

Ministry of Forests

2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan

February 2023



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Forests 2023/24 – 2025/26 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 blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce Ralston". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
February 14, 2023

Table of Contents

Minister’s Accountability Statement3

Strategic Direction.....5

Purpose of the Ministry.....5

Operating Environment.....6

Economic Statement7

Performance Planning8

Financial Summary21

Forest Practices Board Resource Summary22

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations23

Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 Service Plan outlines how the Ministry of Forests will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Forests (the Ministry) is the Province's agency responsible for natural resource management services that supports resilient forests, landscapes, watersheds, and fish and wildlife for the benefit of all British Columbians. The Ministry establishes the policy and conditions for access to, and use of, the province's forests, land, water and natural resources, and provides integrated decision-making that ensures effective stewardship and sustainable management of B.C.'s land and water base for a variety of uses. The Ministry ensures that the province is prepared for, and can effectively respond to, natural hazards such as wildfire and floods. The Ministry is working to fight climate change by enhancing the role of forests and forest products as carbon sinks or opportunities to reduce emissions, while also supporting B.C. to prepare, adapt and respond to the impacts of climate change already underway. With 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 his governance responsibilities for the [Forest Enhancement Society of British Columbia](#). A complete list of Crown Agencies associated with the Ministry can be found in Appendix A.

Operating Environment

The Ministry of Forests is responsible for overseeing a total land base and freshwater area that covers 94.8 million hectares. Managing such a broad and diverse land base is complex, bringing together a number of factors that can impact the achievement of the Ministry's goals.

A strong economy that works for all regions of B.C. is diversified, resilient, and improves the standard of living for people across the province. Maintenance of a healthy environment and a strong, resilient and innovative natural resource sector is particularly important for rural communities. Timber supply is decreasing due to factors such as wildfires and other natural hazard events, mountain pine beetle salvage, and changing needs and interests on the land base. In 2021, the timber harvest volume in B.C. was 52.7 million m³. The Interior accounted for 73% of the harvest (38.4 million m³), and the Coast for 27% (14.3 million m³)¹. In 2021, the forest sector generated over 55,000 jobs, \$5.9 billion in GDP, and \$1.9 billion in provincial government revenue. The sector also exported a total of \$16.3 billion of forest products and contributed \$21 billion to B.C.'s manufacturing sales in 2021².

Through [modernizing the forest sector](#), the Ministry is working to ensure that the forest sector remains a source of good jobs and economic uplift for communities across the province. Policies and programs put in place to partner with First Nations, Indigenous Peoples and organizations to work towards reconciliation, are creating new economic opportunities throughout B.C. In line with the Province's [StrongerBC](#) plan, the Ministry aims to contribute to the B.C.'s economic growth with cleaner energy and fewer emissions. The Ministry is also supporting a sustainable B.C. economy through transforming the forest sector from volume to value – with more made-in-B.C. manufacturing and fewer raw logs shipped overseas.

Last year's extreme weather events put to rest any doubt about the reality, severity and imminence of climate change. People and communities across B.C. were impacted like never before, and more of the same is expected. In combination with the extreme events of floods, wildfire and heat dome over the past few years, the province has witnessed the destructive effects of invasive pests such as the mountain pine beetle on forest ecosystems.

The Ministry is taking action by integrating climate change into its day-to-day-operations, and taking on new approaches in Forest Management Systems, forest landscape planning, and timber supply review. The Ministry is working together with regional offices and a network of researchers to increase the availability of climate science, adaptation tools and expertise to inform decision-making for the sustainable conservation of wildlife species and habitat.

Central to the Ministry's mandate are its commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and consideration of how diverse groups of British Columbians may experience policies and programs. As part of these commitments, the Ministry is working to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and incorporating [Gender-Based Analysis+](#) into its policy and budgeting practices. The Declaration Act Action

¹ Source: B.C. Harvest Billing System (HBS) data

² Source: Preliminary 2021 Economic State of the B.C. Forest Sector report

Plan, released on March 30, 2022, includes collectively identified goals and outcomes that form the long-term vision for implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C. It also has 89 priority actions - tangible steps that will advance this work in key areas over the next five years.

