

Ministry of Environment

including

BC Climate Action Secretariat and
Environmental Assessment Office

2008/09

Annual Service Plan Report



Ministry of Environment including BC Climate Action Secretariat and
Environmental Assessment Office

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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



At the start of the 2008 fiscal year, British Columbia continued to reap the benefits of a strong economy based on a solid financial foundation, but during the last half of the year, B.C.'s economy slowed dramatically as a result of the escalating instability of global financial markets. As the year progressed into 2009, the financial crisis worsened, undermining business and consumer confidence around the world. Despite this dramatic shift in the global economy and the subsequent decline in B.C.'s provincial revenues, I can report that during the 2008/09 fiscal year, British Columbia continued to make significant progress on its environmental priorities.

Our continuing leadership role in delivering the government's Great Goal to lead the world in sustainable environmental management is clearly demonstrated in this annual report, which outlines many of our accomplishments during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

In June 2008, I introduced government's Climate Action Plan, which is estimated to achieve 73 per cent of British Columbia's target to reduce emissions by 33 per cent by 2020. To deliver on this plan, government passed eight pieces of legislation, including three that were introduced by my Ministry:

- Bill 18, the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Cap and Trade) Act*, provides the statutory basis for setting up a market-based cap and trade framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from large emitters operating within the province.
- Bill 39, the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Vehicle Emissions Standards) Act*, provides the authority to make regulations setting greenhouse gas emission standards for new light-duty vehicles distributed for sale in B.C. These standards will be equivalent to those identified in the state of California and will become more stringent for each model year until 2016.
- Bill 31, the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Emissions Standards) Statutes Amendment Act*, containing amendments to the *Environmental Management Act* gives the Province authority to regulate waste management facilities (beginning with landfills) to capture and manage their greenhouse gas emissions.

British Columbia has also taken action on climate change by continuing to implement tools and resources that will ensure government and the public sector are carbon neutral in 2010. Other examples of climate action leadership include government's work in the Western Climate Initiative, and its engagement of British Columbians through seven regional Citizens' Conservation Councils and the LiveSmart BC website.

The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport are working to address provincial air and water quality issues. In 2008, the responsibility for addressing air and

Ministry of Environment including BC Climate Action Secretariat and
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water quality impacts on human health shifted to the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for operating the air quality monitoring network. In June 2008, the government introduced the BC Air Action Plan to help ensure that British Columbians continue to enjoy the very best air quality possible. The Ministry is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and other ministries, industry, communities and other levels of government to implement the plan's comprehensive 28 clean air initiatives that champion clean transportation, clean industry and clean communities.

In June 2008, I was privileged to release *Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan*. This visionary work outlines the government's plan to keep our water healthy and secure into the future. Living Water Smart acknowledges that government's work is only part of the solution, and challenges all British Columbians to step up and do their part. This plan is recognized across Canada and beyond as comprehensive, bold and unique in its presentation. Numerous agencies and organizations comprising scientists, policy makers, academics, industry, business, First Nations, local governments and non-governmental organizations are engaged in implementing its vision. The Ministry is proud to have inspired such passion and support, and applauds the efforts of our partners and stakeholders to help implement and promote the Living Water Smart Plan.

In May 2008, Bill 38, the *Protected Areas of British Columbia (Conservancies and Parks) Amendment Act* received Royal Assent. This legislation represents one of the largest single additions to the protected areas system in the history of the province, in terms of both the overall area being added to the system and the number of sites. The Act contains the descriptions of 11 new "Class A" provincial parks and 70 additional conservancies, doubling the number of conservancies to 135. In total, this new legislation will add more than 990,000 hectares – approximately twice the size of Prince Edward Island – to B.C.'s parks and protected areas system.

Also receiving Royal Assent in May 2008 was Bill 29, the *Environmental (Species and Public Protection) Statutes Amendment Act*. This Bill contains amendments to the *Environmental Management Act* and the *Wildlife Act*. These legislative changes provide improved authority for protecting wildlife resources and public safety in British Columbia. On July 9, 2008, I was also pleased to introduce the Conservation Framework, British Columbia's new approach for maintaining the rich biodiversity of the province.

In 2008/09, 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 strives to complete reviews efficiently and in a timely manner, while ensuring environmental concerns are duly addressed. This is particularly important during these times of economic challenge. For the second year in a row, the Environmental Assessment Office successfully managed a record number of projects, with over 85 projects in the environmental assessment process. The Environmental Assessment Office also completed a record number of reviews – 13 in 2008/09, and a total of 21 over the past two years.

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The Environmental Assessment Office met or exceeded its performance targets to complete reviews within the legislated time limit, except where challenges with federal agencies existed. The review of projects that also require federal review is frequently delayed by unnecessary duplication and overlap of provincial and federal assessments. There are presently over \$1.7 billion worth of projects that have been approved under the British Columbia environmental assessment system, which cannot proceed at this time because they are awaiting federal environmental assessment decisions. This duplication of effort is not an efficient use of taxpayer dollars; it increases uncertainty and risks for investors and reduces job creation in mining, energy, resort development and other areas at a time when the country is facing significant economic challenges. To overcome those challenges, the Environmental Assessment Office initiated aggressive strategies to eliminate unnecessary federal and provincial duplication in late 2008/09. British Columbia is pursuing reciprocal arrangements and equivalency agreements to allow one thorough, comprehensive and scientific environmental assessment for one project. As noted in the 2009 Speech from the Throne, British Columbia's position is that for any given project, there should be one process for review and approval.

The Ministry of Environment including the BC Climate Action Secretariat and Environmental Assessment Office 2008/09 Annual Service Plan Report compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the Ministry's 2008/09 – 2010/11 Service Plan. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Penner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Honourable Barry Penner
Minister of Environment

July 31, 2009

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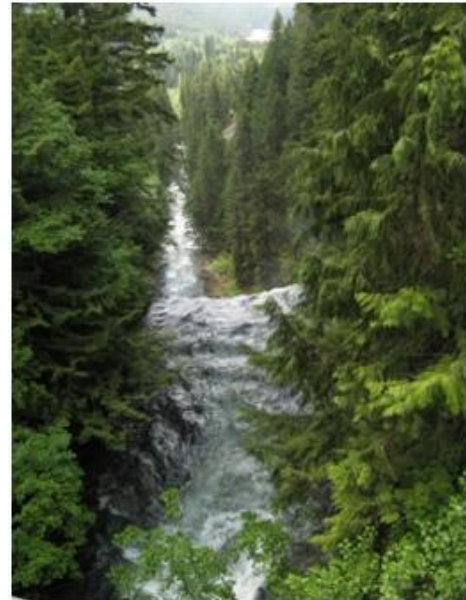
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Ministry Highlights of the Year

Air Action Plan Accomplishments: Since the BC Air Action Plan was released on June 4, 2008, there has been progress on 27 initiatives for clean transportation, clean industry and clean communities, funded through \$5 million allocated to support implementation of the plan in 2008/09. Air Action Plan accomplishments include: expanding the BC Scrap-It Program province-wide and improving the incentives for removing pre-1995 vehicles from B.C. roads; retrofitting school buses throughout the province; implementing, in partnership with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, new provincial anti-idling initiatives; and facilitating the start up of nine new community-based woodstove change-out programs. For more information, please visit www.bcairsmart.ca.

B.C.'s Water Plan Released: *Living Water Smart: BC's Water Plan*, a blueprint for change for the 21st century, was released in June 2008. The plan contains 45 recommended actions to keep our water secure and healthy now and in the future. It proposes significant shifts in government operations, the regulatory framework for land and water, community development, watershed restoration and public awareness, and will positively benefit stream health and technological efficiency. Since the release of the plan, the Ministry has been helping local government, industry and homeowners choose to be water smart. For more information, go to www.livingwatersmart.ca/.



Brandywine Falls Provincial Park

Flood Hazard Management: Major Ministry-funded studies were completed on floodplain hazard management and the impact of climate change on sea level, which will help inform the direction of future policy and standards related to dam and dike safety. The Ministry also improved its flood-forecasting ability by implementing a range of new and updated tools, including a satellite telemetry system to receive data in real time. Ministry staff worked with local government and other stakeholders on several projects to address key flood hazard management and flood protection issues in the lower Fraser River and its tributaries. Staff also processed approvals for Emergency Management BC, using \$8 million of provincial funds for major projects aimed at flood-proofing local communities.

Conservation Framework: The Conservation Framework is a major initiative of government, composed of a suite of tools that set science-based priorities and conservation actions for over 3,000 species and more than 600 ecological communities of conservation concern in B.C. It is quickly becoming a common reference point for those involved in conservation and land management, providing a basis for conservation decision making and advice to resource sectors.

Positive conservation outcomes for ecosystems and priority species (such as being able to down-list, de-list or avoid the legal listing of species at risk) are being advanced through the coordination of government and other sector conservation-related activities.

Myra Canyon Trestles Reopening: On June 22, 2008, 5,000 people participated in a community celebration of the reopening of the Myra Canyon trestles in Myra Bellevue Provincial Park. Hosted by the Myra Canyon Trestle Society and BC Parks, the celebration was the culmination of five years of planning and reconstruction of 16 trestles that were destroyed in the fires in the Okanagan region in 2003. The trestles were the prime feature at this national historic site and are an important tourism attraction for the region. The restoration work consisted of an extraordinary collaboration between private agencies, not-for-profit groups and all levels of government. Project participants were recognized in the 2008 Premier's Awards, winning a gold medal for Service Excellence. The completion of this project is just one of many capital



A rebuilt trestle in Myra Bellevue Provincial Park

reconstruction projects carried out by BC Parks to ensure that British Columbia's parks system remains world class.

Partnerships to Reduce Wildfires: The Ministry of Environment received a bronze Premier's Award in the partnerships category for the BC Parks Fire Interface/Ecosystem Management Program, which is being implemented to reduce wildfire threats in provincial parks. By partnering with stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Forests and Range, the federal/provincial Emergency Pine Beetle Program, Natural Resources Canada, First Nations, municipalities and local communities, the program aims to create fire-smart communities and restore park ecosystems.

Compliance and Enforcement: In the 2008 calendar year, the Ministry issued 27 orders, 176 administrative sanctions and 2,103 violation tickets. Thirty-seven court convictions were also rendered, which, when combined with ticket fines, totalled \$704,306 in penalties for non-compliance. Reports are available at www.env.gov.bc.ca/main/prgs/compliancereport.html.

Contribution of Water to the Economy: Total water rental income for British Columbia was \$396.7 million in 2008, of which the vast majority was from water power. Independent Power Producers generated \$3.9 million. Twenty-one new Independent Power Producer licences were approved in 2008/09. Also in 2008/09, 288 water licences were successfully processed, a 55 per cent increase in the number of applications processed over the previous year.

