

Ministry of  
Environment including  
Environmental Assessment Office

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2007/08  
Annual Service Plan Report

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Published by the Ministry of Environment



## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

I am proud to present the *2007/08 Annual Service Plan Report of the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office*. This report reflects our continuing leadership role in delivering the government's Great Goal to lead the world in sustainable environmental management and outlines our accomplishments during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

In 2007/08, we continued to build partnerships to enhance our commitment to wise management and shared stewardship of our extraordinary natural environment and its precious resources. We worked hard to bring together government, First Nations, the private sector, non-governmental partners and our citizens to find enduring, workable solutions to the many complex challenges that we face. Chief among these is climate change, which challenges all of us to strive toward achieving sustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions and do our part to stabilize the rate of global warming for the long term. In November 2007, British Columbia took aggressive action on climate change by enacting the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, which puts into law the government's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020.

Supporting initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gases and improving air quality were important ministry activities in 2007/08. The ministry invested in Green Fleets BC, which will help remove over 900 tonnes of smog-causing emissions and 200,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases from our air over the next three years. In June 2007, British Columbia became the first province in Canada to make clean technology mandatory in older commercial transport diesel vehicles to reduce diesel emissions and protect human health. Other initiatives championed in 2007/08 included a province-wide retrofit program for school buses and, in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation, the initial development of a Provincial Idle Reduction Initiative. This initiative will involve local governments, health authorities, community groups and the transport and tourism sectors. The involvement of many partners is crucial to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality in British Columbia.

In 2007/08, we strengthened partnerships in support of the sustainable environmental management of our water and land resources. The ministry supported the Fraser Basin Council with additional funding for its ongoing work to improve the well-being of the province's largest watershed. We also continued our important work in promoting water awareness and information sharing and our support for water supply studies and community water management plans. Our efforts to protect surface and groundwater were also reflected in our activities on land where we focused on strengthening industry stewardship programs to reduce contamination in landfills. In August 2007, enhanced provincial recycling regulations resulted in a new industry-led program for safely handling electronic waste. This regulation keeps toxic metals like lead, mercury

and cadmium out of landfills. In 2007/08, we also continued our support of the development of the Brownfield Renewal Strategy, an innovative approach to revitalizing abandoned and underutilized sites affected by pollution so that British Columbians can get the most value out of the land in their communities.

British Columbia's provincial parks get better every year. Over the past four years, our government has invested almost \$83 million to upgrade park infrastructure and acquire additional parkland. In July 2007, our government signed a government-to-government agreement with the Hupacasath First Nation to collaboratively manage parks and protected areas within the Hupacasath traditional territory. To date, the ministry has signed a total of 30 Collaborative Agreements for the management of provincial parks in First Nations' territories.

In 2007/08, we continued to focus on the conservation of native species and ecosystems. In February 2007, the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre was recognized by the international organization NatureServe for its exceptional efforts over the past years to promote partnerships that foster better conservation of Canada's native plants, animals and natural habitats and particularly for the Centre's work around biodiversity and species-at-risk issues.

I am also pleased to report, that through British Columbia's leadership, a new National Task Force on Seafood Eco-Certification, which we co-chair, has been established under the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers. We continue to promote our province internationally as a source for a wide range of high quality, safe and sustainable seafood products.

In 2007/08, the Environmental Assessment Office continued its role of assessing major development projects to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, health and heritage effects. The Environmental Assessment Office successfully managed a record number of projects in 2007/08, with over 70 projects in the environmental assessment process. The Environmental Assessment Office completed its review of eight of these projects in 2007/08.

Five of the projects that received Environmental Assessment Certificates will produce clean, renewable energy and support provincial goals for energy self-sufficiency and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The five projects represent the array of clean power options being explored in British Columbia: Mackenzie Green Energy Centre will produce 59 megawatts of electricity from biomass co-generation; Bear Mountain Wind Farm will produce 120 megawatts of electricity; the East Toba River Montrose Creek Hydro Project will produce 196 megawatts through run-of-river hydro generation; and the expansion of the Waneta and Revelstoke hydroelectric facilities will produce an additional 435 megawatts and 500 megawatts of electricity respectively.

This 2007/08 Annual Service Plan Report compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the Ministry of Environment's 2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan and the Environmental Assessment Office's 2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Penner". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Honourable Barry Penner  
Minister of Environment and Minister Responsible for Water Stewardship and  
Sustainable Communities

June 20, 2008



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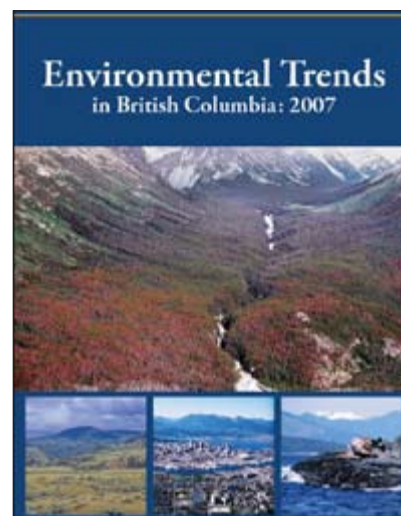


# Ministry of Environment

## Highlights of the Year

In addition to the accomplishments outlined in the Message from the Minister, other key ministry achievements and noteworthy examples of service delivery during the 2007/08 fiscal year included:

- **Environmental Trends in British Columbia 2007:**  
The Environmental Trends Report was released in early January 2008 and is the fourth in a series of such reports from the ministry. The report, which is released every five years, includes indicators that show current conditions in the environment and the impacts of human activity. It also provides information on the impact of efforts to address sustainability issues. More information is available at: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/soe/et07](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/soe/et07).
- **Conservation Framework:** In 2007/08, the ministry made significant progress in the development of a new conservation framework that will establish conservation priorities and recommended actions for species and ecosystems. The current scientific knowledge for over 3,000 species is being compiled and evaluated, resulting in assigned priorities and recommended actions.
- **Wildlife Act:** The ministry has made significant progress toward the development and implementation of key changes to the *Wildlife Act* in 2007/2008, which will enable the ministry to regulate harmful and invasive alien species, control the feeding and attracting of wildlife, increase penalties for those who violate the *Wildlife Act*, and provide expanded authorities for park rangers to monitor hunting and fishing activities both inside and outside of parks.
- **Air Protection:** New air protection initiatives were introduced in 2007/08. These included sponsoring an expanded Scrap-It program, which provides an incentive to trade in older, emissions-producing vehicles, a province-wide, community-based woodstove exchange program, and an anti-idling initiative. The expanded Scrap-It program is under development and will be implemented in 2008/09. In early March 2008, the ministry also created the Clean Air Research Fund to support air quality and health research and government will introduce new requirements to make retrofitting of on-road heavy duty diesel vehicles mandatory by 2009.
- **Environmental Management Act:** A number of new codes of practice and regulations were enacted or amended in 2007/08 to further enhance environmental protection in



British Columbia. Examples include the waste discharge regulation, the slaughter and poultry processing industries code of practice, the vehicle dismantling and recycling industry environmental planning regulation, and the soil amendment code of practice. These new codes and regulations are the culmination of significant efforts and work by many ministry staff and stakeholders over the past three years.

- **Flood Safety:** The ministry made significant preparations to respond to increased flood risk in the spring of 2007 as a result of near-record snow packs. In partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, ministry staff managed \$33 million provided by the Province and the federal government for local municipalities and diking authorities to prepare for spring flooding. The ministry also worked with local authorities to raise some dikes and



provide erosion control in areas of risk. Also in 2007/08, several flood studies were completed to resolve issues in the Fraser Valley related to sea dike crest elevations and areas where existing dikes are low. Such efforts are essential for floodplain areas in the Lower Mainland to reduce the risk of significant financial cost and the risk to public safety.

- **B.C. Water Governance Project:** In 2007, the ministry launched the B.C. Water Governance Project to explore how water governance can be enhanced in British Columbia. The ministry commissioned a paper from the University of British Columbia to provide a better understanding of water governance issues in British Columbia. Three workshops were held in Langley, Prince George and Nanaimo to facilitate information exchange among the Province, First Nations, local governments, industry, water licensees and stewardship groups and to identify opportunities for advancing water governance in British Columbia.
- **Commercial Environmental Investigation Unit:** The specialized Commercial Environmental Investigation Unit (CEIU) was created in April 2007 to deal with major environmental investigations. Its investigators are highly mobile and located throughout the province, allowing them to provide responsive investigative services, including undercover operations. The establishment of the CEIU supports the Province's commitment to lead the world in sustainable environmental management.
- **Reduction of Bear-Human Conflicts:** The Conservation Officer Service partnered with the Pacific Rim Bear Smart Committee to help reduce bear-human conflicts in Ucluelet and Tofino. This innovative program won a Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence. Each year, thousands of wildlife-human conflicts are reported throughout the province. Improving local understanding of how these conflicts can be prevented and reduced saves the Province tens of thousands of dollars and helps keep animals like bears in the wild and out of urban areas.

- **Marine Fisheries Eco-Certification:** British Columbia continued to play a leadership role in assisting B.C.'s major commercial fisheries to obtain third-party eco-certification. The London-based Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) eco-certification program provides third-party certification to well-managed fisheries around the world that demonstrate sustainable use of an ocean resource. There are now six B.C. fisheries in full assessment under the MSC eco-certification program, and five additional fisheries preparing for certification. As a result of our efforts, British Columbia was invited to co-chair the new National Task Force on Eco-Certification reporting to the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers.
- **Groundfish Integration:** British Columbia continues to provide input and support to the BC Groundfish Integration pilot plan, which is in its second year and is recognized as one of the best fishery management plans in the world. The plan allows fishers to turn their by-catch into a marketable product instead of discarding it. Under the plan, new monitoring standards are aimed at providing 100 per cent at-sea and dockside monitoring of catch for compliance with fisheries standards. Other components of the plan include new individual vessel quotas in lingcod and dogfish, individual quotas in rockfish fisheries, and instituting a temporary quota reallocation process among the various commercial groundfish sectors to address by-catch.
- **Land Acquisition:** In 2007/08, the ministry spent more than \$5 million acquiring nine properties totalling 524 hectares for future inclusion in the parks and protected areas (or conservation lands) system. Working with a number of partners, such as The Nature Trust of British Columbia and The Land Conservancy, the ministry was able to combine funding to effectively double the Province's land-purchasing ability. Properties acquired in 2007/08, included the highly valued Gerald Island (Vancouver Island Region), which is known for its high ecological and recreational values, and Skaha Bluffs (Okanagan Region), which protects significant species and ecosystems of the arid interior, while providing world class rock-climbing opportunities.
- **Compliance and Enforcement:** In 2007/08, the ministry continued to demonstrate its commitment to environmental protection through the publication of the Quarterly Compliance and Enforcement Summary. In the 2007 calendar year, the ministry issued 29 orders, 164 administrative sanctions, and 2,068 violation tickets. Sixty-four court convictions were also rendered, which, when combined with ticket fines, totalled \$658,524 in penalties for non-compliance. Reports are available at: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/main/prgs/compliancereport.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/main/prgs/compliancereport.html).
- **e-Licensing for Fish:** In September 2007, the ministry launched a new e-Licensing service to make it easier for anglers to purchase recreational fishing licences. Under the new web-based system, individuals can purchase and pay online for a freshwater fishing licence for recreational purposes. Anglers can also purchase licences from vendors if they prefer. More information can be found at: [www.fishing.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.fishing.gov.bc.ca/).

## Purpose of Ministry

### Support government goals and initiatives

The Ministry of Environment manages and delivers a wide range of programs and services that support the government's environmental goals and objectives, particularly the Great Goal to "lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none." The ministry is a leader in implementing the government's climate change initiatives, a role that was strengthened in 2007/08 by the government's commitment to comprehensive climate action targets. In fulfilling this role, the ministry champions the government's vision of unifying British Columbians in the fight against climate change by engaging many areas of government, First Nations, stakeholders and society in this critical effort.

#### *Ministry Vision*

*A clean, healthy and naturally diverse environment.*

### Promote stewardship and sustainability



The Ministry of Environment encourages environmental stewardship, provides environmental education opportunities, engages stakeholders and actively promotes the sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources. The ministry also promotes sustainable economic activity for the long-term health and benefit of the province and its citizens.

The ministry strives to enhance environmental protection and stewardship by monitoring air and water quality, reducing and removing wastes and toxins from the environment and emphasizing compliance activities. These efforts ensure safe, high quality water, land and air resources. The ministry champions the provincial freshwater fisheries through stewardship initiatives and works with the federal and other governments, stakeholders and industry to ensure sustainable marine fisheries, protected areas and ocean resources. Through the parks and protected areas system, a public trust that provides exceptional opportunities for conservation, outdoor recreation, education, scientific study and social interactions, the ministry ensures that healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems are maintained and that outstanding recreation and wildlife opportunities are available to all.



### **Serve our clients in a responsive way**

The Ministry of Environment serves all citizens of British Columbia in their communities, businesses and workplaces. We also provide service to national and international companies and organizations that engage in business within B.C. We do so through our over 1,500 skilled and experienced staff in over 50 different communities throughout the province, and through effective partnerships with other government bodies, First Nations, industry, associations, communities and environmental groups.



### **Develop innovative partnerships**

Some programs and services are provided by third-party partners such as park facility operators, and through ministry-supported projects delivered by organizations, such as BC Hydro, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, the Living Rivers Trust Fund, the BC Trust for Public Lands, the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society and the BC Conservation Corps. This support, in turn, helps fund local programs that enhance the ministry's ability to fulfill its mandate. The ministry also participates in cross government initiatives with partners such as, but not limited to, the Ministry of Forests and Range, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, the Ministry of Transportation, the Integrated Land Management Bureau, the BC Climate Action Secretariat and the Environmental Assessment Office.

### **Administer legislation and set effective standards**

Robust legislation and effective standard setting form the foundation upon which the ministry delivers its programs and services. The ministry has significant regulatory responsibilities and administers an extensive list of legislation. (See Appendix A for a link to this list.) The ministry is also responsible for ensuring compliance with these standards. To promote compliance, the ministry educates, motivates and employs a variety of strategies to help change behaviour and encourage voluntary compliance with regulatory requirements.

### **Uphold the ministry's values**

To reflect our values of service excellence and accountability, we continually strive to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and services, as well as those of our delivery agents, through program evaluation, business reviews, audits and satisfaction surveys. We perform our work in a professional manner that promotes an objective approach to environmental management.

## Strategic Context

The Ministry of Environment plays a critical role in fulfilling the government's environmental objectives and priorities. The ministry defines its goals and objectives in relation to the government's strategic direction. However, a variety of factors and events may influence the ministry's ability to meet its objectives and those of the government.