The Ministry is advancing key actions such as co-developing a scalable cultural and prescribed fire program with Indigenous Peoples, and better protecting sacred Indigenous heritage sites through amendments to the *Heritage Conservation Act*. In addition, the Ministry is working closely with Indigenous partners and other natural resource sector ministries to develop the elements of a co-managed long-term program, inclusive of collaborative governance, integrated planning, policy, and public education. This new approach includes increasing Indigenous participation to ensure that the benefits provided by B.C.'s forests are shared, as well as advancing reconciliation by creating more tenure opportunities, and working towards a new fiscal relationship with First Nations.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy has been resilient to pandemic, geopolitical and climate-related disruptions. However, higher interest rates are expected to weigh on the economy in the coming years. Following a rapid recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation led to successive interest rate increases from the Bank of Canada in 2022. The impact of higher interest rates has been evident in housing markets and there is uncertainty over its transmission to the rest of the economy in B.C. and among our trading partners. B.C. is heading into this challenging period in relatively strong position, with a low unemployment rate. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 3.0 per cent in 2022 and expects growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.6 per cent in 2024. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 3.4 per cent in 2022 and projects national real GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.5 per cent in 2024. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The risks to B.C.'s economic outlook center around interest rates and inflation, such as the risk of further inflationary supply chain disruptions, the potential for more interest rate increases than expected, and uncertainty around the depth and timing of the impact on housing markets. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, the emergence of further COVID-19 variants of concern and lower commodity prices.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Economic Benefits and Resilience for All British Columbians

The Ministry is engaging in many activities to deliver integrated land and resource management, and to create the conditions that support a vibrant and healthy provincial economy through a modernized forest sector. The Ministry promotes community resiliency through supporting preparedness for, and recovery from, economic disruption and natural hazard events.

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

This objective directs Ministry efforts towards realizing the economic outcomes of its strategies and activities in creating the conditions that support a vibrant, innovative forest sector in B.C. Through specific policy changes and initiatives aimed towards modernizing forest policy, the Ministry is leading a forest sector transition to enhance stewardship and sustainability, as well as increase forest sector participation and economic development in the province.

Key Strategies

- [Modernize Forest Policy in British Columbia](#) through implementing policy, regulatory and legislative changes that benefit communities and Indigenous Peoples, maintain a competitive forest industry, and promote excellence in stewardship;
- Encourage forest industry diversification through initiatives that strengthen B.C.'s value-added and secondary manufacturing sector;
- Facilitate the growth of B.C.'s bioeconomy 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 interest in Canada-US litigation on the softwood lumber dispute.

Discussion

This objective addresses how the Ministry is supporting B.C.'s forest sector in an era of change. Changing land uses, changing needs and interests of Indigenous and local communities, a changing climate, as well as a decreasing timber supply are some of the influencing factors.

Through bold initiatives to modernize the forest sector in B.C., the Ministry is leading a forest sector transition and acting to find new ways to manage B.C.'s forests. Together with Indigenous Peoples, other ministries, stakeholders and communities, the Ministry is supporting new ways to diversify the forest sector, as outlined in the Modernizing Forest Policy

in British Columbia discussion paper. This work aims to provide more opportunities for communities and First Nations to participate in the forest economy, and to create the conditions that encourage a shift from a “high volume” to “high value” mindset through expanding opportunities for the value-added sector and B.C.’s bioeconomy.

The Ministry tracks progress towards this objective through performance measure 1.1, which demonstrates the success of economic diversification activities, including the promotion of sub-sectors such as value-added forest product manufacturing. In addition, the Ministry is working to continue to make progress on the policy intentions in the Modernizing Forest Policy paper. The Intentions Paper outlines policy shifts that are intended to ensure the sector works for people. A significant amount of progress has been made to date specifically with legislation that enhanced the legal mechanisms to redistribute tenure and provide clarity on compensation.

