

**Ministry of Environment  
and the  
Environmental Assessment Office**

**2013/14 – 2015/16  
SERVICE PLAN**

**February 2013**



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## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the *2013/14 – 2015/16 Service Plan* for the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office.

I'm proud of the support my ministry provides to government's key initiatives – the *BC Jobs Plan* and the *Families First Agenda* for B.C. While a traditional view of environmental protection might pit our ministry's mandate against job growth and more family supporting jobs, I – along with Premier Clark - couldn't disagree more. And I believe the work we've undertaken on climate change, waste management, species at risk plans like the boreal caribou management plan, strategic park boundary amendments and increased rigour on environmental assessments, including a new environmental mitigation policy and work on assessing cumulative effects, speak to our guiding principal; environmental protection and stewardship is the bedrock on which to build a growing economy. In a province blessed with rainforests, world-class recreation opportunities, Canada's only desert and greatest biodiversity, our balanced approach isn't optional – it's imperative.

It's the reason why we will continue to stand up for British Columbia's interests on the Northern Gateway Pipeline proposal at the National Energy Board's Joint Review Panel hearings as an intervenor. Our participation is guided by five clear principles that all heavy oil pipeline proposals must meet. A completed environmental assessment review, world leading marine and land oil spill prevention and response, First Nations participation and a fair share of project benefits are non-negotiable tenets of our approach. Considerable ministry resources are being invested in coordinating B.C.'s participation in the review of the proposed Northern Gateway Project.

My ministry has backed up these conditions through the development of world-leading practices for land-based spill prevention and response by releasing a policy development discussion paper that will lead to comprehensive stakeholder engagement with industry, spill prevention and response experts, First Nations, the federal government, and local governments. Central to the discussion will be the polluter pay principle.

This same principle holds true for our nationally renowned product stewardship and recycling program. By putting the onus on the producers of products including electronics, plastics and – beginning in 2014 - all packaging materials, we are reducing the pressure and costs on local governments and taxpayers while reducing the amount of waste going to landfills.

An added benefit of diverting waste from our landfills is that it helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That policy, coupled with others like B.C.'s revenue neutral carbon tax, the clean energy vehicle program, offset protocols, and the northwest transmission line that supports the electrification of B.C.'s mines, is helping to keep the province on track to meet its interim 2012 target of a 6 per cent reduction below 2007 levels. And we continue to work towards establishing the world's first Liquefied Natural Gas plants powered by clean energy with natural gas support as necessary.

It was another banner year for BC Parks. We invested \$13.98 million dollars (a 27% increase) in capital upgrades alone to help improve accessibility and the overall park experience knowing that it's money well spent. For each dollar invested in our provincial parks, \$8.42 is generated in local economic spending as British Columbians share the natural splendor of our great outdoors with their families and visitors from abroad. Customer satisfaction is up at 80 percent and camping reservations hit an all time high at 107,000 for the 2012 camping season. As more and more British Columbian families continue to enjoy BC Parks, we continue to ensure our incredible natural legacy is protected for future generations.

Through the Conservation Officer Service, we are continuing to help communities reduce human wildlife conflicts through education programs such as Bear Smart. Conservation officers also provide critical public safety services, and are on the front lines of the enforcement of our environmental laws and regulations.

As part of government's commitment to sound fiscal practices within the public service, the ministry is also undertaking a number of initiatives in order to reduce costs and streamline ministry service delivery. The Conservation Officer Service and the Environmental Assessment Office both have specific initiatives underway to dramatically improve the efficiency of key services without compromising our world-leading environmental standards.

A key focus continues to be the implementation of a comprehensive response to the Auditor General's 2011 report on the oversight of certified projects, with a number of inspections being planned for the coming year. The Environmental Assessment Office continues to lead B.C.'s analysis and response to the new *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, and B.C. is working to achieve the goal of "one project, one environmental assessment" through coordination with the federal government.

We would not be where we are today without the hard work and dedication of ministry staff, and I want to extend to them my deepest and sincerest thanks for their efforts.

The *Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office 2013/14 – 2015/16 Service Plan* 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.



Honourable Terry Lake  
Minister of Environment

February 4, 2013

## Purpose of the Ministry



*Cathedral Provincial Park and Protected Area*

British Columbia's water, land, air, and plant and animal life are among the most abundant and diverse in all of Canada, and provide British Columbians with a plethora of valuable economic and social benefits. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for encouraging and maintaining the effective protection, management, and conservation of B.C.'s water, land, air, and living resources. It administers the province's parks and protected areas, and monitors and enforces compliance with environmental laws and regulations. It is also

responsible for providing leadership to minimize the effects of climate change and ensuring that British Columbians and industry are prepared to adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

B.C.'s environment is a natural resource that is entrusted to every B.C. resident. To help British Columbians protect their water, land, and air, the Ministry has developed environmental reporting tools such as Environmental Reporting BC and the on-line searchable Environmental Violations Database. The ministry also uses the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line to acquire important information from British Columbians on what they see happening in all parts of the Province. The ministry takes a leadership role in engaging with stakeholders, First Nations and industry in sharing the stewardship of our environment.

Monitoring, assessing, and reporting on environmental conditions are critical services provided by the Ministry, and delivering on those requires extensive scientific data. The Ministry collects, stores, retrieves, analyzes, and sets standards for environmental data, and makes key data available to the public as part of the government's *Open Data* initiative. The Ministry also undertakes, commissions, and coordinates environmental studies.

Threats to the environment are inherently threats to public safety. Incidents such as oil spills can threaten habitats and drinking water and require rapid and diligent responses. To this end, the Ministry manages a comprehensive emergency response program in order to protect the welfare of the public from environmental emergencies and disasters. The Conservation Officer Service provides critical public safety services, human-wildlife conflict response, and natural resource sector compliance and enforcement to the citizens of B.C.

Through leadership, expertise, and sound scientific practices, the Ministry provides the services and support necessary to enable government to meet its environmental goals while supporting positive economic outcomes for B.C. The successful delivery of key cross-government initiatives such as the *BC Jobs Plan: Growing Green Jobs* and the *Climate Action Plan* depend heavily on the knowledge and hands-on planning expertise of Ministry staff.

# Strategic Context

## Climate Change

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>1</sup> released its Fourth Assessment Report, concluding that warming of the earth's climate is certain, the increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely caused by human activity. It further concluded that continued greenhouse gas emissions at or above current rates would induce larger changes in the climate system than have been observed recently. In October 2011, the independent Berkeley Earth Study confirmed the rise in average world land temperature of approximately 1°C since the mid-1950s, validating findings of additional studies by various U.S. and U.K. scientific agencies. The current and future risks to B.C. associated with some of these predicted changes are substantial.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for unavoidable climate change will help to minimize impacts within the province and globally. B.C. is reducing emissions through various policies such as the carbon tax. The extent to which other nations and jurisdictions are effective in reducing emissions will influence the extent of climate impacts. Many of B.C.'s key trading partners and neighbouring jurisdictions are implementing actions, including Alberta, California, Australia, China and other Asian countries. Reducing emissions, using and exporting clean technologies and low-carbon fuels, and developing an innovative clean energy sector all demonstrate climate leadership on an international scale.

## Population Growth

The population of B.C. is expected to increase by up to 1.4 million by the year 2035. As the population increases, environmental pressures around the province will increase accordingly. Population increases result in higher levels of transportation activities, increased pressure on waste management systems, increased potential for human-wildlife conflict, and additional housing and industrial development. As industry grows, so do pressures on ecosystems resulting from changes to the land base, natural resources, and species.