### Environmental Factors

In 2007/08, the ministry continued to build on existing programs, develop new initiatives to address adverse factors and respond to opportunities.

- Climate change continues to pose significant challenges to government and society. In British Columbia, warming trends are having far-reaching effects, impacting ecosystems and biodiversity. The effects of climate change also increase the risks to the environment and to infrastructure from volatile weather patterns, pest outbreaks and unforeseen events.
- A changing climate affects freshwater supply for agriculture, hydroelectric generation and fisheries. These resources and activities are also under pressure from increasing population and economic activity. A key challenge is sustaining freshwater supplies to meet human, agricultural and fishery demands.
- The mountain pine beetle has had severe regional economic and environmental impacts within British Columbia and is now considered a serious threat beyond B.C.'s borders. The mountain pine beetle infestation has harmed not only trees — it has changed the way forests affect groundwater, flooding and surface water runoff, necessitating new strategies to deal with these effects. Mitigating this impact continued to be a priority in 2007/08.
- In the spring of 2007, record snow packs increased the potential for significant flooding, throughout most of the province. Unpredictable events, such as flooding, fire, storms, oil spills, disease outbreaks and contamination of food and water supplies, can have serious effects on human health, ecosystems and the economy. They require an immediate response and mitigation activities from the ministry and its partners, such as those required to address a crude oil pipeline rupture near Burnaby on July 24.



## Societal Factors

The population of British Columbia is expected to grow to over 5.5 million by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Such growth is likely to affect the environment in areas experiencing the greatest population increases, resulting in greater water, land and energy consumption.

- Population growth increases the demand for resources, goods and services, and exerts pressure on the environment from development and industry. Such growth can significantly impact the quality of water, land and air, generating waste and discharging pollutants into the environment. This trend may be offset by changing attitudes and practices among urban planners and industry. Efforts to develop denser communities and encourage greener modes of transportation are gaining momentum. Encouraging, too, are efforts to reduce the release of toxic chemicals and to clean up contaminated sites.
- The products British Columbians use in their homes and vehicles can contribute to environmental pollution and climate change. However, education and stewardship efforts are paying off. Currently, B.C. leads Canada in recycling and the total amount of non-hazardous waste diverted from landfills.<sup>2</sup> This trend is likely to continue as the use of recycling programs by residents and businesses continues to improve.
- Demographic changes, such as increasing cultural diversity and an aging population, are affecting the use of B.C.'s parks and protected areas. Urbanization and a shift away from nature-based experiences by young people means less connection with the environment. Managing expectations and identifying opportunities to offer a variety of experiences in parks and protected areas will continue to be a major focus for the ministry.

## Economic Growth

- British Columbia's economy is based to a large extent on activities related to resource use. Sustaining a thriving economy and the high quality of life it affords the citizens of B.C. depends on maintaining a healthy, diverse environment. Forging partnerships among government agencies, industry and First Nations presents key opportunities for fostering equitable participation in economic activities related to resource use, developing more sustainable production methods and identifying priorities for mitigation.
- Businesses in British Columbia are increasing the production of "greener" products and are creating new market niches. Although exports of environmental goods and technologies from B.C. are still relatively small, opportunities exist to boost the export of goods designed for use in waste water management, renewable energy enterprises, environmental monitoring and air pollution control.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BC Stats. Quarterly Regional Statistics. Fourth Quarter. 2007.

<sup>2</sup> BC Stats. "Recycling in BC." Environmental Statistics. November 2007.

<sup>3</sup> BC Stats. "The Greening of BC's Exports." Environmental Statistics. August 2007.



# Report on Performance

The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* sets out government's accountability framework and planning and reporting requirements. The Annual Service Plan Report provides an overview of actual results compared to planned results from the previous year's Service Plan. The Performance Measurement Table summarizes the ministry's progress in relation to performance targets.

## Performance Plan Summary Table

| <b>Goal 1: Clean and safe water, land and air</b><br>For greater detail see pages 19 to 28   | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b>             | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b>  |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>1.1 Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources</b><br>Percentage of water bodies monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with stable or improving water quality trends | 96%                                   | 96%<br>ACHIEVED            |
| <b>1.3 Healthy air quality</b><br>Percentage of monitored communities achieving the Canada-wide standard quality objective for:  |                                       |                            |
| Particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> )  | Maintain or improve<br>(100% by 2010) | 88%<br>NOT ON TRACK        |
| Low level ozone  | Maintain or improve<br>(100% by 2010) | 100%<br>ACHIEVED           |
| Ranking of PM <sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in Vancouver compared to major metropolitan areas of equal size (>500,000 population) across Canada  | Maintain lowest<br>ranking            | Lowest ranking<br>ACHIEVED |
| <b>Goal 2: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems</b><br>For greater detail see pages 28 to 32  | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b>             | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b>  |
| <b>2.3 Protected, maintained and restored native species and ecosystems</b><br>Number of completed designations by the Ministry of Environment under the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i> :                       |                                       |                            |
| Wildlife Habitat Areas   | 444                                   | 1,084<br>EXCEEDED          |
| Ungulate Winter Ranges   | 40                                    | 54<br>EXCEEDED             |
| Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds   | 27                                    | 31<br>EXCEEDED             |

| <b>Goal 3: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment</b><br>For greater detail see pages 33 to 37   | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b> | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b>    |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>3.2 Shared environmental stewardship is a priority for all British Columbians</b><br>Number of Parks Collaborative Management Agreements and Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes with First Nations | 2<br>Additional           | 10<br>Additional<br>EXCEEDED |
| <b>3.3 Industry and client groups implement best environmental management practices</b><br>Number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs                                  | 9                         | 9<br>ACHIEVED                |

| <b>Goal 4: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources</b><br>For greater detail see pages 37 to 46   | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b>              | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b>    |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>4.1 Wise management and continued benefits of water and air</b><br>Number of water or watershed management plans completed and implemented   | 3                                      | 3<br>ACHIEVED                |
| <b>4.2 Optimize public, outdoor and commercial opportunities from British Columbia's parks, fish and wildlife</b><br>Number of recorded park visits and visitor satisfaction level:               |  |                              |
| Park visits   | 18.9 million<br>(21.6 million by 2010) | 18.2 million<br>NOT ON TRACK |
| Visitor satisfaction level  | Maintain or improve<br>(from 83%)      | 84%<br>ACHIEVED              |
| Number of basic hunting and angling licences sold:  |  |                              |
| Hunting licences  | Increase to 100,000 by<br>2014/15      | 92,664<br>ON TRACK           |
| Angling licences  | Increase to 400,000 by<br>2014/15      | 332,826<br>ON TRACK          |
| <b>4.3 Collaborative management and use of marine and ocean resources</b><br>Number of marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process | 4                                      | 5<br>EXCEEDED                |

| <b>Goal 5: A high performance organization</b><br>For greater detail see pages 47 to 50                                 | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b>         | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b>          |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>5.1 A client-focused organization that supports high quality service</b><br>Changes in satisfaction of client groups |                                   |                                    |
| Client Satisfaction Index   | Maintain or improve<br>by 2008/09 | DATA NOT<br>AVAILABLE <sup>1</sup> |
| Communication of shared stewardship   | Improve by 2008/09                |                                    |
| Consultation with stakeholders  | Improve by 2008/09                |                                    |

<sup>1</sup> The next survey is scheduled for September 2008.

## Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

The following sections present the ministry's goals and provide an overview of their supporting objectives, strategies and performance measures. This Annual Service Plan Report provides performance reporting based on the ministry's 2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan. For each performance measure, there is a discussion of the results, and if there is a significant variance between the target and the actual result, the ministry's response.

### Goal 1: Clean and safe water, land and air

#### Objective 1.1: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources

Achievement of this objective through effective legislation, innovative approaches to water governance and co-ordinated watershed-based planning contributes directly to the goal and is critical to the health of British Columbians and the environment.

#### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- integrating cross ministry initiatives to promote and enhance water stewardship;
- developing and implementing proactive planning and adaptation strategies to address emerging issues and cumulative effects (e.g., climate change, population growth and mountain pine beetle);
- encouraging local governments to include water stewardship and long-term sustainability in their planning and development programs;
- continuing to ensure safe and secure drinking water sources through the ministry's source water protection program;
- continuing to lead the development of water use plans and monitoring of water licence requirements;
- ensuring well-managed and accessible water resource information to support effective decision-making informed by science; and
- identifying and improving collaboration among government, academia and industry on science, research and monitoring to ensure continuous improvement in our knowledge of the provincial water resources.

## Performance Results

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

| Performance Measure   | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual  |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Percentage of water bodies monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with stable or improving water quality trends | 96%            | 96%            | 96%            | 96%<br>ACHIEVED |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** The ministry's measure reflects the government's measure for water quality trends and its 2015/16 target as presented in the *Province of British Columbia Strategic Plan 2007/08 – 2009/10*.

In addition to the 30 water bodies used to report water quality trends, the ministry uses water quality data from approximately 150 other community-based stations on other water bodies.

In 2004/05, 96 per cent of the monitoring stations in 30 water bodies had stable or improving water quality trends. In 2003/04 and 2002/03, 90 per cent of the monitoring stations in 30 water bodies had stable or improving water quality trends.

## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

This measure monitors trends in surface water quality based on the concentration of environmentally significant variables, such as metals, nutrients, pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen and flow, within 30 water bodies monitored under the Canada–B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement.

The purpose of the agreement is to provide co-ordination and integration of surface water quality monitoring activities within Canada and B.C., and to develop joint, cost-shared, comprehensive assessments of water quality. In total, 42 stations are monitored. However, 12 of these are new monitoring stations that have been added in the past three years, and water quality trends cannot be determined at these sites until data have been collected for a minimum of five years. This is expected to occur sometime after the 2009/10 fiscal year.



Gathering water quality data to find trends is a multi-step process. For each water quality monitoring station, data are collected every two weeks, or monthly, in some cases, and sent to accredited laboratories for analysis. Because the government does not expect to see changes in the data on a yearly basis, water quality specialists within the federal and provincial government assess sites on a five-year rotational basis.

The results of this measure provide a good indication of the outcomes of water protection efforts and stewardship of the province's water resources. In addition, the information helps inform authorizations for water use and helps establish further water monitoring requirements.

### **Achievements and Key Issues**

The 2007/08 target was to maintain or improve water quality trends in the 30 water bodies monitored under the federal/provincial agreement. The target was achieved with 96 per cent of the monitoring stations having stable or improving water quality trends.

The Elk River continues to experience levels of selenium that are higher than the selenium water quality guideline. Selenium concentrations in the Elk River continue to increase at a rate of approximately 7 to 8 per cent per year as a result of selenium releases from coal-mining activities. The ministry, Environment Canada and coal-mining companies are collaborating through the Elk Valley Selenium Task Force. The Task Force will review all studies conducted in the Elk Valley, determine the potential environmental effects of selenium, and make recommendations for further areas of study. In 2008, the ministry will commission the detailed assessment of water quality data as a first step in developing site-specific water quality objectives for the Elk River. These objectives will provide a further rationale for selenium management actions, as well as regulatory limits and requirements.

Environment Canada and the ministry have recently deployed a continuous water quality monitoring buoy in the Fraser River estuary. The Fraser River estuary is an important and environmentally sensitive area and is considered a globally significant ecosystem. The deployment of this buoy is the first step in the process of identifying important trends in water and climate in the most sensitive portion of the river. The buoy provides hourly updated water quality information on variables such as turbidity, water temperature and dissolved oxygen, in addition to hydrometric and meteorological information. More information about the buoy can be found at: [www.waterquality.ec.gc.ca/waterqualityweb/realtimeindex.aspx](http://www.waterquality.ec.gc.ca/waterqualityweb/realtimeindex.aspx).

*“You start to get a feel for the importance of fresh water when you realize that nearly two in 10 people in the world have no source of safe drinking water, and this in itself leads to countless unnecessary deaths every year. In British Columbia, we're very fortunate to have fresh water that's safe to drink, but we need to remain vigilant about protecting water from contamination.”*

— Honourable Barry Penner

## Objective 1.2: Reduced contamination from toxins and wastes

By reducing contamination from toxins and wastes efficiently and effectively, the ministry will minimize impacts to water, land, air, human health and safety, and the economy.

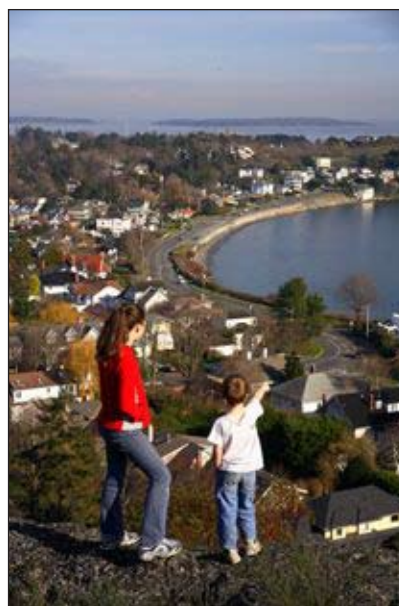
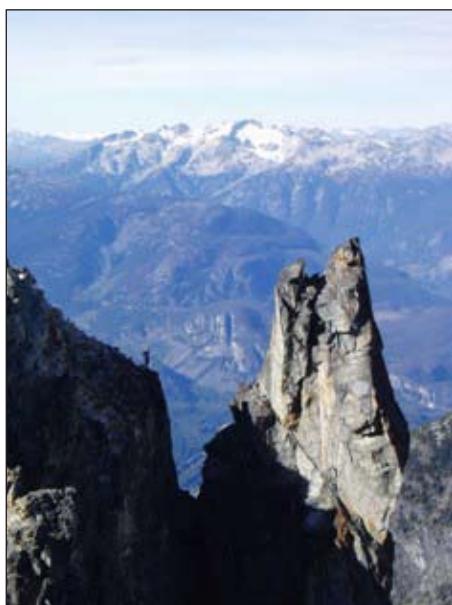
### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- exploring new ways to reduce municipal solid waste disposal;
- increasing the number of products requiring industry-led product stewardship programs;
- supporting the implementation of the Brownfields<sup>4</sup> Renewal Strategy for B.C.;
- promoting the development and adoption of integrated pest management practices; and
- developing a results-based regulatory regime that provides clear roles for government and stakeholders.

## Objective 1.3: Healthy air quality

Most communities in B.C. have good air quality and meet ambient air quality standards. However, research shows that even low concentrations of air pollution can affect the health of British Columbians. Taking action to reduce air pollution will help improve the health of the province's citizens, address the government's air quality targets, preserve our environment and enhance our economic competitiveness.