Government also made further improvements to the [Forest and Range Practices Act](#) (FRPA) that provided updates to forest management and greater roles in decision making and stewardship for First Nations. In addition, the Ministry is exploring ways to accelerate supply of timber and fibre for manufacturing and value-added processing through an enhanced BC Timber Sales value-add program. The Ministry is also working to ensure timely and strong representation of B.C.’s interests in the softwood lumber dispute.

Objective 1.2: Integrated, coordinated and timely delivery of natural resource authorizations services to citizens, clients and businesses

This objective promotes effective management of service delivery processes in order to ensure that the Ministry, in its responsibilities for land, water, fish and wildlife, forests, and archaeology, is supporting a strong economy and providing public services that British Columbians can rely on.

Key Strategies

- Deliver authorizations services and natural resource decisions in accordance with the requirements of service users and standards of the Ministry;
- Continue to monitor and improve the timeliness and ease of access of authorizations services.

Discussion

Authorizations services are an integral part of Ministry’s public facing activities. Through collaboration with [FrontCounter BC](#), the Ministry strives to deliver reliable, effective, and timely services that meet the needs of clients and instills trust. The Ministry is also responsible for delivering durable and integrated natural resource management decisions in a way that supports a new vision for First Nations co-management and the Ministry’s stewardship objectives.

On average, the Ministry accepts over 18,000 applications annually for natural resource-use permits including forests, lands, water, range, archeology, fish and wildlife, making

authorizations services delivery one of the primary functions of the Ministry. Therefore, concerted efforts are directed towards this area to ensure continuous improvement. Progress towards this objective is monitored through monthly client satisfaction survey results and internal metrics on application workloads, staff capacity, and processing timelines.

Objective 1.3: Improve community resiliency and reduce wildfire and flood risk through proactive and collaborative natural hazard management

This objective aims to reduce the risks and impacts of natural hazards such as wildfire and floods through the implementation of a risk assessment-based approach, including incorporation of Indigenous values, knowledge and practices.

Improvements in landscape and community resiliency to wildfire refer to the development and implementation of a [FireSmart](#) action plan that allows for a community to mitigate the likelihood of a natural hazard turning into a disaster. This approach will also help to set a better foundation for the restoration efforts that will aid a community to recover faster. Infrastructure systems such as buildings, bridges, utilities, transportation, and communication are all interconnected and interdependent systems, and an event could have large-scale effects on the people of British Columbia if portions of these systems fail.

Strategies under this objective require that the Ministry ensures a coordinated approach to the Four Pillars of Emergency Management through inter-agency planning as well as coordination with Indigenous communities leading to reducing the wildfire risk.

Improvements in community resiliency to floods refer to the development of a B.C. Flood Strategy and Resilience (Implementation) Plan that are informed by the [United Nations' Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#). A provincial-scale flood strategy is intended to future-proof our ability to prepare for and respond to crises, adapt to climate change, and support meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Key Strategies

- Reduce risk and increase community resiliency through implementation of [Government's Action Plan - Responding to Wildfire and Flood Risks](#) and development of a Provincial Risk Reduction Strategy to reduce wildfire risk in B.C. through targeted wildfire management activities in high wildfire risk landscapes;
- 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;
- In collaboration with First Nation governments, partners and interested parties, continue the development and implementation of a Wildfire Recovery Program, to improve natural hazard management and governance;
- Co-develop a [Cultural and Prescribed Fire](#) Program with First Nations to enable cultural and prescribed fire as an accessible, efficient land management tool that supports the

integrated and expanded use of prescribed fire and enables the use of cultural fire by Indigenous Peoples;

- With support from the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, and in collaboration with local, federal, and Indigenous governments, strengthen the province's flood response through the completion of B.C.'s Flood Strategy, and start the work to translate the strategy into action through the B.C. Flood Resilience Plan;
- Improve floodplain mapping in B.C. by creating floodplain mapping standards, compiling existing floodplain maps to enhance accessibility, and undertaking prioritized mapping activities in partnership with the federal [Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program](#);
- Advance a better understanding of areas with high consequence flood risk by supporting cross-ministry collaboration on provincial disaster and climate risk and resilience assessment alongside provincial flood risk assessment development;
- 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.