Clean up of Wildlife Management Areas: The Ministry, in partnership with several municipalities, successfully completed a pilot project to remove creosote-contaminated wood

debris from the Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area, an important migratory bird, forage fish and recreation area. Creosote is a petrochemical that may be released when wharves, breakwaters, railway trestles and bridges are damaged or decommissioned. This debris may wash up on beaches and sensitive shoreline habitats, and presents a significant hazard to wildlife and humans. In 2008/09, hundreds of pieces of debris were flagged for removal from over 16 kilometres of shore. Twenty-eight tonnes of creosote-treated wood debris was removed and transported to a local waste facility for proper disposal.

New Stewardship Website Launched: In January 2009, the Ministry launched a new “Our Environment” stewardship website to empower more British Columbians to take action to protect and enhance the environment. The website supports and encourages clients, partners and staff to engage in environmental stewardship by providing information and hands-on tools. On the website are examples of actions that can be taken to share the responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the environment, an overview of the B.C. government’s approach to environmental stewardship, links to programs and resources developed by the Ministry and its partners, and profiles of individuals participating in stewardship activities. The website can be found at www.env.gov.bc.ca/OurEnvironment/.

Resource Management Coordination Project: The Resource Management Coordination Project is led by the Integrated Land Management Bureau and is designed to help resource management ministries explore interagency cooperation opportunities and integrated methods for client service delivery. The Conservation Officer Service participated in the project’s Compliance Collaboration Project in 2008/09, which leveraged staff and equipment from the Ministry of Forests and Range, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. Some of the compliance and enforcement outcomes achieved included issuing dangerous wildlife protection orders and patrols of recreational sites.

Commercial Environmental Investigations Unit: In 2008/09, the Ministry of Environment’s Commercial Environmental Investigations Unit participated in 13 major investigations across B.C. Several cases from the previous year were also concluded, resulting in more than \$280,000 in fines and creative sentencing arrangements. The unit continues to be a leader in proactive and intelligence-led compliance and enforcement, focusing on high-profile environmental investigations where there is a significant impact to human health, the environment and public safety.

Groundfish Integration: The innovative Integrated Groundfish Management Program has made British Columbia a world leader in groundfish management, which allows fishers to turn their by-catch into a marketable product instead of discarding it. The Ministry has been working with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and industry for the last four years to establish the program, which promotes the sustainability of B.C.’s fishery resources by holding each individual vessel accountable for all of its catch in the groundfish industry. To date, the program has significantly improved the management of groundfish resources, including improved fishery data for ongoing research and assessment of stock health, and reduced impacts to fish habitat.

Purpose of Ministry

The Ministry supports government goals and initiatives

The Ministry of Environment manages and delivers a wide range of programs and services that support the government’s 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 and champions the fight against climate change. The Ministry works to promote the long-term economic health of the province and its citizens through effective regulation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The Ministry promotes stewardship and sustainability

The Ministry promotes environmental protection and stewardship by monitoring air and water quality, reducing and removing wastes and toxins from the environment and undertaking effective compliance activities. The Ministry supports provincial freshwater fisheries through stewardship initiatives and works with other governments, stakeholders and industry to ensure sustainable marine fisheries and ocean resources. The Ministry manages wildlife in order to optimize the sustainability of populations within ecosystems. Through the parks and protected areas system, the Ministry ensures that healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems are maintained and that outstanding recreation and wildlife opportunities are available to all.



Ranger Ralph Stocker with a golden eagle in Naikoon Park, Haida Gwaii



Rangers on horseback on the Earl Grey Pass trail near Toby Creek, B.C.

The Ministry serves its clients in a responsible way

The Ministry of Environment serves all citizens of British Columbia in their communities, businesses and workplaces. The Ministry also provides services to national and international companies and organizations that engage in business within B.C. The Ministry does so through approximately 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.

The Ministry develops 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, the BC Conservation Corps and the Youth Climate Leadership Alliance. 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 and works hard to establish collaborative relationships with First Nations.

The Ministry administers legislation and sets effective standards

Clear, effective legislation and standard setting provide the foundation for delivering Ministry programs and services. The Ministry has significant regulatory responsibilities and administers an extensive list of legislation. (See page 63 for a link to this list.) To promote compliance, the Ministry educates, motivates and employs a variety of strategies to help change behaviour and encourage voluntary compliance with regulatory requirements. Where necessary, the Ministry undertakes activities to enforce the Province's environmental legislation.

The Ministry reflects the values of the BC Public Service: integrity, courage, teamwork, passion, accountability, service and curiosity. We perform our work with integrity that promotes an objective approach to environmental management. We pursue innovative and collaborative approaches to ensure service excellence. We take pride in the quality of our programs and are motivated to ensure that they serve British Columbians in their communities well. We are committed to maintaining accountability as we strive to improve the 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.

Strategic Context

The Ministry of Environment plays a critical role in achieving the government's environmental goals and supporting the economic and social well-being of British Columbians. Complex and competing factors and events provide the context within which the Ministry must plan and assess its performance in achieving the government's goals.

In 2008, the Ministry responded to a number of unforeseen events. For example, in September 2008, the build-up and confinement of manure gases in Langley caused the death of three farm workers and severely injured two others. In January 2009, a large diesel spill in a Canadian National railyard in Surrey entered the Fraser River. A vacuum truck was able to recover approximately 70,000 litres of mixed diesel and water from the storm sewer. In February 2009, the Ministry issued an emergency environmental order in response to the potential leakage or escape of poisonous and dangerous substances at a MacKenzie pulp mill.

The Ministry has contingency plans for such events, and when these types of events occur, the Ministry refocuses limited resources from one important area to another.

The population of British Columbia is growing: it reached almost 4.4 million in 2007 and is expected to exceed 5.7 million by 2030.¹ An increased population intensifies the pressure on water resources, encourages land development and energy consumption, and may potentially increase waste and the discharge of pollutants.

Sustained economic growth and prosperity over the past few years has augmented government revenues and supported expanded public services. However, changing workforce demographics and a sharp decline in provincial revenues last year caused the Ministry to reassess how it delivers services and to examine innovative ways to achieve its 2008 objectives. During this time of change, the Ministry continued to deliver on its commitments and government priorities.



An excavator cleans up creosote-contaminated logs in Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area, Delta/Surrey

¹ BC Stats. B.C. Level Projections. January 2009.

Report on Performance

Performance Plan Summary Table

Goal 1: Clean and safe water, land and air For greater detail see pages 15 to 19	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
1.2 Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources Percentage of water bodies monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with stable or improving water quality trends	96%	96% ACHIEVED
Goal 2: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems For greater detail see pages 19 to 22	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
2.3 Conserved, maintained and enhanced native species and ecosystems Number of completed designations by the Ministry of Environment under the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Habitat Areas • Ungulate Winter Ranges • Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds 	1,047 60 46	1,207 EXCEEDED 65 EXCEEDED 31 NOT ACHIEVED
Goal 3: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment For greater detail see pages 23 to 25	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
3.3 Industry and client groups implement best environmental management practices Number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs	9	9 ACHIEVED
Goal 4: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources For greater detail see pages 25 to 30	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
4.1 Wise management and continued benefits of water and air Number of water or watershed management plans completed and implemented	3	3 ACHIEVED

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

Number of recorded parks visits and visitor satisfaction level:

• Parks visits	19.4 million	19.6 million ACHIEVED
• Visitor satisfaction level	Maintain or improve from 80%	82% ACHIEVED

4.3 Collaborative management and use of marine and ocean resources

Number of marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process	6	6 ACHIEVED
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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. The performance reporting included is based on the Ministry's 2008/09 – 2010/11 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.

As a result of restructuring, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport is now responsible for reporting on the particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and low level ozone performance measure that was included in the Ministry's Goal 1, Objective 1.4, "Healthy air quality."

Goal 1: Clean and safe water, land and air

Objective 1.1: 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 affect natural systems, which will affect economic and social interests. 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 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.

The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, brought into effect on January 1, 2008, puts into law British Columbia's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020, and by 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050. The Act also requires the public sector to become carbon neutral by 2010 and to report out on travel-related emissions levels and the actions taken to reduce all its greenhouse gas emissions, beginning with the 2008 calendar year.

A Climate Action Team, made up of leaders from environmental organizations, private enterprise, the scientific community, First Nations and academia, recommended target ranges for 2012 and 2016 in its report, *Meeting British Columbia's Targets: A Report from the B.C. Climate Action Team*. The Ministry accepted the recommendations and set reduction targets of six per cent and 18 per cent relative to 2007 levels for 2012 and 2016, respectively.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing new regulations for industrial, landfill and vehicle tailpipe greenhouse gas emission standards;
- 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.



Ministry of Environment hybrid car

- by collaborating with and supporting partners, including communities, industries, other agencies and non-governmental organizations; and
- 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 1.2: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources

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

Strategy

- A key strategy for this objective is leading the implementation of *Living Water Smart: British Columbia’s Water Plan*, including actions and targets for shared water stewardship.

Performance Results

Performance Measure 1: Water bodies monitored under the Canada–B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 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% or greater by 2015/16	96% ACHIEVED

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Discussion of Results

Under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement, 31 provincially significant rivers and streams, including the Fraser, Columbia and Peace, are monitored in British Columbia. This performance measure relies on data collected from 43 monitoring stations to determine whether water quality is stable or improving in each of these key water bodies. By measuring the concentration of variables such as metals, nutrients, pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen, the Ministry is able to identify trends in overall water quality. The Federal – Provincial Water Monitoring Group is working closely with stakeholders to establish new



Water monitoring on the Tsolum River near Mount Washington

monitoring sites across northern B.C. Additional monitoring sites will improve our ability to determine trends in overall water quality.

The 2008/09 target was to maintain or improve water quality trends in the 31 water bodies monitored under the federal-provincial agreement. The target was achieved with monitoring stations having 96 per cent of their parameters with stable or improving water quality trends.

Data collected from sites under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement are used for a variety of reports, including the annual Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators Water Quality Index. The Water Quality Index is a tool that provides a simplified score on water quality for each site. A summary of this report can be found at www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/.

Objective 1.3: Reduced contamination from toxins and wastes

By reducing contamination from toxins and wastes efficiently and effectively, the Ministry will minimize impacts to water, land and air.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- exploring new ways to reduce municipal solid waste disposal;
- supporting the development of a brownfields² strategy for B.C.; and
- promoting the development and adoption of integrated pest management practices.

Objective 1.4: Healthy air quality

Many 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.



Along the Alaska Highway

² 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 potential for redevelopment.