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<sup>4</sup> Brownfields are abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized commercial or industrial properties where past actions have resulted in actual or perceived contamination and where there is active potential for redevelopment.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring well-managed and accessible air resources information to support science-based decision-making;
- continuing to reduce emissions from industry, transportation and community growth;
- working with partners to reduce emissions from ports and marine vessels; and
- continuing to develop and support airshed management.

## Performance Results

Performance Measure: Air quality monitoring — PM<sub>2.5</sub> and low level ozone

| Performance Measures  | 2005/06<br>Actual | 2006/07<br>Actual | 2007/08<br>Target                  | 2007/08<br>Actual          |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Percentage of monitored communities achieving the Canada-wide standard quality objective for:   |                   |                   |                                    |                            |
| Particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> )   | 88%               | 93%               | Maintain or improve (100% by 2010) | 88%<br>NOT ON TRACK        |
| Low level ozone   | 95%               | 95%               | Maintain or improve (100% by 2010) | 100%<br>ACHIEVED           |
| Ranking of PM <sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in Vancouver compared to major metropolitan areas of equal size (>500,000 population) across Canada | 2nd lowest        | Lowest            | Maintain lowest ranking            | Lowest ranking<br>ACHIEVED |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** Due to an increase in the number of monitored communities having sufficient data to generate the statistics needed to determine the Canada-wide standard, the number of communities reported on for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and low level ozone has generally increased over time. In 2007/08, 23/26 communities met the PM<sub>2.5</sub> Canada-wide standard objective, whereas this figure was 26/28 in 2006/07. In 2005/06, 21/24 communities met the objective, whereas this figure was 14/16 communities in 2004/05. For low level ozone, 27/27 communities met the Canada-wide standard objective in 2007/08, whereas this figure was 26/27 in 2006/07, 25/26 in 2005/06 and 24/25 in 2004/05.



## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

The outdoor air contaminants of most concern in British Columbia, from a human health perspective, are particulate matter (PM) and low level or ground level ozone. Particles smaller than 2.5 microns (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) are believed to pose the greatest health risk. These fine particulates, which are most often generated by combustion processes and chemical reactions that take place in the air, are easily inhaled and penetrate the lungs, posing a threat to human health.

Although ozone in the stratosphere (the ozone layer) is beneficial and filters out harmful ultraviolet rays, ground level ozone is a pollutant and can be damaging to human health and the environment.

The ministry, in conjunction with regional districts and industry, collects PM<sub>2.5</sub> data from approximately 50 air quality monitoring sites from over 30 communities across the province. The ministry also collects ozone data from approximately 35 monitoring sites from over 25 communities. Use of this performance measure is designed to help the ministry determine how effectively it is achieving its air quality improvement targets.

### Achievements and Key Issues

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> and low level ozone:** For PM<sub>2.5</sub>, the ministry continues to work toward meeting the target of 100 per cent by 2010. However, in 2007/08, the percentage of communities achieving the Canada-wide standard objective for PM<sub>2.5</sub> was 88 per cent. In 2007/08, 27 out of 27 communities monitored achieved the Canada-wide standard for low level ozone. Although the ministry achieved the 2007/08 target of 100 per cent, low level ozone is highly dependent on meteorological conditions. Further studies are required to determine actual trends.

**Cross-Canada comparison of PM<sub>2.5</sub>:** Based on 2007 PM<sub>2.5</sub> data, Vancouver is ranked first in Canada, with respect to its air quality, among major metropolitan areas of similar size and population (see Figure 1). The government's 2015/16 target for PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in major metropolitan areas is to maintain first place in the rankings.



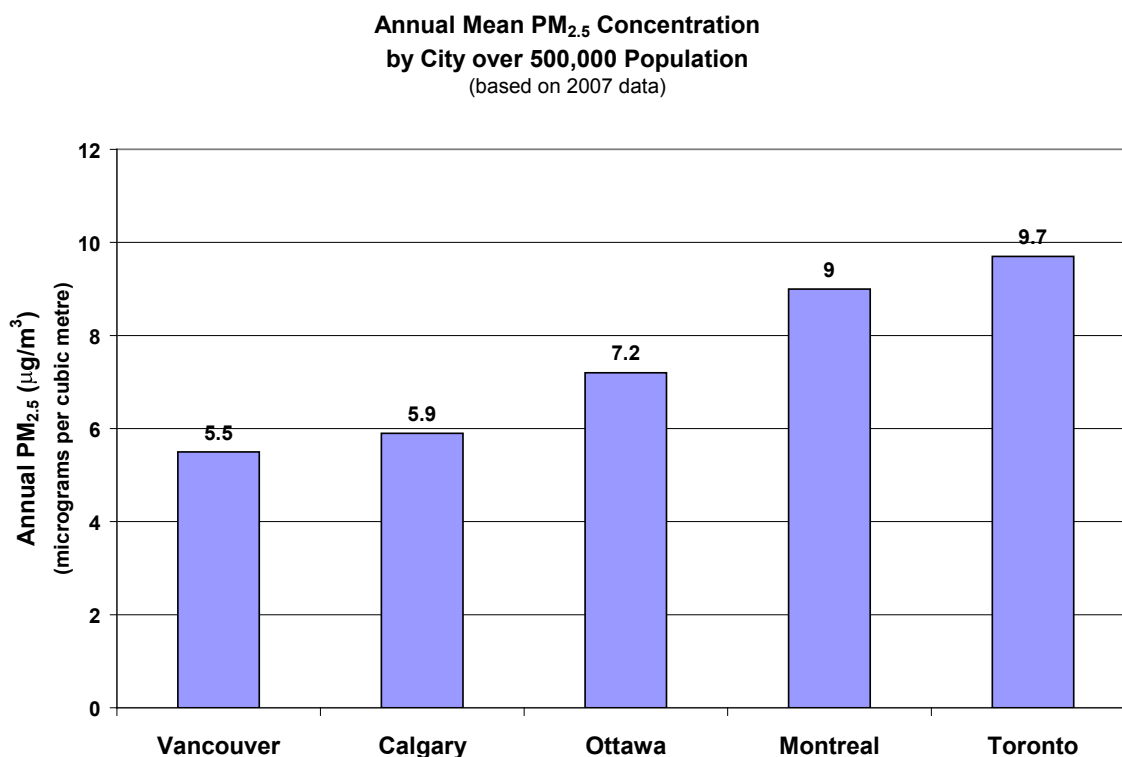


Figure 1. Annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration among major metropolitan areas in Canada of similar size.

## Ministry Response

While the ministry continues to work aggressively toward achieving the 2010 target for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, there are a variety of factors influencing its ability to do so. These include:

- the expansion of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring network into communities where there was no previous data, which may result in identifying higher PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in some areas;
- wildfires in British Columbia and neighbouring jurisdictions;
- burning related to the mountain pine beetle infestation and transportation of salvaged wood to mills;
- increasing energy costs, which has resulted in greater interest in burning wood as a source of fuel; and
- meteorological conditions that can either hinder or help the dispersion of pollutants away from a community.

To address these challenges, the ministry undertook a variety of activities in 2007/08:

- establishment of the first mandatory program in Canada to upgrade engines of older vehicles with diesel oxidation catalyst filters to reduce diesel emissions;

- funding to retrofit school buses in B.C. with diesel oxidation catalyst filters and to enable school districts around the province to purchase new clean-energy school buses;
- support for Green Fleets BC — a partnership initiative led by the Fraser Basin Council to reduce fleet emissions in the province;
- establishment of a provincial woodstove exchange program, and funding to support new woodstove exchanges in six communities and areas: Prince George, Kimberley, Grand Forks, Revelstoke, Golden, and the Okanagan Valley; and
- establishment of the \$600,000 B.C. Clean Air Research Fund, which is now known as BC Clear, to advance air quality research in the province.

Although the communities of Vanderhoof, Valemount and Hope exceeded the Canada-wide standard target for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone, community interest and involvement to improve air quality is strong. In Valemount, an Airshed Management Committee has been formed to improve air quality.

The ministry supports this effort by offering technical expertise and resources, providing information-sharing and encouraging partnership-building. Other activities such as the provincial woodstove exchange are also being considered.

*“Well-informed, engaged members of the public are our greatest allies in the fight against global warming and localized air pollution. Accurate, timely information will give people the tools to make environmentally responsible choices, reduce their emissions, and better protect air quality across the province.”*

— Honourable Barry Penner

Vanderhoof has passed a bylaw to regulate and control the installation of outdoor solid fuel combustion appliances such as wood-fired boilers that are used for space heating or the heating of water. Such appliances are a local source of emissions. Vanderhoof is also drafting a Clean Air Bylaw as a step toward improving local air quality.

Prince George is currently engaged in Phase Two of a three-phase Air Quality Management Plan. Three research studies that will form the basis of Phase Three of the airshed plan are also nearing completion. The scientific results of these studies will be used to prioritize actions to reduce emissions.

The ministry also continued to support community-led airshed activities in locations around the province, such as Port Alberni, the Sea-to-Sky corridor, Merritt, the Okanagan Valley, Quesnel, Prince George and the Bulkley Valley-Lakes District.

### **Objective 1.4: Effective responses to climate change**

Climate change is a serious issue that has broad local, regional and global significance. Climate change includes gradual changes in average temperature and precipitation, and increased frequency of extreme events such as drought, heavy precipitation and coastal storm surges.

Changes in climate drive changes in natural systems that will also affect economic and social interests.

The human-contributed greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere mean that ongoing climate change and its impacts are certain. All jurisdictions, including British Columbia, have a responsibility to join the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and prepare for the effects of future climate change (adaptation). These two necessary and complementary approaches are interrelated. Emission reduction is expected to slow climate change and provide human and natural systems more time to adjust to the altered environment.

*“British Columbia continues to work hard to deal with climate change. The B.C. government is funding initiatives such as ones with the Community Energy Association because we know actions from regional districts and local governments will be needed to help us meet our goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020.”*

— Honourable Barry Penner

The Province passed new legislation in the fall of 2007 that mandates greenhouse gas emission targets and the government’s commitment to make government operations carbon neutral by 2010. The Province is developing additional tools that will enable implementation of key elements of the government’s strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020.

In 2007, the provincial government announced the formation of a Climate Action Team, which includes leaders from environmental organizations, private enterprise, the scientific community, First Nations and academia. The Climate Action Team will recommend additional actions to achieve the 2020 target as well as recommend interim targets for 2012 and 2016.

The government also established the BC Climate Action Secretariat to co-ordinate and support the wide range of initiatives aimed at achieving provincial targets.

The Ministry of Environment is responsible for work in key areas that address both greenhouse gas reductions and climate change adaptation. These include:

- developing new regulations for industrial, landfill and vehicle tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions;
- reporting on provincial greenhouse gas emissions and leading work on developing a community energy and emissions inventory;
- preparing for the impacts of climate change on water and other environmental resources in B.C. by collaborating with and supporting partners such as communities, industries, other agencies and non-governmental organizations; and



Hybrid car.

- leading the initiatives designed to increase overall provincial capacity to prepare for impacts of climate change, including applied research, assessment of impacts, outreach and the development of adaptation tools.

### **Objective 1.5: Effective management of environmental risks**

Events in the environment, such as industrial spills or flooding, can present risks to public health and safety, property and the environment itself. Although not all environmental risks are avoidable, effective management means that impacts from risks can be minimized. The ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- preparing for and responding effectively to high-risk environmental emergencies such as oil spills, hazardous material spills, gas leaks and flood and debris flows;
- developing a strategy to enhance partnerships for environmental stewardship in spill responses;
- reducing the risk to public safety through effective flood hazard management (working with local governments), drought management and dam safety programs;
- providing effective and timely forecasting of floods and droughts;
- reducing the risk to public safety through effective human-wildlife management and response programs;
- reducing the risk to the environment and human health and safety through effective compliance and enforcement strategies and actions, including development of a commercial environmental investigation unit; and
- remediation of high-risk contaminated sites.

## **Goal 2: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems**

### **Objective 2.1: Well-managed and accessible information on species and ecosystems**

The collection, storage, management and distribution of scientific information on native species and ecosystems provides for effective research, contributes to the understanding of the status of native species and ecosystems and is critical to making informed decisions.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- compiling, consolidating, analyzing and distributing information on species and ecosystems;
- communicating the conservation status of species and ecosystems;
- providing guidelines and standards for the protection and conservation of species and ecosystems, including monitoring and reporting on achievements; and
- assessing the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems and related risks and threats within parks and protected areas.

*The British Columbia Conservation Data Centre has been named the top conservation data centre in the western hemisphere for 2007. We're very proud of the work done by the B.C. Conservation Data Centre around biodiversity and species-at-risk issues. It's great to see this branch of our ministry and the individuals who work there receive this kind of recognition from an international organization such as NatureServe.*

— Honourable Barry Penner

## Objective 2.2: Well-managed parks and protected areas

The designation of parks and protected areas means these lands will be preserved for future generations and demonstrates British Columbia's commitment to the conservation of native species and ecosystems.

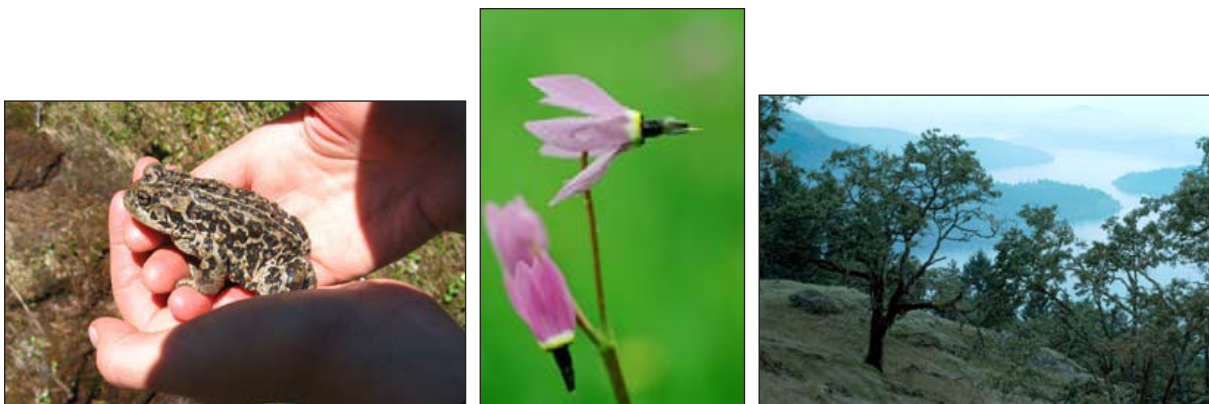
## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to identify, designate and manage parks and protected areas;
- undertaking parks and protected areas planning and management to ensure long-term protection of natural, cultural and recreational assets;
- maintaining and promoting partnerships for securing and managing parks and protected areas;
- continuing to evaluate the assets of protected areas to support sound decision-making;
- incorporating the Healthy By Nature<sup>5</sup> messages into BC Parks communications; and
- adopting best business practices to optimize parks system management.