## Resource Management Coordination

When Government's structure to manage Crown land and natural resources was reconfigured in the spring of 2011, it created an improved arena for coordination and integration. Under the direction of the Natural Resource Board, natural resource ministries are making bold changes to service delivery in the natural resource sector. This sector approach promotes streamlined authorization processes and enhanced access to public services across the province. The reconfiguration facilitates more consistent engagement and consultation with industry, stakeholders, partners and clients. It also enhances inclusion of Aboriginal, economic and environmental considerations into decision making. The ministries are working together to make these improvements and meet the commitments of the *BC Jobs Plan*.

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<sup>1</sup> A scientific intergovernmental panel that assesses scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to the understanding of climate change.

# 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

### Objective 1.1: Reduced provincial greenhouse emissions

Climate change has global, regional and local significance. Changes in climate drive changes in natural systems that affect economic, environmental and social interests. 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. Population growth is also contributing to the impact. How we respond to climate change will shape our economy, the environment, our society, our communities and our way of life.

The government has made a strong commitment to tackle climate change by addressing its causes (mitigation) and preparing the province for the unavoidable consequences of climate change (adaptation). The Ministry of Environment leads the government's cross-ministry climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- providing emissions inventory at the provincial, community and industrial level to assist British Columbians in better understanding their greenhouse gas emissions and informing them of strategies to reduce them;
- advising Government and reporting to British Columbians on B.C.'s progress in delivering on the commitments in the *Climate Action Plan* and their expected results in reaching B.C.'s greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- establishing government leadership on climate action by leading B.C.'s Carbon Neutral Government commitment, and assisting local governments in meeting their own commitments, including working towards carbon neutrality, under the Climate Action Charter; and
- proposing policies and programs across government to reduce emissions, including carbon pricing, regulatory measures and incentives.

## Performance Measure 1: Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Performance Measure	2007/08 Baseline	2012/13 Target <sup>2</sup>	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia relative to 2007 levels <sup>1</sup>	64.9 megatonnes	6% reduction by 2012 <sup>3</sup> (61.0 megatonnes)	18% reduction by 2016 (53.2 megatonnes)	18% reduction by 2016 (53.2 megatonnes)	18% reduction by 2016 (53.2 megatonnes)

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

<sup>1</sup> Emissions levels for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 were 64.9, 65.4, 61.5 and 62.0 megatonnes, respectively. Greenhouse gases are measured in units of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. See the *British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2010*, page 15, for details at [env.gov.bc.ca/cas/mitigation/ghg\\_inventory/index.html](http://env.gov.bc.ca/cas/mitigation/ghg_inventory/index.html). Emissions estimates for 2007 can be expected to differ slightly with the release of each inventory report due to refined calculation methods. There will be an interim update of 2011 emissions in 2013 but a full report will not be released. The next *British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report* will be released in 2014 and will report on 2012 emissions.

<sup>2</sup> Data collection, target setting and progress are on a calendar-year basis. The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act* required the Minister of Environment to report on progress towards legislated targets in 2012.

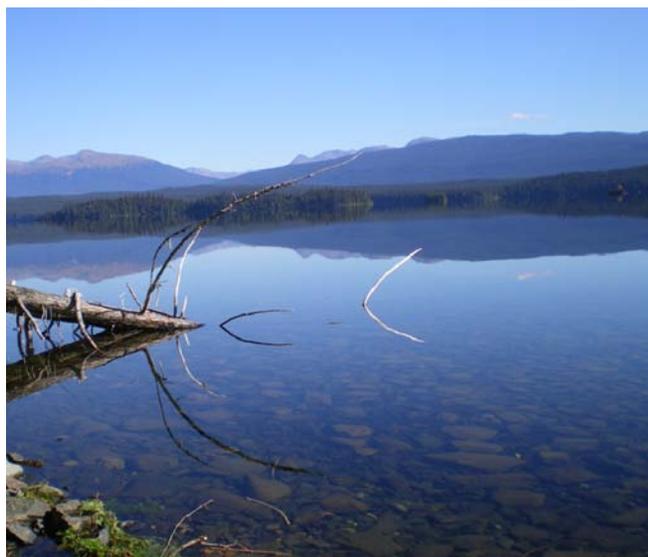
<sup>3</sup> The data required for assessing the 2012 greenhouse gas emission target is expected to be available in 2014.

### Discussion

The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, brought into effect January 1, 2008, put into law B.C.'s target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020, and by at least 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 is legally mandated to report on greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere from activities in B.C. Emissions included within the scope of the inventory include those resulting from transportation, heating, industry, landfills, agriculture and net deforestation.

B.C.'s *Climate Action Plan*, released in June 2008, details a suite of climate action policies designed to make progress towards B.C.'s greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2020. The 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 the *British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report*. This report in turn is based on Environment Canada's *National Inventory Report: Greenhouse Gases and Sinks in Canada*,<sup>2</sup> which is prepared every year to meet Canada's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on



Swan Lake / Kispiox River Provincial Park

<sup>2</sup> [ec.gc.ca/Publications/default.asp?lang=En&xml=A91164E0-7CEB-4D61-841C-BEA8BAA223F9](http://ec.gc.ca/Publications/default.asp?lang=En&xml=A91164E0-7CEB-4D61-841C-BEA8BAA223F9).

Climate Change.<sup>3</sup> Baseline data also may be revised due to methodological improvements. The ministry fulfils its legal requirement to report on progress towards legislated targets by publishing [Making Progress on B.C.'s Climate Action Plan](#).<sup>4</sup>

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

The greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere will continue to influence the global climate for decades to come, and some impacts are unavoidable. A comprehensive climate change action plan, therefore, includes preparing for such impacts, or “adapting.” Adaptation will help maximize the opportunities and reduce the risks related to climate change and its impacts on society and the natural environment.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working across government to integrate climate change adaptation into government business so that investments made today are informed by the conditions of tomorrow;
- working with partners, such as the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, to develop tools to inform B.C. decision makers on the potential impacts of climate change and assist them in making the decisions necessary to prepare for them;
- fostering superior management of natural resources and infrastructure in the face of climate change by undertaking studies in key sectors such as agriculture, mining, and coastal infrastructure to highlight vulnerabilities and opportunities for strategic investment; and
- providing options to improve the financing of adaptation efforts and establishing liabilities and accountabilities to meet them.

## **Performance Measure 2: Review B.C. Government policies, strategies and operational activities to ensure that they will deliver the desired objectives for their sectors in a changing climate.**

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Completion of sector based policy, strategy or operational reviews for climate sensitive business areas. <sup>1</sup>	2	2 <sup>2</sup>	4	5	6

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

<sup>1</sup> See the B.C. Forest Stewardship Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation at [www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/climate/actionplan/index.htm](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/climate/actionplan/index.htm) and the BC Agriculture Climate Change Adaptation Risk + Opportunity Assessment at [pics.uvic.ca/research-pages/affiliated-projects/bc-agriculture-climate-change-adaptation-risk-and-opportunity](http://pics.uvic.ca/research-pages/affiliated-projects/bc-agriculture-climate-change-adaptation-risk-and-opportunity)

<sup>2</sup> Targets are cumulative.

<sup>3</sup> [unfccc.int](http://unfccc.int).

