

Ministry of Forests

2023/24
Annual Service Plan Report

August 2024



For more information on the Ministry of Forests, please contact us at:

PO BOX 9352

STN PROV GOVT

VICTORIA, BC V8W 9M1

250-387-6121

Or visit our website at: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/for/>.

Published by the Ministry of Forests

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Forests 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2023/24 - 2025/26 Service Plan published in 2023. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce Ralston". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
August 7, 2024

Minister of State's Accountability Statement

The Ministry of Forests 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan published in 2023. Under the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Act, I am accountable for achievement of the following results for 2023/24:

- a) Meet with relevant officials within government, with forest industry representatives, with First Nations and with other stakeholders in order to develop an understanding of opportunities and risks respecting the stabilization and growth of fibre supply.
- b) Submit to Cabinet a report on the results referred to in paragraph (a) on or before March 31, 2024.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Mercier'.

Honourable Andrew Mercier
Minister of State for Sustainable Forestry Innovation
August 9, 2024

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Minister’s Accountability Statement | 3 |
| Minister of State’s Accountability Statement | 4 |
| Letter from the Minister | 6 |
| Purpose of the Annual Service Plan Report | 7 |
| Strategic Direction | 7 |
| Purpose of the Ministry..... | 7 |
| Operating Environment..... | 7 |
| Economic Statement | 9 |
| Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results | 10 |
| Financial Report..... | 22 |
| Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations..... | 24 |
| Appendix B: Forest Practices Board..... | 25 |
| Appendix C: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities..... | 26 |

Letter from the Minister

I extend my sincerest gratitude to the staff of the Ministry of Forests (Ministry) for their dedicated efforts to deliver on our mission to take an integrated and collaborative approach to natural resource management. In the past year, the Ministry advanced many important priorities that support the Province's overall goals for a sustainable, clean and secure industry that promotes a fair economy and safer communities.

I am proud of the significant progress we have made in achieving our key goals and objectives. We increased economic benefits and resilience for all British Columbians. For example, the new BC Timber Sales Value-Added Manufacturing Program dedicates fibre supply to small and medium-sized secondary manufacturers and creates jobs throughout B.C. Also, newly amended wildfire regulations enable more partnership-based approaches to supporting First Nations' safe use of fire for land stewardship, in alignment with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. The Ministry has initiated eight more forest landscape plans that collaboratively set clear outcomes for the management of old growth, climate change, wildfire risk and other forest-related values. Together, we continued to conserve more old forests for future generations while supporting sustainable local jobs.

To support our efforts in creating sustainable natural resource management practices, the Province signed a contribution agreement under the 2 Billion Trees program alongside the Government of Canada. Under this two-year agreement, over 37 million trees will be planted in B.C. This is on top of the incredible milestone we reached this year by planting the 10 billionth tree in B.C. The Province also provided the Forest Enhancement Society of BC a further \$50 million to enhance forest resiliency to wildfire and climate change for the lasting benefit of British Columbians.

I must acknowledge the challenges we encountered over the past year, including last summer's wildfire season – the worst on record in B.C. I wish to reflect on all those who put their lives at risk to protect our homes, communities, and environment.

Once again, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all Ministry staff for their hard work and dedication. The Ministry will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we serve.



Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
August 7, 2024

Purpose of the Annual Service Plan Report

This annual service plan report has been developed to meet the requirements of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* (BTAA), which sets out the legislative framework for planning, reporting and accountability for Government organizations. Under the BTAA, the Minister is required to report on the actual results of the Ministry's performance related to the forecasted targets stated in the service plan for the reported year.

Strategic Direction

The strategic direction set by the Province in 2020 and Minister Ralston's [2022 Mandate Letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the [Ministry of Forests 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry supports resiliency of the province's land-base and economy by providing collaborative management of forest, range and archaeological resources, and leading the Province's wildfire response and mitigation. With a commitment to sustainable natural resource management, the Ministry is enhancing the role of forests and forest products as carbon sinks, managing forests to support healthy ecosystems, and working to ensure greater value for B.C. wood and high-value manufacturing. The Ministry is continually pursuing ways to strengthen partnerships, collaboration, and engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and to collaborate with other government ministries in conducting this work.

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

On behalf of all British Columbians, the Ministry strives to be a world leader in sustainable forestry, managing more than 90 percent of forest and rangelands in B.C. Managing such a broad and diverse area is complex, and several factors can impact the achievement of the Ministry's goals.