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<sup>5</sup> Healthy by Nature is a Ministry of Environment initiative, in conjunction with ActNow BC, that emphasizes the link between parks, personal health and the health of families, communities and the environment.



### **Objective 2.3: Protected, maintained and restored native species and ecosystems**

Ministry programs conserve biodiversity, maintain and enhance native ecosystems and achieve a balance between the needs of wildlife and the needs of people. The ministry encourages others to accept a greater role in environmental stewardship and facilitates community initiatives to protect and restore local environments.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with and expand partnerships, including those with First Nations, to identify, protect and restore species and ecosystems;
- continuing to assess and monitor fish and wildlife populations and ecosystems to support improved resource management;
- continuing to assess, monitor and manage wildlife health;
- continuing to develop guidelines, policies and standards for the protection and conservation of species and ecosystems;
- continuing to monitor the effectiveness of and compliance with fish and wildlife guidelines;
- developing and implementing an enhanced legal and policy framework and regional-based planning programs;
- providing scientific advice to decision-makers and those responsible for developing and implementing resource use policies and land use planning initiatives;
- providing leadership in species-at-risk ranking and designation, and preparation and implementation of recovery plans;
- developing and implementing a provincial policy that balances water flow requirements for species, ecosystems, communities and industries;

- leading, in collaboration with the federal government, the development of a marine protected area system for the Pacific coast;
- developing and implementing a provincial human-wildlife conflict policy and response program to provide maximum wildlife protection consistent with public safety;
- developing and implementing sustainable fish and wildlife harvest policies that balance conservation, public safety and user demand;
- partnering with resource agencies on provincial access management; and
- reducing risk to native species and ecosystems by responding to offences with effective compliance and enforcement strategies and actions, including implementation of Seasonal Conservation Officers.

## Performance Results

### Performance Measure: Completed designations under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*

| Performance Measure  | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual           |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Number of completed designations by the Ministry of Environment under the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i> , including Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs), Ungulate <sup>1</sup> Winter Ranges (UWRs)* and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds (FSWs) | WHAs – 414     | WHAs – 917     | WHAs – 444     | WHAs – 1,084<br>EXCEEDED |
|  | UWRs – 35      | UWRs – 48      | UWRs – 40      | UWRs – 54<br>EXCEEDED    |
|  | FSWs – 17      | FSWs – 31      | FSWs – 27      | FSWs – 31<br>EXCEEDED    |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** \*The number for UWRs specifies the number of ungulate winter range packages; each package may have as few as 1 to more than 1,000 winter ranges. Thus, when monitoring progress in this area, it is important to also consider the amount of area designated.

**March 31, 2008:** 1,084 WHA designations approved covering 764,932 hectares; 54 UWR designations approved covering 4,598,086 hectares

**March 31, 2007:** 917 WHA designations approved covering 743,863 hectares; 48 UWR designations approved covering 3,601,200 hectares

**March 31, 2006:** 414 WHA designations approved covering 668,424 hectares; 35 UWR designations approved covering 2,658,725 hectares

**March 31, 2005:** 320 WHA designations approved covering 658,935 hectares; 28 UWR designations approved covering 2,284,917 hectares

<sup>1</sup> An ungulate is a hoofed mammal such as a caribou, moose, bison or goat.



## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

Designations under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* provide special management for species and plant communities affected by forest and range activities on Crown land. These designations provide legislated protection for habitats and contribute significantly to the conservation of native species. It is important to measure ministry progress in establishing environmental standards for the protection and restoration of species and their habitats under the Act.

The ministry's legal designations are for Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs), Ungulate Winter Ranges (UWRs) and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds (FSWs). The number of WHAs and UWRs has steadily increased as shown in the table above. The number of FSWs, a new designation measured since 2006, is also expected to increase annually over the next several years.

### Achievements and Key Issues

In 2007/08, the ministry exceeded the targets for WHAs, UWRs and FSWs. In 2007/08, 167 WHA designations were approved for a total of 1,084 WHAs, covering 764,932 hectares, and 6 UWR designations were approved for a total of 54 UWRs, covering 4,598,086 hectares. The ministry's 2007/08 target for Fisheries Sensitive Watershed designations was 27 and the total number of FSWs approved was 31.

A risk to achieving the ministry's targets is the level of funding available to assess potential designations. Annual business targets are based on expected levels of funding from the Forest Investment Account and other funding sources. The targets provide a count of only the number of designations. The size of the designations will vary depending on the species and their habitat requirements. In addition, reporting out on monitoring initiatives in the plan is key to ensuring that the conservation goals for designated areas are being met.

### Ministry Response

The ministry exceeded its 2007/08 targets for the number of WHA, UWR and FSW designations. The exceeded targets for these three performance measures reflect the ministry's increased productivity in these areas.



## Goal 3: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment

### Objective 3.1: British Columbians understand the benefits of healthy living and the effect of their actions on the environment

*Six outstanding British Columbians were selected to receive the 2007 Arbor Vitae Awards in recognition of their dedication to environmental protection and stewardship. "It was very rewarding to discover the number of dedicated, environmentally conscious people living and working across the province. Their actions are instrumental to move British Columbia ahead as a world leader in sustainability and responsible environmental management."*

— Honourable Barry Penner

In order to foster an environmentally conscious society, people must become aware of the relationship between their actions and how those actions directly impact their health, the quality of their lives, and the lives of other people and species with which they share the environment. As British Columbians continue to make the connection between their activities and environmental impacts, they are much more likely to set a higher environmental standard for their own actions and those of others.

### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- implementing and supporting a comprehensive and integrated ministry stewardship outreach strategy; and
- promoting outdoor activities as beneficial for a healthy lifestyle.

### Objective 3.2: Shared environmental stewardship is a priority for all British Columbians

The ministry recognizes that a successful shared stewardship model needs to integrate co-operative and collaborative partnerships with First Nations, industry, associations, academia, communities, environmental groups and other government bodies across all sectors and geographic jurisdictions. Success depends on information and knowledge sharing, consultation and partnerships.



## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- recognizing, promoting and enhancing shared stewardship through consultative processes and volunteer initiatives that engage stakeholders, clients and partners;
- promoting sustainable natural resource management through collaborative management and decision-making processes;
- pursuing opportunities for the Conservation Officer Service to provide shared compliance and enforcement activities through partnerships with other agencies; and
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance activities taken to protect the environment.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Number of partnerships with First Nations**

| Performance Measure  | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target          | 2007/08 Actual                       |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Number of Parks Collaborative Management Agreements (PCMA) and Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes (RFWPs) with First Nations | 21             | 25             | 2 Additional (27 total) | 10 Additional (35 total)<br>EXCEEDED |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** Benchmark information for 2007/08 and previous years is:

2007/08 Totals: 30 PCMA; 5 RFWPs

2005/06 Totals: 16 PCMA; 5 RFWPs

2003/04 Totals: 14 PCMA; 2 RFWPs

2006/07 Totals: 20 PCMA; 5 RFWPs

2004/05 Totals: 15 PCMA; 5 RFWPs

2002/03 Totals: 12 PCMA; 2 RFWPs

## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

The ministry originally introduced this measure in the 2004/05–2006/07 Service Plan. The measure was developed to monitor the ministry’s progress in developing partnerships with First Nations in support of the government’s New Relationship initiative, which promoted government-to-government relationships between First Nations and provincial ministries. Parks Collaborative Management Agreements define how the Province and First Nations will work together to manage specific B.C. parks and protected areas. The measure was expanded in 2005/06 to include the number of official Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes.

### Achievements and Key Issues

Since 2004, a total of 30 Parks Collaborative Management Agreements have been signed, and four more are in progress. Five Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes have been established and six more agreements have been initiated. The target has been exceeded, with a total of 35 signed Parks Collaborative Management Agreements or Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes. As a result, 115 out of a total of 198 bands in the province are engaged in these processes.

*The Collaborative Agreement for the management of parks and protected areas in Hupacasath First Nation traditional territory focuses on park planning and capacity building, and on creating a forum for both parties to discuss issues of common interest. Through agreements like this, B.C. is able to work together with First Nations to ensure the long-term ecological and cultural integrity of the lands and resources in First Nations' traditional territories.*

The ministry will continue to monitor the development and implementation of Parks Collaborative Management Agreements and Regional Fish and Wildlife Processes with First Nations as an important indicator of our success in establishing a shared stewardship approach to protecting the environment and fish and wildlife.

### Ministry Response

Since 2004/05, the ministry has worked to develop and implement processes that have met with increased success in the signing of collaborative management agreements. The signing of 10 new PCMAs in 2007/08 exceeded the ministry's target by eight agreements and resulted from a successful culmination of efforts over previous years requiring extended communication between First Nations and the ministry on a number of sensitive issues.

### Objective 3.3: Industry and client groups implement best environmental management practices

British Columbia continues to enjoy expanding economic opportunities. As industry, organizations and other ministry client groups become more environmentally conscious, they are more likely to incorporate environmental values and best practices into their decision-making processes and activities. Sustainable environmental management practices not only protect the environment and reduce costs (e.g., by using resources and energy more efficiently), they also lay the foundation for good corporate citizenship.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;
- continuing to research and collaborate with key stakeholders on product categories suitable for inclusion in the B.C. Recycling Regulation; and
- encouraging compliance by reporting those in non-compliance and those exceeding environmental standards.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Industry-led product stewardship programs**

| Performance Measure   | 2005/06<br>Actual | 2006/07<br>Actual | 2007/08<br>Target | 2007/08<br>Actual |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs | 7                 | 9                 | 9                 | 9<br>ACHIEVED     |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** The nine industry-led product stewardship programs are for paint, used oil products, beverage containers, pharmaceuticals, solvents and flammable liquids, domestic pesticides, gasoline, tires and electronic products. Tires and electronic products were added to the B.C. Recycling Regulation in 2006 and implemented by industry in 2007.

## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

For this measure, the ministry is counting the number of post-consumer product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs. Industry-led stewardship programs shift the responsibility for a product from local government to industry. Such programs encourage industry to accept life-cycle responsibility over products and enable businesses to collect post-consumer products for safe reuse and recycling, thereby reducing the overall environmental impact. Currently, stewardship programs are in place for paint, used oil products, beverage containers, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, solvents and flammable liquids, tires, electronic products and gasoline. The results are less waste and toxins entering landfills and reduced tax dollars being spent by local governments.



Stewardship programs continue to be an important example of how B.C. business works with the ministry and its clients by implementing sustainable and responsible environmental management practices.

### **Achievements and Key Issues**

The ministry achieved its 2007/08 target of nine product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs. This multi-year target, established in 2005/06, was for two additional product categories to be added to the B.C. Recycling Regulation by the end of the 2007/08 fiscal year. The tire program was implemented in January 2007 and the electronic products program was implemented in August 2007.

## **Goal 4: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources**

### **Objective 4.1: Wise management and continued benefits of water and air**

British Columbia's water and air resources sustain a full range of economic, community and ecosystem needs. Understanding the important benefits these resources provide, the ministry seeks to ensure that all British Columbians will continue to benefit from the wise and prudent management of these resources.

### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- seeking public consensus on a new water allocation model and modifying and streamlining the *Water Act* and related legislation;
- exploring shared governance frameworks to promote increased community and stakeholder involvement at the local level;
- valuing water appropriately by recognizing its full range of benefits;
- continuing to promote water conservation and demand-side management measures;
- continuing to ensure timely response to water licence applications to support economic development;
- continuing the effective management and operation of water management projects for diverse economic, environmental and social values such as the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and the Nicola Lake Dam;
- promoting and facilitating multi-stakeholder watershed management plans; and
- promoting and facilitating multi-stakeholder airshed management plans.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Completed and implemented water or watershed management plans**

| Performance Measure   | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number of water or watershed management plans completed and implemented | 1              | 2              | 3              | 3<br>ACHIEVED  |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** The target is three plans by 2007/08 and six plans by 2009/10. Target figures are cumulative.

### Discussion of Results

#### Rationale for the Performance Measure

Water or watershed management plans are undertaken to co-ordinate development and management of water, land and related resources to optimize the benefits and sustainability of the community, economy and environment. These plans serve as a valuable tool to address conflicts between water users and in-stream flow requirements, risks to water quality and aquatic ecosystems and concerns about land use. The water management plan performance measure assesses both the number of water management plans designated under the *Water Act* and plans with no statutory basis.

#### Achievements and Key Issues

The ministry is on track to meet the 2009/10 target of six water or watershed management plans. To date at least three plans have been completed and/or implemented and a number of others have been initiated. Completed plans include the following:

- The Trout Creek Water Use Management Plan has been completed and implemented. This plan guides community reservoir management during low flow periods for downstream fish habitat protection in an area near Summerland.
- The Trepanier Creek Watershed Management Plan covers 990 km<sup>2</sup> and includes five major watersheds on the west side of Okanagan Lake. It was completed and implemented in 2004.





- The Cowichan River Water Management Plan was completed in 2007 and implementation is now underway. This plan covers the Cowichan Basin on Vancouver Island and includes measures such as downstream fish habitat requirements, inclusive forms of water governance and public outreach.

Other planning processes are underway and will be completed and implemented in the near future. These include the Nicola Valley water use management plan and the Kiskatinaw River and Pine River watershed management plans. The Township of Langley Water Management Plan is the first of its kind in British Columbia to be initiated under the *Water Act*. It will address declining groundwater levels and the risk of contamination that could impact community and agricultural groundwater supply and drinking water. The timeframe for completing this plan was recently extended to March 2009, to allow for additional community consultation.

#### **Objective 4.2: Optimize public, outdoor and commercial opportunities from British Columbia's parks, fish and wildlife**

British Columbia's parks, fish and wildlife provide a variety of unique outdoor opportunities for residents and visitors in the form of recreation, camping, marine and freshwater angling, hunting and wildlife viewing. Engaging in these activities by British Columbians and visitors promotes healthy living and an appreciation of B.C.'s landscape, native species and the environment as a whole. The use of campgrounds contributes to the maintenance and infrastructure of B.C.'s natural places and to environmental protection and management activities. Several commercial organizations also provide services and recreational activities, attracting visitors from around the world. This creates jobs within B.C. and contributes significantly to the province's economy. Effective management and use of these resources will ensure their sustainability and promote economic opportunities.