<sup>4</sup> [env.gov.bc.ca/cas/pdfs/2012-Progress-to-Targets.pdf](http://env.gov.bc.ca/cas/pdfs/2012-Progress-to-Targets.pdf)

## Discussion

Government's adaptation strategy recognizes the importance of working with stakeholders in climate sensitive sectors, such as natural resources, health care, agriculture, tourism and transportation, to assess risk and prioritize actions to reduce the risk of adverse impacts to the sector from climate change. This new performance measure assesses progress towards this commitment by tracking initiatives to review B.C. Government policies, strategies and operational activities to ensure that they will deliver the desired objectives for their sectors in a changing climate.

The previous performance measure, introduced in the *2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan*, tracked the number of provincial ministries considering climate adaptation in business planning and delivery, as determined from Ministry Service Plans. In 2011/12, eight ministries that are key to making progress on adaption in sectors such as transportation, agriculture, the environment and natural resources described specific initiatives in their service plans, substantially achieving the target for the performance measure.

Work has already begun. Government supported an industry led effort to complete a climate change risk and opportunity assessment for the agriculture sector. The Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) has developed an action plan for climate adaptation. Both were completed in 2012. Looking ahead, the Ministry of Environment, working with the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Gas, has initiated an assessment of the mining sector, and, working with FLNRO, Emergency Management BC and the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, is assessing coastal flood protection policy. These initiatives will be completed in early 2014. Thereafter it is anticipated that one assessment will be completed each year. Sectors under consideration include Transportation Infrastructure, Tourism and Health Care.

Information about *Preparing for Climate Change: British Columbia's Adaptation Strategy*, is available at [livesmartbc.ca/government/adaptation.html](http://livesmartbc.ca/government/adaptation.html).

A discussion of results will be available in the Ministry's *Annual Service Plan Report*.

## **Objective 1.3: Promote innovative approaches to grow the Green Economy**

BC's leadership on climate change has sparked innovation across BC's economy to develop business solutions to address environmental problems. By accelerating how we develop and demonstrate new clean energies and technologies here in BC, our businesses have a strong foundation to export to a growing international market.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading cross-government efforts on the Green Economy elements of the *BC Jobs Plan*;
- working with large industrial emitters, such as Liquefied Natural Gas exporters, to develop greenhouse gas management strategies to limit their carbon liability while providing new opportunities to reduce energy costs and access new markets;

- expanding the range of tools to attract investments in innovation such as offsets and government capital spending;
- working across government to promote demonstration projects that showcase B.C. clean energy and technologies as business solutions to environmental problems; and
- coordinating provincial relations with federal and international partners on climate actions to ensure coordinated and effective approaches for B.C. businesses, as well as developing new relationships with export markets.

## **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. This can be achieved through effective legislation, innovative approaches to water governance and coordinated watershed-based planning.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- encouraging shared water stewardship by leading and coordinating the implementation of the actions and commitments in *Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan* ([LivingWaterSmart.ca](http://LivingWaterSmart.ca));
- working with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the ministries of Health and Agriculture, and the Oil and Gas Commission to protect surface and groundwater resources;



*The mountains of Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park provide the picturesque backdrop for this paraglider*

- engaging with First Nations, stakeholders and the public to develop new water sustainability legislation to protect stream health and aquatic environments, improve water governance arrangements, introduce more flexibility and efficiency in the water allocation system, and regulate groundwater use in priority areas and for large withdrawals;
- assessing the health of surface and groundwater resources through collaborative science and monitoring programs; and
- actively contributing to the Council

of the Federation’s Water Stewardship Council, and engaging other governments and external stakeholders in implementing the [Water Charter](#).<sup>5</sup>

## Objective 2.2: Reduced contamination from toxins and waste

By reducing contamination from toxins and wastes efficiently and effectively, the Ministry will enhance public health and safety and mitigate impacts to water, land and air.

### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;<sup>6</sup>
- regulating the management of waste, remediation of contaminated sites, and development of brownfields (underutilized former industrial/commercial sites) in order to protect human and environmental health and facilitate economic development;
- ensuring that the generators, carriers and receivers of hazardous waste handle, store, transport, treat and dispose of it according to the Hazardous Waste Regulation and in a manner that does not compromise the safety of human health and the environment;
- collaborating with communities, public organizations, industry and other agencies and private parties to protect human health and the environment by promoting the safe use and management of hazardous waste; and
- revising the Hazardous Waste Regulation and developing training and guidance materials to promote increased accountability for hazardous waste management.

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

Performance Measure	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 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, 28 provincially significant rivers and streams, including the Fraser, Columbia and Peace, are monitored in B.C. This performance measure relies on data collected from 37 monitoring stations to determine whether water quality is stable or improving in each of these key water bodies.

<sup>5</sup> [councilofthefederation.ca/pdfs/Water Charter Aug 4 2010.pdf](http://councilofthefederation.ca/pdfs/Water_Charter_Aug_4_2010.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> As per the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility ([ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr\\_cap.pdf](http://ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr_cap.pdf))

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.

In 2012/13, the Federal-Provincial Surface Water Monitoring Group will complete a report on the Fraser River Basin. This report will include the status and trends in water chemistry from 11 federal-provincial stations in the Fraser River Basin which will assist in the management of water resources and the development of mitigation strategies in the Basin.

One new trend station was established in September 2012 in the Petitot River in northeastern B.C. The Petitot River monitoring station was established to monitor for Natural Gas resource developments in the Horn River Basin. An additional monitoring station is planned for the Murray River near Tumbler Ridge, B.C., to monitor for cumulative impacts from upstream coal mining. Another station has been proposed for the Quesnel River to monitoring for aquatic impacts from heavy metal mines.

The Federal-Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program continues to continuously monitor Osoyoos Lake and the Fraser River Estuary using water quality monitoring buoys. This data is posted in near-real-time on the internet. Furthermore, data collected from the Federal-Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program are used in a variety of reports. One example is the annual report of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators program on the [Water Quality Index](#)<sup>7</sup> developed by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

### **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 on public health and safety and environmental sustainability. Reducing emissions of some pollutants has benefits for both air quality and climate change. Emission reduction actions, cleaner technology and shifts in behaviour have all contributed to downward trends in pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter over the past decade.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of policies and initiatives designed to avoid, minimize and offset emissions from industry, transportation, urban growth, ports and marine vessels;
- continuing to develop new industrial air emissions standards that require using the best achievable technology practices;
- developing ambient air quality objectives, standards, guidelines, and other resources to support airshed planning and decision making in permitting and environmental assessment processes;

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<sup>7</sup> [ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=68DE8F72-1](http://ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=68DE8F72-1).

- collaborating with the federal and provincial governments to develop a national Air Quality Management System that will include national emission standards, national ambient air quality standards and be delivered through an air zone management approach; and
- collaborating with the Oil and Gas Commission, Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Natural Gas and local partners in the northeast to monitor, report out to the public, assess and reduce impacts of oil and gas development on air quality.

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

Performance Measure	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Number of air emission standards incorporating current Best Achievable Technology practices	7	8	9	9

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: Targets are cumulative.

#### **Discussion**

The Best Achievable Technology (BAT) 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, and support the government's goal to protect air quality and human health. Standards for the slaughter and poultry processing industries, biomass-fired electrical power generation, wood-burning boilers used in agricultural operations, pellet plant manufacturing operations, wood residue burners, and waste-to-energy from municipal solid waste have been developed over the past several years.<sup>8</sup>

To ensure that continual progress is made to better regulate industrial waste discharges, the Ministry of Environment is committed to developing until 2015, at least one new air standard that incorporates BAT. The development of such standards is complex as it may involve modification of the industrial process and/or application of control technology to minimize releases to the environment, while ensuring that economic viability is maintained.

