

Environment and Parks

BUSINESS PLAN 2015–18

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of October 15, 2015.

original signed by

Shannon Phillips, Minister

THE MINISTRY

The ministry consists of the Department of Environment and Parks, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund, the Land Stewardship Fund, the Natural Resources Conservation Board and the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency (AEMERA). Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the Land Use Secretariat, the Surface Rights Board, the Land Compensation Board, the Environmental Appeals Board and the Public Lands Appeal Board.

Six delegated administrative organizations which operate outside of government and are accountable to the minister are the Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, Alberta Recycling Management Authority, Alberta Used Oil Management Association, Beverage Container Management Board and the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation.

Albertans are proud of their environment, abundant natural resources and system of provincial parks and protected areas. These inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations. Alberta's vision is for a healthy, clean and prosperous province where Albertans are leaders in environmental conservation, enjoy sustainable economic prosperity and a great quality of life.

The ministry engages with Albertans to ensure the province's environmental, social and economic goals for the future are met. Government is committed to ensuring Alberta's natural resources are managed using innovative and responsible approaches and maximizing their value while protecting Alberta's environment. The ministry engages with all Albertans to listen and understand the challenges and to find the correct path to attain desired environmental, economic and social outcomes. To ensure the sustainability of Alberta's air, land, water and biodiversity, all Albertans will need to play a strong role.

A more detailed description of Environment and Parks and its programs and initiatives can be found at www.aep.alberta.ca.

LINK TO GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The desired outcomes and priority initiatives identified in this business plan are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

These are challenging times in Alberta and they require leadership and innovation. The pressures on Alberta's landscape mean the Government of Alberta can no longer manage development incrementally. Instead, cumulative social, economic and environmental impacts must be considered in the government's decision-making processes in order to reconcile competing demands on the landscape. An integrated and responsible resource management approach

establishes mechanisms to manage the government's progress towards achieving desired environmental, economic and social outcomes.

Part of the government's commitment to serving Albertans is the development and implementation of regional land-use plans, a key component of the Land-use Framework. These plans have begun to balance outcomes within some regions of Alberta and also address the environmental impacts and opportunities that parks and recreational activities have on the landscape and on Albertans' quality of life. Working with Indigenous peoples will be critical to ensuring success.

DESIRED OUTCOMES, PRIORITY INITIATIVES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Desired Outcome One: Environment and ecosystem health and integrity

Albertans care about the health and integrity of their environment and ecosystems. Protection and conservation of Alberta's air, water, land and biodiversity requires productive relationships that include all Albertans. Through managing provincial parks and protected areas, the ministry conserves important ecosystems and ecosystem services. The ministry is committed to a renewed approach to conservation, biodiversity and ecological integrity and works with Albertans to manage the cumulative effects of natural resource development.

Direction to achieve the desired outcomes is provided through policy, regional plans and frameworks, and is supported by education, outreach, authorizations and compliance programs as well as environmental trends and conditions monitoring, evaluating and reporting. The ministry provides an environmental stewardship framework and regulates natural resource access, allocation and use through planning, policy and policy assurance programs. To protect Alberta's environment and ecosystem it is essential for businesses, non-governmental organizations, communities and individuals to comply with pollutant emissions, water withdrawals, wastewater discharges, fish and wildlife harvest limits, and timely land reclamation and remediation to achieve clean air, quality water, sustainable water supplies and productive sustainable lands and ecosystems including biodiversity that meet environmental, economic and social needs for present and future generations.

Priority Initiatives:

- 1.1 Ensure environmental protection, conservation and ecosystem integrity by:
 - completing regional plan development focusing on the North Saskatchewan and Lower Peace regions;
 - ensuring an improved approach to eliminating tailings ponds;
 - implementing regional plans through management frameworks, sub-regional plans and projects;
 - supporting open and transparent access to scientific data and information on Alberta's environmental conditions and trends;
 - transitioning to an open-source environmental information system; and
 - improving water management and quality.
- 1.2 Establish Alberta as an environmental leader by:
 - creating an expert panel to comprehensively review Alberta's climate change policy, consulting with stakeholders and providing feedback on actions Albertans are ready to take on climate change; and
 - developing a comprehensive new provincial policy that demonstrates to the world Alberta's commitment to address climate change.
- 1.3 Develop and initiate implementation of a land reclamation framework.
- 1.4 Participate in the government's review of its existing programs and policies in consultation with Indigenous peoples to identify ways to implement the objectives and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2013	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
1.a Total greenhouse gas emissions ¹	267	263	264	265
1.b Kilograms of municipal solid waste per capita disposed of in landfills ²	911	666	654	632