Strategies

- A key strategy for this objective is leading the implementation of the BC Air Action Plan, which is aimed at continuing to reduce emissions from industry, transportation, urban growth, ports and marine vessels and continuing to support airshed management.³

Objective 1.5: Effective management of environmental risks

Events such as oil spills and floods can present risks to public health and safety, property and the environment. Although not all environmental risks are avoidable, effective management can help to reduce these risks. The Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- responding effectively to high-risk environmental emergencies;
- reducing the risk to public health and safety and the environment through effective management and response programs, and compliance and enforcement strategies and actions;
- managing the environmental risks of human-wildlife interactions through proactive and reactive strategies; and
- managing the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites and regulating the remediation of all contaminated sites.

Goal 2: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems

Objective 2.1: Well-managed, integrated 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 and contributes to the understanding of the status of native species and ecosystems.

³ The Ministry is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, other ministries, industry, communities and other levels of government to implement 28 clean air initiatives that champion clean transportation, clean industry and clean communities.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- employing the Conservation Framework to collect, assess and distribute information on species and ecosystems, including their conservation status and priority ranking;
- assessing the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems and related risks and threats within parks and protected areas; and
- providing guidelines and standards for the protection and conservation of species and ecosystems, including monitoring and reporting on achievements.



A marmot in Garibaldi Provincial Park, north of Squamish



Broadleaf willow-herb (centre) and leatherleaf saxifrage (on either side), Garibaldi Park

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:

- undertaking parks and protected areas planning and management to ensure long-term protection of natural, cultural and recreational assets; and
- maintaining and promoting partnerships to manage parks and protected areas.

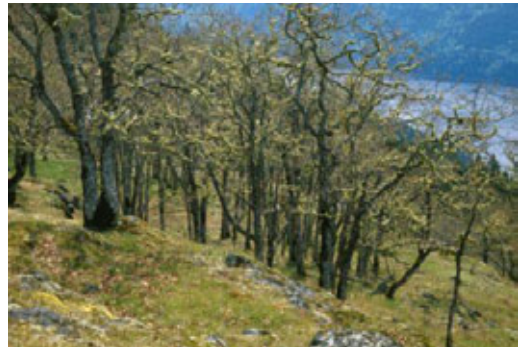
Objective 2.3: Conserved, maintained and enhanced native species and ecosystems

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 native species and ecosystems.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of the Conservation Framework to set priorities for species and ecosystem recovery and management action;
- continuing to work with and expand partnerships, including those with First Nations, to identify, protect and restore species and ecosystems;
- continuing to develop and implement guidelines, policies, standards and legislation for the protection, conservation and management of species and ecosystems; and
- providing leadership in species-at-risk status ranking and legal designation, and preparing and implementing recovery plans.



Garry oak ecosystem

Performance Results

Performance Measure 2: Completed designations under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 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 ⁴ Winter Ranges (UWRs)* and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds (FSWs).	WHAs – 917 UWRs – 48 FSWs – 31	WHAs – 1,084 UWRs – 54 FSWs – 31	WHAs – 1,047 UWRs – 60 FSWs – 46	WHAs – 1,207 EXCEEDED UWRs – 65 EXCEEDED FSWs – 31 NOT ACHIEVED

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. When monitoring progress, considering the amount of area designated is important.

⁴ An ungulate is a hoofed mammal such as a caribou, moose, bison or goat.

Discussion of Results

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 on the previous page. The number of FSWs, a designation measured since 2006, is also expected to increase annually over the next several years.

In 2008/09, the Ministry exceeded the targets for WHAs and UWRs. Targets for FSW designations were not achieved. In 2008/09, 155 WHA designations were approved for a total of 1,207 WHAs covering 1,045, 475 hectares, and 11 UWR designations were approved for a total of 65 UWRs covering 6,200,237 hectares.

The Ministry's 2008/09 target for Fisheries Sensitive Watershed designations was 15; however, no FSWs were approved.

Ministry Response

Watershed evaluation procedures to support FSW designations have required more fine tuning in the pilot project areas than originally anticipated. This has resulted in an extended timeline for consultation with affected parties and a delay in FSW designations in the three pilot forest districts. Pilot regions are making progress toward completing designations, and it is anticipated that the target number of watersheds will have been established in 2009/10.



Moose in South Tweedsmuir Park

Targets were exceeded for UWR designations primarily due to designations for mountain caribou that were not planned at the outset of the 2008/09 fiscal year. Targets for WHAs were exceeded because the target number of WHAs for the 2008/09 fiscal year was underestimated. The actual number of WHAs approved in 2008/09 was 125, which is on a par with previous years.

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

In order to foster an environmentally conscious society, people must become aware of the relationship between their actions and the impact on their health, and on 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:

- working with stewardship organizations to increase environmental awareness; and
- promoting outdoor activities to foster a connection to and an appreciation for the natural environment.

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

The Ministry recognizes that in order for shared stewardship to be successful, it is necessary to work in partnership with First Nations, industry, communities, environmental groups and other government bodies.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- recognizing, promoting and enhancing shared stewardship through consultative processes and volunteer initiatives that engage stakeholders, clients and partners;
- promoting sustainable natural resource management through collaborative management; and
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance activities to protect the environment.



Conservation Officers and local rock scalers rescue a trapped mountain goat off Highway 97 in the Okanagan

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

Sustainable environmental management practices not only protect the environment, they reduce costs (e.g., by using resources and energy more efficiently), and lay the foundation for good corporate citizenship.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;
- continuing to research and collaborate with key stakeholders on product categories suitable for inclusion in the B.C. Recycling Regulation;
- continuing to explore opportunities to reduce regulatory burden⁵ through changes such as implementing codes of practice to replace permit-based authorization frameworks, while promoting best environmental management practices and maintaining stringent environmental standards; and
- encouraging compliance by reporting those in non-compliance with Ministry environmental standards and/or regulatory requirements.



Recycling: an environmental best practice

Performance Measure 3: Industry-led product stewardship programs

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs	8	9	9	9 ACHIEVED

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: Target figures are cumulative.

⁵ British Columbia continues to make regulatory reform a priority across government, making it easier for businesses to operate and succeed in B.C., while still preserving regulations that protect public health, safety and the environment. Regulatory reform has been and will continue to be undertaken throughout the Ministry as the organization pursues its move to a results-based regulatory approach. Since 2001, the Ministry has reduced its regulatory requirements by 42 per cent while continuing to maintain stringent environmental standards.

Discussion of Results

For this measure, the Ministry is counting the number of product categories with industry-led product stewardship programs. Industry-led stewardship programs require industry to accept life cycle responsibility for the products they sell, including post-consumer collection and recycling. Such programs also provide an inherent incentive for industry to design products that are less toxic and easier to recycle. Currently, stewardship programs are in place for a total of nine product categories: paint; used oil products; beverage containers; pharmaceuticals; pesticides; solvents and flammable liquids; tires; electronic products; and gasoline. The results are more green jobs, more investment in B.C.'s recycling industry, less waste and toxins and fewer landfills. Stewardship programs continue to be an important example of how industry works with the Ministry by implementing sustainable and responsible environmental management practices.

In 2008/09, after consulting with stakeholders on the next products to regulate, the Recycling Regulation was amended to include products such as cameras, cellular phones, small appliances, light bulbs and batteries. The regulation requires that industry implement new programs for these product categories by July 1, 2010. This expansion allows the Ministry to meet the 2010/11 target of 11 product stewardship programs.

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. 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:

- promoting increased community and stakeholder involvement at the local level;
- responding in a timely manner to water licence applications, based on reviews that ensure optimal environmental, social and economic outcomes;
- reviewing legislation to improve the protection of ecology, provide opportunities for community involvement and provide incentives for efficient water use;
- supporting communities engaged in multi-stakeholder watershed management plans;
- supporting multi-stakeholder airshed management plans; and
- continuing to support local air quality projects.

Performance Measure 4: Completed and implemented water or watershed management plans

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Number of water or watershed management plans completed and implemented	2	3	3	3 ACHIEVED

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: Target figures are cumulative.

Discussion of Results

Water or watershed management plans are undertaken to coordinate 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*, as well as plans with no statutory basis.

Water management plans are initiated by local governments or other regional organizations, with the Ministry of Environment acting in a supportive role, and generally take quite a long time to develop. 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, the Trepanier Creek Watershed Management Plan and the Cowichan River Water Management Plan.



Cowichan River, Vancouver Island

Other planning processes are underway and will be completed and implemented in the near future. These include the Nicola Valley Water Use Management Plan, the Kiskatinaw River and Pine River Watershed Management Plans and the Somass Basin Water Management Plan on Vancouver Island. 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 December 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 promotes an appreciation of B.C.'s landscape, native species and the environment as a whole.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- optimizing stewardship and economic opportunities with First Nations, local communities, non-profit groups, private land owners and others;
- developing strategic plans for parks, fish and wildlife management that promote exceptional outdoor opportunities, while ensuring long-term protection of natural resources;
- developing and implementing marketing strategies to promote active living through park visitation;
- expanding the quality of park recreation opportunities and services;
- providing angling licences through electronic licensing and developing the provision of hunting licences through a similar framework;
- developing new opportunities for marine angling in the Georgia Basin through net pen rearing of juvenile pink salmon;
- streamlining the provision of commercial licences (e.g., for guides, trappers and fur traders) through process improvement and regulation simplification focused on client service standards; and
- promoting awareness of contributions to the Park Enhancement Fund.



*Left: Opening of the rebuilt Myra Canyon trestles
Above: Fishing in Murrin Provincial Park*

Performance Measure 5: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Number of recorded park visits and visitor satisfaction level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park visits • Visitor satisfaction level 	19.5 million 83%	19.6 million 84%	19.4 million Maintain or improve (from 80%)	19.6 million ACHIEVED 82% ACHIEVED

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: Recorded park visits: The number of recorded visits to B.C. parks was based on attendance data submitted from April 2008 through March 2009. The visitor satisfaction rating is based on an extensive satisfaction survey that is conducted in campgrounds and day-use areas around the province and is based on nearly 5,000 respondents. The five-year rolling average for 2008/09 is based on the average Visitor Satisfaction Index rating for the reporting years of 2004/05 to 2008/09.

Discussion of Results

British Columbia’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 facilities and services available in B.C.’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 Ministry of Environment 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.

Number of park visits: The target for the number of park visits is 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 five per cent each year: 18.9 million in 2007/08, 19.6 million in 2008/09, 19.8 million in 2009/10 and 21.6 million in 2010/11. Between April 2008 and mid-February 2009, the number of recorded park visits was 19.6 million.

Park visitor satisfaction survey results: The Visitor Satisfaction Index (see Figure 1 on the next page) 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.

