

Ministry of Forests

2022/23 – 2024/25 SERVICE PLAN

February 2022



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Published by the Ministry of Forests

Minister's Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Forests 2022/23 – 2024/25 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katrine Conroy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Katrine Conroy
Minister of Forests
February 22, 2022

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Forests (the Ministry) is the Province's agency responsible for the management of forests, lands and range and integrated decision making for water, fish and wildlife, archaeology permits and authorizations and natural resource compliance and enforcement. The Ministry is also responsible for ensuring the province is well positioned to address natural hazards, including wildfire and flood management. The Ministry is working to address climate change by enhancing the role of forests and forest products as carbon sinks or opportunities to reduce emissions, and by preparing and responding to the impacts of climate change already underway. By a commitment to sustainable natural resource management, and through the advancement of forest policy modernization and new transformational initiatives, the Ministry supports activities that provide economic, environmental, cultural and social benefits to all British Columbians. This work directly contributes to the achievement of the Province's goals of meaningful reconciliation, a strong, sustainable economy and a better future for all British Columbians.

The Ministry oversees policy development, operational management and implementation, and administers relevant statutes and associated regulations. The Ministry also supports the Minister in her governance responsibilities for the Columbia River Treaty and associated Crown agencies including the [Columbia Power Corporation](#), [Columbia Basin Trust](#) and the [Forest Enhancement Society of British Columbia](#). A complete list of Crown Agencies associated with the Ministry can be found in Appendix A.

Strategic Direction

In 2022/2023, the Government of British Columbia will continue its whole-of-government response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on protecting the health, social and economic well-being of British Columbians. Building on our economic, environmental, and social strengths while looking to seize opportunities to improve outcomes for all British Columbians will be an important aspect of each ministry's work as we respond to COVID-19 and recover from devastating floods and wildfires. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will align with the five foundational principles established by Government in 2020: putting people first; working toward lasting and meaningful reconciliation; supporting equity and anti-racism; ensuring a better future through fighting climate change and meeting our greenhouse gas reduction targets; and supporting a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

This 2022/23 Service Plan outlines how the Ministry of Forests will support the government's priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the November 2020 [Minister's](#) mandate letter.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy has rebounded from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020, despite significant pandemic variant and climate-related events. A strong health response, high vaccination rates, increased infrastructure investments and supports for British Columbians struggling through the pandemic has helped the province rebound. While the recovery has broadened over the past year, it remains uneven with sectors like tourism, hospitality and live recreation events not fully recovered. The path of the ongoing economic recovery in B.C. and its trading partners remains highly uncertain. However, rebuild efforts from the November 2021 floods are expected to provide some support to economic activity in the province. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 5.1 per cent in 2021 and expects growth of 4.2 per cent in 2022 and 2.7 per cent in 2023. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC projects national real GDP growth of 4.1 per cent in 2022 and 2.8 per cent in 2023, following an estimated gain of 4.7 per cent in 2021. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The pandemic has increased risks to B.C.'s economic outlook, such as the emergence of further variants of concern, inflationary supply chain disruptions, extended travel restrictions, and the continued impact of the slower recovery in some sectors of the B.C. economy. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, and lower commodity prices.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Economic Benefits and resilience for all British Columbians, through a modernized forest sector and effective natural hazard management.

This goal addresses the Ministry’s role in creating conditions that support a vibrant and healthy provincial economy through a modernized forest sector, and promoting resilience to natural hazard events. Some objectives and strategies associated with this goal are under review, following recent restructuring, and will be updated to support the new mandate of Ministry of Forests in future plans.

Objective 1.1: Modernize the B.C. forest economy and support an innovative, sustainable forest sector

Key Strategies

- Implement the [Modernizing Forest Policy in B.C.](#) initiative through policy, regulatory and legislative changes that benefit communities and Indigenous peoples, maintain a competitive forest industry, and ensure excellence in stewardship;
- Support other ministries and agencies to promote the use of B.C. wood and mass timber in domestic and international markets to expand economic opportunities;
- Encourage forest industry diversification through a strengthened value-added sector;
- Facilitate the growth of B.C.’s bio-economy through key partnerships that advance new and innovative forest product facilities such as engineered wood, supporting forest revitalization and the Province’s [CleanBC](#) plan;
- Support the federal government and represent B.C.’s interests in Canada-U.S. litigation on the softwood lumber dispute.