Notes:

- ¹ Measured in million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, as outlined in *Alberta's 2008 Climate Change Strategy*. Targets and data are measured on a calendar year and there is a reporting lag period.
- ² The 2013 actual is not reflective of historical trends due to the 2013 southern Alberta floods. Targets are based on the 2012 actual of 691 kg/capita.

Performance Indicators	Actual 2010	Actual 2011	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)
1.a Air quality index ¹	93%	95%	97% (2012)	96% (2013)
Good air quality days				
1.b Percentage of species at risk ²			2.2% (2005)	3.6% (2010)

Notes:

- ¹ The Air Quality Index reflects the overall averaged annual air quality of the province based on provincial ambient air quality objectives of five major pollutants: fine particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. In 2011-13 five out of six air zones in Alberta achieved the new Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards, which focuses on a three year average of the highest occurring concentration levels of two major pollutants: fine particulate matter and ozone. Management action is being taken in the Red Deer region to achieve the standard.
- ² Results are gathered by the provincial government, universities, colleges and expert biologists, and are reported federally once every five years as legislated by the *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada*.

Desired Outcome Two: Sustainable economic diversification

Albertans wish to generate economic diversification through a green economy that will improve human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. A green economy is one where growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The Government of Alberta will utilize policy, regulations and economic instruments to catalyze and enable the growth of a green economy through the investment and development by Albertans in green sectors such as waste, water and energy to enhance efficiency, reduction, reuse and recycling. The development of a green economy promotes the government's bottom line of sustaining and advancing economic, environmental and social well-being for now and into the future.

Priority Initiatives:

- 2.1 Lead development of a new climate change policy including advancing energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- 2.2 In partnership with other ministries, shift Alberta's economic diversification towards a green economy to create new jobs through programs that assist Albertans in reducing their energy use, which will reduce their costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Performance Measure(s):

Performance measure(s) that reflect progress toward achieving outcome two are under development.

Desired Outcome Three: Social well-being

Albertans love their province and wish to maximize the social benefits a quality natural environment provides. To complement the overall mental and physical health benefits such as active living derived from a healthy environment and ecosystem, the ministry manages Alberta's parks systems land base, facilities and infrastructure. Opportunities are provided for Albertans and visitors to explore natural landscapes and provincial parks, engage in nature-based experiences or outdoor recreational activities and learn about Alberta's natural heritage. These interactions enhance social well-being while contributing to the provincial economy through Alberta's tourism industry. To ensure these opportunities are available, the ministry will work with all Albertans to protect and conserve the province's air, land, water and biodiversity.

Priority Initiatives:

- 3.1 Implement *Alberta's Plan for Parks* in conjunction with the continued implementation of the Land-use Framework by:
- addressing the commitment to provide modern facilities, high quality recreation experiences and conservation;
 - leading initiatives to create new parks, or expand or reclassify existing parks to help fill conservation, recreation and tourism gaps in the current Alberta provincial parks system;
 - continuing to develop and implement strategies, including the Inclusion Strategy, Science Strategy and the Visitor Experience Strategy, to enable Albertans of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to experience nature through Alberta's provincial parks system;
 - consolidating and modernizing parks legislation, including an updated parks classification system; and
 - encouraging public participation in and support of Alberta Parks through a Parks Advisory Council and a Parks Conservation Foundation.
- 3.2 Implement a provincial recreational trails pilot project that will generate recreational, active living and environmental benefits.