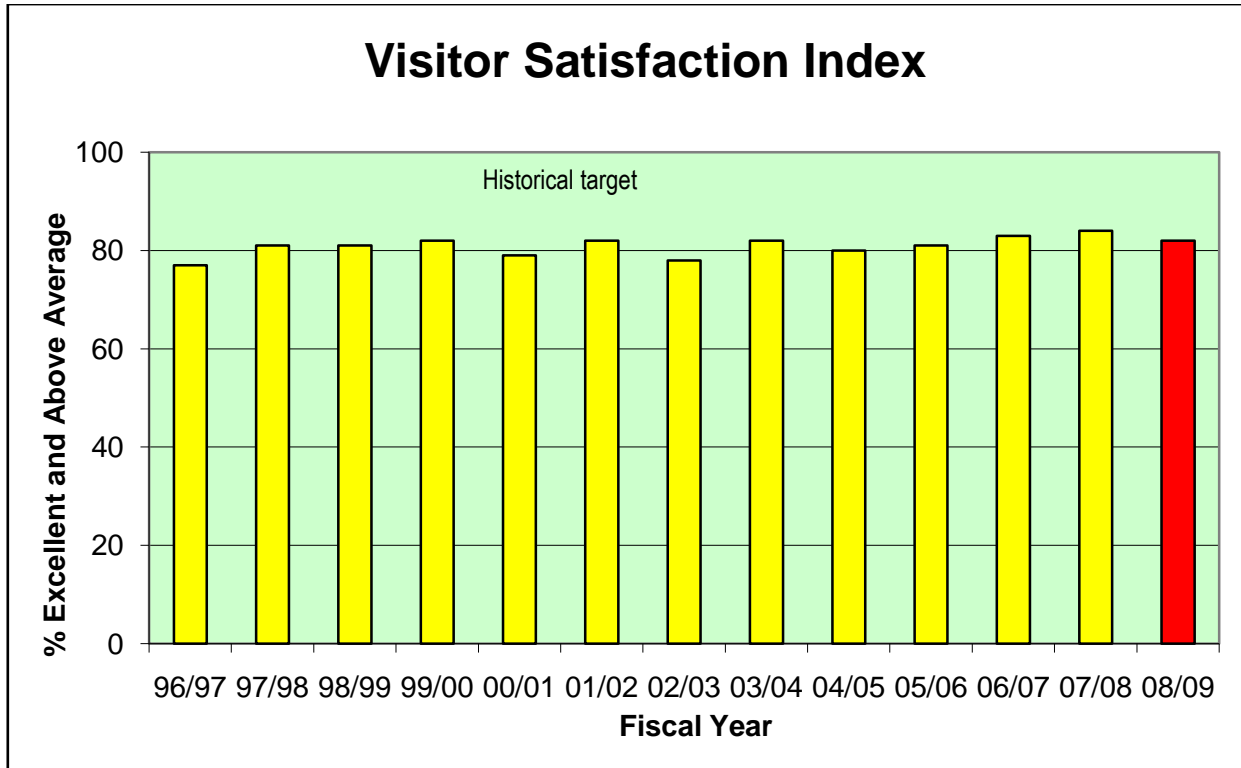


Figure 1. Visitor satisfaction index from 1996 to 2008

The Visitor Satisfaction Index indicates the effectiveness of service improvements over the past 12 years. A five-year rolling average is used to account for the fact that individual parks are surveyed on a four-year rotating basis, and a slight change in the rating is therefore not considered to be statistically significant. The five-year rolling average for 2008/09 was calculated at 82 per cent. The Ministry met its goal to maintain or improve on visitor satisfaction level from the 80 per cent target. Services that received a higher satisfaction score in 2008/09 were the visitor’s sense of security (up one per cent) and the availability of recreation opportunities (up four per cent).

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

British Columbia’s marine fisheries 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 Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to represent British Columbia’s interests and ensure that ocean and marine resources are managed in a sustainable manner.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- undertaking initiatives, such as third-party certification of British Columbia’s fisheries, to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of British Columbia’s seafood products in domestic and international markets; and
- representing British Columbia’s interests to ensure a fair share of federal and cross government programs, initiatives and activities to promote research, exports and investment for our seafood sector.

Performance Measure 6: Marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Number of marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process	4	5	6	6 ACHIEVED

Data Source: Ministry of Environment

Note: Target figures are cumulative. 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. In 2008/09, halibut became the sixth fishery to be managed through a collaborative decision-making process.

Discussion of Results

Economic sustainability is dependent on the level and certainty of access to resources. The marine fisheries sector provides approximately \$829 million in revenue to the province’s economy.⁶ Marine fisheries fall under federal jurisdiction. To ensure social and economic benefits from B.C.’s marine resources to British Columbians, the Ministry participates in federal fisheries management by meeting regularly with its federal counterparts, attending advisory processes with First Nations, industry and other stakeholders, and by participating on the negotiating teams for international fisheries agreements.

Measuring the increase in the number of B.C. marine fisheries that are managed collaboratively and include provincial government and stakeholder participation helps determine if British Columbia’s interests concerning fair allocation and certainty of access to resources are represented.

With the halibut fishery joining the list of fisheries governed by a collaborative management regime, the Ministry has met its 2008/09 target of a total of six marine-based commercial and recreational fisheries managed through a collaborative decision-making process that includes strong stakeholder and Ministry participation. Together, halibut, sardine, herring, hake, tuna, rockfish and lingcod generate approximately \$283 million in wholesale value to the B.C. economy.⁷

⁶ BC Stats. British Columbia’s Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector. April 2007.

⁷ Government of British Columbia. *2007 British Columbia Seafood Industry Year in Review*. September 2008.

Report on Resources

Resource Summary Table

Core Business Areas	Estimated ¹	Other Authorizations ²	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Environmental Stewardship ³	47,131		47,131	54,662	7,531
Parks and Protected Areas	38,177		38,177	34,866	(3,311)
Water Stewardship ⁴	62,793		62,793	39,621	(23,172)
Environmental Protection ⁵	41,985		41,985	48,568	6,583
Compliance	19,961		19,961	20,010	49
Executive and Support Services ⁶	34,076		34,076	31,091	(2,985)
Total	244,123	0,000	244,123	228,817	(15,306)
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)					
Environmental Stewardship	302		302	380	78
Parks and Protected Areas	207		207	207	0
Water Stewardship	134		134	140	6
Environmental Protection	266		266	276	10
Compliance	152		152	152	0
Executive and Support Services	393		393	404	11
	1,454		1,454	1559	105
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)⁷					
Environmental Stewardship	398		398	282	(116)
Parks and Protected Areas	14,303	26,562	40,865	41,833	968
Water Stewardship	109		122	122	13
Environmental Protection	245		245	569	324 ⁸
Compliance	974		974	268	(706) ⁹
Executive and Support Services*	2,032	304 ¹⁰	2,336	1,853	(479)
Total	18,061	26,866	44,927	44,927	0

¹ The “Estimated” amount corresponds to the *Estimates* as presented to the Legislative Assembly in February 2008 less transfers of \$2.8 million in operating funds to the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. It also includes an amount for Species at Risk which was transferred from the Integrated Land Management Bureau. The Estimates do not reflect overhead and support services adjustments related to the transfer of the Integrated Land Management Bureau from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to the Ministry of Forests and Range in June 2009.

² “Other Authorizations” include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the “estimated amount” under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

³ The \$7.37M operating shortfall in Environmental Stewardship includes costs for the Youth Climate Leadership Alliance, BC Conservation Corps, Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Mountain Pine Beetle, Mountain Caribou, Spotted Owl, and Environment Based Management.

⁴ The \$23.20 million operating surplus in Water Stewardship was due to lower than expected Water Rental Remissions.

⁵ The \$6.60 million operating shortfall in Environmental Protection was due to costs of managing an emergency situation at Worthington Pulp Mill and clean up of a fuel spill at Oliver Creek.

⁶ 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), Corporate overhead costs and shared administrative staff in the regional offices.

⁷ Capital Expenditures in fiscal 2008/09 included \$27.45 million for implementation of the Land Resource Management Plan; \$11.28 million for park facilities; \$2.85 million for land acquisition; \$0.63 million for air and water monitoring equipment; \$0.41 million for specialized equipment; \$0.29 million for capitalized vehicle leases; \$1.15 million for Myra Trestles; \$1.68 million for e-Licensing; \$0.13 million for other information systems; and \$0.08 million for office equipment.

⁸ The \$0.32 million capital shortfall in Environmental Protection was due to additional expenditures on air and water quality monitoring equipment.

⁹ The \$0.71 million capital surplus in Compliance was due to lower than expected expenses for specialized equipment.

¹⁰ In the estimates, capital is also allocated to the Park Enhancement Fund which was used to offset expenditures in the operating vote. A \$4 thousand Ministry capital shortfall is offset by a capital surplus in the Environmental Assessment Office, which holds the other capital budget component authorized for the Ministry of Environment.

Operating Expenses

The Ministry had a surplus variance of \$15.21 million in 2008/09 primarily due to lower than expected Water Rental Remissions, offset by shortfalls in Environmental Protection and Environmental Stewardship. Core business surpluses were redirected within the Ministry to address priorities, as required. Detailed explanations are provided as footnotes to the Resource Summary Table above.

Full-time Equivalents

Overall, the Ministry utilized 105 more FTEs than estimated. Environmental Stewardship used 78 more FTEs than budgeted due primarily to staff hired to meet the objectives of recoverable programs, workloads and the Youth Climate Leadership Alliance. Some salary costs were recovered by sources outside the ministry (e.g., Forest Investment Account). Executive and Support Services used 11 more FTEs than budgeted during 2008/09 due to additional administrative support provided to regional programs.

Capital Expenditures

Overall, the Ministry’s capital expenditure exceeded total estimates by \$4 thousand. The capital shortfall is offset by the \$6 thousand capital surplus in the Environmental Assessment Office, which holds the other capital budget component authorized for the Ministry of Environment.

Comparison of 2008/09 and 2007/08 Expense

The Ministry's gross expense in 2008/09 decreased by \$226.22 million mostly due to \$252 million in 2007/08 Supplementary Estimates for Climate Action that were not required in 2008/09.

The breakdown of the 2008/09 expense is as follows:

- Salaries and benefits increased by \$3.09 million. This change was mainly due to a negotiating framework wage increase.
- Operating costs decreased by \$19.48 million, primarily due to Climate Action initiatives carried out under Supplementary Estimates (\$22.60 million) during 2007/08.
- Government transfers decreased by \$251.73 million. This was mainly due to Climate Action initiatives carried out under Supplementary Estimates in 2007/08.
- Other expenses increased by \$10.95 million, primarily due to an \$11.67 million increase in water rental remissions.

