

BUSINESS PLAN 2016–19

Environment and Parks

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of March 17, 2016.

original signed by

Shannon Phillips, Minister

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

The ministry consists of the Department of Environment and Parks, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund, Energy Efficiency Alberta, the Land Stewardship Fund and the Natural Resources Conservation Board. 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. All associated agencies, boards, commissions and delegated administrative organizations will undergo a review to ensure maximum benefit for Albertans. The Alberta Climate Change Office has been established to implement the Climate Leadership Plan.

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 and enjoy sustainable economic prosperity and a great quality of life.

The ministry works with Albertans to ensure the province's environmental, social and economic goals for the future are met. Strategic partnerships support the ministry in achieving its outcomes by providing collaborative forums to leverage resources, capacity and a shared responsibility for environmental stewardship. The ministry engages with Albertans to listen and to better understand the challenges involved in ensuring that Alberta's natural resources are managed using innovative and responsible approaches. 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.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The outcomes and key strategies identified in this business plan are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta.

To improve Alberta's reputation and grow its economy, it is time to take leadership on one of the world's biggest problems – the pollution that is causing climate change. Albertans need protection from both the increase in frequency and severity of catastrophic events resulting from climate change and the negative health impacts of air pollution, especially from coal power generation. In light of lower oil prices, Albertans are looking to government to diversify the economy and create jobs by investing in a greener, more efficient economy.

Alberta's landscape also faces competing demands, so government's decision-making processes must consider the cumulative social, economic and environmental impacts, in order to find balance. In addition to the ever-present development and population growth, outdoor recreational activities are also putting pressure on the province's landscape. Effectively managing the impacts of outdoor recreation may also create an opportunity for expansion of recreation and tourism industries as part of a transition to a greener economy.

To achieve cohesive, integrated and responsible resource management, effective policy development and implementation across all levels of government is needed. The government is committed to tackling the challenge of developing open and consistent management of data, records and information in response to Albertans' expectations and empowering individuals, non-profit organizations and businesses to derive value from government information. In addition to these challenges, stakeholder engagement and communication with all Albertans are key to incorporating the roles and contributions of Albertans to the province's success.

Finally, there are a number of demographic changes in this province, such as increasing ethnic diversity and a large, young and growing Indigenous population. It is critical the Government of Alberta addresses the unique needs of these groups in order to ensure success for all Albertans, including the most vulnerable populations.

OUTCOMES, KEY STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome One: Environment and ecosystem health and integrity

Albertans care about the health and integrity of their environment and ecosystems and the ministry is committed to a renewed approach to conservation, biodiversity and ecological integrity. Productive relationships and strategic partnerships that include Albertans are needed to achieve clean air, quality water, sustainable water supplies, productive and sustainable lands, conserved natural landscapes and protected areas. The ministry works with strategic partners to conserve landscapes representative of Alberta's natural regions, ecosystems and ecosystem services that protect biodiversity and provide habitat for common, vulnerable and endangered species.

Direction to achieve outcomes is provided through legislation, 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. Examples of ongoing ministry initiatives include identifying and recovering species at risk, the Land Trust Program and the Land Purchase Program which prevent habitat fragmentation, maintain biodiversity and preserve native landscapes. The ministry provides an environmental stewardship framework based on planning and policy and then regulates natural resource access, allocation and use. To protect and conserve Alberta's air, water, land and biodiversity it is essential for businesses, non-governmental organizations, communities and individuals to comply with limits and requirements for pollutant emissions, water withdrawals, wastewater discharges, fish and wildlife harvest, species conservation and timely land reclamation and remediation. Ecosystem health and integrity will enable Alberta to meet environmental, economic and social needs for present and future generations.