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

Events such as spills and catastrophic fires can present risks to public health and safety, property and the environment. Although not all environmental risks are avoidable, effective management can help to minimize and offset the impact of these risks. The Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment, as well as risks to public safety involving human wildlife conflict.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

<sup>8</sup> More information on industrial regulations and codes of practice is available at [env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/](http://env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/).



*Emergency response to an oil spill*

- ensuring the prevention, preparation, mitigation and response to spills that effect human health and the environmental quality of the province's water, land and air resources along with the flora and fauna they contain by establishing policies and procedures, response plans, operational guidelines, cooperative agreements and technical guidance on emergency response;

- promoting stewardship with other provincial agencies, industry, First Nations, local government, federal government and other stakeholders to protect the public and the environment in the event of an emergency or disaster;
- implementing new approaches to the management of compliance verification data to allow the Ministry to improve its response to environmental risks and provide increased public accountability;
- issuing permits to minimize the creation of future contaminated sites and manage the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites; and
- collaborating with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to manage the public safety risks of human-wildlife interactions, including awareness programs and, in severe conflicts, employing a specialized predator attack team composed of specially trained conservation officers and the wildlife veterinarian from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

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

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

The collection, storage, management and open distribution of scientific information on species and ecosystems enables effective science and policy development, contributes to the understanding of the status of native species and ecosystems, and leads to greater certainty in land use decision making.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing data systems to support the acquisition and management of data and information, and providing open access to that information in support of science, policy development and shared stewardship;
- employing the [B.C. Species and Ecosystems Explorer](#)<sup>9</sup> to make available information on species and ecosystems at risk, including their conservation status, associated threats, and conservation priorities; and
- assessing the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems and related risks and threats throughout B.C., including parks and protected areas.

### **Objective 3.2: Conserved, maintained and enhanced native species and ecosystems**

Many Ministry programs support the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance and enhancement of native ecosystems to achieve a balance between the needs of wildlife and the needs of people. The Ministry encourages and supports the public and stakeholders 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:

- implementing applied science and research programs to support continued improvement in the conservation of species and ecosystem;



- providing leadership in overall program coordination for species at risk, including preparing and implementing recovery plans, legal listing, and intergovernmental relations;
- collaborating with partners on strategies to address invasive species;
- leading the development of an environmental mitigation policy and associated procedures to help support natural resource decision making and to foster avoidance, minimization and offsetting of impacts to the environment;

*Northern Red-Legged Frog (rana aurora) at Dionisio Provincial Park, Galiano Island*

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<sup>9</sup> [a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/](http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/)

- addressing invasive species by collaborating with partners on strategies, providing enforcement services under the *Wildlife Act*, and using a specialized Conservation Officer Service response team to control alien species; and
- supporting natural resource integrated decision making through the development of consistent approaches, tools, and policies.

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

Performance Measure	2012/13 Projected	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Changes in the conservation status of species	No change	Net Improvement	Net Improvement	Net Improvement

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: This measure reflects the net change in the conservation status of species in B.C.

#### **Discussion**

BC has one of the most diverse assemblages of species of any Canadian province. Changes in the status of native species of plants and animals in B.C. is an important indicator of how well the Ministry is meeting its objective to conserve, maintain and enhance native species and ecosystems. The United Nations established the years 2011–2020 as the UN Decade on Biodiversity. One component of this declaration is to “improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.” The Ministry’s performance measure coincides with this declaration and will give insight into B.C.’s contribution to the United Nation’s goal as the decade progresses.

The Conservation Data Centre conducts status rank assessments for a different subset of species and ecosystems annually and reports these at the end of each fiscal year. As such, assessments for the 2012/13 fiscal year will be complete and reported in the final quarterly reporting period.

Species status changes slowly and this measure may require time respond to environmental change or management actions. The role of the Ministry is to establish effective management frameworks that facilitate shared stewardship 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 B.C., such as those that affect the status of migratory birds, also influence the biodiversity within the province’s borders.

#### **Objective 3.3: Well-managed parks and protected areas**

Parks and protected areas help to ensure the protection of native species and ecosystems, provide families with outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, and contribute to meeting our environmental, social and economic goals. British Columbia has the third largest parks system in North America and largest provincial/territorial system in Canada protecting over 14% of the province. Our world-class parks system provides a legacy for future generations.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- protecting, restoring and managing high-priority habitat and ecosystems including invasive species, forest health impacts, species at risk, and landscape connectivity;
- collaborating with First Nations and communities in protected areas planning and management to ensure long-term protection of natural, cultural and recreational assets;
- fostering collaboration with local, regional and federal governments and other partners to advance the establishment of new terrestrial and marine protected areas;
- strengthening the role parks and protected areas play in climate change adaptation; and
- increasing and promoting partnerships to expand the opportunities and involvement in stewardship initiatives.

## 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:

- promoting the sharing of responsibility for protecting the environment, human health, and public safety, Community Stewardship Initiatives, and the Bear Smart and [Urban Ungulate](#)<sup>10</sup> programs;
- continuing to work with stewardship organizations to increase environmental awareness;
- promoting outdoor activities to foster a connection to and an appreciation for the natural environment;
- developing and openly delivering information on critical issues like climate change, environmental policies and water stewardship to targeted audiences through innovative communication tools, such as social media; and

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<sup>10</sup> [env.gov.bc.ca/cos/info/wildlife\\_human\\_interaction/UrbanUngulates.html](http://env.gov.bc.ca/cos/info/wildlife_human_interaction/UrbanUngulates.html)

- providing open access to scientific data and information about the state of environment through websites such as [Environmental Reporting BC](#)<sup>11</sup> and [BCAirQuality.ca](#).

### **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 engage citizens and 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;
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance activities to protect the environment;
- leading industry engagement on planning and regulatory development that supports and encourages the transition to a low-carbon economy and ensures that international partners are apprised of B.C.'s progress;
- fostering sustainable natural resource management through collaborative approaches with the public, non-profit groups, communities, First Nations governments, academia and industry; and
- using social media, such as the [LiveSmartBC.ca](#) and Environmental Reporting BC Twitter channels ([@LiveSmartBCca](#) and [@EnvReportBC](#)), to engage British Columbians on current environmental issues.

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

Sustainable environmental management practices not only protect the environment, they reduce costs through more efficient use of resources and energy, 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;<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [env.gov.bc.ca/soe/](http://env.gov.bc.ca/soe/)

<sup>12</sup> As per the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility ([ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr\\_cap.pdf](http://ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr_cap.pdf)).

- encouraging compliance by reporting those in non-compliance with Ministry environmental standards and regulatory requirements, and publishing the names of those in non-compliance in the [Quarterly Environmental Enforcement Summaries](#);<sup>13</sup>
- expanding the role of Qualified and Approved Professional delivery and reliance, such as the [Contaminated Sites Approved Professional Society](#);<sup>14</sup>
- continuing to explore opportunities to reduce regulatory burden through changes to streamline authorization processes; and
- promoting best environmental management practices and maintaining high environmental standards.

### Performance Measure 6: Completion of the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Percentage of product sub-categories <sup>1</sup> in the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility fully covered by industry-led recycling programs in British Columbia	68%	68%	79%	84%

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

<sup>1</sup> The Canada-wide Action Plan places a number of products into different categories. The Ministry divides these categories into sub-categories. For example, one category is packaging, which the Ministry divides into two subcategories: beverage containers and packaging and printed paper. Some product categories include a large number of products and require multiple industry-led stewardship programs in order to attain complete coverage.