A vibrant and prosperous forest sector is vital to B.C.'s overall economic well-being and is particularly important for rural communities. In 2023, the forest sector supported about 49,230 direct jobs in communities across B.C., generated \$5.76 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), and \$778 million in government revenues (2023/24). The B.C. forest sector faces challenges such as a declining timber supply, difficult economic or market conditions and ongoing trade disputes with the U.S.

People and communities throughout B.C. continue to feel the impacts of climate change. The province experienced the most destructive wildfire season in B.C.'s history in 2023, with over two million hectares of forest and land burned, tens of thousands of people forced to evacuate, and hundreds of homes lost. Combined with the effects of an unprecedented drought, the ecological and economic damage were significant.

With climate change, forest health management has also become more challenging as hotter and drier conditions lead to increased stress for B.C.'s ecosystems. In this context, forest resources sequester carbon dioxide through photosynthesis and help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. The Ministry is supporting [CleanBC](#) by screening and planting trees that are more resistant to pests, diseases, and drought. Ministry researchers are generating new and innovative scientific knowledge on climate change adaptation to support successful management of B.C.'s forests.

Central to the Ministry's mandate are its commitments to meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and considerations of how diverse groups of British Columbians may experience provincial policies and programs. The Ministry has a fiduciary responsibility to manage forest resources for public benefit. The Ministry is aligning programs, policies, and legislation with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration). The Ministry also has been working on developing a responsive, diverse workforce to work in cooperation with First Nations to realize these changes together.

In October 2023, the Province transferred responsibility for the *Land Act*, *Water Sustainability Act*, *Wildlife Act*, and several other authorities for the administration of land, water, fish and wildlife from the Ministry of Forests to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. The Ministry's ongoing priorities include transforming the forest sector, supporting a resilient and sustainable land-base, and delivering the Ministry's mandate in a way that supports meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Economic Statement

Following two years of strong recovery from the pandemic, economic growth in British Columbia moderated in 2023. After expanding by 3.9 per cent in 2022, B.C.'s real GDP increased by 1.6 per cent in 2023, the second highest growth rate among provinces (tied with Saskatchewan and Ontario) and outperforming the national average. Growth in B.C.'s real GDP was supported by service-producing industries such as real estate, rental and leasing; professional, scientific and technical services; transportation and warehousing; and healthcare. Despite steady growth in the construction and mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction sectors, output for goods-producing industries decreased in 2023, partly due to lower manufacturing activity. While B.C.'s economy continued to expand in 2023, some sectors such as transportation and warehousing and accommodation and food services have yet to fully return to pre-pandemic levels.

B.C.'s labour market continued to grow in 2023, with employment growth of 1.6 per cent and wages and salaries increasing by 6.9 per cent. However, B.C.'s unemployment rate rose to 5.2 per cent in 2023 from 4.6 per cent in the previous year as the labour force, supported by record high immigration, grew faster than employment. High interest rates tempered consumer spending on goods in 2023 and nominal retail sales edged down 0.1 per cent. In 2023, price pressures in B.C. moderated among a broad number of goods and services but remained elevated. B.C.'s inflation rate averaged 3.9 per cent in 2023, down from 6.9 per cent in 2022. B.C. home construction activity strengthened in 2023. Housing starts totalled 50,490 units in 2023, the highest annual pace on record and up 8.1 per cent compared to the previous year. High interest rates continued to weigh on home sales activity last year. B.C. MLS home sales decreased by 9.2 per cent in 2023, while the MLS average home sale price was 2.6 per cent lower than 2022. On the external front, B.C.'s international merchandise exports declined by 13.5 per cent in 2023, due to weaker global demand and lower commodity prices compared to 2022.

Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

The following goals, objectives and performance measures have been restated from the 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2024/25 – 2026/27, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

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 strong ranching sector and 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 results

- Continued to transform forest policy in B.C. by implementing changes to the [Forest and Range Practices Act](#), the [Forest Act](#) and the [Wildfire Act](#) and associated regulations to strengthen natural resource stewardship and support a strong and diversified forestry sector.
- Established three “accelerator tables” for value-added wood manufacturers to expand the value-added timber industry. BC Timber Sales (BCTS) is an active member of the accelerator tables.
- Hosted the Forest Innovation and Bioeconomy Conference in June 2023, drawing approximately 200 government, industry, academic and Indigenous delegates to learn about global bioproduct research and the latest commercialization opportunities.
- Continued to represent B.C.’s interests in the Canada-U.S. litigation on the softwood lumber dispute, in cooperation with industry and the federal government.

- Worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation on the Manufacturing Jobs Fund, supporting capital investments across the forest sector.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The Ministry is accountable for reforming forest legislation, regulations and policy to reflect a shared strategic vision with First Nations that upholds the rights and objectives of the UN Declaration with a focus on reconciliation. The Ministry continues to pursue these changes in consultation and cooperation with First Nations. As part of this effort, B.C. amended legislation to support cultural and prescribed fire, authorize discretion and strengthen compliance and enforcement (*Forest Statutes Amendment Act 2023* (Bill 41)). Changes to the *Forest Act* enable new discretionary authority for permit decisions and enhance the Province's ability to address First Nations concerns raised during the permit consultation and review process. In addition, amendments to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* provide new tolls for compliance and enforcement that strengthen protection of public and First Nations values and interests.

Value-added accelerator tables were jointly hosted by the Province, the BC First Nations Forestry Council, the BC Value-Added Wood Coalition, and the Council of Forest Industries. A table for each of the north, south and coast regions met with the aim of finding ways to expand local production of high-value wood products for domestic and international markets.

The BC Timber Sales Regulation was amended on December 11, 2023, to increase and diversify forest sector participation. The new Category 4 – Value-added program supports B.C. manufacturers and lumber producers of all sizes that produce value-added products used locally and internationally. At the same time, the regulation amendment repealed the registration requirements for Category 2 and those currently registered in Category 2 will cease on December 31, 2024.

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 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 results

- Maintained delivery of authorizations services and natural resource decisions in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Ministry.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

Authorizations services are an integral part of the Ministry's public facing activities. Through collaboration with FrontCounter BC, the Ministry continued work to deliver reliable, effective,

and timely services that meet the needs of clients and instill trust. The Ministry rendered over 11,700 decisions and responded to over 39,600 client enquiries in 2023/24.

Due to a natural resource sector ministry reorganization in October 2023, responsibility for land, water, fish and wildlife authorizations is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

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 through the implementation of a risk assessment-based approach, including incorporation of Indigenous values, knowledge and practices.

Key results

- Amended the Wildfire Regulation to enable a more partnership-based approach to supporting First Nations' safe use of fire for land stewardship, in alignment with the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act).
- Co-chaired the Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies to provide recommendations to the Province to strengthen preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery for the 2024 hazard season.
- Collaborated with First Nation governments, partners and interested parties to implement the Wildfire Land-based Recovery program to reduce the negative impacts of wildfire and support ecosystem recovery.
- Through delivery of FireSmart activities, supported work in treating the wildland-urban interface and strengthened capacity of local emergency authorities and Indigenous communities to prepare and respond to wildfire events.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The Ministry plays a key role in the Province's efforts to improve landscape and community resiliency through natural hazard emergency preparedness, response, and land-based recovery. The Ministry is committed to collaborating with First Nations, local governments, the forest industry and other partners.

Cultural and prescribed fire supports healthy and resilient ecosystems and can reduce wildfire risk to improve community safety and well-being. Many First Nations in B.C. have a long history of using fire as a stewardship tool to nurture ecosystems and sustain traditional foods, medicines, and other resources. Under section 60 of the *Wildfire Act*, Indigenous governing bodies now have the option to enter into agreements with the Province relating to open fire, rather than submitting and obtaining an official's approval for a burn plan. These agreements are one step the Ministry is taking to shift to a more partnership-based framework.

Following the 2023 wildfire season, the Province launched the Premier’s Expert Task Force on Emergencies to provide recommendations about how to apply lessons learned to better prepare for and respond to future emergencies.

The Ministry has taken a range of actions to enhance wildfire preparedness for the 2024 season based on the task force’s work. This includes incorporating advanced wildfire predictive technologies and expanding the number of firefighting tools available for BC Wildfire Service crews. The Ministry also introduced an enhanced recruitment process and created other pathways for local participation in wildfire response.

Performance measures and related discussion

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target | 2023/24 Actual |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1.1 Annual BCTS timber volume auctioned, targeted at the value-add sector ¹ | 585,524 m ³ | 643,000 m ³ | 546,782 m ³ |

Data source: BC Timber Sales

PM 1.1 targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as 746,000 m³ and 812,000 m³, respectively. Targets were revised in the latest [service plan](#).

Several factors impacted BCTS from offering for auction the targeted volume in Category 2 or 4. The primary factors include a severe and prolonged wildfire season, continued work to address old growth policies, land base constraints, and advancing reconciliation with First Nations.