Year-Over-Year Resource Changes

Figure 3 provides a year-over-year description of the changes to the Ministry's resources. Previous fiscal periods have not been restated for comparative purposes.

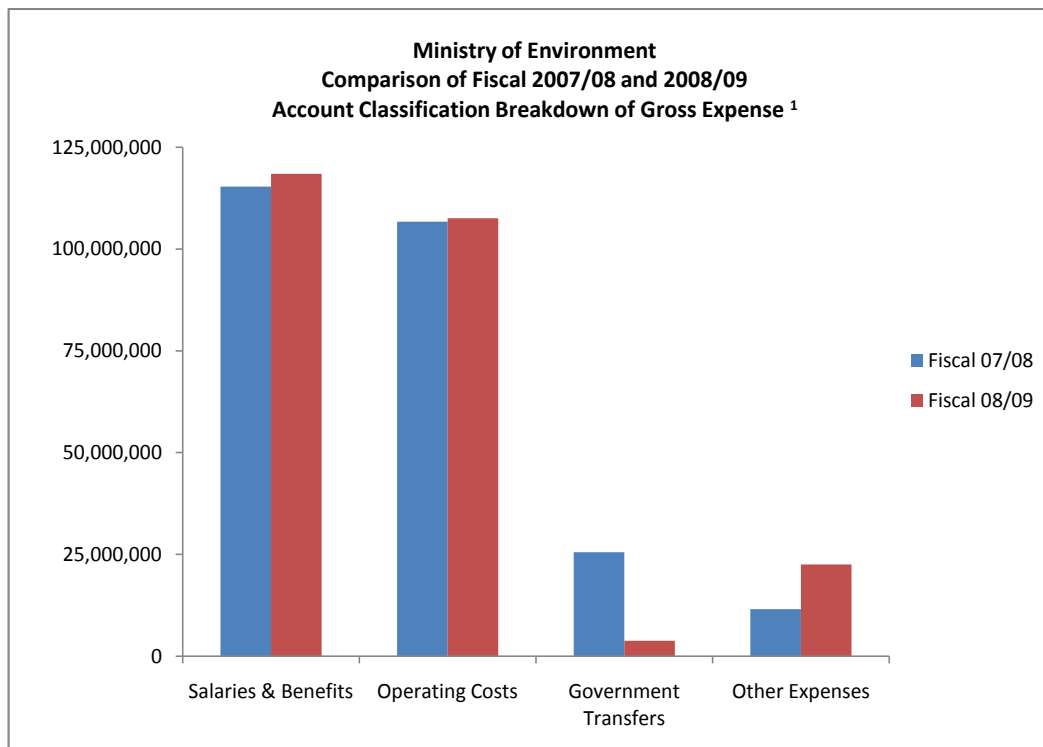


Figure 3. Two-year comparison of gross expense (Source: B.C. Draft Public Accounts, 2008-09) 2007/08 Supplementary Estimates excluded for comparative purposes

Environmental Appeal Board and 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 for the Ministry of Health Services; the Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board for the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport; the Industry Training Appeal Board for the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development; and the Health Professions Review Board for the Ministry of Health Services.

The Board has statutory authority to hear appeals from administrative decisions under the *Environmental Management Act*, the *Integrated Pest Management Act*, the *Water Act* and the *Wildlife Act*. The Commission has statutory authority to hear appeals from administrative decisions made with respect to a variety of matters regulated by the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*, *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Forest Act*, the *Range Act*, the *Wildfire Act* and the *Private Managed Forest Land Act*.

While their budget vote is the responsibility of the Ministry, the Board and the Commission operate independently from the Ministry of Environment. Therefore, they are not considered one of the core business areas accountable to the Minister of Environment, but they are included in the Resource Summary of this Annual Report.

It is further noted that the Oil and Gas Appeal Tribunal, which was enacted under the *Oil and Gas Activities Act*, is scheduled to come into force in September 2009 and may have the same membership as the Board and the Commission.

The Board⁸ and Commission⁹ each produce an annual report, which is provided to their ministers for tabling in the legislature.

⁸ Go to www.eab.gov.bc.ca for more information on the Environmental Appeal Board.

⁹ Go to www.fac.gov.bc.ca for more information on the Forest Appeals Commission.

Resource Summary Table

	Estimated ¹	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Environmental Appeal Board/Forest Appeals Commission	2,096	0	2,096	1,373	(723)
Total	2,096	0	2,096	1,373	(723)
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)					
Environmental Appeal Board/Forest Appeals Commission	11	0	11	8.56	(2.44)
Total	11	0	11	8.56	(2.44)
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)					
Environmental Appeal Board/Forest Appeals Commission	15	0	15	0	(15)
Total	15	0	15	0	(15)

¹ The "Estimated" amount corresponds to the *Estimates* as presented to the legislative assembly in February 2008.

BC Climate Action Secretariat

Highlights of the Year

Climate Action, a key priority for government through 2008/09, resulted in new policy initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Action Secretariat worked with ministries, Crown agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that a plan was established to meet the Province's legislated greenhouse gas emissions target of a 33 per cent reduction below 2007 levels. Key highlights of this work are listed below.

- The Secretariat supported the Cabinet Committee on Climate Action. The Cabinet Committee on Climate Action is chaired by the Premier and met on a regular basis in 2008/09 to provide direction on achieving government's climate action objectives.
- The Secretariat worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Environment and other government organizations to introduce seven climate action bills in the spring 2008 legislative session. The bills will help the Province meet its emission reduction targets set out in the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act (2007)*:
 - The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Cap and Trade) Act* to enable the implementation of a cap and trade system in conjunction with regional partners;
 - The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Vehicle Emissions Standards) Act* to enable the adoption of vehicle emissions standards that will increase automobile fuel efficiency;
 - The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Emissions Standards) Statutes Amendment Act* to regulate landfill gas;
 - The *2008 Utilities Commission Amendment Act* to encourage more low carbon energy generation projects;
 - The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Renewable and Low Carbon Fuel Requirements) Act*, to encourage the development of renewable forms of energy and decrease the carbon content of fuels;
 - The *Local Government (Green Communities) Statutes Amendment Act (2008)* to encourage the development of more sustainable, healthy communities; and
 - The *Carbon Tax Act* to encourage low carbon economic development while reinvesting every penny of carbon tax revenue into targeted tax cuts for individuals and businesses.
- New climate action regulations were introduced to:
 - require landfills to install methane collection systems;
 - require gasoline and diesel sold in B.C. to contain a minimum average renewable fuel content of five per cent beginning in 2010;

- establish reporting requirements for public sector organizations required to be carbon neutral under the *Greenhouse Gas Emission Targets Act*; and
- establish criteria and other requirements for emission offsets to be acquired by the Pacific Carbon Trust to meet government's carbon neutral commitment.
- The Secretariat supported the work of the Climate Action Team, which resulted in 31 climate action policy recommendations to further reduce British Columbia's greenhouse gas emissions.
- British Columbia's interim greenhouse gas emission reduction targets were set by regulation at six per cent by 2012 and 18 per cent by 2016, based on Climate Action Team recommendations.
- Secretariat staff took on leadership roles across the Western Climate Initiative as Canadian co-Chair, Chair of the Offsets Committee, Chair of the Economic Committee and the Canadian Liaison for the Western Climate Initiative. The Secretariat represented British Columbia on all of the Western Climate Initiative committees and task groups and played an instrumental role in the delivery of the cap and trade design document published in September 2008.
- British Columbia's industry was engaged on the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions through 13 Working Groups reaching hundreds of companies across all sectors of the economy.
- British Columbia, represented by Secretariat staff, was elected Chair of the International Carbon Action Partnership. The partnership was created in October 2007 with the goal of facilitating the development of an international carbon market by linking mandatory cap and trade systems.
- Secretariat staff represented the Province on the Climate Registry's executive and Board, and co-chaired the group's Mandatory Reporting Committee.
- All ministries developed carbon neutral action plans and more than 100 Green Teams are engaged on climate action across government.
- Projects initiated under Public Sector Energy Conservation Agreement are achieving real emissions reductions through energy retrofits.
- The Secretariat worked with the Ministry of Finance and the Crown Agencies Secretariat to establish the Pacific Carbon Trust as a service delivery Crown corporation. Pacific Carbon Trust's mandate is to stimulate low carbon economic development in British Columbia through the acquisition of greenhouse gas offsets.
- All 2008 government travel was carbon neutral and will be offset through emission reduction projects managed by the Pacific Carbon Trust.

Purpose of the Secretariat

The BC Climate Action Secretariat:

- coordinates and facilitates best practices research and policy on climate action across government ministries;
- advises and supports the Cabinet Committee for Climate Action;
- establishes engagement processes with First Nations, local governments, other governments, industries, environmental organizations and the scientific community to facilitate their input into the planning process;
- assesses incentives and other fiscal and financial mechanisms that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- leads and coordinates the carbon neutral public sector initiative;
- coordinates the development of a public outreach and strategic engagement program to mobilize citizens and partners;
- coordinates the Citizens' Conservation Councils on Climate Action;
- develops and facilitates the implementation of a regional cap and trade system and standardized offsets program;
- leads and supports the development of all required climate action related legislation and regulations;
- works with international, national and regional partners to forward climate action goals; and
- supports the Pacific Carbon Trust.

Strategic Context

The BC Climate Action Secretariat operates within a strategic context characterized by both challenge and opportunity. This context includes an increasingly serious global environmental crisis, a slowing economy, a dynamic intergovernmental relations backdrop and a complex, multi-dimensional public sector. These factors have affected the ability of the Secretariat to act on its mandate and achieve success.

Environmental Context

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded in its 2007 report that the Earth's climate is changing. Climate change is caused by rising greenhouse gas emissions mostly from human activities such as fossil fuel combustion and land use changes. These emissions, once released to the atmosphere, trap more of the Sun's energy and cause global temperatures to rise. If greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise unabated, the Panel stated that we will likely see rising sea levels, decreased snowpacks, increased glacial melting, and increased occurrences of droughts and floods. Collectively, these climate change impacts have the potential to devastate the quality of life worldwide and in British Columbia.

The Secretariat's work in 2008/09 focused on mitigating future climate change impacts by working across government to implement legislation and policy that will reduce British Columbia's greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic Context

British Columbia's real GDP contracted by 0.3 per cent in 2008, following growth of 3.0 per cent in 2007 and 4.4 per cent in 2006. Private sector forecasters expect economic weakness in B.C. to continue well into 2009. In *Budget 2009*, B.C.'s Economic Forecast Council projected that B.C.'s annual real GDP will be 0.0 per cent in 2009 (or no growth) and then will grow by 2.8 per cent in 2010. Risks to B.C.'s economic outlook include a prolonged U.S. recession, continued turmoil in global financial markets, slower global demand for B.C. products, volatile commodity prices and further moderation of domestic demand in B.C.