#### Discussion

In October 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment endorsed the [Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility](#)<sup>15</sup>. 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 producers and consumers of a product rather than on general taxpayers and local governments. B.C. is committed to the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility and is the North American leader in developing producer responsibility programs, having more programs and covering more products than any other jurisdiction. The website [recycling.gov.bc.ca](http://recycling.gov.bc.ca) has the complete list of products with industry-led stewardship programs in B.C.

The target for this measure is to have comprehensive coverage of the products in all subcategories by 2017/18.

<sup>13</sup> [env.gov.bc.ca/main/compliance-reporting/](http://env.gov.bc.ca/main/compliance-reporting/)

<sup>14</sup> [csapsociety.bc.ca](http://csapsociety.bc.ca)

<sup>15</sup> [ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr\\_cap.pdf](http://ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr_cap.pdf).

## **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, which are crucial to the health and sustainability of our environment.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- operating the hydrometric and air monitoring networks<sup>16</sup> to obtain information to support water and airshed management;
- acquiring, interpreting and openly sharing environmental science and information; and
- supporting communities engaged in multi-stakeholder air and watershed management plans.

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

British Columbia's parks, fish and wildlife provide families and visitors with a variety of unique outdoor opportunities 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,



*Atna River Falls, Morice Lake Provincial Park*

native species, ecosystems and the environment as a whole, while supporting economic opportunities.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- promoting sponsorship and donation opportunities through the Park Enhancement Fund to enhance conservation and recreation opportunities in BC Parks;
- implementing a volunteer strategy that will engage British Columbians in conservation and recreation activities

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<sup>16</sup> The B.C. hydrometric network is an environmental monitoring system that collects stream flow data from over 450 locations in British Columbia. The data are essential for hydroelectric power production, infrastructure, as well as for flood forecasting, agriculture and other purposes.

throughout BC Parks;

- working with partners both inside and outside government to implement strategies and programs that promote exceptional outdoor opportunities while ensuring the long-term protection of natural resources;
- ensuring effective park management performance and value for money through the implementation of the Parks Recreation Integrated Service Model; and
- optimizing stewardship and economic opportunities with First Nations, local communities, non-profit groups, private land owners and others.

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

Performance Measure	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Number of recorded park visits	20.0 million	20.9 million	21.3 million	21.7 million
Park visitor satisfaction level	80%	Maintain or improve (from 80%)	Maintain or improve (from 80%)	Maintain or improve (from 80%)

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: The satisfaction rating is based on a satisfaction survey that is completed by users of campgrounds around the province. In summer 2011, more than 2,000 people responded to the survey. A number of respondents for summer 2012 will be available by the end of October, 2012 – the survey's closing date.

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2010/11 baseline of 80% satisfaction.

### **Discussion**

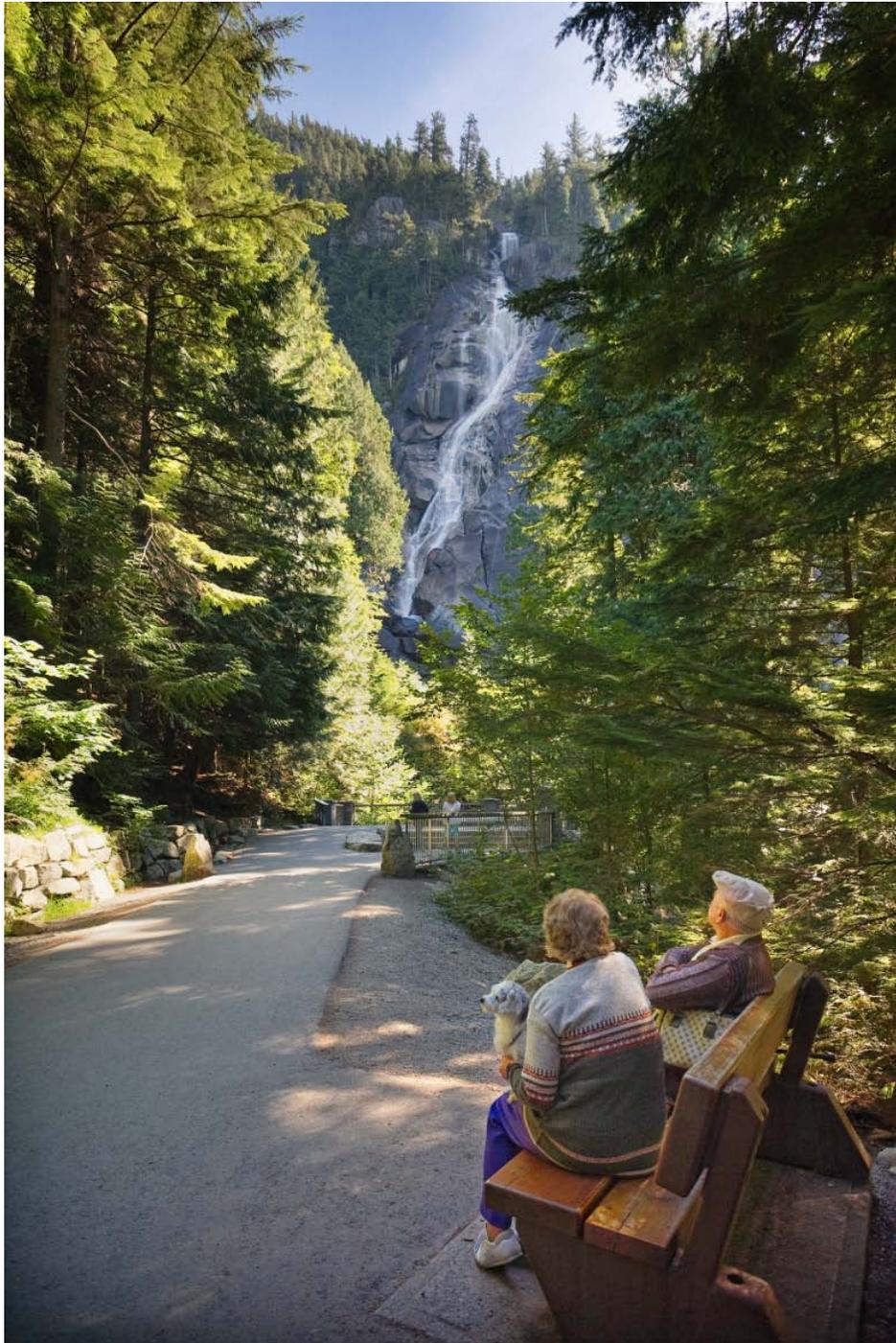
The parks and protected areas system in B.C. covers approximately 13 million hectares (or 14.3 per cent of the province), including both provincial and national parks. Provincial parks provide protection for representative landscapes and habitat for native species. Parks also provide recreational services and opportunities that contribute to local economies, promote active living and support an appreciation for the environment. In 2009, The Canadian Parks Council published an economic impact report stating that every dollar invested in British Columbia's protected areas system generates \$8.42 in spin off economic activity.

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. This performance measure is 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 by conducting an annual satisfaction survey with a random sample of park visitors. The Ministry employs an online survey that increases cost-effectiveness and reduces the use of paper. The results of this survey are used by Ministry staff and park facility operators to assess and improve park maintenance and to help determine how capital funding should be allocated.