The timber volume that was offered restricted to Category 2 or 4 for the Coastal Business Area was 133,144 m³. Of this amount, 36,673 m³ was offered in Chinook Business Area and 96,471 m³ was offered in the Strait of Georgia Business Area.

The volume that was offered restricted to Category 2 or 4 for the interior business areas was 413,638 m³. Of this volume, 52,050 m³ was offered in the Babine Business Area, 62,484 m³ was offered in the Cariboo-Chilcotin Business Area, 45,760 m³ was offered in the Kamloops Business Area, 98,231 m³ was offered in the Kootenay Business Area, 61,131 m³ was offered in the Okanagan-Columbia Business Area, and 93,982 m³ was offered in the Prince George Business Area.

Measuring volume offered for auction in Category 2 or 4 is an important measure of increasing forest sector participation and economic development as volume is targeted to value-added manufacturers supporting forest sector diversification and resilience.

| Performance Measure | 2021/22 Baseline | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target | 2023/24 Actual |
|---|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1.2 Client satisfaction with natural resource authorization services ^{1,2} | 76.5 | 76.9 | 78.0 | 75.6 |

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

¹PM 1.2 targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as 78.0 and 78.0, respectively.

²Responsibility for land, water, fish and wildlife authorizations shifted to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship as part of the restructuring of the ministries in October 2023. This measure has been removed from the Ministry of Forests [2024/25-2026/27 Service Plan](#).

Natural resource authorization services did not meet the client satisfaction target due to issues with website completeness, consistency and timeliness. A monthly survey, administered by BC Stats, measures 11 drivers of client satisfaction with natural resource authorization services. Client satisfaction reflects the client experience throughout the process. This can be driven by their interaction with FrontCounter BC staff and/or authorizations staff from across the natural resource sector ministries, notably the Ministries of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship; Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation; Forests and BC Parks.

Survey results indicate website completeness, consistency and timeliness continue to be low scoring drivers with clients, resulting in a lower performance result. FrontCounter BC continues to monitor these overall indicators to drive policy, process, and technology improvements in partnership with sector ministries.

| Performance Measure | 2020/21 Baseline | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target | 2023/24 Actual |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1.3 Number of cultural and prescribed fire projects developed by or co-developed with First Nations ^{1,2,3,4} | 3 | 15 | 30 | 23 |

Data source: BCWS prescribed fire provincial project data tracking spreadsheet

¹PM 1.3 targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as 40 and 40+, respectively. Targets were revised in the latest [service plan](#).

²“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.

³The 2023/24 reporting period for this performance measure is January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

⁴This performance measure is tracked under Goal 2 in the 2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan.

Progress towards meeting the target for this performance measure was affected by the 2023 wildfire season, which was unprecedented in its scale and duration. While the spring burning window saw many successful projects completed, drought conditions into the fall limited good burning windows, and many BC Wildfire Service and partner resources were also deployed for firefighting well into the fall. Projects not delivered in 2023 have been rolled over into delivery plans for 2024 and beyond, when good burning conditions offer new windows for successful project delivery.

Goal 2: Partnerships that Support Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Furthering the Province’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 shared management and decision-making and economic development for Indigenous communities and Peoples. The Ministry is committed to the Province's plans to share the sustainable management of the B.C.'s natural resources including fisheries, wildlife, forestry, land, and water with Indigenous Peoples.

Key results

- In partnership with First Nations, introduced new measures to sustain the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR) as one of the world's most treasured and diverse coastal temperate forest ecosystems.
- Together with 'N̓amgis First Nation, the Ministry began work on the first joint decision-making agreement under the Province's new forest landscape planning framework, in the portion of 'N̓amgis' territory that overlaps Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 37 currently held by Western Forest Products Inc.
- Continued to work toward full partnership with First Nations in managing B.C.'s forest resources and co-develop a new fiscal framework and forestry revenue-sharing model.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

In July 2023, amendments were made to the GBR Land Use Order. Following this, First Nations and the Province have continued collaborating to fully implement Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) in the GBR. Within the GBR Order framework, a series of funding agreements have been established to support Nation-led initiatives aimed at advancing EBM implementation within their respective territories. These initiatives continue to make significant progress in addressing EBM implementation priorities, including the development and completion of Landscape Reserves Designs (LRDs) throughout the GBR Order area. LRDs are instrumental in creating a network of old growth and recruitment forests while mapping out managed forest areas. This process is essential to achieving the GBR's goals of ecological integrity and human well-being.