The worsening economic situation made it more challenging for the Secretariat to create strategic partnerships with B.C. businesses and organizations in order to engage the public through climate action outreach.

Intergovernmental Context

National and international collaboration to establish common climate change policy is a key part of British Columbia's climate action strategy. British Columbia's partnerships with members of the Western Climate Initiative, the Climate Registry, and the International Climate Action Partnership will lay the foundation for compatible market-based systems to trade carbon offsets and credits within North America and worldwide to help reduce emissions. It has been critical for British Columbia to lead in the early stages of designing and structuring these systems.

The success of several key components of the provincial approach to climate action depends on maintaining and strengthening intergovernmental relationships and encouraging other jurisdictions to join similar emissions trading systems. The Province of Quebec and the Province of Ontario joined British Columbia in the Western Climate Initiative in 2008/09. Their commitment increased Canada's representation in the Western Climate Initiative region to more than 80 per cent of the population and over 70 per cent of its gross domestic product. The 2008 U.S. election changed the landscape of intergovernmental relations in North America and brought increased attention to climate change initiatives in which British Columbia has been playing a key leadership role.

Provincial Government Context

The Province is committed to harnessing the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of the BC Public Service to become carbon neutral by 2010. This commitment has been an important way for government to demonstrate leadership and "walk the talk" of climate action. The public sector includes not only core government ministries, but also Crown agencies, Boards of Education, colleges, universities and health authorities. Creating a system by which all of these diverse entities can easily measure, report, reduce and offset their emissions through a valid emissions offset system has been a complex challenge. An example of one these challenges experienced in 2008/09 was the realization that some public sector organizations are less prepared for implementing carbon neutral systems than initially thought. This realization highlighted the need to focus on ease of implementation for all organizations and an adherence to the principles of continuous improvement.

The achievement of a carbon neutral public sector also depends on continued engagement of a wide variety of public servants. The ability of the Climate Action Secretariat to guide the public service and inspire their commitment to carbon neutrality will be an important determinant in the successful implementation of this key climate action initiative. The Secretariat's work to increase awareness was significantly enhanced by the efforts of government green teams in spreading the climate change and carbon neutral message and influencing positive change.

Report on Performance

The BC Climate Action Secretariat’s goals, objectives and performance results based on the 2008/09 – 2010/11 Service Plan are listed below.

Performance Results Summary Table

Goal 1: Government’s Climate Action Plan is completed and implemented For greater detail see pages 42 to 43		2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
1.1 Lead the successful development and implementation of climate action initiatives across government Government Climate Action Plan in place to guide initiatives	Climate Action Plan complete	ACHIEVED	
Goal 2: Ministries and Crown agency activities are aligned with government climate action priorities and integrated For greater detail see pages 43 to 44		2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
2.1 Guide the successful delivery of climate action goals across government by providing direction and resolving issues Ministry and Crown agencies assist in the implementation of climate action priorities and policies	50% of Climate Action Plan priorities underway	ACHIEVED	
Goal 4: The public sector is carbon neutral by 2010 For greater detail see page 45 to 46		2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
4.1 Public sector organizations are provided with the tools and resources needed to comply with carbon neutral requirements Carbon neutral tools and resources developed and implemented by public sector organizations	Measurement tool created and distributed to core government; guidelines for reporting developed	ACHIEVED	
Goal 5: The public is engaged in climate action and positive behaviour change is occurring For greater detail see pages 47 to 48		2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
5.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for public engagement A comprehensive strategy for public engagement is developed and implemented	Citizens’ Conservation Council established; full website launched	ACHIEVED	

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: Government's Climate Action Plan is completed and implemented

Objective 1.1: Lead the successful development and implementation of climate action initiatives across government

By leading and coordinating initiatives across government ministries, the BC Climate Action Secretariat assists in identifying priorities and developing and implementing a comprehensive climate action plan.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing climate action policy research and planning documents as directed by the Cabinet Committee on Climate Action;
- assisting ministries to develop policy, legislation and/or regulations as required;
- providing research support and leveraging existing Ministry capacity to guide strategic policy development;
- supporting the work and deliverables of the Climate Action Team; and
- establishing the Pacific Carbon Trust.

Performance Measure 1: Government Climate Action Plan in place to guide initiatives

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Government Climate Action Plan in place to guide initiatives	N/A	N/A	Climate Action Plan complete	ACHIEVED

Data Source: BC Climate Action Secretariat

Discussion of Results

The BC Climate Action Secretariat released a comprehensive Climate Action Plan in June 2008, which provides both the Secretariat and all of government with a central plan outlining climate action responsibilities. Initiatives included in the plan are a result of policy development within the Climate Action Secretariat and ministries, as guided by the Cabinet Committee on Climate Action. Independent economic modelling of the policies and initiatives included in the plan

estimates that the province is 73 per cent of the way toward its 33 per cent greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2020. In August 2008, the Climate Action Team released recommendations for additional measures to reduce the province’s emissions.

The form of the Climate Action Plan is expected to evolve over time and will be reviewed and amended as needed.

Goal 2: Ministries and Crown agency activities are aligned with government climate action priorities and integrated

Objective 2.1: Guide the successful delivery of climate action goals across government by providing direction and resolving issues

The BC Climate Action Secretariat facilitated the coordination and integration of activities across all ministries and Crown agencies by providing necessary direction.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring ministries and Crown agencies are aware of climate action priorities;
- supporting ministries in the development of legislation required to reflect priorities;
- fostering two-way communication through meetings with key climate action ministries; and
- presenting a climate action vision and priorities across the public service through presentations and an Intranet website.

Performance Measure 2: Ministry and Crown agencies assist in the implementation of climate action priorities and policies

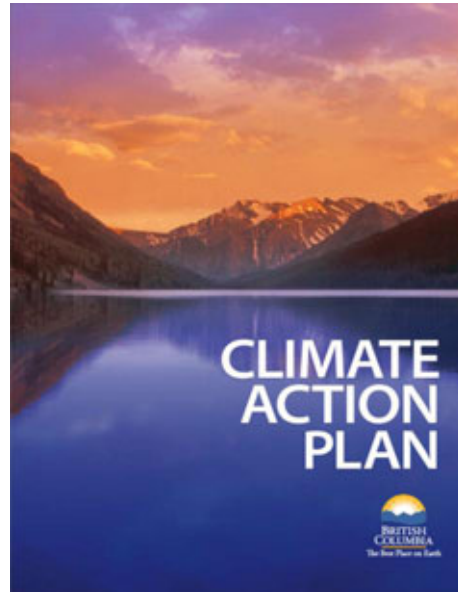
Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Ministries and Crown agencies assist in the implementation of climate action priorities and policies	N/A	N/A	50% of Climate Action Plan priorities underway	ACHIEVED

Data Source: BC Climate Action Secretariat

Discussion of Results

Attaining the Province's greenhouse gas reduction targets depends on the ability of ministries and Crown agencies to implement climate action priorities. The Secretariat plays a crucial role by providing direction and leadership to these entities, and the number of climate action activities underway is a key indicator of the Secretariat's effectiveness.

With many of the Climate Action Plan activities underway in 2008/09, the Secretariat has achieved its target. In large part, this is because ministries and Crown agencies have treated climate action as a key priority and have worked effectively with the Secretariat. A good example of this approach is the development of seven climate action bills tabled in 2008. By collaborating with the Ministry of Community and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, and Ministry of Finance in the development of the legislation, the Secretariat worked to ensure that ministry expertise was optimized to meet the Province's climate action priorities. The Secretariat also worked with many other ministries to advance climate action initiatives, including the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Ministry of Forests and Range, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development.



Government's Climate Action Plan is estimated by independent economic modelling to achieve 73 per cent of British Columbia's 2020 Greenhouse Gas emissions reduction target

Goal 3: Government is successful in achieving its intergovernmental relations climate action objectives

Objective 3.1: Lead the development and implementation of government's climate action intergovernmental relations strategy

By developing and implementing the government's intergovernmental relations strategy related to climate action, the BC Climate Action Secretariat reinforces the need for regional, national and international strategies to combat climate change.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working with the Western Climate Initiative, the International Climate Action Partnership, the Climate Registry, and the Pacific Coast Collaborative to coordinate regional climate action goals;
- continuing to work with Canadian provinces and the federal government through the Council of the Federation;
- pursuing other regional, national and international opportunities to advance climate action goals and fostering collaboration through formal agreements and partnerships; and
- working with local governments to further climate action goals.

Goal 4: The public sector is carbon neutral by 2010

Objective 4.1: Public sector organizations are provided with the tools and resources needed to comply with carbon neutral requirements

By facilitating the development and distribution of tools and resources across the public sector, the BC Climate Action Secretariat will ensure that the carbon neutral commitment can be achieved.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working with the Ministry of Citizens' Services to develop a carbon measurement tool for all public sector organizations to use;
- developing and distributing guidelines for carbon neutrality to all public sector organizations;

- providing expertise and advice as required;
- reporting on progress; and
- making emission offsets available to ministries, schools, hospitals, universities and colleges through the Pacific Carbon Trust.

Performance Measure 3: Carbon neutral tools and resources developed and implemented by public sector organizations

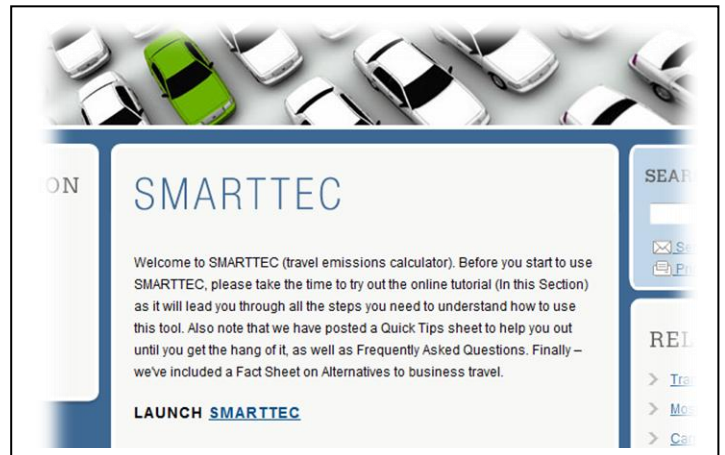
Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Carbon neutral tools and resources developed and implemented by public sector organizations	N/A	N/A	Measurement tool created and distributed to core government; guidelines for reporting developed	ACHIEVED

Data Source: BC Climate Action Secretariat

Discussion of Results

The BC Climate Action Secretariat is ensuring that government and public sector organizations have access to tools that will help them meet government’s carbon neutral public sector commitment for 2010. A key achievement this past year has been the launch of SMARTTOOL, which helps ministries measure greenhouse gas emissions, identify opportunities to save energy and reduce emissions. SMARTTOOL is also being rolled out to the broader public sector.