*"We have one of the best parks systems in the world and our government is making significant capital investments to make it even better."*

— Honourable Barry Penner

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- providing outstanding hunting, marine and freshwater angling and wildlife viewing opportunities;
- providing a diverse range of outdoor recreation and commercial opportunities in the parks system to respond to visitor trends;
- maximizing opportunities for partnerships with First Nations, local communities, non-profit groups, private land owners and others;
- developing and implementing marketing strategies to promote healthy living through park visitation;

- improving and expanding the quality of park recreation opportunities and services;
- streamlining the provision of hunting and angling licences, permits and commercial licences through the development and delivery of electronic business applications; and
- creating a community engagement program to provide local stewardship and economic opportunities.

## Performance Results

### Performance Measure: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

| Performance Measure  | 2004/05<br>Baseline | 2005/06<br>Actual | 2006/07<br>Actual | 2007/08<br>Target                         | 2007/08<br>Actual               |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Number of recorded park visits and visitor satisfaction level: |                     |                   |                   |   |                                 |
| Park visits  | 18.0 million        | 18.3 million      | 19 million        | 18.9 million<br>(21.6 million<br>by 2010) | 18.2 million<br>NOT ON<br>TRACK |
| Visitor satisfaction level                                     | 80%                 | 81%               | 83%               | Maintain or<br>improve                    | 84%<br>ACHIEVED                 |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:**

**Parks Visits:** The number of recorded visits to B.C. parks was 18.2 million based on attendance data submitted from April 2007 through January 2008.

**Visitor Satisfaction:** See Figure 2: Visitor Satisfaction Index.

## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

Parks provide recreational services and opportunities that contribute to local economies, promote healthy living and support an appreciation for the environment. Parks also provide protection for representative landscapes and habitat for native species. B.C.'s parks system is the single largest recreation enterprise in the province and one of the best in the world. The number of visitors to provincial parks is used to measure the contribution of parks to the government's priorities of healthy communities, tourism and the economy. These data are intended to provide a reasonable indication of the trend in the level of use of public, outdoor and commercial opportunities available in British Columbia's parks.

Additionally, the ministry is the largest supplier of overnight camping accommodation throughout British Columbia. Since 1985, the ministry has monitored the effectiveness of providing services in provincial park campgrounds and day-use areas by conducting an annual



satisfaction survey with a random sample of park visitors. The results of this survey are used by ministry staff and park facility operators to better assess which services are being provided well and which services require improvements.

### Achievements and Key Issues

**Number of park visits:** The target for the number of park visits is not currently on track for a 20 per cent increase over the 2004/05 baseline of 18.0 million by 2010. In order to track progress toward the 2010 target of 21.6 million recorded visits, interim targets were set at 5 per cent each year: 18.9 million in 2007/08, 19.4 million in 2008/09, 19.8 million in 2009/10 and 21.6 million in 2010/11. Between the period of April 2007 and January 2008, the number of recorded visits to the parks was 18.2 million.

**Park visitor satisfaction survey results:** The Visitor Satisfaction Index (see Figure 2) is calculated as an average provincial rating of five services considered by park visitors to be important to their stay in a campground: cleanliness of restrooms, cleanliness of grounds, condition of facilities, a sense of security, and control of noise. The rating is based on the number of “excellent” and “above average” responses.

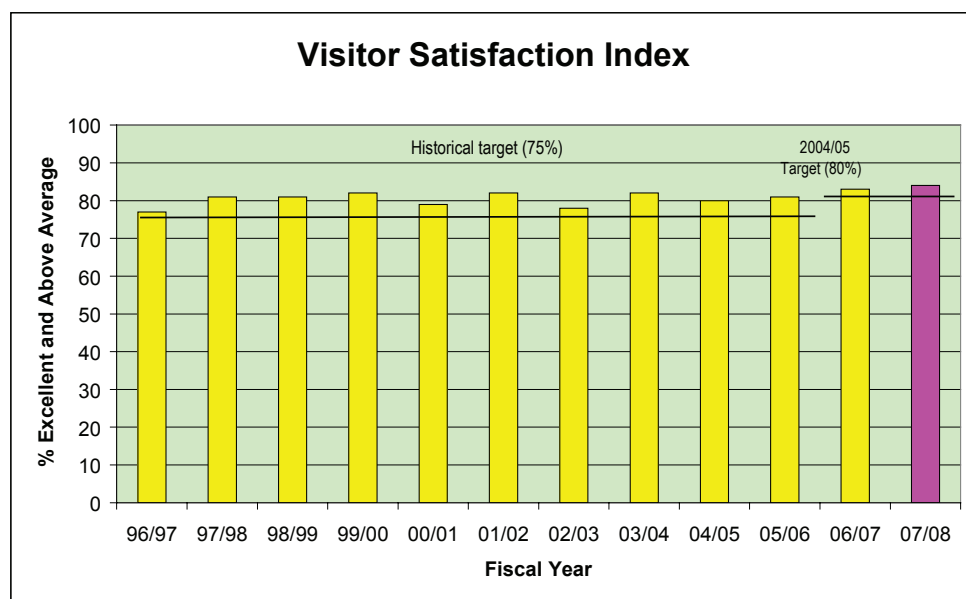


Figure 2. Visitor satisfaction index from 1996/97 to 2007/08.

The Visitor Satisfaction Index indicates the effectiveness of service improvements over the past 12 years. In 2007/08, the index increased overall by 1 per cent from 83 per cent in 2006/07 to 84 per cent in 2007/08. As a result, the ministry met its target to maintain or improve on visitor satisfaction level. Some of the services that contributed to the increase in the overall index were cleanliness of grounds, cleanliness of restrooms, and control of noise, all of which increased by 2 per cent.

## Ministry Response

The target forecasts for park attendance remain a key focus for the ministry. However, it should be recognized that many factors outside of the ministry's control influence park attendance.

Factors that affect the experience inside parks include weather conditions, major construction projects, forest fires and forest health. External variables that are unrelated to parks can also affect park attendance and tourism trends. Examples include gas prices, the value of the Canadian dollar, terrorism threats in North America and changing demographics. The unusually high amount of precipitation on the west coast, which typically sees the most visitors, is thought to be a major contributing factor to the slight decline in attendance from the previous year.



The expectations of British Columbians are changing and the services provided in our parks are changing, too. Work is continuing under the 2006 Parks for People Strategy, which focuses on ensuring that services and programs are responsive to visitor needs and demographic trends. The ministry is continuing its efforts to provide world class, high quality recreation, tourism and stewardship opportunities, while ensuring the protection of the province's natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

## Performance Results

### Performance Measure: Number of hunting and angling licences sold

| Performance Measures                               | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target                 | 2007/08 Actual      |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Number of basic hunting and angling licences sold: |                |                |                                |                     |
| Hunting  | 92,020         | 96,142         | Increase to 100,000 by 2014/15 | 92,664<br>ON TRACK  |
| Angling  | 319,363        | 339,805        | Increase to 400,000 by 2014/15 | 332,826<br>ON TRACK |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** Information is accurate to December 2007.

Benchmark information for 2007/08 and previous years is:

2007/08: Hunting – 86,560 resident and 6,104 non-resident. Angling – 262,430 resident and 70,396 non-resident.

2006/07: Hunting – 89,532 resident and 6,610 non-resident. Angling – 266,961 resident and 72,844 non-resident.

2005/06: Hunting – 85,633 resident and 6,387 non-resident. Angling – 251,993 resident and 67,370 non-resident.

2004/05: Hunting – 84,003 resident and 5,931 non-resident. Angling – 248,052 resident and 68,328 non-resident.

2003/04: Hunting – 81,368 resident and 5,785 non-resident. Angling – 252,867 resident and 69,398 non-resident.

2002/03: Hunting – 85,714 resident and 6,234 non-resident. Angling – 275,430 resident and 79,772 non-resident.

## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

The ministry originally developed a measure of the number of hunting and angling licences sold to reflect the number of resident and non-resident hunters and anglers taking advantage of the freshwater fishing and hunting opportunities in British Columbia. Both resident and non-resident hunters and anglers contribute to the province's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment. Although this measure does not account for differences in the experiences and economic contributions of individual licence holders, it provides a good indication of the overall economic contributions from hunting and angling opportunities.

The ministry strives to ensure fish and wildlife populations remain healthy, while providing recreational hunting and angling opportunities to the public. Hunting and angling are permitted where there are healthy populations of fish and game, and wildlife is conserved and managed carefully. First Nations are consulted by the ministry wherever possible. The ministry is also involved in wildlife inventory and fish-stocking projects.

### **Achievements and Key Issues**

The number of hunting and angling licences show a 3.6 per cent decline from the previous year for hunting (from 96,142 to 92,664) and a 2.1 per cent decline over the same period for angling (from 339,805 to 332,826). Demographic trends toward increased urbanization, an aging population and limited vacation time are among the reasons for these declining numbers. Additionally, attracting people to hunting and angling activities means competing with an increased number of recreational opportunities that were not previously available. Hunting regulations, firearms restrictions and a lack of mentors in the field have also contributed to the decline in hunting. A lack of knowledge about places to fish, fluctuating Pacific salmon stocks, weather and the increasing price of fuel are factors in the decline of angling.

### **Ministry Response**

The ministry is implementing a number of recommendations to increase the number of hunting licences sold, such as lowering the legal age for unsupervised hunting from 19 to 18. The ministry is also working in co-operation with the BC Wildlife Federation to provide online education to those seeking instruction outside of the classroom and to those looking for a refresher course before returning to hunting after a long absence. Other initiatives include providing, where feasible, general open seasons for mule deer and white-tailed deer does for hunters under the age of 19 and hunters participating in their first season, as well as increasing accessibility to hunting opportunities on private land through the Private Area Zones Wildlife Program. Online licensing for hunting is also under development.

The Angling Market Development Plan, led by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, contains 29 recommendations that will be implemented over the next 10 years to enhance angling opportunities in the province. The implementation of 14 of these recommendations will begin in 2008, including a multi-media marketing campaign, Discover Fishing BC. The campaign has eight partners, including the Ministry of Environment. A new online e-Licensing system was made available to anglers in September 2007 to make obtaining a licence more accessible.

### **Objective 4.3: Collaborative management and use of marine and ocean resources**

British Columbia's marine and ocean resources provide great economic and social benefits to the citizens of the province. The ministry works in close collaboration with the Integrated Land Management Bureau, which is responsible for provincial marine planning, and with the federal government, particularly the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to represent British Columbia's interests through new shared governance arrangements for ocean and marine resources and to ensure that these resources are managed in a sustainable manner.

## Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- identifying and advancing provincial objectives as they relate to ocean resources and their use;
- influencing implementation of the Federal Oceans Strategy on the Pacific coast;
- ensuring that federal management and international relations reflect provincial objectives for marine fisheries;
- representing B.C.'s interests to ensure the seafood sector's fair share of federal and cross government programs, initiatives and activities to promote research, exports and investment; and
- undertaking initiatives to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of B.C.'s seafood products in domestic and export markets.

**Performance Measure: Marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process**

| Performance Measure  | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number of marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process | 3              | 4              | 4              | 5<br>EXCEEDED  |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory/Benchmark Information:** The three fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process in 2005/06 were hake, herring and tuna. A fourth fishery, established in 2006/07 was Strait of Georgia rockfish and lingcod. A fifth fishery, sardine, was established in 2007/08.

## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure



Economic sustainability is dependent on the level and certainty of access to resources. The provincial government actively participates in marine fisheries management to represent the Province's interests, and is a key partner in federal management activities and decision-making processes. Measuring the increase in the number of B.C. marine fisheries that

are managed collaboratively and include provincial government and stakeholder participation will determine if the Province's interests concerning fair allocation and certainty of access to resources are represented.

In April 2007, BC Stats reported that the marine fisheries sector provided approximately \$829 million<sup>6</sup> in revenue to B.C.'s economy. As marine fisheries fall under the federal jurisdiction, the Province continues to influence federal fisheries management to provide social and economic benefits to British Columbians. The ministry accomplishes this by meeting regularly with its federal counterparts, attending advisory processes with First Nations, industry and other stakeholders, and participating on the negotiating team for international fisheries agreements.

### **Achievements and Key Issues**

The ministry exceeded its target for this performance measure by achieving a total of five marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process. During 2007/08, the sardine fishery joined Strait of Georgia rockfish and herring, hake and tuna fisheries that are now governed with a collaborative management regime that includes strong stakeholder and ministry participation.

The ministry has reached a joint agreement with the federal government on 164 rockfish conservation areas and management measures to aid in the recovery of Strait of Georgia rockfish and lingcod populations. The ministry has also reached a collaborative agreement with the federal government to develop a permanent licensing plan for the 25 commercial sardine licences previously developed under the emerging federal fisheries policy. The Province continues to work with the federal government and commercial stakeholders on a market-based mechanism to allow for the growth of the halibut recreational fishery sector.

Together, sardine, herring, hake, tuna, rockfish and lingcod generate over \$200 million in wholesale value to the B.C. economy.

### **Ministry Response**

The 2007/08 target for this measure was a total of four fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process. The establishment of a fifth fishery in 2007/08 is the result of a successful culmination of efforts by the ministry and stakeholders over the past several years.

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<sup>6</sup> BC Stats. British Columbia's Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector. April 2007.

## Goal 5: A high performance organization

The Ministry of Environment strives to be a high performance organization, with dedicated leadership and people. We continually aim for excellence in our work, decision-making processes, and the services we provide.

### Objective 5.1: A client-focused organization that supports high quality service

A client-focused organization strives to identify and develop ways to continuously improve client service. The ministry anticipates what its clients—the citizens, organizations and businesses of British Columbia— will need and how best to meet those needs through responsive staff, effective programs, policy, legislation and decision-making, and timely information systems.

#### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to foster collaborative and productive relationships with clients; and
- identifying and implementing continuous improvements to client business processes.

## Performance Results

### Performance Measure: Changes in satisfaction of client groups

| Performance Measures                     | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual              | 2007/08 Target                    | 2007/08 Actual                  |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Changes in satisfaction of client groups |                |                             |                                   |                                 |
| 1. Client Satisfaction Index             |                | Baseline Established<br>79% | Maintain or improve by<br>2008/09 | Data Not Available <sup>1</sup> |
| 2. Communication of shared stewardship   | —              | 55%                         | Improve by<br>2008/09             |                                 |
| 3. Consultation with stakeholders        |                | 49%                         | Improve by<br>2008/09             |                                 |

**Data Source:** Ministry of Environment.

**Explanatory /Benchmark Information:** The client satisfaction performance measure contains three indicators. The first indicator, the Client Satisfaction Index, includes four staff-related client services — professional competence of ministry staff, reliability of information shared with clients, availability of staff and timeliness of staff responses to client requests and or inquiries. The second indicator denotes how effectively the ministry is communicating its goal of encouraging B.C. residents to share in the responsibility of caring for the environment. The final indicator suggests how effectively the ministry is consulting on proposed policy and legislation development.