Discussion

Since 2017, unprecedented floods and wildfires have caused significant damage and destruction in the province and resulted in severe consequences for many affected British Columbians. The difficult work of recovery continues and is a priority for the provincial government, local and First Nations governments, and all those living in affected areas.

As extreme climate events increase in frequency and severity, the Ministry recognizes the need to improve landscape and community resiliency through its natural hazard emergency preparedness, response, and land base recovery, and is committed to collaborating with local and First Nations government partners on the implementation of these actions. The Ministry monitors progress towards its objective through performance measure 1.3.

Performance Measures

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Forecast | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target | 2025/26 Target |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1.1 Annual BCTS timber volume auctioned, targeted at the value-add sector | 458,000 m ³ | 643,000 m ³ | 746,000 m ³ | 812,000 m ³ |

Data source: BC Timber Sales

Discussion

Under the direction of the Ministry, [BC Timber Sales \(BCTS\)](#) manages about 20 per cent of the province's allowable annual cut for Crown/public timber, operating in 33 communities, and has directly supported over 8,000 jobs across B.C.

The value-added sub-sector in the forest industry is primarily made up of small- to medium-sized companies that play an important role in the provincial economic development. Value-added companies manufacture a diverse range of specialty products that maximize the value of B.C.'s forests. One of the contributing factors to the value-added sector's ability to maintain capacity and introduce new products and processes is an assured supply of timber; however, many value-added manufacturers do not hold replaceable Crown tenure and often source input materials through open market. In order to support this vital sub sector of the forest industry, BCTS provides open access through auction to Crown timber for non-tenured or insufficiently tenured timber processing facilities.

Performance measure 1.1 is new to the 2023/24 Service Plan. It shows how much timber is sold at auction to the value-added sector, providing critical data to the Ministry to guide decisions about how it can continue to better support the growth of this sector. Targets are set based on the amount of volume apportioned to BCTS and may be adjusted annually based on market conditions and government direction (such as the Old Growth Strategic Review).

| Performance Measure | 2021/22 Baseline ¹ | 2022/23 Forecast | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target | 2025/26 Target |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1.2 Client Satisfaction with natural resource authorization services | 76.5 | 77.0 | 78.0 | 78.0 | 78.0 |

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, BC Stats

¹ The Client Satisfaction survey changed effective April 1, 2022. As a result, the baseline year may be changed to 2022/23 in future plans.

Discussion

Client Satisfaction with the Ministry's performance in delivering authorizations services is reflected in results from a monthly survey that is administered by [BC Stats](#). The survey has been employed since 2006 and now generates 6,000 responses annually, supporting the broader objective of the natural resource sector ministries to improve client services and citizen trust.

Results provide insights at the regional and business area level, allowing for specific client and region-centric improvements to Ministry processes and services that will ultimately lead to improvements in the overall client satisfaction score. The survey is founded on 11 drivers of client satisfaction established by the Institute of Citizen-Centered Services, which includes staff knowledge and competence, ease of process, timeliness, consistency, and fairness.

This performance measure is new to the 2023/24 Service Plan. The target of 78 points reflects the Ministry's goal to consistently achieve a level of performance that is considered strong among government organizations providing services to the public.

| Performance Measure | 2020/21 Baseline | 2022/23 Forecast | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target | 2025/26 Target |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1.3 Number of cultural and prescribed fire projects developed by or co-developed with First Nations ^{1,2} | 3 | 20 | 30 | 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.

