial reviews only.

Significant progress has been made with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency 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 avoiding any potential need 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 innovative legislative tools. This includes a specific agreement recently signed for the proposed Northwest Transmission Line Project for which the federal review responsibilities have been delegated to the Province, with each government having authority to make final decisions. The broader 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 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 the Environmental Assessment Office will be guided by. This document is available on the Environmental Assessment Office's website at: [www.eao.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/).

## **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;
- acknowledging that First Nations have rights regarding consultation and accommodation that are different from other participants in the environmental assessment process;
- providing First Nations with capacity funding;
- supporting the First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group; and
- enhancing coordination with the federal government on First Nations consultation through joint initiatives, including staff training workshops, information sharing, and tools and procedures improvement.

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

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Percentage of potentially affected First Nations:				
• given the opportunity to engage in the environmental assessment process	100%	100%	100%	100%
• engaged in the environmental assessment process	80%	80%	80%	80%

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office

### **Discussion**

All First Nations potentially affected by a proposed project have the right to be consulted in the environmental assessment process. This performance measure addresses whether the potentially affected First Nations were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental assessment process, and whether or not these First Nations choose to engage in the process. First Nations may participate in an environmental assessment through working groups (comprised of representatives from various governmental agencies and local governments) and through other direct discussions with the Environmental Assessment Office.

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 the opportunity to participate on working groups and engage in government-to-government discussions wherever First Nations wish to do so.

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 Nation 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 the assessment process, as well as the opportunity to present their views on a project (in their own words) in the materials that the Environmental Assessment Office provides to ministers to support their decision-making with respect to a proposed project.



*Construction on the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project*

## **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 the full range of issues and interests have 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 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*; and
- meeting on a regular basis with the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee to receive feedback and suggestions for improving the environmental assessment process to ensure it is valued.

#### **Discussion**

Previous service plans included a measure for this goal that addressed the level of proponent satisfaction with the environmental assessment process by asking proponents of projects going through the process to rate the Environmental Assessment Office on a scale of 1 to 10, regardless of where they were in the process. This survey was undertaken every two years. This performance measure will no longer be used as it does not measure the satisfaction of all participants, including proponents, government regulatory agencies, First Nations, the public and other stakeholders, with the environmental assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office will instead solicit feedback from interested parties, in particular, the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee, on the environmental assessment process on an ongoing basis as part of its process of continuous improvement. The Environmental Assessment Advisory 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. This committee currently meets semi-annually and provides a forum for discussion of issues of common interest relating to environmental assessment, in particular, refinements to policy and means of enhancing public and stakeholder participation in the environmental assessment process. Based on feedback provided by the committee, the Environmental Assessment Office has recently produced the Environmental Assessment Office 2009 User Guide (available at: [http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/pdf/EAO\\_User\\_Guide\\_2009.pdf](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/pdf/EAO_User_Guide_2009.pdf)), which is intended to help improve proponent and stakeholder understanding of 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 3: Requests to opt in to the environmental assessment process**

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of requests to opt in to the environmental assessment process	2	2 or more	2 or more	2 or more

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office

**Discussion**

This performance measure was introduced in the 2009/10 Service Plan and is based on the premise that proponents would not seek to opt in<sup>7</sup> to the environmental assessment process unless they feel that 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).

<sup>7</sup> A proponent may seek to "opt in" to the environmental assessment process where a project is not automatically reviewable under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

## Environmental Assessment Office Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2009/10 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2010/11 Estimates <sup>2</sup>	2011/12 Plan	2012/13 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Assessment Office .....</b>	8,805	8,816	8,815	8,815
<b>Total .....</b>	8,805	8,816	8,815	8,815
<b>Office Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund)(\$000)</b>				
<b>Environmental Assessment Office .....</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Total .....</b>	0	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2010/11 *Estimates*.



# Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

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