<sup>1</sup> The next survey is scheduled for September 2008.



## Discussion of Results

### Rationale for the Performance Measure

High performance organizations place a special emphasis on the delivery of appropriate, effective and responsive client-based service delivery. A change in client satisfaction is an important indicator of how well the ministry is meeting clients' expectations.



In September 2006, a survey was conducted with representatives from business, industry, government, First Nations, non-governmental organizations and academia who have regular contact with staff and an interest in ministry programs and services.

In the fall of 2008, the ministry will conduct a second survey to measure changes in client satisfaction. Asking our clients how we are doing and responding to the feedback our clients provide is an ongoing process for the ministry. Building a better understanding of our clients' needs and expectations provides the foundation upon which to improve our services and programs.

### **Objective 5.2: A healthy working environment that supports and motivates staff, promotes innovation, and attracts and retains high performance employees**

The ministry strives to ensure that it is a desirable, well-respected and innovative place to work. Acknowledging that a challenging and balanced work environment is essential for good health and a productive workforce, the ministry recognizes staff for their contributions, supports their work with appropriate resources, and encourages professional development opportunities and health and wellness activities.

### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- updating and implementing the ministry's human resources strategy;
- optimizing performance by providing developmental opportunities, recognition and reward initiatives;
- advancing the development of a knowledgeable and skilled workforce; and
- fostering a supportive workplace culture through leadership, health promotion and positive social relationships.

### **Objective 5.3 An integrated cross-ministry framework that supports ministry goals and objectives**

Leadership and a co-ordinated approach to legislation and policy development, planning, performance management and reporting, resource allocation, and compliance and enforcement services are essential to ensuring cross-ministry consistency, effective and efficient program delivery and the realization of ministry goals. The ministry works across core business areas to support goals and objectives, improve outcomes, identify risks and focus on ministry and government priorities.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- providing a legislative and policy framework that supports ministry goals and objectives;
- providing support and streamlined outcomes through effective intergovernmental relations;
- facilitating a strategic and integrated approach to planning, measurement, evaluation and accountability;
- linking ministry resources with planning and results;
- tracking performance and reporting results toward the achievement of provincial environmental objectives; and
- providing leadership and service in support of a strategic ministry compliance approach and maintaining strong and effective compliance and enforcement services.

### **Objective 5.4: Information resources that support effective decision-making**

Science, socio-economic analysis and technology are fundamental tools for effective ministry decision-making. Application of the best available science and sound economic analysis are key components of setting and evaluating the effectiveness of environmental standards. Well-managed, accurate and accessible information is critical to making informed environmental and business management decisions.

#### **Strategies**

Key strategies for this objective include:

- maintaining access to the best available science through in-house expertise and partnerships with research agencies and universities;
- monitoring the effectiveness (i.e., the impact) of standards of environmental values such as water and air quality and health of ecosystems;

- providing tools to better integrate scientific information with the social and economic factors considered in resource management decisions;
- developing effective information resources to facilitate effective environmental decision-making; and
- pursuing opportunities to maximize the use of technology and best practices in the management of information resources.

# Report on Resources

## Introduction

The ministry's resources are dedicated to activities associated with protecting the environment, managing the province's natural resources, promoting and supporting sustainability practices and promoting the understanding of, and compliance with, environmental regulatory requirements.

The 2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan presented the ministry's performance plans — goals, objectives and strategies — and identified the resources required to achieve the planned outcomes over three years. The following sections detail the fiscal performance of the ministry by providing an overview of ministry funding, reporting the resources consumed over the 2007/08 fiscal year and comparing actual expenditures against estimated expenditures.

## Ministry Funding

The total net funding available for ministry operations in fiscal year 2007/08 was \$475.80 million. This funding was derived from the following sources:

- Voted appropriation<sup>7</sup> — this is the largest source of ministry funding, which provided \$186.56 million.
- Statutory appropriation — the Sustainable Environment Fund authorizes the collection of waste permit fees under the *Environmental Management Act* and revenue collection under the *Social Services Tax Act* (i.e., surcharges collected on products that cause a problem to the environment, such as children's disposable diapers, and are used for environmental protection programs). This funding source provided \$29.31 million.
- Other authorizations — the Contingency Funding (all ministries) and New Programs Vote provided \$7.94 million for the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and \$252 million in Supplementary Estimates were provided for Climate Action initiatives.

Other funding sources available to the ministry for operational expenses not summarized above include:

- Internal recoveries — Recoveries within the government reporting entity, excluding the Sustainable Environment Fund, are estimated at \$26.08 million. Internal recoveries include recoveries from other provincial government ministries, such as programs funded under the Ministry of Health's ActNow BC program and the Forest Investment Account. Actual internal recoveries for the year were \$25.03 million.

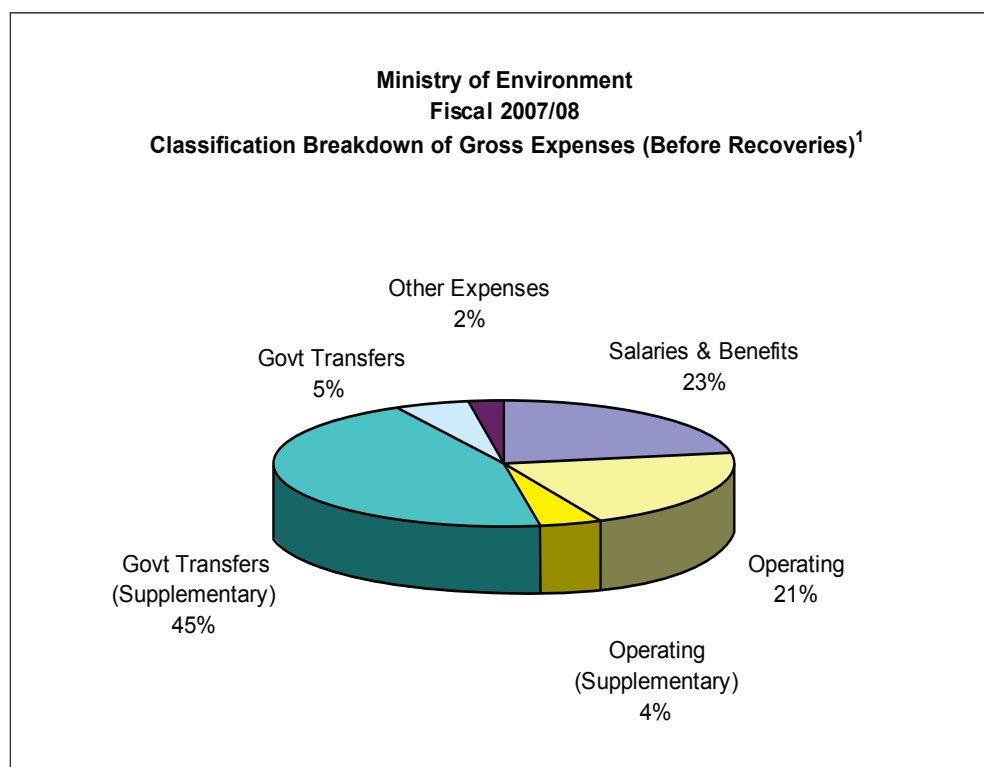
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<sup>7</sup> Voted appropriation — the *Supply Act* as represented in the *Estimates*.

- External recoveries — Recoveries from outside the Consolidated Revenue fund were estimated at \$9.35 million. External recoveries include recoveries from within the government reporting entity, such as government corporations, and funds outside the government reporting entity, such as other levels of government and private corporations. Actual external recoveries were \$8.69 million.

### Ministry Expense (see Figure 3)

- Salaries and benefits — \$115.36 million — accounted for 23 per cent of annual spending.
- Operating costs — \$127.04 million — including professional services, parks operating and other contracts, building occupancy and materials and supplies costs, accounted for 25 per cent of gross expenditures.
- Government transfers — \$255.54 million — including grants and transfers under agreement, accounted for 50 per cent of gross expenditures.
- Other expenses — \$11.57 million total — including costs not attributable to other categories, such as water rental remissions, accounted for 2 per cent of gross expenditures.



**Figure 3.** Gross expense for fiscal 2007/08 (Source: B.C. Draft Public Accounts, 2007–2008)

1. “Supplementary” refers to Supplementary Estimates, shown separately for information.

## Resource Summary Table

The 2007/08 Resource Summary Table reports on the resources used during the year, by core business area, and compares actual expenditures to the amounts estimated. All significant variances are explained in the section that follows the table.

### Resource Summary

| Core Business Areas  | Estimated <sup>1</sup> | Other Authorizations <sup>2</sup> | Total Estimated | Actual         | Variance  |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>  |                        |                                   |                 |                |           |
| Environmental Stewardship <sup>3</sup> .....   | 78,857                 | 7,936                             | 86,793          | 96,551         | 9,758     |
| Water Stewardship <sup>4</sup> .....   | 39,228                 |                                   | 39,228          | 27,660         | (11,568)  |
| Oceans and Marine Fisheries.....   | 2,258                  |                                   | 2,258           | 2,929          | 671       |
| Environmental Protection <sup>5</sup> .....  | 43,230                 | 252,000                           | 295,230         | 295,212        | (18)      |
| Compliance <sup>6</sup> .....  | 18,482                 |                                   | 18,482          | 19,541         | 1,059     |
| Executive and Support Services <sup>7</sup> .....                                    | 33,807                 |                                   | 33,807          | 33,906         | 99        |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>215,862</b>         | <b>259,936</b>                    | <b>475,798</b>  | <b>475,798</b> | <b>0</b>  |
| <b>Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)</b>  |                        |                                   |                 |                |           |
| Environmental Stewardship .....  | 478                    |                                   | 478             | 546            | 68        |
| Water Stewardship.....   | 127                    |                                   | 127             | 131            | 4         |
| Oceans and Marine Fisheries.....   | 14                     |                                   | 14              | 15             | 1         |
| Environmental Protection <sup>5</sup> .....  | 270                    |                                   | 270             | 280            | 10        |
| Compliance.....  | 152                    |                                   | 152             | 142            | (10)      |
| Executive and Support Services.....  | 403                    |                                   | 403             | 391            | (12)      |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>1,444</b>           |                                   | <b>1,444</b>    | <b>1,505</b>   | <b>61</b> |
| <b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)<sup>8</sup></b> |                        |                                   |                 |                |           |
| Environmental Stewardship .....  | 29,673                 |                                   | 29,673          | 28,644         | (1,029)   |
| Water Stewardship.....   | 162                    |                                   | 162             | 129            | (33)      |
| Oceans and Marine Fisheries.....   | 5                      |                                   | 5               | 0              | (5)       |
| Environmental Protection .....   | 283                    |                                   | 283             | 1,066          | 783       |
| Compliance.....  | 1,153                  |                                   | 1,153           | 337            | (816)     |
| Executive and Support Services <sup>9</sup> .....                                    | 2,710                  | 62                                | 2,772           | 3,890          | 1,118     |
| <b>Total<sup>10</sup> .....</b>  | <b>33,986</b>          | <b>62</b>                         | <b>34,048</b>   | <b>34,066</b>  | <b>18</b> |

- <sup>1</sup> The “Estimated” amount corresponds to the *Estimates* as presented to the Legislative Assembly in February 2007.
- <sup>2</sup> “Other Authorizations” include access to Operating Contingencies in the amount of \$7.9 million for the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation; \$252 million in Supplementary Estimates; and access to Capital Contingencies in the amount of \$62 thousand for information systems.
- <sup>3</sup> The \$9.8 million operating shortfall in Environmental Stewardship includes costs of Storm Damage; Mountain Caribou, Spotted Owl, Ungulate Inventories; increased payments to the Freshwater Fisheries Society; and a payment to the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation to offset operating and maintenance costs on conservation land properties.
- <sup>4</sup> The \$11.6 million operating surplus in Water Stewardship is due to delays in BC Hydro’s implementation of Water Use Plans.
- <sup>5</sup> Environmental Protection includes expenses and staffing for the BC Climate Action Secretariat.
- <sup>6</sup> The \$1.1 million operating shortfall in Compliance is due to the extension of seasonal conservation officers; increased travel and vehicle operating expenses; and Bear Aware Education and Bear Smart programs.
- <sup>7</sup> Executive and Support Services includes expenses for the Minister’s Office, Deputy Minister’s Office, Strategic Policy Division, Corporate Services Division (shared with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands), and shared administrative staff in the regional offices.
- <sup>8</sup> Capital Expenditures in fiscal 2007/08 included \$13.2 million in Park and Protected Area land; \$13.7 million in park facilities; \$1.6 million for capitalized vehicle leases; and \$3.4 million for information systems.
- <sup>9</sup> The \$1.1 million capital shortfall in Executive and Support Services is due to increased information systems costs for e-Licensing.
- <sup>10</sup> The \$18 thousand capital shortfall is offset by a \$17 thousand capital surplus in the Environmental Assessment Office, which holds the other capital budget component authorized for the Ministry of Environment. The difference of \$1 thousand is due to rounding.

## Operating Expenses

Any core business surpluses were redirected within the ministry to address priorities. The surplus variance in Water Stewardship was due to lower than anticipated water rental remissions, offset by operating shortfalls in Environmental Stewardship and Compliance. Detailed explanations are provided as footnotes to the Resource Summary.

## Full-time Equivalents

Overall, the ministry utilized 61 FTEs more than estimated. Environmental Stewardship used 68 FTEs more than budgeted due to staff hired to meet the objectives of recoverable programs. Although salaries costs were recovered by sources outside the ministry (e.g., Forest Investment Account), the FTE usage was not. This overage was partially offset through recruitment lag in Compliance and Executive and Support Services.

Environmental Protection used 10 FTEs more than budgeted due to the establishment of the BC Climate Action Secretariat during 2007/08.

## Capital Expenditures

Overall, the ministry’s capital expenditure exceeded total estimates by \$0.02 million or 0.05 per cent, primarily due to increased information systems costs for e-Licensing. The capital shortfall is offset by an equivalent capital surplus in the Environmental Assessment Office, which holds the other capital budget component authorized for the Ministry of Environment.