The Province's new forest landscape planning framework requires that a forest landscape plan (FLP) is developed in consultation and cooperation with First Nations whose rights may be affected. It also provides the opportunity to have Indigenous Governing Bodies enter into decision-making agreements under section 7 of the Declaration Act. The FLP for TFL 37, developed jointly by 'N̓amgis and Western Forest Products, is one of four pilots within the province and the first to bring forward a draft plan for public review. First Nations and community stakeholder engagement is ongoing.

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 several strategies and initiatives, the Ministry aims to improve ecosystem health, as well as the socioeconomic well-being of First Nations.

Key results

- Collaborated with First Nations, forest industry, local government, and other interested parties to inform a new old growth strategic action plan.
- Entered a tripartite framework agreement with the Government of Canada and First Nations Leadership Council to protect and conserve biodiversity, habitats and species at risk in B.C.
- Continued to develop FLPs in partnership with First Nations.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The Ministry, in collaboration with First Nations and through engagement with stakeholders, continued development of an [old growth strategic action plan](#) in response to the 14 recommendations made by an independent panel in their 2020 review of B.C.'s old forests. Throughout 2023, the Province continually engaged with a wide range of sector participants, including the forest sector, environmental groups, and local governments through meetings, workshops, existing committees and conferences. Weekly 'open calls' were conducted with First Nations from May 2023 to January 2024 to discuss and review contents of the draft action plan together.

Consultation with First Nations rights and title holders, and engagement with multiple natural resource sectors, environmental non-government organizations, local governments and the public on the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework occurred between November 15, 2023, and January 31, 2024. The framework is a central part of the response to the old growth strategic review. It will set a provincial vision and formalize the strategic direction to prioritize the conservation and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity, including a commitment to co-develop with First Nations new legislation that applies to all sectors.

Eight new FLP projects were initiated in collaboration with First Nations in each area: two on Central Vancouver Island, one in the Skeena region, one in the Omineca region, two in the Cariboo region and two in the Thompson-Okanagan region. The four FLP pilot projects that were previously underway all made significant progress in developing draft plans for public review and input. The combined area of the four pilot projects and eight new FLPs initiated last

year represents roughly 41% of the land base over which FLPs are intended to be developed. More information can be found on the provincial [forest landscape planning website](#).

Performance measure and related discussion

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

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

¹PM 2.1 targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as TBD. Targets were revised in the latest [service plan](#).

²This performance measure is tracked under Goal 4 in the 2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan.

³Four pilot projects were initiated in 2020/21, and work continues to complete those projects.

The eight new FLP projects initiated in 2023/24 were at varying stages of completing outcomes related to: finalizing project terms of reference and consultation and cooperation processes between the Province and First Nations; defining a vision for the FLP area and identifying forest values and interests to be addressed in the plan; and reaching out to local communities and stakeholders for initial input.

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 results

- Completed first phase of engagement on *Wildlife Act* Review which focussed on proposals for changes with all First Nations and provincial advisory bodies.
- Completed priority wildlife inventory surveys with Together for Wildlife funding, regional wildlife staff and First Nations partners, such as mountain goat and sheep surveys to support conservation and management decisions.

- Co-developed with First Nations the draft Provincial Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework and Commercial Bear Viewing Strategy, and the draft Provincial Thinhorn Sheep Stewardship Framework, and held public consultations for each.
- Continued ongoing wildlife health surveillance projects, including Chronic Wasting Disease, *Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae*, Avian Influenza.
- Completed modernization of the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation under *the Wildlife Act*.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The *Wildlife Act* Review is a multi-year, multi-phase project carried out in consultation and cooperation with rights and title holders. The first phase of the engagement process occurred in the fall of 2023 and winter of 2024 and focused on discussing opportunities for improvements to the *Wildlife Act* with rights and title holders and wildlife advisory bodies.

The various wildlife inventory surveys completed helped to support engagement with First Nations and stakeholders, and supported consultation with First Nations on wildlife management decisions. Many of these projects were completed in partnership with First Nations.

The Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) surveillance program helped to identify the first cases of CWD in B.C. in February 2024, and has provided the direction for immediate response actions currently underway as well as developing a long-term strategy to manage CWD in B.C.

Completion of the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation has allowed the Province to provide accessible information to the public on areas where motor vehicles are restricted or prohibited under the *Wildlife Act* to protect sensitive habitats, reduce disturbance and displacement of wildlife, provide a diversity of hunting experiences, or reduce hunter harvest while maintaining hunting opportunity.