Another key achievement has been the implementation of the SMARTEC Travel Emissions Calculator that tracks core government travel. The use of SMARTEC has helped meet government’s carbon neutral commitment for travel in 2008. Guidelines for reporting have been developed and distributed to ensure consistent reporting of greenhouse gas emissions across government and the public sector.



SMARTTEC enables the Public Service to track employee travel emissions that are then offset through the Pacific Carbon Trust

Goal 5: The public is engaged in climate action and positive behaviour change is occurring

Objective 5.1: A comprehensive strategy for public engagement is developed and implemented

By developing a comprehensive strategy for public outreach, the Secretariat will assist the Province in encouraging the level of public engagement and behaviour change required to significantly reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- establishing the Citizens' Conservation Councils to advise on public engagement strategies; and
- launching an informative, comprehensive and engaging website and other communications resources as identified.

Performance Measure 4: Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for public engagement

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
A comprehensive strategy for public engagement is developed and implemented	N/A	N/A	Citizens' Conservation Councils established; full website launched	ACHIEVED

Data Source: BC Climate Action Secretariat

Discussion of Results

Public engagement and outreach is a critical component in achieving government's greenhouse gas reduction targets. The target set here reflects the need to conduct the necessary analysis in order to adopt the best possible public engagement strategy for the Province, solicit the advice of the new Citizens' Conservation Councils, and continually develop new tools to encourage positive behaviour change. The Secretariat launched seven regional Citizens' Conservation Councils in September 2008. The councils were instructed to provide recommendations to the government on the most regionally relevant ways to provide public education and engage the public's help in reducing emissions and identifying low carbon economic opportunities. The

mandate of the councils runs until December 2009 and is a key component of the government's climate action outreach.

The LiveSmart BC website was launched in July 2008. It provides a central location for information on climate action initiatives and identifies ways in which British Columbians can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and save money.

Report on Resources

Resource Summary Table

	Estimated	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Climate Action Secretariat	15,458		15,458	12,250	(3,208)
Total	15,458		15,458	12,250	(3,208)
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)					
Climate Action Secretariat	18		18	22	4
Total	18		18	22	4
Secretariat Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)					
Climate Action Secretariat	0		0	3	3
Total	0		0	3	3

¹ The amounts in the "Estimated" column correspond to the *Estimates* as presented to the legislative assembly in February 2008.

² "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

³ Variance represents "Actual" minus "Total Estimated." If the Actual is greater than the Total Estimated, the Variance will be displayed as a positive number.

⁴ The \$3.21 million operating surplus was primarily due to corporate expenditure management initiatives.

⁵ The \$3 thousand capital shortfall is offset by a capital surplus in the Environmental Assessment Office, which holds a portion of the capital budget component authorized for the Ministry of Environment. The difference of \$1 thousand is due to rounding.

Environmental Assessment Office

Highlights of the Year

In 2008/09, the Environmental Assessment Office effectively managed an unprecedented 87 reviewable projects, a 23 per cent increase over last year's record project volumes. This represents over \$36 billion in potential investments in B.C. A record 13 projects were referred to ministers for decision in 2008/09, up from eight referred in 2007/08.

Projects Update

Of the 13 projects referred to ministers for decision during 2008/09, all were certified during the fiscal year. Included was a referral for a major amendment to the environmental assessment certificate for the Tulsequah Chief Project. The Office referred this amendment to ministers because the trans-boundary project required concurrent review by Alaska and U.S. federal authorities, involved the use of a new and unproven technology in an area known for sensitive environmental conditions and extreme weather, and was of interest to First Nations and the public, particularly in Alaska.

The Environmental Assessment Office also reviewed and approved requests from proponents for five amendments to their environmental assessment certificates.

In total, the projects that completed the environmental assessment process this fiscal year represent over \$5 billion in capital investment. This represents a 200 per cent increase over the value of capital investment for projects that received an environmental assessment certificate in 2007/08.

Fairness and Service Code

In 2008/09, the Environmental Assessment Office developed the *Fairness and Service Code* to give proponents, First Nations and the public an understanding of what can be expected during a provincial environmental assessment. The Code outlines the basic steps in an environmental assessment and sets out the guiding principles and service standards the Office will apply in its dealings with interested parties. See page 67 for a link to the code.

Intergovernmental

In 2008/09, 65 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 *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Significant progress was made with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in 2008/09 on a range of initiatives designed to minimize duplication and enhance harmonization. The Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency recently

entered into a broader agreement committing to greater cooperation and coordination. This includes the identification of a pilot project for which the federal review responsibilities would be delegated to the Province, with each government having authority to make final decisions. The agreement also provides for cooperative initiatives such as joint training, detailed joint work plans and staff exchanges.



Vancouver Convention Centre construction

Purpose of the Environmental Assessment Office

The Environmental Assessment Office was created in 1995 to coordinate the assessment of proposed major projects in B.C. as required under the former *Environmental Assessment Act*. This role has continued under the current *Environmental Assessment Act*, proclaimed in December 2002, which also granted the Environmental Assessment Office greater flexibility to tailor environmental assessments to project-specific needs while still allowing for comprehensive project reviews.

Environmental assessments examine 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 proposed project must first undergo an environmental assessment and receive a certificate before ministries can issue approvals for the project under other provincial enactments.

Under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, projects become reviewable in three ways.

1. 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).
2. Project proponents may also apply to the Environmental Assessment Office to have their project reviewed under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.
3. 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 where 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; and



- consultations with First Nations to address and, where appropriate, accommodate potential effects on established or asserted aboriginal rights and title.

The environmental assessment process also includes the following elements:

- technical studies to identify any potentially adverse environmental, social, economic, heritage or health effects of a proposed project;
- strategies and measures to avoid, prevent or reduce potential adverse effects through mitigation or project redesign;
- preparation of a comprehensive assessment report summarizing issues and findings at the conclusion of the process;
- preparation of a recommendations document, with reasons, that provides advice on whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate for a proposed project; and
- assignment of conditions and follow-up or compliance reporting requirements to a proponent in an environmental assessment certificate.

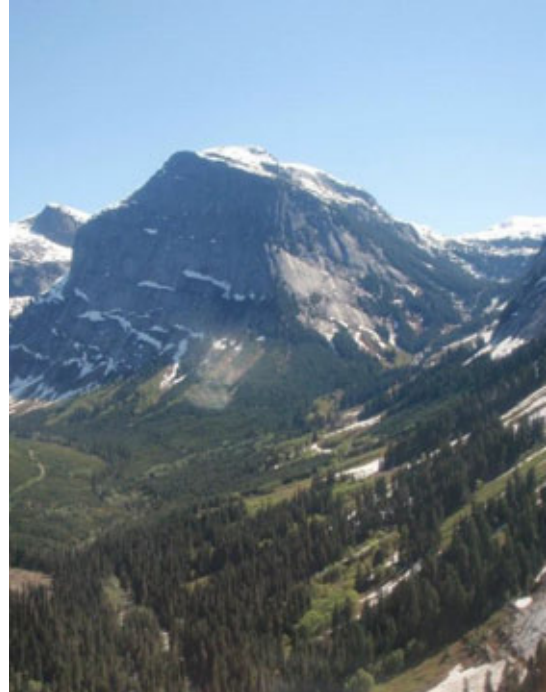


North Thompson River (proposed Harper Creek Copper-Gold-Silver Mine Project)

Strategic Context

Despite a weakening of the global economy in the latter half of 2008/09, the workload of the Environmental Assessment Office remained heavy. In 2008/09, the capital investment value for projects in the environmental assessment process exceeded \$36 billion, although some assessments are inactive at present.

In conducting its assessments, the Environmental Assessment Office is guided by the evolving case law and government policy related to the obligations of the Crown to consult with First Nations. Among other things, the Environmental Assessment Office seeks First Nations' input on its project-scoping decisions and procedural orders, encourages and helps fund First Nations' participation in technical working groups, and makes provisions for First Nations' discussions outside of working groups where necessary, including government-to-government consultation. 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. The Office provides First Nations the opportunity to include their submissions in the materials that it provides to the ministers to support their decision-making with respect to a proposed project.



Site of the proposed East Toba Montrose Creek Hydroelectric Project

A significant number of projects require assessment under both provincial and federal law. At the end of the 2008/09 fiscal year, there were over \$1.7 billion worth of projects that have been approved under the provincial environmental assessment process, but which cannot proceed at this time because they are awaiting federal environmental assessment decisions.

Report on Performance

Performance Plan Summary Table

Goal 1: The environmental assessment process is clear and streamlined For greater detail see pages 56 to 58	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
1.1 The environmental assessment process is easy to follow Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process	8 out of 10	DATA NOT AVAILABLE *
1.2 Harmonized federal-provincial assessment processes Percentage of applications in harmonized review completed within provincial timelines (application screening/application review/ministers' decision)	80%	87% EXCEEDED
Goal 2: Environmental assessment reports and recommendations are comprehensive and timely For greater detail see pages 59 to 61	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
2.1 Applications for environmental assessment certificates are complete and thorough Percentage of applications in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.C. environmental assessment process only • Joint B.C./Canada environmental assessment process 	90% 80%	100% EXCEEDED 71% NOT ACHIEVED
2.2 Meaningful consultation with First Nations occurs during environmental assessment reviews Percentage of impacted First Nations engaged in project assessment working group(s)	75%	79% EXCEEDED

* Next survey to be completed in 2009/10.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: The environmental assessment process is clear and streamlined

Objective 1.1: The environmental assessment process is easy to follow

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to develop and improve guidelines such as the Proponent Guide to the Environmental Assessment Review Process and sector-specific guidelines;
- continuing to seek ways to increase public and stakeholder awareness of the environmental assessment process, including the use of the electronic Project Information Centre (e-PIC); and
- conducting surveys to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the environmental assessment process.

Performance Results

Performance Measure 1: Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Proponents' overall level of satisfaction with the assessment process	8 out of 10	6 out of 10	8 out of 10	DATA NOT AVAILABLE*

* **Data Source:** BC Stats conducts a survey of proponents every two years. Results of the next survey will be available in spring 2010.

Discussion of Results

This measure addresses the level of proponent satisfaction with the environmental assessment process by asking proponents to rate the Environmental Assessment Office on a scale of 1 to 10, regardless of where their projects are in the process. A BC Stats survey is undertaken every two years and the results of the next survey will be available in spring 2010. In alternate years, the Environmental Assessment Office also seeks proponents' views on the delivery of the environmental assessment process through periodic telephone interviews and meetings with proponents who are actively engaged in, or have recently completed, the environmental assessment process. In 2008/09, the Executive Director met or spoke with 35 proponents to

obtain their feedback on the environmental assessment process. Overall, proponents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the environmental assessment process.