The Ministry has targeted an approximate 1.7 million increase in park attendance between 2012/13 and 2015/16. 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 the economy. The extent that these factors influence attendance levels may cause park use to fluctuate by as much as 5 per cent annually. The Ministry therefore recommends that the park visitation performance measure be assessed over a three-year term to account for any significant annual fluctuations.



*Shannon Falls Provincial Park*

# Ministry of Environment Resource Summary

Ministry of Environment	2012/13 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2013/14 Estimates <sup>2</sup>	2014/15 Plan	2015/16 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Environmental Protection <sup>(3)</sup> .....	6,954	8,324	8,324	8,324
Environmental Sustainability .....	19,083	19,083	19,083	19,083
BC Parks.....	31,422	31,422	31,422	31,422
Conservation Officer Services .....	16,714	16,714	16,714	16,714
Climate Action <sup>(4)</sup> .....	3,523	3,271	3,271	3,271
Executive and Support Services <sup>(4)</sup> .....	21,790	21,049	21,049	21,049
<b>Sub-Total</b> .....	<b>99,486</b>	<b>99,863</b>	<b>99,863</b>	<b>99,863</b>
Park Enhancement Fund <sup>(5)</sup> .....	500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Sustainable Environment Fund <sup>(3)</sup> .....	20,305	18,935	18,935	18,935
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>120,291</b>	<b>120,298</b>	<b>120,298</b>	<b>120,298</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
Executive and Support Services <sup>(6)</sup> .....	17,415	18,227	20,913	20,913
Park Enhancement Fund.....	400	400	400	400
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>17,815</b>	<b>18,627</b>	<b>21,313</b>	<b>21,313</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for the 2012/13 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2013/14 Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

<sup>3</sup> The \$1.37M increase in Environmental Protection is offset by an equivalent decrease in the Sustainable Environment Fund.

<sup>4</sup> Climate Action, and Executive and Support Services (\$0.993M) expenditure management savings target.

<sup>5</sup> The \$1M increase in the Park Enhancement Fund is more than offset by increased revenues.

<sup>6</sup> The \$0.472M 2013/14 increase in capital is comprised of a \$3.245M increase in vehicle budget, offset by decreases of (\$2.083M) in land and (\$0.35M) in specialized equipment.

# Environmental Assessment Office

## Purpose of the Office

The Environmental Assessment Office was established in 1995 to administer the *Environmental Assessment Act* (Act) and its regulations. The Act gives authority to the Environmental Assessment Office to evaluate proposed projects that are reviewable under the Act for potential adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects that may occur during the life of the project, and to verify and enforce compliance with the conditions of environmental assessment certificates.

The Environmental Assessment Office's vision is to support vibrant communities, a healthy environment, and a prosperous economy. The Environmental Assessment Office ensures that proposed major projects meet provincial environmental, economic and social goals, and that the interests and concerns of B.C.'s families and communities, First Nations, government agencies and other interested parties are considered in each assessment. Proposed projects currently undergoing assessment in B.C. represent thousands of potential jobs and approximately \$30 billion in potential capital investment.

## The Environmental Assessment Process

A broad range of proposed projects are reviewable if they meet or exceed certain thresholds defined in the Reviewable Projects Regulation<sup>17</sup>. This regulation identifies thresholds for industrial, mining, energy, water management, waste disposal, food processing, transportation and tourist destination resort projects. Reviewable proposed projects are generally those with a higher potential for adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage or health effects.

The Minister of Environment can also designate any project as reviewable if it has not been substantially started, the Minister believes the project may have a significant adverse effect, and an environmental assessment would be in the public interest. In addition, proponents of projects may apply to the Environmental Assessment Office to request that their projects be accepted for review.

The Environmental Assessment Office leads project reviews with input from technical government experts, local government representatives, First Nations, and the public to identify and assess the potential for significant effects of proposed projects and potential mitigation



*Flagging environmentally sensitive areas prior to the start of construction on the Quality Wind Project.*

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<sup>17</sup> For example, if a proposed coal mine is projected to produce  $\geq 250,000$  tonnes of coal per year, it would be automatically reviewable.

measures. Consequently, projects that complete an environmental assessment are often designed and implemented much differently from how they are proposed at the beginning of the environmental assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office fulfills the Province’s legal duty to consult with First Nations throughout the environmental assessment process. The Environmental Assessment Office consults, and where appropriate, identifies measures to accommodate the interests of First Nations in relation to potential effects on established or asserted Aboriginal rights and on treaty rights.

At the end of an environmental assessment, the Environmental Assessment Office prepares an assessment report identifying the potential environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects associated with the proposed project, and evaluates the extent to which any adverse effects would be avoided or mitigated. This report is provided to the ministers who decide whether or not to issue an environmental assessment certificate. If the ministers issue a certificate, proponents are required to implement conditions of the certificate to avoid or mitigate adverse effects. In this way, a proponent is granted a ‘conditional’ environmental assessment certificate.

After a project is certified, the Environmental Assessment Office works with other government agencies to ensure that proponents comply with certificate conditions.

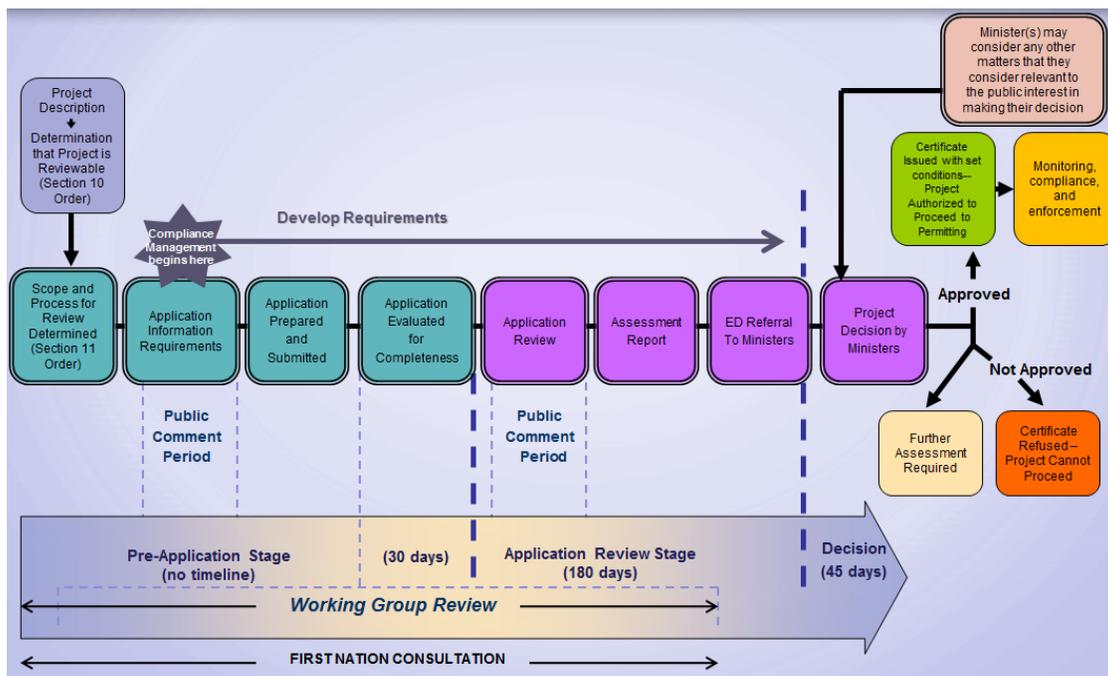


Figure 1: The environmental assessment process.