Key Strategies:

- 1.1 Ensure environmental protection, conservation and ecosystem integrity by:
 - completing regional plan development focusing on the North Saskatchewan and Lower Peace regions;
 - implementing regional plans through management frameworks, sub-regional recreation and land disturbance plans and projects, and the establishment of multi-stakeholder forums;
 - developing and implementing air quality management action plans to address the *Alberta: Air Zones Report 2011–13*, which is based on Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards;
 - ensuring an improved approach to eliminating tailings ponds;
 - demonstrating how Alberta contributes to Canada’s international commitment to protect 17 per cent of terrestrial ecosystems under Target 11 of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*;
 - developing woodland caribou range plans to meet species recovery requirements;
 - ensuring grazing lease objectives are communicated and monitored;
 - transitioning to an open-source environmental information system that supports access to scientific data and information on Alberta’s environmental conditions and trends; and
 - developing and initiating implementation of a land reclamation framework.
- 1.2 Demonstrate Alberta’s commitment to address climate change by working with the Alberta Climate Change Office as it leads the implementation of the Climate Leadership Plan.
- 1.3 Enhance Alberta’s provincial parks, in conjunction with the continued implementation of Alberta’s Land-use Framework, by:
 - leading initiatives to create new provincial parks, or to expand or reclassify existing provincial parks to help fill conservation, recreation and tourism gaps in the current Alberta provincial parks system; and
 - revitalizing and modernizing provincial parks legislation, including a revised provincial parks classification system.
- 1.4 Protect the Castle Special Management Area under provincial parks legislation and develop and implement a park management plan to ensure the area’s environmental values are effectively managed and enable nature-based recreational and tourism opportunities.
- 1.5 Participate in the government’s program and policy review for ways to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples objectives and principles.
- 1.6 Participate in the comprehensive review of Alberta’s agencies, boards and commissions to ensure they are performing to the maximum benefit for Albertans.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2014	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19
1.a Municipal solid waste to landfills: • Kilograms of municipal solid waste, per capita, disposed of in public and private landfills ¹	669 ¹	657	633	620

Note:

¹ Data is corrected from 666 to 669 kilograms per capita.

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 1.a The amount of waste disposed in waste disposal facilities affects environmental and ecosystem health and integrity by deteriorating the quality of Alberta’s land, air and water and signals the amount of resources that have not been recycled or reused. This measure highlights the success in encouraging Albertans to reduce waste and tracks progress on reducing the amount of waste disposed of in waste disposal facilities, per capita.

Performance Measures under Development:

Measures for protected areas and Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan are under development to further reflect progress toward achieving outcome one.

Performance Indicators	Actual 2010	Actual 2011	Actual 2012	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)
1.a Provincial air quality index: • Percentage of good air quality days in urban areas based on Alberta's ambient air quality objectives for fine particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide ¹	93%	95%	97%	96% (2013)	97% (2014)
Good air quality days					
1.b Species at risk • Percentage of vertebrate species including mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish designated as 'at risk' ²				2.2% (2005)	3.6% (2010)
1.c Total greenhouse gas emissions ³ : • Total million tonnes of CO ₂ equivalents (greenhouse gas) emitted from major emission source categories	243	247	258	267 (2013)	

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. The new Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards, which focus on a three year average of the highest occurring concentration levels of two major pollutants: fine particulate matter and ozone, and the annual average of fine particulate matter for the province's six air zones, complements the Air Quality Index.
- ² Species at risk 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*.
- ³ Emissions are measured on a calendar year and there is a reporting lag period.

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 and efficiency of a green economy through investment and development by Albertans in green sectors such as waste, water, renewable energy, ecotourism and outdoor recreation. The development of a green economy as detailed in Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan promotes the government's bottom line of sustaining and advancing economic, environmental and social well-being now and into the future.

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Through the Climate Change Office, develop and implement energy efficiency initiatives that support Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan and drive economic diversification and job growth.
- 2.2 Support Alberta's progress towards a green economy to create new jobs in agriculture, forestry, transportation and construction sectors by providing leadership on adoption of greener technology.
- 2.3 Ensure parks and conservation efforts are creating jobs in tourism and associated industries.

Performance Measures under Development:

Performance measures that reflect progress toward achieving outcome two are under development.