² The 2023/24 reporting period for this performance measure is January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

Discussion

Provincial policy commitments made through 2021 and 2022 to enable, integrate and expand the use of cultural and prescribed (C&Rx) fire recognize that development of a comprehensive C&Rx fire program, in partnership with First Nations, contributes to a resilient B.C.

Cultural fire is an Indigenous practice, often defined as the controlled application of fire on the landscape to achieve a specific cultural objective. Prescribed fire is the planned and controlled application of fire to the landscape to achieve objectives, including fuel management (risk reduction), habitat enhancement, ecosystem restoration, and pest management.

Both prescribed and cultural fire are land management tools. Safe, logical and effective use of fire requires project planning, including prescription and burn plan development. Projects are often developed in collaboration by burn proponents, burn practitioners and professionals, and implementation of C&Rx fire is dependent upon appropriate environmental conditions.

This performance measure reports on the number of approved burn plans developed by or co-developed with First Nations to focus efforts on relationship development, partnership opportunities and expertise development, and to eliminate influence of environmental factors associated with burn implementation in performance reporting. A baseline was defined from the 2020/21 program data. Following assessment in 2022, targets for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 were adjusted from the 2022/23 Service Plan to reflect anticipated program growth. 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 the land, water, and natural and cultural resources in B.C.

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 is directed at improving the engagement activities that would result in the economic development for Indigenous communities and Peoples. The Ministry is committed to the B.C. Government's plans to share the sustainable management of the province's natural resources including fisheries, wildlife, forestry, land, and water with Indigenous Peoples.

Key Strategies

- Continue 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;
- Continue to work toward full partnership with First Nations in managing B.C.'s forest resources, including the co-development of a new fiscal framework and forestry revenue-sharing model;
- Explore greater opportunities to promote partnerships through program-level operations and government-to-government mandates;
- In collaboration with First Nations and with support from the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, complete amendments to the *Heritage Conservation Act* in alignment with the Declaration Act Action Plan;
- Continue to reform forest legislation, regulations and policy to reflect a shared strategic vision with First Nations that upholds the rights of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Discussion

The Ministry of Forests is committed to working towards true and lasting reconciliation with First Nations, and to strengthening partnerships, collaboration, and engagement with Indigenous Peoples on the management of natural resources and the land base in B.C. This includes shifting to a co-management approach to share the benefits provided by B.C.'s forests, and advancing reconciliation by co-developing a new fiscal framework and creating more tenure opportunities for First Nations.

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* requires the development of an action plan to achieve alignment over time. The Ministry must provide transparency and accountability on progress made toward ensuring that the policies, legislation and regulations of British Columbia are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and toward achieving the goals of the Declaration Act Action Plan. By working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples, the Ministry is improving its programs, policies and legislation and advancing Indigenous involvement in Ministry operations in alignment with the Province's *Declaration Act* commitments.

Objective 2.2: In partnership with First Nations, implement a new vision for forest management that prioritizes B.C.'s ecosystem health and community resiliency

The Ministry recognizes and honours First Nations' rights and title on their traditional territories. To further our commitments in this respect, the Ministry continually seeks opportunities to partner with First Nation communities to ensure forest management practices benefit from Indigenous stewardship, values and knowledge. Through a number of strategies and initiatives, the Ministry aims to improve ecosystem health, as well as the socioeconomic well-being of First Nations.

Key Strategies:

- In partnership with First Nations and other interested parties, advance the implementation of the [Old Growth Strategic Review](#) through development of a new Old Growth Strategic Action Plan;
- Work collaboratively with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship and First Nation governments to develop land-use objectives through [modernized land-use planning](#), ensuring that sustainable natural resource management reflects shared social, cultural, economic and environmental values;
- In partnership with First Nations, develop and implement [Forest Landscape Planning](#) in B.C.

Discussion

There are about 11.1 million hectares of old growth forest in B.C., which represents about 20 percent of the province's forested land-base, and 12 percent of its area overall. The Ministry is committed to a new integrated approach to protect ecosystem health and resiliency throughout B.C.