Performance Measures	Last Year Actual	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
3.a Change in licence sales:				
• Fishing	-1.1%	> Rolling average of last five years' results		
• Hunting	6.5%	> Rolling average of last five years' results		
3.b Provincial park or recreation areas visitation ¹	33.7% (2013-14)	33.0%	33.0%	33.0%

Note:

¹ Percentage of adult Albertans who visited a provincial park or recreation area in the last 12 months. The overall number of visits is expected to increase as the province's population continues to grow.

Performance Indicator	Actual 2013	Actual 2014
3.a Visitor satisfaction with the quality of services and facilities at provincial parks	85.6%	86.4%

Desired Outcome Four: Protected public health and safety from environmental conditions and events

Environment and Parks will work with Health to assure the public is protected now and in the future from the adverse effects of environmental conditions and events. Safety and economic impacts from environmental emergencies are addressed by ministry prevention, mitigation, response and recovery measures. Drinking water facilities that require an approval or registration under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* are regulated. Ministry support is provided through grant funding to municipalities and First Nations, education, training, planning, forecasting, assessment, coordination and the management of water infrastructure, wildlife interaction and environmental emergencies. Examples of this support are flood recovery and mitigation by water operations infrastructure management, flood and erosion control funding programs and enhanced flow monitoring programs. Collaborative efforts by all Albertans are key to assure protected public health and safety and to build resiliency to mitigate the impacts of catastrophic events.

Priority Initiatives:

- 4.1 Develop plans and programs to anticipate and minimize impacts of major catastrophic events and to protect communities including:
- a framework to address invasive species in Alberta; and
 - a comprehensive flood mitigation plan to reduce community flood and drought vulnerability including:
 - › an enhanced floodplain and flood hazard mapping program;
 - › Flood Development Regulation implementation limiting future development in provincially-mapped floodways;
 - › Bow Elbow and Highwood River basin structural flood mitigation options; and
 - › local government level grant funding under the Alberta Community Resilience Program to mitigate future extreme flood and drought events.
- 4.2 Continue Alberta Parks' facility and infrastructure recovery work arising from the 2013 southern Alberta floods.

Performance Measure(s):

Performance measure(s) that reflect progress toward achieving outcome four are under development.

Performance Indicator	Actual 2010	Actual 2011	Actual 2012	Actual 2013
4.a Drinking water quality indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of facilities with no significant drinking water quality incidents 	96%	96%	94%	93%

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Consolidated Financial Statements Basis

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable			
	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Target	2017-18 Target
REVENUE				
Transfers from Government of Canada	13,274	8,453	845	845
Internal Government Transfers	6,230	4,554	3,154	2,054
Investment Income	2,384	40	40	39
Premiums, Fees and Licences	96,113	104,432	105,170	104,690
Other Revenue	244,118	163,984	181,380	161,498
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(6,230)	(4,554)	(3,154)	(2,054)
Total	355,889	276,909	287,435	267,072
EXPENSE				
Ministry Support Services	75,684	73,166	73,417	73,431
Air	26,898	17,339	17,498	17,500
Land	54,105	50,922	56,485	56,484
Water	69,264	63,840	72,361	70,361
Fish and Wildlife	23,092	24,811	24,952	24,952
Integrated Planning	36,376	39,243	37,954	36,854
Parks	78,261	87,464	87,520	86,675
Climate Change	14,464	70,655	68,084	68,084
Land Use Secretariat	7,494	10,463	10,549	10,549
Science and Monitoring	15,251	-	-	-
Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency	49,823	78,000	78,000	78,000
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	11,121	11,909	11,978	11,978
2013 Alberta Flooding	82,273	103,286	74,650	50,000
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(512)	(350)	(350)	(350)
Total	543,594	630,748	613,098	584,518
Net Operating Result	(187,705)	(353,839)	(325,663)	(317,446)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT				
Ministry Support Services	2,848	-	425	425
Land	3,016	5,000	5,602	5,602
Fish and Wildlife	31	-	297	297
Parks	14,429	19,488	16,220	34,432
Land Use Secretariat	175	-	-	-
Science and Monitoring	730	800	1,000	1,000
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	-	17	17	17
2013 Alberta Flooding	4,074	92,579	135,836	103,377
Total	25,303	117,884	159,397	145,150