Performance Measure(s)	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
1.1 Policy Intentions implemented from the Modernizing Forest Policy initiative	2	6	7	6

Data source: Ministry of Forests

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

The [Modernizing Forest Policy in B.C.](#) initiative identified 19 policy intentions requiring engagement with First Nations, forest industry representatives and communities to develop the future vision of the forest sector and B.C.’s forests. This performance measure proposes to evaluate the implementation over the next three years of the articulated forest policy intentions and is fully aligned with the objective of modernizing the B.C. forest economy and supporting an innovative, sustainable forest sector.

Discussion

This performance measure was changed from previous years’ BCTS volume sold to the implementation of 19 of the Modernizing Forest Policy in B.C. initiative policy intentions. This

new measure better reflects the full scope of the work being undertaken by the Ministry on modernizing the forest economy. Target selection of implementation of six, seven, and six policy intentions over the next three years was based on an average estimated time to progressively complete implementation.

Objective 1.2: Improve community resilience through proactive and collaborative natural hazard management

Key Strategies

- Reduce risk and increase community resiliency through implementation of the [Government’s Action Plan: Responding to Wildfire and Flood Risks](#) in response to [Addressing the New Normal: 21st Century Disaster Management in British Columbia](#);
- Deliver funding through the [Community Resiliency Investment program](#) to support work in treating the wildland-urban interface through delivery of [FireSmart](#) activities, and strengthen capacity of local emergency authorities and Indigenous communities to prepare and respond to wildfire events;
- Develop a provincial risk reduction strategy to reduce wildfire risk through targeted wildfire management activities in high wildfire risk landscapes;
- In collaboration with Indigenous peoples, partners and interested parties, continue the development and implementation of a Wildfire Recovery Program, as well as a Flood Recovery Program, in conjunction with the B.C. Flood Strategy, to improve natural hazard management and governance;
- Develop drought management strategies in collaboration with other ministries, interested parties, and Indigenous peoples that will help British Columbians better prepare for future drought and climate change impacts.

Performance Measure(s)	2020/21 Baseline	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
1.2 Number of cultural and prescribed fire projects developed by or co-developed with First Nations ^{1,2}	3	10	20	40	>40

Data source: BCWS prescribed fire provincial project data tracking spreadsheet.

¹“Cultural and prescribed fire” is defined by the *Wildfire Regulation* as Resource Management Open Fire and includes the use of fire by government for purposes established in Section 18 of the *Wildfire Act*; “Developed by a First Nations” is a BCWS-approved independently developed First Nations’ burn plan; and “Co-developed with a First Nation” is: a First Nation actively engaged in project development, a First Nation is a burn plan co-proponent, or where cultural burning is the primary objective.

²This performance measure is reported by calendar year for 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

This performance measure demonstrates the Ministry’s progress on further improving community resilience through proactive and collaborative efforts by establishing partnerships with First Nations interested in cultural and prescribed burning that is inclusive of First Nations burning practices and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The increased use of cultural and

prescribed fire as a forest management tool, the integration of First Nations burning practices and the inclusion of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into prescribed fire use is aligned with the 2018 [Abbott Chapman Report](#) recommendations, Modernizing Forest Policy in B.C. policy intentions, and wildfire risk reduction and prepared communities Ministry mandate commitment.

Discussion

This performance measure replaces the previous measure, the annual percentage participation of higher risk communities in wildfire risk reduction activities, introduced in the 2019/20 Service Plan. Results of the previous measure consistently exceeded annual targets and demonstrate the success of the wildfire risk reduction program in higher risk communities.