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.

Key results

- Implemented key actions identified in the Provincial Climate Adaptation and Preparedness Strategy, including developing a Climate Adaptation Policy Framework.

- Launched the Future Forest Ecosystems Centre 2023-25 Strategic Plan to focus on climate data, ecological forecasting, and building capacity to support the Ministry's legal obligations to account for climate change risks under the *Forest Statutes Amendment Act*.
- By the end of 2023, the Forest Enhancement Society of BC had approved 66 projects valued at \$47.9 million to use more waste wood from the forest and to reduce wildfire risks for communities.
- Together with forestry contractors, planted approximately 42 million trees and applied forest nutrients to approximately 31,000 hectares of forest land through the Forest Investment Program, well over the 10-year historic average of 17,000 hectares per year.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

It is recognized that land management, including forest management, is critical to addressing climate change and its impacts. In 2023/24, the Ministry continued to focus on activities that revitalize and protect B.C.'s forests, strengthen resiliency to climate change, and mitigate climate change.

B.C. uses many mitigation options in our forests, including reforestation, fertilization, managing forest health, reducing slash pile burning, and using more fibre in longer-lived products. Conserving old forests as carbon sinks is one of those strategies. The forest landscape planning tables will develop long-term permanent approaches to managing our forests, including old growth and biodiversity, as well as climate change and wildfire risk.

This year, the Ministry took steps to increase the carbon stored in B.C.'s forests, reduce emissions, and support the province's forests to adapt to and mitigate climate change. Through the Forest Investment Program (FIP), the Ministry delivered approximately \$100 million in activities such as forest nutrient application, reforestation, tree improvement, and road rehabilitation to increase carbon sequestration.

The Province continues to invest in reforestation of areas impacted by natural disturbances and the application of nutrients to forest stands as climate mitigation strategies through FIP. The Office of the Chief Forester partnered with Natural Resources Canada through the 2 Billion Trees program, resulting in approximately 2.3 million trees planted in 2021, approximately 8.5 million trees in 2022, and 30 million trees in 2023. The Office of the Chief Forester also partnered with CleanBC to apply nutrients to 31,000 hectares in 2023/24.

The Ministry continued to advance the incorporation of climate change considerations into natural resource management planning and decision-making in 2023/24, including timber supply reviews, permitting and authorizations, and forest landscape planning. The Ministry is developing a Climate Adaptation Policy Framework as a strategic anchor to streamlining the Ministry's climate strategies, policies, priorities and guidance, and to guide legislative and regulation changes to enable the consideration of climate risks and data in decision-making processes. The Ministry's climate action planning program is coordinating and supporting the

climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts in accordance with the Ministry’s climate change strategy across all natural resource regions and business areas.

Performance measures and related discussion

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target | 2023/24 Actual |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3.1 Timely completion and publication of Annual Regulation Cycle per category ^{1,2} | July 1, 2022 (Hunt/Trap) | April 1, 2023 (Fish) | April 1, 2023 (Fish) |

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Fish and Wildlife Branch

¹PM 3.1 targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as July 1, 2024 (Hunt/Trap) and April 1, 2025 (Fish), respectively.

²Responsibility for this performance measure shifted to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship as part of the restructuring of the ministries in October 2023. This measure has been removed from the Ministry of Forests 2024/25-2026/27 Service Plan.

Each year, a review of regulations is undertaken, considering and incorporating Indigenous knowledge so that the Province can align its laws to support responsible fish and wildlife management and promote reconciliation. This includes offering opportunities for public comment on proposed angling, hunting and trapping regulations. Updated [regulations for freshwater fishing in B.C.](#) were published in April 2023.

Due to a ministry reorganization in October 2023, responsibility for this performance measure has transferred to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

| Performance Measure | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Target | 2023/24 Actual |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 3.2 Greenhouse gas emissions reduced or sequestered through forest investment activities (MtCO ₂ e) ^{1,2,3,4,5} | 3.4 | 2.0 | 2.2 |

Data source: Forest Carbon and Climate Services Branch

¹PM 3.2 targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were stated in the 2023/24 service plan as 2.0 and 2.0, respectively.

²This performance measure is tracked under Goal 4 in the 2024/25 – 2026/27 service plan.

³Emission reductions and sequestration resulting from Forest Investment Program (FIP) activities delivered in the current fiscal year are measured in units of MtCO₂e (million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent) and indicate the cumulative effect of each year’s investments out to year 2050.