Through the new Forest Landscape Planning framework, the Ministry is working together with First Nations rights holders to establish legal direction for forestry practices – harvesting, roadbuilding and other investment - for the management of forest resource values within a planning area. Central to this new approach is working collaboratively with Indigenous governments to co-develop plans, and engaging communities and stakeholders. Development of Forest Landscape Plans enables new opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to better participate in and benefit from forest planning and decision-making.

The Ministry is monitoring progress towards this objective through performance measure 2.1, which tracks the phased implementation of Forest Landscape Planning across B.C. The Ministry is also working with First Nations, stakeholders and others to implement the recommendations from the Old Growth Strategic Review. In 2023/24, the Ministry will focus on identifying the operational policies required for a new approach to old growth management, with an updated Old Growth Strategic Action Plan, which will guide the management of B.C.'s old forests into the future.

Performance Measures

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Forecast | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target ³ | 2025/26 Target ³ |
|--|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 Number of Forest Landscape Plans initiated with First Nations through Government-to-Government agreements. | N/A ^{1,2} | 8 | TBD | TBD |

Data source: Office of the Chief Forester, Ministry of Forests.

¹ This is a new measure for the 2023/24 Service Plan.

² Four pilot projects were initiated in 2020/21, and work continues to complete those projects.

³ Targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be determined over the course of 2023/24.

Discussion

Forest Landscape Planning was introduced in Bill 23, the *Forest Statutes Amendment Act* in November 2021 as a new forest management planning framework regime under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and will replace the existing Forest Stewardship Plan framework.

Conducted in partnership with First Nation governments and in collaboration with forest and range tenure holders, Forest Landscape Plans provide legal direction for where and how forest management activities, such as timber harvesting, road layout and silviculture activities, can occur on the land base, for the 10-year life of the plan. These plans will also address other values including climate change adaptation and mitigation, old growth management, species at risk and wildlife habitat, wildfire risk reduction/and wildfire resiliency management, recreation, cultural values and watershed health.

This performance measure is new for 2023/24, and tracks the Ministry's efforts to successfully engage with First Nations on this initiative, which is a first critical step towards implementing Forest Landscape Plans across B.C. Priorities for new projects are identified in collaboration with Indigenous partners and Natural Resource Sector ministries, and are considered initiated once a government-to-government agreement has been signed by both parties. The Ministry has initiated four pilot projects in partnership with First Nations, communities, and the forest sector, which will also help inform the future Forest Landscape Planning process.

Goal 3: Sustainable Natural Resource Management

The Ministry is committed to ensuring that the economic benefits, recreational opportunities, and cultural resources provided by B.C.'s forests, range, land, water, fish and wildlife are responsibly managed and preserved for generations to come.

Objective 3.1: Deliver exceptional research and scientific analysis to guide policy and allocations to sustainably manage resources

This objective relates to the Ministry's role of conducting [scientific research](#) and analysis that informs the decision-making processes for changes to regulations, policies and procedures pertaining to resource management. Science-based resource management refers to the

science of balancing the preservation of wild places and natural resources with resource utilization.

Key Strategies

- Provide scientific and policy expertise and analysis to support natural resource management decisions;
- Support healthy fish and wildlife populations and habitat through foundational science and Indigenous knowledge that supports durable decisions;
- Provide scientific expertise and analysis from the [First Nations - B.C. Wildlife Stewardship and Habitat Conservation Forum](#), wildlife stakeholders and organizations, Indigenous Peoples, rural communities, natural resource development industry stakeholders and the public, to support the decisions required to implement the [Together for Wildlife](#) strategy to improve wildlife management and habitat conservation in B.C.

Discussion

This objective ensures that the Ministry has the information needed to support durable natural resource decisions, including recovery of priority species-at-risk and the overall sustainable management of fish and wildlife populations in B.C. Through research, consultation and information-sharing processes, the Ministry works with its partners, including Indigenous, federal and other provincial governments and agencies, and other ministries to ensure the sustainable management of fish and wildlife species and habitat, and leading to the development and implementation of regulations, policies and programs.