The new measure, the number of cultural and prescribed fire projects developed by or co-developed with First Nations, is part of a suite of risk reduction activities to reduce the potential fire behaviour for a successful suppression opportunity within wildland urban interface or within specific community risk reduction efforts. Examples of risk reduction activities include spacing, chipping, pile burning, and prescribed fire. A baseline for the new measure was defined from 2020/21 project data. Based on the limited number of projects and program growth forecasts, three-year targets were defined to double each year and, in 2024/25, maintained. As cultural and prescribed fire projects developed by or co-developed with First Nations projects are new targets will be assessed annually and adjusted accordingly.

Goal 2: Partnerships that Support Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Furthering Government's commitment to work toward true and lasting reconciliation, the Ministry is taking action to increase opportunities for collaboration in the stewardship and economic development of land, natural and cultural resources in B.C. Some objectives and strategies associated with this goal are under review, following recent restructuring, and will be updated to support the new mandate of Ministry of Forests in future plans.

Objective 2.1: Strengthen partnerships and meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples in the management of the land base and natural resources in B.C.

This objective demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to strengthening the voice of Indigenous peoples in the stewardship of natural resources in B.C., and building capacity for government-to-government collaboration. The Ministry is dedicated to supporting the Province's commitment to implement the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (the [Declaration Act](#)).

Key Strategies

- Contribute to implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through application of the *Declaration Act* in alignment with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and other Ministries;

- Advance opportunities to include Indigenous peoples as full and active partners in the forest sector and support economic development of Indigenous communities;
- Explore greater opportunities to promote partnerships through program-level operations and government-to-government mandates;
- Work collaboratively with the new Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship and partner with Indigenous governments and engage interested parties and communities to develop land-use objectives through modernized land-use planning and ensuring sustainable natural resource management reflects shared social, cultural, economic and environmental values.

Performance Measure(s)	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
2.1 Number of programs, policies or pieces of legislation modified in response to cooperation and consultation with Indigenous peoples, including but not limited to those outlined in the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i> Action Plan.	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD

Data source: Ministry of Forests

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

This measure highlights the Ministry’s commitment to work towards true and lasting reconciliation and towards strengthening partnerships, collaboration and engagement with Indigenous peoples in the management of the natural resources and land base in B.C.

The *Declaration Act* requires the development of an action plan to achieve alignment over time. The Ministry must provide transparency and accountability on progress its made in ensuring the laws of B.C. are consistent with the *Declaration Act* and in achieving the goals of the Action Plan.

Discussion

This measure expands upon the previous performance measures 2.1a and 2.1b in the 2020/21-2022/23 Service Plan, which reported the number of policies that have been reviewed in cooperation and consultation with Indigenous communities, and number of programs or polices modified in response to cooperation and consultation with Indigenous communities.

With the creation of the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship in 2022, some programs, policies and/or pieces of legislation that are included in this performance measure may be transitioned from the Ministry of Forests to the new ministry. As such, the Ministry will be developing new targets for this performance measure over the 2022/23 fiscal year.

Goal 3: Sustainable Natural Resource Management

The Ministry is committed to delivering its stewardship responsibilities in the best interest of the citizens of British Columbia. Some objectives and strategies associated with this goal are under review, following recent restructuring, and will be updated to support the new mandate of Ministry of Forests in future plans.

Objective 3.1: Improve wildlife management, protect wildlife habitat, and support the recovery of species at risk

Key Strategies

- Provide analysis to support and decisions required to implement the [Together for Wildlife Strategy](#) to improve wildlife management and habitat conservation in B.C.;
- Apply new and existing management tools and practices to recover priority species at risk that reflect Indigenous values and provide certainty to affected natural resource users;
- Plan and deliver key management actions to stabilize, recover and/or maintain identified woodland caribou herds in British Columbia through the comprehensive [Provincial Caribou Recovery Program](#).

Performance Measure(s)	2020/21 Baseline	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
3.1 Wildlife habitat restored or enhanced through Ministry management activities ¹	117,960 hectares	123,858 hectares	10% increase from baseline	15% increase from baseline	20% increase from baseline

Data source: Resource Stewardship Division

¹ This baseline was established using 2020/21 data. The 2021/22 forecast amount is expected to be a 5% increase from 2020/21 baseline.