⁴GHG reduction or sequestration for forest investment specific activities was calculated with the modelling tool developed by Ministry of Forests.

⁵Targets are based on funding commitments and may be adjusted in future plans.

Through FIP, the Province invests in activities that increase GHG sequestration and reduce GHG emissions. This includes carbon sequestration from forest nutrient management, afforestation and reforestation of areas impacted by natural and human caused disturbances, tree improvement, forest health treatments, and reforestation/rehabilitation of roads.

This performance measure projects the cumulative GHG emissions reduced or sequestered by 2050 resulting from this year’s investments. Estimates are updated annually to reflect changes in program delivery, impacts of disturbances that occur after treatment, and methodological improvements.

The Ministry exceeded the 2023/24 target due to the expansion of the activities and associated benefits included through FIP. The 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 forest nutrient application.

Financial Report

Financial Summary

| | Estimated (\$000) | Other Authoriz- ations ¹ (\$000) | Total Estimated (\$000) | Actual (\$000) | Variance (\$000) |
|---|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Operating Expenses | | | | | |
| Integrated Resource Operations | 82,012 | (21,650) | 60,362 | 54,191 | (6,171) |
| Office of the Chief Forester | 140,179 | 54,413 | 194,592 | 191,341 | (3,251) |
| Timber, Range and Economics | 11,264 | 512 | 11,776 | 10,443 | (1,333) |
| Fire Preparedness | 45,437 | 0 | 45,437 | 40,887 | (4,550) |
| Regional Operations | 138,854 | (34,895) | 103,959 | 99,647 | (4,312) |
| Executive and Support Services | 65,822 | 3,766 | 69,588 | 89,205 | 19,617 |
| Fire Management | 204,120 | 890,760 | 1,094,880 | 1,094,880 | 0 |
| BC Timber Sales Account | 236,929 | 0 | 236,929 | 168,184 | (68,745) |
| Crown Land Special Account | 500 | (500) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub-total | 925,117 | 892,406 | 1,817,523 | 1,748,778 | (68,745) |
| Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual ² | 0 | 0 | 0 | (12,423) | (12,423) |
| Total | 925,117 | 892,406 | 1,817,523 | 1,736,355 | (81,168) |
| Ministry Capital Expenditures | | | | | |
| Executive and Support Services | 35,749 | 0 | 35,749 | 43,525 | 7,776 |
| Fire Management | 16,000 | 0 | 16,000 | 14,738 | (1,262) |
| BC Timber Sales Account | 41,107 | 0 | 41,107 | 30,687 | (10,420) |
| Total | 92,856 | 0 | 92,856 | 88,950 | (3,906) |

Ministry of Forests

| | Estimated (\$000) | Other Authoriz- ations ¹ (\$000) | Total Estimated (\$000) | Actual (\$000) | Variance (\$000) |
|---|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Other Financing Transactions | | | | | |
| BC Timber Sales Account | | | | | |
| Receipts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Disbursements | 89,131 | 622 | 89,753 | 89,753 | 0 |
| Net Cash Requirements (Source) | 89,131 | 622 | 89,753 | 89,753 | 0 |
| Crown Land Administration | | | | | |
| Receipts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Disbursements | 6,382 | (6,382) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Net Cash Requirements (Source) | 6,382 | (6,382) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Habitat Conservation Trust | | | | | |
| Receipts | (6,500) | 6,500 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Disbursements | 6,500 | (6,500) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Net Cash Requirements (Source) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Summary | | | | | |
| Total Receipts | (6,500) | 6,500 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Disbursements | 102,013 | (12,260) | 89,753 | 89,753 | 0 |
| Total Net Cash Requirements (Source) | 95,513 | (5,760) | 89,753 | 89,753 | 0 |

¹ "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations, Contingencies and Government Reorganization. A breakdown of Other Authorizations for Operating Expenses are Statutory Appropriations of \$890.760 million, Contingencies of \$81.422 million, and Government Reorganization of \$(79.776) million. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

² The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$12.423 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of August 2024, the Minister of Forests is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

[Forest Enhancement Society of British Columbia](#)

The purpose of the Forest Enhancement Society of British Columbia is to identify and fund projects that advance the environmental and resource stewardship of British Columbia's forests.

[Forest Practices Board](#)

The Forest Practices Board provides independent oversight of tenure holders' and government ministries' compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act* through monitoring and reviewing forest and range practices in B.C.'s public forests and rangelands.