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 derived from a healthy environment and ecosystem, the ministry manages Alberta's provincial parks systems land base, facilities and infrastructure, and access to public lands. Opportunities are provided for Albertans and visitors to explore natural landscapes, engage in nature-based experiences or outdoor recreational activities, and learn about Alberta's natural heritage through the ministry's many educational, interpretative and experiential programs. Additional outdoor recreational activities are provided through management of water reservoirs and fish hatcheries. These interactions enhance social well-being and quality of life while contributing to the provincial green economy through Alberta's recreation and tourism industry. To ensure these opportunities continue to be available to future generations, the ministry will work with Albertans to protect and conserve the province's air, land, water and biodiversity.

Key Strategies:

- 3.1 Enhance Alberta's provincial parks, in conjunction with the continued implementation of Alberta's Land-use Framework, by:
 - addressing the commitment to provide modern facilities, high quality recreation experiences and conservation;
 - continuing to develop and implement strategies, including the Inclusion Strategy, Science Strategy and Visitor Experience Strategy, to enable Albertans of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to experience nature through Alberta's provincial parks system; and
 - encouraging public participation in and support of Alberta Parks through a Provincial Parks Advisory Council and a Parks Conservation Foundation.
- 3.2 Develop and implement a recreation management strategy for Crown Lands that fosters outdoor recreation planning and management, and nature-based tourism, within a green economy.¹
- 3.3 Initiate revision of the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Policy to address increasing and changing pressures.

Note:

¹ In this context "Crown Lands" refers to land under the administration of Environment and Parks pursuant to the *Public Lands Act* and the *Provincial Parks Act* and "nature-based tourism" refers to tourism that is undertaken largely or solely for the purpose of enjoying natural attractions and engaging in outdoor activities, whether for relaxation, discovery, or adventure (e.g. camping, bird watching, trail riding, downhill skiing, hunting, mountain biking, motorized recreation).

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2014-15	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19
3.a Hunting and fishing licence sales ¹ :				
• Percentage change of fishing licence sales compared to the previous year	5.2%	± 5%	± 4%	± 4%
• Percentage change of hunting licence sales compared to the previous year	3.7%	± 4%	± 3%	± 3%
3.b Provincial park or provincial recreation areas visitation:				
• Percentage of adult Albertans who visited a provincial park or provincial recreation area in the last 12 months ²	28.4%	33.0%	33.0%	33.0%

Notes:

¹ Fishing licence sales were 280,425 in 2014-15, an increase of 13,827 from 2013-14, and hunting licence sales were 123,438 in 2014-15, an increase of 4,381 from 2013-14. These actual license sales numbers update the estimated figures provided in the Ministry Annual Report 2014-15. The targets provided estimate the annual percentage change based on historical averages and projected trends for license sales.

² Percentage of adult Albertans who visited a provincial park or provincial recreation area in the last 12 months. The overall number of visits is expected to increase as the province's population continues to grow.

Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:

- 3.a Nature-based activities provide social benefits to Albertans and foster communities that are engaged in environmental stewardship and responsible use of nature. The ministry issues hunting and fishing licences which provide opportunities for Albertans to engage in hunting and fishing and to connect with nature while developing an appreciation and respect for the outdoors and wildlife. Licensing also provides revenue for wilderness development and outdoor recreation management plus has indirect tourism and economic benefits.
- 3.b Albertans who visit provincial parks and provincial recreation areas managed by the ministry have opportunities for enjoyable and safe experiences in nature and a variety of nature-based outdoor recreation activities, which contributes to overall social well-being.

Performance Indicator	Actual 2013	Actual 2014
3.a Park visitor satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Albertans who visited provincial parks or provincial recreation areas in the last 12 months, and are satisfied with the quality of services and facilities 	85.6%	86.4%

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

As indicated by the science of climate change, catastrophic events such as floods, fires and drought will increase in frequency and severity. In addition, the negative health effects of air pollution, particularly from coal power generation, are now better understood, resulting in chronic respiratory conditions, hospital admissions, untimely deaths and a strain on the health care system. Environment and Parks has a role to play in protecting Albertans through the mitigation of climate change, CO₂ abatement programs and significant investments in adaptation, including major infrastructure improvements for the city of Calgary and surrounding southern Alberta communities to avoid another catastrophic flood as experienced in 2013.