## Comparison of 2007/08 and 2006/07 Expense

The ministry's gross expense in 2007/08 increased by \$289.03 million from 2006/07 primarily as a result of Supplementary Estimates in the amount of \$252 million for Climate Action initiatives.

The breakdown of these expenses is as follows:

- Salaries and benefits increased by \$9.72 million. This is primarily due to the conversion of contract funding to create permanent positions and a negotiating framework wage increase.
- Operating costs increased by \$40.77 million, primarily due to Climate Action initiatives carried out under Supplementary Estimates (\$22.6 million) and the transfer of Central Management Service costs to the ministry.
- Government transfers increased by \$233.30 million. This is mainly due to Climate Action initiatives carried out under Supplementary Estimates.

Other expenses increased by \$5.24 million, primarily due to a \$4.58 million increase in water rental remissions.

## Year-Over-Year Resource Changes

Figure 4 provides a year-over-year description of the changes to the ministry's resources. Previous fiscal periods have not been restated for comparative purposes to reflect the transfer of Corporate Services Division and the annualization of Land and Water BC into the ministry.

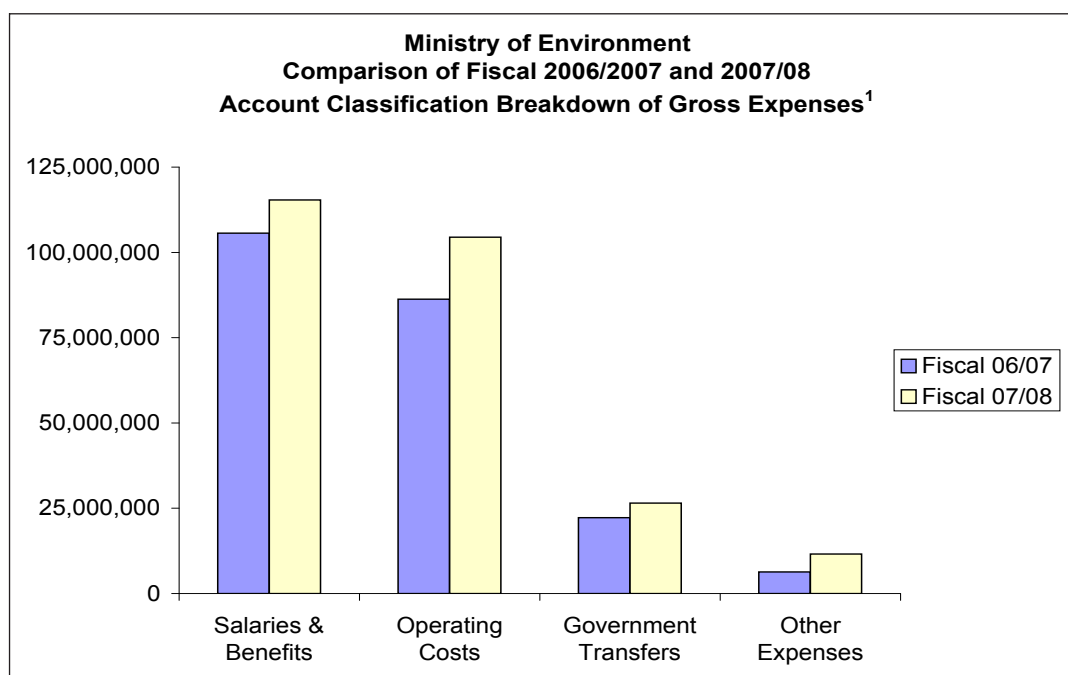


Figure 4. Two-year comparison of gross expense (Source: B.C. Draft Public Accounts, 2007-2008)

<sup>1</sup> Supplementary estimates excluded for comparative purposes.

## Environmental Appeal Board/Forest Appeals Commission

The Environmental Appeal Board (Board) and Forest Appeals Commission (Commission) are independent, quasi-judicial tribunals jointly administered by the same office. They hear appeals of government decisions under several provincial statutes concerned with natural resource management, environmental quality and public health protection.

As well, the Board and Commission administer other tribunals including the Hospital Appeal Board and the Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board for the Ministry of Health and the Industry Training Appeal Board for the Ministry of Economic Development.

The Board has statutory authority to hear appeals from administrative decisions under the *Environmental Management Act*, the *Health Act*, the *Integrated Pest Management Act*, the *Water Act* and the *Wildlife Act*. For 2007/08, the Board received approximately 40 appeals against 33 orders/permits/decisions, conducted 17 hearings and published 41 decisions.

The Commission has statutory authority to hear appeals from administrative decisions made with respect to a variety of matters regulated by the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Forest Act*, the *Range Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and the *Private Managed Forest Land Act*. For 2007/08, the Commission received appeals against 63 orders/permits/decisions, conducted 12 hearings and published 20 decisions.

The Board<sup>8</sup> and Commission<sup>9</sup> each produce an annual report, which is provided to their ministers for tabling in the legislature.

|  | Estimated <sup>1</sup> | Other Authorizations | Total Estimated | Actual       | Variance     |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>  |                        |                      |                 |              |              |
| Environmental Appeal Board/<br>Forest Appeals Commission                 | 2,077                  |                      | 2,077           | 1,430        | (647)        |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>2,077</b>           |                      | <b>2,077</b>    | <b>1,430</b> | <b>(647)</b> |
| <b>Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)</b>                                      |                        |                      |                 |              |              |
| Environmental Appeal Board/<br>Forest Appeals Commission                 | 11                     |                      | 11              | 9            | (2)          |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>11</b>              |                      | <b>11</b>       | <b>9</b>     | <b>(2)</b>   |
| <b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b> |                        |                      |                 |              |              |
| Environmental Appeal Board/<br>Forest Appeals Commission                 | 15                     |                      | 15              | 0            | (15)         |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>15</b>              |                      | <b>15</b>       | <b>0</b>     | <b>(15)</b>  |

<sup>1</sup> The "Estimated" amount corresponds to the *Estimates* as presented to the Legislative Assembly in February 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Go to [www.eab.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eab.gov.bc.ca) for more information on the Environmental Appeal Board.

<sup>9</sup> Go to [www.fac.gov.bc.ca](http://www.fac.gov.bc.ca) for more information on the Forest Appeals Commission.

# Environmental Assessment Office

## Highlights of the Year

In 2007/08, the Environmental Assessment Office effectively managed an unprecedented 71 reviewable projects. This represented over 20 billion dollars in potential investment in British Columbia and a 13 per cent increase in last year's record project volumes. The five projects referred to ministers was down from last year's record of 11 projects; however, the projects completed met all of the legislated timelines.

### Projects Update

During 2007/08, a total of 71 projects were in the environmental assessment process. This year, the Environmental Assessment Office referred five projects to ministers for a decision and an independent review panel referred a project to the ministers. Of six projects referred during 2007/08, five were certified during the fiscal year. An additional project that was referred to the ministers in the previous fiscal was also certified in 2007/08. The Environmental Assessment Office also reviewed and approved requests from 11 proponents for 16 amendments to their respective environmental assessment certificates. Under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the Environmental Assessment Office may decide that an environmental assessment certificate is not required for a project, if satisfied that the project will not result in any significant adverse effects when practical mitigation measures are taken into account. The Environmental Assessment Office determined that the extension of the Smithers Airport runway did not require an environmental assessment certificate. The proponent must still obtain all relevant permits and meet all regulatory requirements for the project. More detailed information can be found on the Environmental Assessment Office's electronic Project Information Centre (ePIC) at: [www.eao.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca).

### Intergovernmental

In 2007/08, 75 per cent of all projects under review by the Environmental Assessment Office were also confirmed by the federal government as subject to, or likely subject to, review under the federal *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

### First Nations

Initiatives in 2007/08 to build relationships with First Nations included providing funding to the Treaty Eight Tribal Association for an Environmental Assessment Coordinator to help them with the large number of environmental assessments they are involved in. The Environmental Assessment Office also participated in several forums and workshops organized by the First Nation Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group, such as a forum to discuss social impact assessments and renewable energy. These forums and workshops also provided an opportunity for networking and relationship-building.

## Purpose of the Environmental Assessment Office

The Environmental Assessment Office was created in 1995 to co-ordinate the assessment of proposed major projects in British Columbia as required under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. This role was continued for the Environmental Assessment Office when government proclaimed the rewritten *Environmental Assessment Act* in December 2002.

Environmental assessment examines the potential for adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects from the construction, operation and, where required, decommissioning stage of a project. For any project requiring an environmental assessment certificate, the proponent must first undergo an environmental assessment and receive a certificate before ministries can issue approvals for the project under other provincial enactments.

There are three ways a project can be designated reviewable under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. Projects in the following sectors that meet or exceed the size thresholds established in the Reviewable Projects Regulation (B.C. Reg. 370/2002) are automatically subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act*: industrial, mining, energy, water management (dams, dykes, and reservoirs), waste disposal, food processing, transportation and tourism (destination resorts). Project proponents may also apply to the Environmental Assessment Office to have their project reviewed under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The Minister of Environment may also order the assessment of a project if the Minister believes the project has the potential for significant adverse effects and it is in the public interest to do so.

The environmental assessment process administered by the Environmental Assessment Office provides for:

- opportunities for First Nations, local government, government agencies and all interested parties to identify issues and provide input;
- consultations with First Nations to address and, where appropriate, accommodate potential effects on established or asserted aboriginal rights and title;
- technical studies to identify any potentially adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects of a proposed project;
- strategies and measures to avoid, prevent or reduce potential adverse effects through mitigation or project redesign;
- development of a comprehensive environmental assessment report summarizing issues and findings that may include recommendations on whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate for a project; and
- assigning conditions and follow-up or compliance reporting requirements to a proponent in an environmental assessment certificate.

Major projects subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act* may also be reviewable under the federal *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. To minimize duplication and overlap, Canada and British Columbia entered into the Canada/British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation in 2004 to co-ordinate information requirements, use provincial time limits and issue a joint assessment report wherever possible, while retaining their respective decision-making powers.

During an assessment, the Environmental Assessment Office obtains valuable advice from provincial ministries, such as the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and the Ministry of Community Services on technical and policy considerations within their respective mandates.

## Strategic Context

The continued strong performance of the provincial economy, as well as increasing demand for energy and mineral resources from Asia and the United States, has had significant effects on the workload of the Environmental Assessment Office. Over the past three years, the Environmental Assessment Office has experienced an unprecedented number of energy, mining, and infrastructure projects entering the assessment process. With additional economic growth projected, this trend is expected to continue.

A key challenge for the Office, therefore, is meeting the demand for environmental assessments resulting from continued economic growth and delivering timely reviews to support the economy. The Environmental Assessment Office People Plan is designed to support the work of the Office in meeting its workload pressures through the recruitment of persons with the required skill sets, while ensuring appropriate succession planning measures are also in place.

Energy and mining project proposals represent the majority of projects in the assessment process and will use the bulk of the Environmental Assessment Office's resources. The energy projects, especially from independent power producers who are helping to meet the government's goal to be electricity self-sufficient by 2016, represent a wide diversity of energy resources (such as hydro, wind and biomass). This diversity of projects will help enable the province to acquire 90 per cent of its energy needs from clean sources. Project proposals for new mines, primarily in the northwest and northeast, are expected to continue to enter the environmental assessment process at an unprecedented rate.

When conducting assessments and preparing recommendations to government on applications for environmental assessment certificates, the Environmental Assessment Office is guided by the evolving case law and government policy related to the obligations of the Crown. This means ensuring that government's consultation and accommodation obligations to First Nations have been met.

The Environmental Assessment Office is committed to building a new relationship with First Nations that is founded on reconciliation, mutual respect and trust. As part of this commitment, the Environmental Assessment Office recognizes that First Nations have interests that are based on established or asserted aboriginal rights and title, and is working to engage First Nations early and effectively in the environmental assessment process.

More specifically, the Environmental Assessment Office seeks First Nations input on its project-scoping decisions, encourages and helps fund First Nations participation in technical working groups, and makes provisions for First Nations discussion outside of working groups where necessary. First Nations are also provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Assessment Report, which identifies the issues considered during an environmental assessment. The draft report includes a detailed assessment of potential impacts of the proposed

project on established or asserted aboriginal rights and title, and summarizes the conclusions of the review, including the documentation of any unresolved issues. It is then finalized and forwarded to ministers for their consideration as the statutory decision-makers under the British Columbia *Environmental Assessment Act*.

The Environmental Assessment Office also actively encourages proponents to meet with First Nations at their earliest opportunity to learn about First Nations communities and First Nations interests and concerns.

One of the benefits of successfully engaging First Nations in environmental assessment reviews is that it helps government establish an effective working relationship with First Nations at the beginning of a potential project. This assists other provincial agencies if the project proceeds to the permitting stage after an environmental assessment certificate has been issued by ministers.

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to work with First Nations, proponents, stakeholders and other government bodies, including federal government agencies, to improve upon the environmental assessment process.



# Report on Performance

## Performance Plan Summary Table

| <b>Goal 1: The environmental assessment process is clear and streamlined</b><br>For greater detail see pages 62 to 66                                   | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b> | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b>   |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>1.1 The environmental assessment process is easy to follow</b><br>Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process              | 8 out of 10               | 6 out of 10<br>NOT ACHIEVED |
| <b>1.2 Harmonized federal/provincial assessment processes</b><br>Percentage of applications in harmonized review completed within provincial time lines | 80%                       | 100%<br>EXCEEDED            |

| <b>Goal 2: Environmental assessment reports and recommendations are comprehensive and timely</b><br>For greater detail see pages 66 to 70  | <b>2007/08<br/>Target</b> | <b>2007/08<br/>Actual</b> |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>2.1 Applications for environmental assessment certificates are complete and thorough</b><br><br>Percentage of applications in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days | 90%                       | 100%<br>EXCEEDED          |
| Percentage of environmental assessment reports that identify and consider all potential significant environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects raised during the project review    | 100%                      | 100%<br>ACHIEVED          |
| <b>2.2 Meaningful consultation with First Nations occurs during environmental assessment reviews</b><br>Percentage of project assessments with First Nations engaged in working groups               | 75%                       | 91%<br>EXCEEDED           |

## Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

### Goal 1: The environmental assessment process is clear and streamlined

The environmental assessment of major projects must preserve high environmental standards, offer process certainty to proponents, be competitive with other jurisdictions and be accessible to all levels of government and stakeholders. To meet the goal of an environmental assessment process that is clear and streamlined, the Environmental Assessment Office set two objectives: (1) an environmental assessment process that is easy to follow and (2) harmonization with the federal government and provision of access to information about project reviews as they proceed.