[Managed Forest Land Council](#)

The Managed Forest Council is an independent provincial agency established under the *Private Managed Forest Land Act*. The objective of the council is to encourage forest management practices on private managed forest land in B.C., considering the social, environmental, and economic benefits of those practices.

[Timber Export Advisory Committee](#)

The Timber Export Advisory Committee provides recommendations to the minister regarding the export of timber originating from lands within B.C. that is regulated for manufacture in B.C. by the Province.

[Wildfire Reduction Equipment Support Trust](#)

The purpose of the Wildfire Reduction Equipment Support Trust is to help eligible contractors purchase specified equipment that will be used in B.C. forestry operations to accomplish removal of combustible materials from the forest floor and forest understory, transport such material to a roadside location where it can be accessed, and perform these operations without damaging larger trees and while minimizing ground disturbance.

Appendix B: Forest Practices Board

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 that can be found at www.bcfpb.ca.

Financial Summary

| | Estimated (\$000) | Other Authoriz- ations (\$000) | Total Estimated (\$000) | Actual (\$000) | Variance (\$000) |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Operating Expenses | | | | | |
| Total | 3,986 | 0 | 3,986 | 3,871 | (115) |

Appendix C: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities

The following is a summary of progress made on priorities as stated in Minister Ralston's 2022 Mandate Letter.

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|---|--|
| <p>Improve timing and transparency of permitting processes to support sustainable economic development while maintaining high levels of environmental protection, aligned with cross-government work on permitting led by the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • The Ministry continues to work with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to deliver authorization services. • For more information, see Objective 1.2. |
| <p>Continue work to update and modernize forest policy and legislation to ensure a competitive, sustainable future for communities, Indigenous Peoples, workers, and companies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • Multiple projects to transform forest policy and legislation are ongoing to ensure the forest sector continues to be a good source of jobs and economic uplift for communities in B.C. • For more information, see Objective 1.1. |
| <p>Accelerate the transition of our forestry sector from high-volume to high value production, with fewer raw log exports and more innovative wood products manufactured locally.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 1.1. |
| <p>Explore options for enhancing BC Timber Sales to support high value production, dedicating a specific portion of the annual allowable cut to producers creating new jobs for workers in BC, and supporting mills to transition to second and third growth trees.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 1.1 and the associated Performance Measure 1.1. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|--|
| <p>With support from the Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, accelerate implementation of the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review and actions to protect important old growth forests, and complete the old growth strategic action plan in 2023.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 2.2. |
| <p>Accelerate work to re-engineer cut block boundaries to maximize old growth protection and ensure supply of timber and fibre for manufacturing and value added processing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 1.1. |
| <p>To advance reconciliation and meet our government’s obligations under the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i> (Declaration Act), continue to work toward full partnership with First Nations in managing B.C. forest resources, including through the new revenue sharing model being developed by our government.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • A number of initiatives are underway to implement the Declaration Act Action Plan. • For more information, see Objective 2.1. |
| <p>In collaboration with First Nations and with support from the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, complete amendments to the <i>Heritage Conservation Act</i> in line with the Declaration Act Action Plan.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • The Ministry is committed to aligning the <i>Heritage Conservation Act</i> with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. • For more information, see the Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|--|---|
| <p>With support from the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, strengthen the BC Wildfire Services focus on wildfire prevention and management year-round, including cultural and prescribed fire.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • 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 wildfire risk. • For more information, see Objective 1.3 and the associated Performance Measure 1.3. |
| <p>Explore options to improve training, retention, and recruitment in B.C. Wildfire Service.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 1.3. |
| <p>With support from the Minister 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 BC Flood Resilience Plan.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority was transferred to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship in October 2023. |
| <p>With support from the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, work together with First Nations to complete work to improve the protection and stewardship of forest resources, habitats, biodiversity, and cultural heritage in the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 2.1. |
| <p>With support from the Minister of State for Trade, continue work to protect and create jobs by fighting for a fair deal for B.C. wood products in softwood lumber negotiations with the United States.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This mandate letter priority is in progress. • For more information, see Objective 1.1. |

| 2022 Mandate Letter Priority | Status as of March 31, 2024 |
|---|---|
| <p>Support the Minister of State for Sustainable Forestry Innovation to strengthen and improve the Residual Fibre Utilization Policy to increase fibre security and to address the urgent demand from secondary users and value-added manufacturers for sustainable cost-effective fibre supply (2024 mandate letter priority).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This mandate letter priority is in progress.• For more information, see Objective 1.1. |