Due to the natural resource sector ministry re-organization in April 2022, this objective and its associated performance measure 3.1 have changed since the 2022/23 Service Plan. The Ministry's core mandate is now focused on scientific research and analysis that informs the decision-making process and results in changes to regulations, policies and procedures. Responsibilities for fish and wildlife habitat and species-at-risk have shifted to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

The Ministry monitors progress towards this objective through performance measure 3.1, which ensures the timely review and publication of the Ministry's annual hunting and fishing regulations. The Ministry's research scientists communicate their work by [publishing in peer-reviewed journals, technical reports, and extension publications](#) with direct applicability to natural resources management. The Ministry also works closely with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to achieve the objectives in the Together for Wildlife strategy.

Objective 3.2: Revitalize and protect B.C.'s forests, and strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation activities

The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) recognizes that land management is critical for mitigating climate change and its impacts. With that in mind, the Province invests in activities that increase the carbon stored in B.C.'s forests, reduce emissions, and develop

innovative low-carbon forest-based products. Through research, education, policy, and decision support tools, the Ministry works to incorporate climate change information into its natural resource assessment, planning, and development initiatives with the goal of creating resilient communities and ecosystems.

Through this objective, the Ministry is advancing towards its goal of sustainable natural resource management and taking steps to protect B.C.'s forests by fostering innovative forest management activities, modernizing forest policies and strengthening the resiliency of B.C.'s forests to climate change, while also building a sustainable, innovative forest economy that is led by Indigenous Peoples.

Key Strategies

- Invest in forest management activities that reduce emissions, enhance carbon sequestration and rehabilitate and restore forests, such as reforestation, improving fibre utilization, increasing density, forest health treatments, and expanding fertilization;
- Continue to modernize B.C.'s forest stewardship planning framework through transformation of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and to 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 greenhouse gas emissions;
- Generate new scientific knowledge on forest carbon and climate change to support decision-making, and to support changes in behavior and practices through education, outreach and development of decision support tools.

Discussion

Strengthening B.C.'s ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change and protecting B.C.'s forests continues to be an important objective to the Ministry. Through the Forest Investment Program, the Ministry is investing in fertilization, reforestation, tree improvement, and road rehabilitation to increase carbon sequestration, and is encouraging better use of wood fibre to reduce slash pile burning.

In 2023/24, the Ministry will continue to monitor progress through performance measure 3.2, as well as work to implement the activities outlined in the forest bioeconomy pathway of the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030, including advancing the manufacturing and markets for B.C. bioproducts.

Performance Measures

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Forecast | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target | 2025/26 Target |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 3.1 Timely completion and publication of Annual Regulation Cycle per category | July 1, 2022 (Hunt/Trap) | April 1, 2023 (Fish) | July 1, 2024 (Hunt/Trap) | April 1, 2025 (Fish) |

Data source: Ministry of Forests, Fish and Wildlife Branch

Discussion

Each year, the Ministry conducts a review of regulations, considering and incorporating Indigenous knowledge so that the Province can align its laws to support responsible fish and wildlife management and promote reconciliation. A timely publication of regulation updates demonstrates that [fish and wildlife regulations](#) remain current and responsive to the best available science, policy expertise, analysis and Indigenous knowledge.

New for the 2023/24 Service Plan, performance measure 3.1 ensures that the Ministry delivers on its requirement to review and publish fish and wildlife allocation regulations each year. This ensures that sustainable levels of species are balanced through the allocation of the available harvest of a wildlife population between user groups, as well as support the Ministry's wildlife stewardship priorities.

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Forecast | 2023/24 Target | 2024/25 Target | 2025/26 Target |
|---|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 3.2 Greenhouse gas emissions reduced or sequestered through forest investment activities (MtCO ₂ e) ^{1,2} | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |

Data source: Forest Carbon and Climate Services Branch

¹ Emission reductions and sequestration 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.