# Strategic Context

## Environmental Assessment Activity

The demand for environmental assessment of proposed projects is anticipated to remain strong. Currently, the potential capital investment for projects in the environmental assessment process is over \$35 billion.

Of the projects currently under review by the Environmental Assessment Office, approximately 51 percent are mining projects and 26 percent are power projects. The remainder of projects undergoing assessment are found in the oil and gas, destination resort, waste disposal, water and industrial sectors.

## Evolving Practice of Environmental Assessment

The practice of environmental assessment, including compliance and effectiveness management, is evolving as societal standards and government regulations change. To understand and incorporate current practices and emerging trends in environmental assessment, the Environmental Assessment Office engages with a broad community of practitioners such as federal and provincial Environment Assessment Administrators, International Association for Impact Assessment and other provinces to identify leading best practices used by other agencies.

The Environmental Assessment Office continually reviews its process to ensure effectiveness and efficiency improvements. A key focus at this time is to ensure clearer expectations of all participants in the environmental assessment process, and that B.C.'s environmental assessment process meets or exceeds federal substitution and equivalency requirements as described below.

## Federal-Provincial Coordination

Historically, approximately two-thirds of proposed projects in B.C. have required assessment under both provincial and federal legislation. The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* was amended by the federal government in July 2012 to include: new “start-to-finish” timelines; the introduction of new compliance functions; a requirement that the federal government issue a federal “decision statement” at the conclusion of each environmental assessment; and new tools for substitution and equivalency that support the goal of having one process for projects (one project, one environmental assessment) that require federal and provincial environmental assessments. The Environmental Assessment Office is working with the federal government on transition and implementation issues relating to the new Act.

## First Nations

The Environmental Assessment Office is committed to working constructively with First Nations to ensure that the Crown fulfills its duties of consultation and accommodation and is guided by the following principles which can be found in more detail in the Fairness and Service Code:

- Respect
- Capacity

- Government to Government Dialogue
- Dealing with Differences

To improve and enhance efforts to engage effectively with First Nations, the Environmental Assessment Office has:

- refreshed First Nations consultation guidance to reflect the Provincial Interim Direction for Meeting Legal Obligations when Consulting First Nations;
- trained all staff on our consultation requirements and developing preliminary strength of claim assessments;
- committed to coordinating consultation with other agencies to ensure engagement with First Nations is as respectful as possible; and
- initiated the refresh of the Environmental Assessment Office's guidance to proponents for engaging effectively with First Nations.

The Environmental Assessment Office is changing the Service Plan measure respecting First Nations engagement from fiscal year 2012/13. The Environmental Assessment Office will no longer measure First Nations engagement in the process based on whether or not First Nations choose to engage in the environmental assessment process because the performance measure was not effective in measuring the Environmental Assessment Office's results in this area. Even though this measure is discontinuing, the Environmental Assessment Office will continue to provide qualitative information to describe the Environmental Assessment Office's activities to engage First Nations.



*Construction on the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project in the Lower Mainland*

## Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

### Goal 1: Respected Environmental Assessment

#### Objective 1.1: Ensure desired outcomes related to provincial environmental, social and economic goals are delivered to the people of British Columbia

The environmental assessment process is an integrated and iterative process in which the Environmental Assessment Office works with the proponent, government agencies, First Nations, potentially affected parties, and the public to ensure that potentially adverse effects of a proposed project are identified and avoided or mitigated so that if the project is to proceed, it will do so in a sustainable manner. The Environmental Assessment Office ensures that once an environmental assessment has been completed, Ministers are informed of both the potential benefits and adverse effects of the proposed project before they decide whether or not to issue an environmental assessment conditional certificate.

#### Strategy

The key strategy for this objective is to maintain and continually improve the effectiveness of the environmental assessment process by developing a quality assurance program that includes:

- continuous improvement and ongoing enhancement of the environmental assessment process before an environmental assessment certificate is issued; and
- a compliance management program to ensure that projects comply with certificate conditions and commitments.

#### Performance Measure 1: Compliance inspections completed on certified projects

Performance Measure	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Number of compliance inspections completed on certified projects	15 inspections*	17 inspections	19 inspections	21 inspections

\*Note: Increase to forecast for 2012/13 from target of 10 inspections for 2012/13 based on actual results achieved to date.

#### Discussion

In July 2011, the Office of the Auditor General published a report<sup>18</sup> on the Environmental Assessment Office's oversight of certified projects and concluded that oversight was insufficient to ensure that potential adverse effects are avoided or mitigated. In the spring of 2011, the Environmental Assessment Office established a Policy and Quality Assurance Unit to lead the development of a comprehensive compliance management program. While the Auditor General's report focused on the post-certification oversight provided by the Environmental

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs/2011/report4/audit-bc-environmental-assessment-office-EAO>

Assessment Office, the addition of dedicated compliance and enforcement staff play an important role in supporting the development of certificate conditions during the application review process. Compliance staff within the Environmental Assessment Office work with other regulatory agencies to clarify inspection roles and responsibilities and ensure the project is constructed and operated according to the Environmental Assessment Certificate.

To that end, the Environmental Assessment Office conducts site inspections of certified projects to promote compliance and enforce legally binding environmental assessment certificate conditions. For 2013/14, the Environmental Assessment Office has increased the target number of site inspections to 17 from the baseline target of 10 (set in 2011/12) to reflect the growth and functionality of the compliance and enforcement program. Oversight of certified projects is provided through field based inspections completed by the Environmental Assessment Office compliance and enforcement staff and permitting agencies with the authority to enforce compliance under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. For example, the Environmental Assessment Office has established a partnership with the Compliance and Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to assist in conducting inspections of the environmental assessment certificate conditions placed on certified projects, and is ensuring effective coordination with other agencies who inspect on subsequent permit conditions. The results of inspections of environmental assessment certificate conditions undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Office and by partner agencies will continue to inform future targets as the program evolves.



*EA certificate inspection in May of 2012 of the Northwest Transmission Line project.*

**Performance Measure 2: Timely response to compliance reports received from Environmental Certificate holders.**

Performance Measure	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Percentage of compliance reports submitted by Environmental Assessment Certificate holders that are reviewed by staff and posted online within six weeks of receipt.	New measure	80%	85%	90%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office

## Discussion

Upon successful completion of the environmental assessment process, projects are granted environmental assessment certificates. These certificates stipulate a number of conditions that projects must adhere to throughout the lifespan of the project (pre-construction, construction, operations, and decommissioning). Depending on the certificate, there may be a requirement for environmental assessment certificate holders to submit annual or periodic reports detailing compliance with each condition related to the current phase of their project.

Compliance reports are reviewed by staff from the Environmental Assessment Office to ensure the reports meet the requirements of the condition, and to determine whether a project inspection may be warranted. Reports also alert staff as to the current status of certified projects. The documents are then posted on the [electronic project information centre](#) on the Environmental Assessment Office's website to ensure transparency and accountability to the public.

This performance measure target is set at 80% to reflect that compliance reports may have issues requiring resolution prior to posting. In such cases, the review, investigation and resolution of non-compliance could exceed the six week time period. Self-monitoring and reporting by environmental assessment certificate holders is integral to the Environmental Assessment Office's compliance and enforcement strategy and supplements the proactive inspection and compliance promotion activities undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Office. This performance measure reflects the Environmental Assessment Office's commitments to review compliance reporting in a timely manner, while maintaining a high level of transparency by ensuring compliance reports are readily available to the public.