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

Furthering its commitment to improve wildlife management and habitat conservation, this performance measure demonstrates the result of Ministry efforts to support wildlife populations and help recover species at risk. The Ministry identifies opportunities to manage and protect Crown land to improve the health of the provincial land base. These efforts result in improved habitat for wildlife and fish, while also realizing additional co-benefits including the restoration of forests impacted by wildfire and pests, and increased carbon sequestration. This measure highlights the effectiveness of Ministry management activity to enhance and restore wildlife habitat.

The performance measure definition was adjusted to remove conserved habitat hectares as the definition of conservation varies, and conservation activities can be highly variable year to year. The revised performance measure now focuses solely on enhanced and restored wildlife habitat. This only includes restoration and enhancement activity that contribute to specific wildlife habitat objectives, such as, cultural and prescribed fire program, wildfire recovery, cumulative effects mitigation, caribou recovery, and moose enhancement.

Discussion

The Ministry has finalized the methodology to accurately and reliably measure the area in British Columbia that is currently restored or enhanced for the benefit of wildlife habitat. The baseline of 117,960 hectares was finalized using 2020/21 data and is the benchmark for future improvements. The target percentage increase in area (hectares) improved by Ministry activities above the baseline is projected to increase annually by five percent. The target will be annually assessed and adjusted accordingly.

Objective 3.2: Revitalize and protect B.C.’s forests, and strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation activities to benefit all British Columbians

Key Strategies

- Implement an effective approach to engage with Indigenous leaders and organizations as a foundation for implementing the Old Growth Strategic Review panel report: [A New Future for Old Forests](#);
- Invest in forest management activities that reduce emissions, enhance carbon sequestration and rehabilitate and restore forests, such as reforestation, improving utilization, increasing density, forest health and expanding fertilization;
- Continue to modernize B.C.’s forest stewardship planning framework through the transformation of the [Forests and Range Practices Act](#) to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and help address local issues;
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to develop and implement the [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#), and implement the forest bioeconomy pathway of government’s [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#), such as minimizing slash pile burning to reduce green house gas emissions;
- Generate new scientific knowledge on forest carbon and climate change to support decision-making and support changes in behaviour and practices through education, outreach, and the development of decision support tools.

Performance Measure(s)	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Target ³	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
3.2 Greenhouse gas emissions reduced or sequestered through FCI activities ^{1,2}	2.6	1.0	TBD	TBD

Data source: Climate Change and Integrated Planning Branch

¹Emission reductions and sequestration resulting from FCI activities delivered in the current fiscal year are measured in units of MtCO₂e (Millions Tonnes Carbon Dioxide Equivalent) and the cumulative benefits of each year’s activities are modeled up to the year 2050.

²The Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund funding currently ends March 31, 2024.

³Targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are based on approved funding commitments and may be adjusted in future plans if additional funding is received.

Linking Performance Measure to Objective

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recognizes that land management, including forest management, is critical to addressing climate change and its impacts. With that in mind,

the Province launched the Forest Carbon Initiative (FCI) in 2017, supported by the federal Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund (LCELF). The FCI is investing in fertilization, reforestation, tree improvement, and road rehabilitation to increase carbon sequestration, and is encouraging better use of wood fibre to reduce the burning of woody biomass in slash piles. This performance measure projects the cumulative greenhouse gas emissions reduced or sequestered by 2050 for each year of the FCI. Projections are updated annually to reflect changes in program delivery as well as methodological improvements.

Discussion

Given that the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund is nearing completion, the Province is currently working with the federal government to determine the investment parameters of the Two Billion Tree program. The targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be updated when an agreement is in place. The Ministry will work to implement the activities outlined in the forest bioeconomy pathway of the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030, including minimizing slash pile burning and advancing the manufacturing and markets for B.C. bioproducts.