² Targets are based on funding commitments and may be adjusted in future plans.

Discussion

The performance measure tracks the cumulative Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced by 2050 resulting from investments in each fiscal year, demonstrating the impact of Ministry strategies to mitigate climate change risk and its effects. Estimates are updated annually to reflect changes in program delivery, impacts of disturbances that occur after treatment, and methodological improvements.

This performance measure has changed for 2023/24. Although the Ministry previously tracked GHG emissions reduced or sequestered, it was as a result of activities completed with investments through the [Forest Carbon Initiative](#) program. In late 2021, the Forest Investment Program was created to better coordinate multiple forest investment funding sources including the Forest Carbon Initiative for the delivery of activities such as reforestation and

fertilization. The broader program aims to mitigate climate change, enhance forest resiliency, improve timber supply, and support current and future generations through coordinated resource and forest investments.

Targets for this measure are set by assessing current and ongoing funding from multiple sources including the Forest Carbon Initiative, [CleanBC](#), [Land Based Investment Strategy](#) as well as recoveries from the federal [2 Billion Trees program](#) and determining the GHG emissions reduced or sequestered through activities funded by these programs.

Financial Summary

| Core Business | 2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹ | 2023/24 Estimates | 2024/25 Plan | 2025/26 Plan |
|---|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Operating Expenses (\$000) | | | | |
| Integrated Resource Operations | 65,702 | 82,012 | 83,141 | 83,168 |
| Office of the Chief Forester | 111,946 | 140,179 | 115,657 | 115,657 |
| Timber, Range and Economics | 10,477 | 11,264 | 11,433 | 11,433 |
| Fire Preparedness | 43,348 | 45,437 | 45,882 | 45,882 |
| Regional Operations | 126,294 | 138,854 | 141,889 | 141,861 |
| Executive and Support Services | 64,999 | 65,822 | 65,991 | 65,992 |
| Fire Management | 194,285 | 204,120 | 205,098 | 205,098 |
| BC Timber Sales Account | 206,742 | 236,929 | 235,119 | 243,275 |
| Crown Land Special Account | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| Total | 824,293 | 925,117 | 904,710 | 912,866 |
| Capital Expenditures (\$000) | | | | |
| Executive and Support Services | 35,936 | 35,749 | 32,448 | 32,448 |
| Fire Management | 2,575 | 16,000 | 16,000 | 13,500 |
| BC Timber Sales Account | 40,671 | 41,107 | 41,452 | 41,415 |
| Total | 79,182 | 92,856 | 89,900 | 87,363 |
| Other Financing Transactions (\$000) | | | | |
| BC Timber Sales Account Disbursements | 96,347 | 89,131 | 86,964 | 101,663 |
| Crown Land Administration Disbursements | 6,382 | 6,382 | 6,382 | 6,382 |
| Habitat Conservation Trust Disbursements | 6,500 | 6,500 | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| Habitat Conservation Trust Receipts | (6,500) | (6,500) | (6,500) | (6,500) |
| Net Cash Requirements (Source) | 102,729 | 95,513 | 93,346 | 108,045 |
| Total Receipts | (6,500) | (6,500) | (6,500) | (6,500) |
| Total Disbursements | 109,229 | 102,013 | 99,846 | 114,545 |
| Total Net Cash Requirements (Source) | 102,729 | 95,513 | 93,346 | 108,045 |

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 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 | 2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹ | 2023/24 Estimates | 2024/25 Plan | 2025/26 Plan |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Operating Expenses (\$000) | | | | |
| Total..... | 3,896 | 3,986 | 3,991 | 3,991 |

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

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

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 2023, the Minister of Forests is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

[Consular Corps of B.C.](#)

The Consular Corps is the official body of Consular Officers who reside in the province of B.C. They represent more than 80 countries to promote their trade within the Consular District. In addition to this, they assist and protect nationals of the countries they represent, explain their policies and achievements in areas such as culture, trade, science, technology and tourism.

[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*.