Environment and Parks will work with Health, Municipal Affairs, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency and other ministries and agencies to assure that 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 education, training, planning, forecasting, assessment, coordination, grant funding to municipalities and First Nations, and the management of water infrastructure, wildlife interaction and environmental emergencies. Examples of this support include creation of the Alberta Climate Change Office, problem wildlife management, flood hazard mapping, flood recovery and mitigation by water operations infrastructure management, flood and drought funding programs and enhanced flow monitoring programs. Collaborative efforts by Albertans are key to assure protected public health and safety and to build resiliency to mitigate the impacts of catastrophic events.

Key Strategies:

- 4.1 Develop and implement 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 with:
 - › an enhanced floodplain and flood hazard mapping program;
 - › floodplain development regulations limiting future development in provincially-mapped flood hazard areas;
 - › watershed-based structural flood and drought mitigation options;
 - › local government level grant funding under the Alberta Community Resilience Program and Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program to mitigate future flood and drought events; and
 - › enhanced flood and drought communication and communication tools.
- 4.2 Continue ministry facility and infrastructure recovery work arising from the 2013 southern Alberta floods.
- 4.3 Improve and maintain provincial park infrastructure and provincially-owned water management infrastructure to ensure public health and safety.
- 4.4 Develop a revised regulatory and governance approach to ensure safe and quality drinking water to all Albertans.

Performance Measures under Development:

The drinking water quality treatment measure is under development to reflect progress toward achieving outcome four.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable			2016-17 Estimate	2017-18 Target	2018-19 Target
	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Budget	2015-16 Forecast			
REVENUE						
Transfers from Government of Canada	13,274	8,453	8,453	685	685	685
Internal Government Transfers	6,230	4,554	4,554	3,154	2,054	2,054
Investment Income	2,384	40	39	44	43	43
Premiums, Fees and Licences	96,113	104,432	106,087	110,255	109,798	110,741
Other Revenue	244,118	163,984	166,913	172,380	217,483	988,584
Ministry Total	362,119	281,463	286,046	286,518	330,063	1,102,107
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(6,230)	(4,554)	(4,554)	(3,154)	(2,054)	(2,054)
Consolidated Total	355,889	276,909	281,492	283,364	328,009	1,100,053
EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	75,684	73,166	73,166	71,156	70,734	72,436
Air	40,763	27,994	27,994	17,565	17,460	17,986
Land	54,105	50,922	46,922	45,724	45,187	46,658
Water	69,264	63,840	63,840	76,528	74,278	74,747
Fish and Wildlife	23,092	24,811	24,811	24,503	24,356	25,148
Integrated Planning	36,376	39,243	38,987	39,076	37,762	38,460
Parks	81,221	90,286	91,602	92,451	91,705	92,897
Land Use Secretariat	7,494	10,463	10,463	10,305	10,241	10,426
Science and Monitoring	65,074	78,000	78,000	70,520	70,348	70,759
Climate Change and Emissions Management	599	60,000	7,400	-	-	-
Climate Leadership Plan	-	-	-	235,000	773,000	1,836,000
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	11,121	11,909	11,909	11,845	11,845	11,843
2013 Alberta Flooding	82,273	103,286	128,286	100,357	103,477	65,000
Ministry Total	547,066	633,920	603,380	795,030	1,330,393	2,362,360
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(512)	(350)	(350)	(350)	(350)	(350)
Consolidated Total	546,554	633,570	603,030	794,680	1,330,043	2,362,010
Net Operating Result	(190,665)	(356,661)	(321,538)	(511,316)	(1,002,034)	(1,261,957)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT						
Ministry Support Services	2,848	-	-	425	425	425
Land	3,016	5,000	5,000	5,602	5,602	5,602
Fish and Wildlife	31	-	-	297	297	297
Parks	14,429	19,488	19,763	31,220	49,432	49,432
Land Use Secretariat	175	-	-	-	-	-
Science and Monitoring	730	800	800	1,000	1,000	1,000
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	-	17	17	17	17	17
2013 Alberta Flooding	4,074	92,579	67,579	110,129	49,900	75,000
Total	25,303	117,884	93,159	148,690	106,673	131,773