## Objective 1.1: The environmental assessment process is easy to follow

The Environmental Assessment Office seeks to continually improve the environmental assessment process through the development of tools to improve proponents', First Nations', and the public's understanding of the process and assist with the preparation of assessment documentation. Efforts are also made to enhance public information about the environmental assessment process and provide access to information about project reviews as they proceed.

### Strategies

Strategies for this objective include the drafting of sector-specific guidelines for each project category and a proponents' guide to the environmental assessment process as well as publications and ways to ensure increased public understanding of the process and opportunities for public participation. The Environmental Assessment Office continually evaluates and refines its assessment guidelines and policies to ensure the review process is clear and accessible for proponents, to facilitate the delivery of good quality environmental assessment applications, and to streamline regulatory requirements wherever possible.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process**

| Performance Measure   | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target     | 2007/08 Actual              |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process | 8 out of 10    | 8 out of 10    | Maintain or exceed | 6 out of 10<br>NOT ACHIEVED |

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office and BC Stats.

### Discussion of Results

Environmental assessments require significant human and financial resources from proponents and government. Every two years, BC Stats conducts an independent and neutrally administered survey of proponents for the Environmental Assessment Office to measure client satisfaction with the delivery of environmental assessments and gauge whether the process is clear, timely and effective. For years in between the formal surveys, the Environmental Assessment Office conducts telephone interviews and meetings with proponents. For 2007/08, a formal survey was conducted by BC Stats and the proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the environmental assessment process was 6 out of 10. The proponent survey indicates that the overall reduction in proponent satisfaction is due to four main factors: the desire for clearer direction, rules, and explanations of the environmental assessment process; the speed of the environmental assessment process; difficulty in dealing with First Nations and local issues; and the desire for improved communication with federal agencies.

## Office Response

The Environmental Assessment Office has been working hard to build more effective working relationships with proponents, First Nations, federal agencies, and other stakeholders in the environmental assessment process. The Environmental Assessment Office and the Vancouver Office of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are implementing a jointly developed work plan aimed at improving the delivery of co-operative environmental assessments in British Columbia. In response to impediments to efficient and effective delivery that were identified in the work plan, the offices recently signed four procedural “commitments” intended to provide certainty and predictability in the conduct of some key activities during the co-operative environmental assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office is continuing to work toward building more effective relationships with First Nations by encouraging their early engagement in the environmental assessment process and providing them with the resources to participate in the environmental assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office is in the early stages of developing a new course and new materials on the environmental assessment process in British Columbia. These resources will provide proponents and others with knowledge and tools to enable them to navigate through an environmental assessment process more effectively.

The Environmental Assessment Office is also reviewing and revising a number of policy documents to help provide greater clarity and consistency to all parties involved in environmental assessments.

## Objective 1.2: Harmonized federal/provincial assessment processes

In 2004, British Columbia and Canada renewed the Canada/British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation. The agreement is designed to achieve government co-operation, efficient and effective use of public and private resources and procedural certainty for participants in the environmental assessment process. The agreement includes specific measures to minimize costly and time-consuming duplication and overlap when a project is subject to provincial and federal assessment legislation. The challenge is to integrate into the provincial process and associated time limits, federal review steps and timeframes for federal decision-making under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, in particular, where a project is subject to a comprehensive study under the federal process.

## Strategies

To ensure that joint federal/provincial environmental assessments meet all requirements of the Canada/British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (2004), the Environmental Assessment Office works with the Canadian Environmental Assessment

Agency to draft, implement, and evaluate operational policies and procedures for co-ordinated environmental assessment. The Environmental Assessment Office also collaborates with federal environmental assessment staff to develop, on a project-by-project basis, work plans and schedules for each environmental assessment and steps for regular communication to monitor and address co-ordination issues.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Percentage of applications in harmonized review completed within provincial time lines**

| Performance Measure  | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual   |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of applications in harmonized review completed within provincial time lines | 75%            | 79%            | 80%            | 100%<br>EXCEEDED |

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office.

## Discussion of Results

A unified time limit for completion of provincial and federal environmental assessments reduces duplication and overlap, supports the efficient and effective use of public and private resources and offers procedural certainty for participants in the environmental assessment process. For the year 2007/08, 12 projects subject to review under the *Environmental Assessment Act* were also subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Five of the 12 projects were referred to ministers for a decision of which three were screening-level assessments; two were comprehensive studies under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. In each case, the Environmental Assessment Office managed these harmonized reviews on behalf of both governments using provincial time limits and consulted extensively with federal departments to develop federal/provincial work plans and address any co-ordination issues. The Environmental Assessment Office achieved a 100 per cent success rate in meeting the performance measure target, improving on the 79 per cent success rate in 2006/07. In addition to the 12 projects subject to joint review, the Kemess North Copper-Gold Mine project was assessed by the joint federal/provincial panel review which set its own timelines.

## Office Response

The Environmental Assessment Office will continue its efforts to ensure harmonized reviews are completed within provincial timelines.

## **Goal 2: Environmental assessment reports and recommendations are comprehensive and timely**

Ministers require timely, high quality information, analysis and recommendations about the potential effects of a project to decide whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate. The Environmental Assessment Office recognizes that to assess the impacts of a project, information in applications for environmental assessment certificates must be complete and thorough. Also key is meaningful consultation with First Nations to identify and address potential effects to First Nations' interests. Environmental assessment reports are based on a thorough review of all relevant issues and include representation of the interests of those affected by a proposed project. This provides the basis for fully informed decisions by ministers as to whether a project should proceed and results in decisions that also consider the broader public interest.

### **Objective 2.1: Applications for environmental assessment certificates are complete and thorough**

The Environmental Assessment Office works closely with government agencies, First Nations and proponents to determine the information required from a proponent (known as an application for an environmental assessment certificate) to assess the potential environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects of a project. The Environmental Assessment Office also assesses the adequacy of a proponent's proposed plans for consulting the public and First Nations during the application review. These measures help ensure the proponent's application is complete so the process can proceed in a timely manner.

### **Strategies**

The Environmental Assessment Office sets out, in Terms of Reference issued to a proponent, the information required for an application for an environmental assessment certificate. The Terms of Reference describe the range of data, analyses and reporting the application will contain. The Environmental Assessment Office convenes multi-disciplinary working groups to assist with this task and also issues a draft of the Terms of Reference for public review and comment. This ensures that final Terms of Reference are thorough, identify the technical and scientific information required for a good quality environmental assessment application and benefit from the perspectives obtained through discussions and consultations with stakeholders and First Nations.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Percentage of applications in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days**

| Performance Measure   | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual   |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of applications in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days | 75%            | 54%            | 90%            | 100%<br>EXCEEDED |

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office.

### Discussion of Results

Legislated time limits in the *Environmental Assessment Act*, including a 180-day limit for review of applications for environmental assessment certificates, offer greater process certainty and are important for effective planning and decision-making. Once an application is accepted for formal review, the Environmental Assessment Office strives to complete the environmental assessment within this 180-day time limit. In 2007/08, the Environmental Assessment Office completed environmental reviews of five projects and referred these projects to ministers for a decision. The Environmental Assessment Office completed all project reviews in 2007/08 within 180 days. The average number of days per review was 177 days.

Two project reviews completed in fiscal year 2007/08 were comprehensive studies (Ruby Creek Molybdenum Mine and Waneta Hydroelectric Expansion), and three project reviews were screening-level assessments (Revelstoke Generating Station Unit 5 Project, Bear Mountain Wind Park and Mackenzie Green Energy Centre) under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Projects subject to comprehensive studies under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* are typically more complex and can prove challenging to fully harmonize with the British Columbia environmental assessment process in 180 days.

### Office Response

The Environmental Assessment Office will continue its efforts to ensure all application reviews are completed within the 180-day timeline. While some deviations are expected for complex projects, the Environmental Assessment Office will strive to avoid or minimize any such deviations in the future.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure:** Percentage of environmental assessment reports that identify and consider all potential significant environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects raised during the project review

| Performance Measure   | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual   |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of environmental assessment reports that identify and consider all potential significant environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects raised during the project review | 100%           | 100%           | 100%           | 100%<br>ACHIEVED |

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office.

### Discussion of Results

The environmental assessment reports for ministers provide the findings of an environmental assessment, a thorough review of all relevant issues, and the basis for balanced decisions by government on whether a project should proceed. The Environmental Assessment Office works with proponents to ensure information to assess a project's potential environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects is identified, collected, and then shared and reviewed by government, First Nations and the public. The environmental assessment process is an iterative process in which a proponent may refine the project design to address effects identified during the review. Environmental assessment reports carefully document these and other measures proposed or adopted by a proponent in response to potential effects. Through these steps, the Environmental Assessment Office ensures assessment reports describe the range of perspectives and issues on a project along with measures developed by a proponent to mitigate potential adverse effects. The Environmental Assessment Office continues to ensure all environmental assessment reports identify and consider all potential significant issues.

### Objective 2.2: Meaningful consultation with First Nations occurs during environmental assessment reviews

Government has an obligation to consult with First Nations and, where appropriate, accommodate established and asserted aboriginal rights and titles. The Environmental Assessment Office engages First Nations in the assessment process to discharge the Crown's duties, and to consider First Nations' issues in the completion of environmental assessment reviews.

### Strategies

Strategies adopted by the Environmental Assessment Office to achieve this objective include requiring proponents to develop plans for consultations with First Nations, and seeking active First Nations' involvement in project reviews, including representation on project technical



working groups. A primary tool for ensuring thorough and comprehensive environmental assessments is the establishment of technical working groups. These groups consist of representatives of key federal, provincial and local government agencies, and typically seek active representation from First Nations affected by a project. The direct engagement of First Nations in working groups is an effective way of building relationships, identifying First Nations' issues, and initiating processes and project design changes that assist in accommodating First Nations' rights, title and other project-related issues. The Environmental Assessment Office also consults with First Nations on a government-to-government basis, where appropriate, outside of the technical working group.

## Performance Results

**Performance Measure: Percentage of project assessments with First Nations engaged in working groups**

| Performance Measure  | 2005/06 Actual | 2006/07 Actual | 2007/08 Target | 2007/08 Actual  |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Percentage of project assessments with First Nations engaged in working groups | N/A            | 75%            | 75%            | 91%<br>EXCEEDED |

**Data Source:** Environmental Assessment Office.

## Discussion of Results

This was a new measure for the Environmental Assessment Office in 2006/07. The benchmark has been established based on the First Nations that may be impacted by a project and have chosen to sit on the technical working group for the project. Although the Environmental Assessment Office cannot control whether First Nations choose to participate in working groups, First Nations' perspectives on a project are important, and the Environmental Assessment Office makes every effort to seek their participation. For the 2008/09 Service Plan, this performance measure has been more accurately re-titled "Percentage of impacted First Nations engaged in project assessment working groups."

## Office Response

The Environmental Assessment Office seeks early and active engagement with First Nations that may be impacted by a proposed project. The Environmental Assessment Office has streamlined its processes for providing First Nations with contributory funding, making it easier for First Nations to fully participate in an environmental assessment. The Environmental Assessment Office also provides considerable support to the First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group to help educate First Nations about the environmental assessment process in British Columbia.

# Report on Resources

## Resource Summary Table

| Major Project Environmental Assessments and Corporate Operations         | Estimated <sup>1</sup> | Other Authorizations | Total Estimated | Actual       | Variance    |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>  |                        |                      |                 |              |             |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>6,957</b>           |                      | <b>6,957</b>    | <b>6,950</b> | <b>(7)</b>  |
| <b>Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)</b>                                      |                        |                      |                 |              |             |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>49</b>              |                      | <b>49</b>       | <b>46</b>    | <b>(3)</b>  |
| <b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b> |                        |                      |                 |              |             |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>56</b>              |                      | <b>56</b>       | <b>39</b>    | <b>(17)</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The "Estimated" amount corresponds to the *Estimates* as presented to the Legislative Assembly in February 2007.

# Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

## Appendix A: Ministry Hyperlinks to Additional Information

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/vision\\_mission\\_values.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/vision_mission_values.pdf)

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/org\\_chart.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/org_chart.pdf)

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/core\\_business.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/core_business.pdf)

The Ministry of Environment's glossary of terms can be found here:

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/glossary.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/glossary.pdf)

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

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/leg.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/leg.pdf)

The Ministry of Environment's risk management framework can be found here:

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/riskmgmt.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2008/riskmgmt.pdf)

## Appendix B: Ministry Contact Information

| Regional Office   | Telephone                    | Fax                          | Website                |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Victoria — Headquarters</b>  | 250 387-1161                 | 250 387-5669                 | www.gov.bc.ca/env      |
| <b>Vancouver Island Region</b>  |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Nanaimo  | 250 751-3100                 | 250 751-3103                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/vir/ |
| Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Lower Mainland Region</b>  |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Surrey   | 604 582-5200                 | 604 930-7119                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/sry/ |
| Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, North Vancouver, Powell River                   |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Thompson Region</b>  |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Kamloops   | 250 371-6200                 | 250 828-4000                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/sir/ |
| Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt  |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Okanagan Region</b>  |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Penticton  | 250 490-8200                 | 250 490-2231                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/sir/ |
| Other offices: Grand Forks, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton/Manning Park, Vernon                         |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Kootenay Region</b>  |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Offices:</i><br>Cranbrook<br>Nelson  | 250 489-8540<br>250 354-6333 | 250 489-8506<br>250 354-6332 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/kor/ |
| Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Invermere, Revelstoke                       |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Cariboo Region</b>   |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i><br>Williams Lake   | 250 398-4530                 | 250 398-4214                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/car/ |
| Other offices: 100 Mile House, Bella Coola/Hagensborg, Quesnel                                      |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Skeena Region</b>  |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Smithers   | 250 847-7260                 | 250 847-7591                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/ |
| Other offices: Atlin, Burns Lake, Dease Lake, Queen Charlotte City, Terrace/Lakelse Lake            |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Peace Region</b>   |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Fort St. John  | 250 787-3411                 | 250 565-6629                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/nor/ |
| Other offices: Chetwynd/Moberly Lake Park, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson/Liard Hot Springs              |                              |                              |                        |
| <b>Omineca Region</b>   |                              |                              |                        |
| <i>Main Regional Office:</i> Prince George  | 250 565-6135                 | 250 565-6629                 | wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/omr/ |
| Other offices: Mackenzie, Vanderhoof  |                              |                              |                        |

## **Appendix C: Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information**

For more information on the Environmental Assessment Office:

### **Environmental Assessment Office**

First Floor  
836 Yates Street  
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9V1

### **General Inquiries**

Telephone: 250 356-7441 and [eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca)  
Fax: 250 356-7440  
Website: [www.eao.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca)