Climate change adaptation remains an important priority to the Ministry. Through research, education, policy, and decision support tools, the Ministry works to ensure that climate change information is incorporated into natural resource assessment, planning, and development initiatives with the goal of creating resilient communities and ecosystems. The Ministry is also implementing activities funded through the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy.

Financial Summary

Core Business Area	2021/22 Restated Estimates ¹	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Plan	2024/25 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Integrated Resource Operations	77,963	81,601	82,384	82,444
Office of the Chief Forester	102,840	111,946	112,948	112,951
Forest and Range Sector Policy	10,473	10,477	10,477	10,477
Fire Preparedness	43,343	43,348	43,348	43,348
Regional Operations	116,551	116,588	116,588	116,588
Executive and Support Services	66,358	67,029	67,047	67,047
Fire Management	136,310	194,285	199,535	199,535
BC Timber Sales Account	233,816	206,742	213,000	232,061
Crown Land Special Account	20	500	500	500
Total	787,674	832,516	845,827	864,951
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	28,287	35,936	30,097	30,097
Fire Management	525	2,575	2,575	2,575
BC Timber Sales Account	49,851	40,671	43,756	42,929
Total	78,663	79,182	76,428	75,601
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
BC Timber Sales Account Disbursements	105,816	96,347	96,222	95,107
Crown Land Administration Disbursements	6,382	6,382	6,382	6,382
Habitat Conservation Trust Disbursements	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500

Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Habitat Conservation Trust Receipts	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	112,198	102,729	102,604	101,489
Total Receipts	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)
Total Disbursements	118,698	109,229	109,104	107,989
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	112,198	102,729	102,604	101,489

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2021/22 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2022/23 Estimates.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Forest Practices Board Resource Summary

The Forest Practices Board independently monitors and reviews forest and range practices in B.C.'s public forests and rangelands. The Board audits both tenure holders and government ministries for compliance with forest and range practices legislation, carries out special investigations and issues reports as appropriate, investigates concerns and complaints from the public, and participates in appeals to the [Forest Appeals Commission](#). It informs both the B.C. public and the international marketplace of forest and range licensees' performance in carrying out sound practices and complying with legal requirements.

The Board's mandate is provided by the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*. While the Board operates independently from the Ministry of Forests, its budget vote is the responsibility of the Minister. The Board reports its accomplishments and priorities through an annual report found at: www.bcfpb.ca.

Forest Practices Board	2021/22 Restated Estimates ¹	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Plan	2024/25 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Total	3,861	3,896	3,896	3,896

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2021/22 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2022/23 Estimates.

*Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals

As of April 2021, the Minister of Forests is responsible and accountable for the following organizations which fall within the Province of British Columbia's government reporting entity:

[Columbia Basin Trust](#)

The Columbia Basin Trust (the Trust) is mandated under the [Columbia Basin Trust Act](#) to manage Columbia Basin Trust's assets for the ongoing economic, environmental and social benefit of the region, without relieving governments of any obligations in the region. The Trust is also mandated under the Columbia Basin Management Plan to include the people of the Basin in planning for the management of the assets and to work with others to coordinate activities related to the purpose of the Trust.

[Columbia Power Corporation](#)

The Columbia Power Corporation mission is to efficiently develop and operate commercially viable, environmentally sound and safe power project investments for the benefit of the province and the residents of the Columbia Basin. In making power project investments, Columbia Power Corporation's goal is to support the employment, economic development and resource management objectives of the province and Columbia Basin Trust, within the constraints of a commercial enterprise.

[Creston Valley Wildlife Management Authority](#)

The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Authority manages the conservation of wildlife, particularly waterfowl, in the Creston Valley.

[Forest Appeals Commission](#)

The Forest Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal granted authority under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* to hear appeals from decisions made under a variety of statutes administered by the Ministry.

[Forest Enhancement Society of British Columbia](#)

The Forest Enhancement Society of British Columbia (FESBC) supports the Ministry by identifying, funding, advocating for and advancing environmental and resource stewardship of B.C.'s forests.

[Forest Practices Board](#)

British Columbia's Forest Practices Board provides independent oversight of compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.