## Objective 1.2: Build upon a strong legislative framework

British Columbia's *Environmental Assessment Act* has been in place since 1994. The Act was subsequently amended in 2001 to allow for more flexible and responsive procedures. One of the major strengths of B.C.'s environmental assessment legislation is its requirement that certain phases of project reviews be completed within specific timelines.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring that all relevant information is incorporated into the proponent's application for an environmental assessment certificate, thereby greatly reducing the need to suspend the review during the legislated 180-day application review period;
- identifying policy, practice and legislative options to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the environmental assessment review process; and
- working with other provincial agencies to improve service to clients and the public, including participating in the "Integrated Decision Making" initiative in the Natural Resource Sector.

**Performance Measure 3: Application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process are completed within 180-days**

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2012/13 Forecast <sup>2</sup>	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Percentage of application reviews in the B.C. environmental process completed within 180-days:					
B.C. process only	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Joint B.C./Canada process	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office

**Discussion**

The legislated timelines in the Act include a 180-day limit for the Environmental Assessment Office’s review of applications for environmental assessment certificates. This timeline offers certainty for the public, government, First Nations, other potentially affected parties and proponents in understanding the duration of steps in environmental assessment and supports timely planning for all parties.

**Goal 2: Successful Partnerships**

**Objective 2.1: Ensure effective partnerships with provincial agencies are established, maintained and enhanced**

One of the key functions provided by the Environmental Assessment Office is the coordination and assessment of technical input from various provincial agencies into environmental assessments of proposed projects. In this role, building positive relationships and effective communication networks is a major function undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Office.

**Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working with other provincial ministries to identify and implement process efficiencies for projects before, during and after environmental assessment;
- providing clear direction to working group members on their roles and the type of information and input required to support the Environmental Assessment Office;

- ensuring that other provincial agencies are aware of the work of the Environmental Assessment Office through outreach and relationship building; and
- partnering with other provincial agencies where possible (for example, undertaking compliance inspections).

**Objective 2.2: Enhance efforts to coordinate environmental assessment with the federal government**

Coordination with the federal government has been a top priority of the Environmental Assessment Office since the early 1990's, and continues to be a priority in light of amendments to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* that came into force in July 2012.

There are key opportunities to address inefficiencies in the review process and as such, the Environmental Assessment Office continues to pursue the goal of “one project, one environmental assessment” to reduce duplication and overlap while increasing certainty and predictability, and maintaining rigorous environmental standards.

**Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental assessments undertaken by both the federal and provincial governments;
- working closely with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and other government agencies to understand and take advantage of the new tools in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*; and
- communicating with proponents, First Nations, and the public about how B.C. and Canada coordinate on environmental assessment.

# Environmental Assessment Office Resource Summary

Core Business Area	2012/13 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2013/14 Estimates <sup>2</sup>	2014/15 Plan	2015/16 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Environmental Assessment Office .....	8,754	8,754	8,754	8,754
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>8,754</b>	<b>8,754</b>	<b>8,754</b>	<b>8,754</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for the 2012/13 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2013/14 Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

# Appendix

## Ministry of Environment Contact Information

### Headquarters

Victoria

Telephone: 250 387-1161

Fax: 250 387-5669

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

Additional contact information can be found at [www.gov.bc.ca/env/contacts.html](http://www.gov.bc.ca/env/contacts.html).

### Regional Offices

#### Coast Region

##### West Coast

*Nanaimo Office:*

Telephone: 250 751-3100

Fax: 250 751-3103

Website: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/)

Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Queen Charlotte City, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet

##### South Coast

*Surrey Office:*

Telephone: 604 582-5200

Fax: 604 930-7119

Website: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/)

Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver, Sechelt, Powell River

## **Southern Interior Region**

### **Cariboo/Thompson**

*Kamloops Office:*

Telephone: 250 371-6200

Fax: 250 828-4000

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

*Williams Lake Office:*

Telephone: 250 398-4530

Fax: 250 398-4214

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

Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton, Vernon, 100 Mile House, Quesnel

### **Kootenay/Okanagan**

*Nelson Office:*

Telephone: 250 354-6333

Fax: 250 354-6332

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

Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Grand Forks, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke

*Penticton Office:*

Telephone: 250 490-8200

Fax: 250 490-2231

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

*Cranbrook Office:*

Telephone: 250 489-8540

Fax: 250 489-8506

## **Northern Region**

### **Skeena**

*Smithers Office:*

Telephone: 250 847-7260

Fax: 250 847-7728

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

Other offices: Atlin, Burns Lake, Dease Lake, Terrace/Lakelse Lake

## **Omineca**

*Environmental Protection Division  
Conservation Officer Service  
Prince George Office:*  
Telephone: 250 565-6135  
Fax: 250 565-6629

*Environmental Sustainability  
Parks and Protected Areas Division  
Prince George Office:*  
Telephone: 250 565-6135  
Fax: 250 565-6940

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

Other offices: Vanderhoof, Mackenzie, Mount Robson, Fort St. James

## **Peace**

*Fort St. John Office:*

Telephone: 250 787-3411

Fax: 250 787-3490

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

Other offices: Chetwynd/Moberly Lake Park, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson/Liard Hotsprings

## **Report all Poachers and Polluters**

Telephone: Dial Toll-Free 1-877-952-7277

Website: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/rapp/form.htm>

## **Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information**

Second Floor  
836 Yates Street  
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9V1  
Email: [eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca)  
Website: [www.eao.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca)

### **Water Management Projects and South West Coast Sector**

(Dams, Dykes and Diversions, Shoreline Modification, and Groundwater Projects)

Scott Bailey – Executive Project Director  
250 356-1763  
[Scott.Bailey@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Scott.Bailey@gov.bc.ca)

### **First Nations**

Trish Balcaen – a/Executive Project Director  
250 387-1624  
[Trish.Balcaen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Trish.Balcaen@gov.bc.ca)

### **Coal Projects and Kootenays Sector**

(Industrial mineral, construction stone, sand and gravel)

Karen Christie – Executive Project Director  
250 387-2200  
[Karen.L.Christie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Karen.L.Christie@gov.bc.ca)

### **Food Processing, Waste Management, Destination Resorts and Transportation Projects and Northwest Sector**

Chris Hamilton – Executive Project Director  
250 387-5606  
[Chris.Hamilton@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Chris.Hamilton@gov.bc.ca)

### **Power and Industrial Projects and Northeast Sector**

Brian Murphy – Executive Project Director  
250 387-9409  
[Brian.Murphy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Brian.Murphy@gov.bc.ca)

## **Metal Mining Projects, Thompson Okanagan and Cariboo Sector**

Shelley Murphy – Executive Project Director

250 387-2563

[Shelley.Murphy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Shelley.Murphy@gov.bc.ca)

## **Oil and Gas Projects and Omineca Sector**

David “Archie” Riddell – Executive Project Director

250 387-1409

[David.Riddell@gov.bc.ca](mailto:David.Riddell@gov.bc.ca)

## **EA Process and Communications**

Greg Leake – Director, Client Communications and Engagement

250 356-7479

[Greg.Leake@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Greg.Leake@gov.bc.ca)

## **Policy, Legislation, Compliance, and Intergovernmental Relations**

Michelle Carr – Executive Director, Policy and Quality Assurance

250 356-1151

[Michelle.Carr@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Michelle.Carr@gov.bc.ca)

## **Environmental Assessment Operations**

John Mazure - Executive Lead, Environmental Assessments

250 387-9408

[John.Mazure@gov.bc.ca](mailto:John.Mazure@gov.bc.ca)

## **Associate Deputy Minister’s Office**

Dave Nikolejsin

250 356-7475