The Environmental Assessment Office will continue to use proponent feedback to help improve its process. For example, proponents expressed a desire to have greater clarity on the Environmental Assessment Office's expectations regarding First Nations' consultation requirements. The Environmental Assessment Office has addressed this through its new *Fairness and Service Code* and other documentation.

Objective 1.2: Harmonized federal-provincial assessment processes

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work cooperatively with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to ensure joint federal-provincial environmental assessments meet all requirements of the *Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation*; and
- promoting and facilitating negotiations, on a project-by-project basis, for each harmonized environmental assessment.

Performance Results

Performance Measure 2: Percentage of applications in harmonized review completed within provincial timelines

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Percentage of applications in harmonized review completed within provincial timelines (application screening/application review/ministers' decision)	79%	100%	80%	87% EXCEEDED

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office

Discussion of Results

A harmonized approach to 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 2008/09, five of the projects that the Environmental Assessment Office referred to the ministers for a decision were also subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and underwent harmonized reviews. In each case, the Environmental Assessment Office managed these harmonized reviews on behalf of both governments within provincial time limits, and

consulted extensively with federal departments to develop common work plans and to address any coordination issues. The Environmental Assessment Office completed the screening of all five proponent applications for completeness within the 30-day time limit, and completed three of five harmonized federal-provincial reviews within the 180-day time limit. All five reviews were reviewed and a decision made by provincial ministers on whether to issue an environmental assessment certificate within the 45-day time limit.

In addition to these results, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency have also recently entered into a broader agreement committing to greater cooperation and coordination. This includes the identification of a pilot project for which federal review responsibilities would be delegated to the Province, with each government having authority to make final decisions. The agreement also provides for cooperative initiatives such as joint training, detailed joint work plans and staff exchanges.

Under section 27 of the *Environmental Assessment Act*, B.C. may accept an environmental assessment undertaken by another jurisdiction as equivalent to B.C.'s, thereby avoiding duplication of environmental assessments. The Environmental Assessment Office has entered into two such agreements with the federal government. One agreement is with the National Energy Board to accept its assessments under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* as equivalent to provincial reviews, thereby removing the need for the Office to review these projects or aspects of them. The other agreement is related to the Fairview Terminal Expansion Project in Prince Rupert, whereby B.C. will accept the federal government's environmental assessment as equivalent to its own.

To improve the environmental assessment process, the Environmental Assessment Office will continue pursuing agreements with the federal government to use existing legislative tools to minimize duplication and to continue enhancing harmonization through joint work plans and joint staff training, with the ultimate goal of a single comprehensive review for one project. As indicated in the 2009 Speech from the Throne, the Province will continue to seek federal legislative changes to enable the federal government to enter reciprocal equivalency agreements and accept provincial environmental assessments as equivalent to a federal review in appropriate cases.

Office Response

The review of applications for the two projects that were not completed within the 180-day time limit, Port Mann/Highway 1 Project and South Fraser Perimeter Road Project, involved complex federal agency review issues. Each of these projects experienced considerable delay in dealing with federal government issues and concerns.

Although the Environmental Assessment Office will continue to press the federal government to complete timely reviews, the Office has indicated that in the future it will make decisions within the 180-day time frame, even if the federal authorities are not in a position to do the same.

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

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

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- providing clear, consistent and effective guidance to proponents regarding information requirements for environmental assessment certificate applications;
- convening multidisciplinary working groups to engage in meaningful project-related discussions; and
- ensuring applications for environmental assessments contain the required information before they are accepted for review.

Performance Results

Performance Measure 3: Percentage of applications in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Percentage of applications in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180 days:				100%
• B.C. environmental assessment process only	54%	100%	90%	71%
• Joint B.C./Canada environmental assessment	79%	100%	80%	NOT ACHIEVED

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 2008/09, the Environmental Assessment Office completed environmental reviews of 12 projects having a legislated 180-day review period and referred these projects to the ministers for a decision. Of those, five reviews were solely provincial. The Environmental Assessment Office completed these five reviews within the 180-day time limit. The average number of days per provincial review was 160 days.

The remaining seven reviews were begun as joint federal-provincial assessments.¹⁰ Of these, the Environmental Assessment Office completed five reviews within the 180-day time frame. The average number of days for these five reviews was 176 days. Overall, the average number of days for all reviews was 177 days.

Office Response

Although the Environmental Assessment Office will continue to press the federal government to complete timely reviews, the Office will make decisions within the 180-day time frame, even if the federal authorities are not in a position to do the same.

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

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring proponents develop comprehensive plans that result in timely and meaningful consultation with First Nations;
- continuing to seek active First Nations' involvement in the early stages of project reviews;
- providing opportunities for First Nations to review and comment on key environmental assessment documents, through working groups and otherwise;
- promoting open and regular communication with First Nations' communities to identify, understand and address project-related issues; and
- providing resources to assist the First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group.

Performance Results

Performance Measure 4: Percentage of impacted First Nations engaged in project assessment working group(s)

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Percentage of impacted First Nations engaged in project assessment working group(s)	75%	91%	75%	79% EXCEEDED

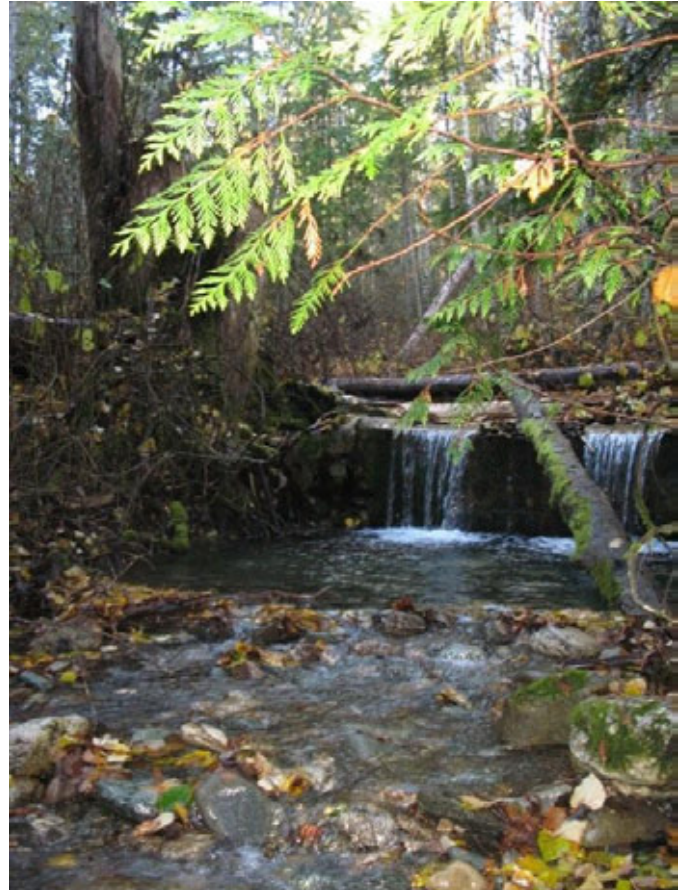
Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office

¹⁰ For two of these reviews, the federal and provincial processes desynchronized prior to the date the Province referred the proposed project to provincial ministers for decision. The federal process for these reviews remains ongoing. The other five reviews were completed as joint federal-provincial or harmonized reviews.

Discussion of Results

This was a new measure for the Environmental Assessment Office in 2006/07. The benchmark had been established based on those First Nations that may be impacted by a project and have chosen to sit on the technical working group for the project. That year, 75 per cent of interested First Nations were engaged in a project assessment working group. In 2008/09, the Environmental Assessment Office set its performance target at 75 per cent and exceeded that goal with 79 per cent of interested First Nations engaged in a project assessment working group.

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. In the 2008/09 – 2010/11 Service Plan, this performance measure was re-titled “Percentage of impacted First Nations engaged in project assessment working groups.” In the 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan, the Environmental Assessment Office modified this performance measure to track the percentage of potentially affected First Nations engaged in the environmental assessment process. This recognizes that potentially affected First Nations may participate in an environmental assessment through a working group and other direct discussions.



Jones Creek, Vavenby, B.C.

Report on Resources

Resource Summary Table

	Estimated	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated ¹	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Total	10,508		10,508	8,439	(2,069) ²
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)					
Total	52		52	52	-
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)					
Total	56		56	50	(6)

¹ The "Estimated" amount corresponds to the *Estimates* as presented to the Legislative Assembly in February 2008.

² \$1,907 of the underspent variance was the result of corporate expenditure management initiatives.

Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

Appendix A: Hyperlinks to Additional Information

Ministry of Environment

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

www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009/vision_mission_values.pdf

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

www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009/org_chart.pdf

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

www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009/core_business.pdf

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

www.env.gov.bc.ca/sp/2009/leg.pdf

Environmental Assessment Office

Environmental Assessment Office's *Fairness and Service Code* can be found here:

www.eao.gov.bc.ca/pub/pdf/EAO_FairnessAndServiceCode_Jan09.pdf

Appendix B: Ministry Contact Information

Regional Office	Telephone	Fax	Website
Victoria – Headquarters	250 387-1161	250 387-5669	www.gov.bc.ca/env/
Vancouver Island Region			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Nanaimo	250 751-3100	250 751-3103	www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/
Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet			
Lower Mainland Region			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Surrey	604 582-5200	604 930-7119	www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/
Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, North Vancouver, Sechelt, Powell River			
Thompson Region			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Kamloops	250 371-6200	250 828-4000	www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/
Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt			
Okanagan Region			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Penticton	250 490-8200	250 490-2231	www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/
Other offices: Grand Forks, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton/Manning Park, Vernon			
Kootenay Region			
<i>Main Regional Offices:</i> Cranbrook Nelson	250 489-8540 250 354-6333	250 489-8506 250 354-6332	www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/
Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke			
Cariboo Region			
<i>Main Regional Office:</i> Williams Lake	250 398-4530	250 398-4214	www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/
Other offices: 100 Mile House, Bella Coola/Hagensborg, Quesnel			

Appendix C: BC Climate Action Secretariat and Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

Secretariat Contact Information

BC Climate Action Secretariat

Ministry of Environment

First Floor

525 Superior Street

Victoria BC V8V 1T7

Contact:

James Mack

A/Head, BC Climate Action Secretariat

250 387-5581

For more information, see www.climateactionsecretariat.gov.bc.ca/

Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

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Email: eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca

Fax: 250 356-7440

Website: www.eao.gov.bc.ca/