

**2023/24 Estimates Debate Index**  
**Ministry of Forests**

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## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

**Title:** Budget 2023 Summary

**Revised:** March 7, 2023

**Issue:** Budget 2023 Summary for Operating and Capital

**Response:**

- The Ministry of Forests operating budget for 2023/24 is \$925.117M representing an increase of 12.2 percent (\$100.824M) from the 2022/23 estimates of \$824.293M.
- The increase is the result of budget decisions increasing Ministry Operations (\$60.802M), Fire Management (\$9.835M) and BC Timber Sales (\$30.187M).
- The capital budget for 2023/24 is \$92.856M, representing an increase of 17.3 percent (\$13.674M) from the 2022/23 estimates of \$79.182M.
- The increase is the result of funding increases to Fire Management (\$13.425M) and BC Timber Sales (\$0.436M) offset by a small decrease in Ministry Operations (\$0.187M).
- Additionally, not reflected in the increases above, the Ministry received Government Financial Information three years to implement Forest Landscape Plans, to continue the operations of the Forest Enhancement Society BC and to support the permitting project.

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

### Background/Status:

Table 1: Operating Budget	2022/23 Restated Estimates (\$M)	2023/24 Estimates (\$M)	Increase (\$M)
<b>Ministry Operations</b> - increase includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest Enhancement Society BC - \$25M</li> <li>• Forest Service Roads Engineering - \$11.817M</li> <li>• Permitting - \$1.267M</li> <li>• Shared Mandate - \$20.915M</li> <li>• Budget 2022 decisions: Climate Program and Adaptation Strategy and former Minister of State – \$1.803M</li> </ul>			
<b>Vote 30 Total</b>	422.766	<b>483.568</b>	60.802
<b>BC Timber Sales Special Account</b> – increase includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lift to align with Performance Targets and Resource Requirements – \$18.946M</li> <li>• Shared Mandate - \$4.983M</li> <li>• Budget 2022 lift to align with Performance Targets and Resource Requirements – \$6.258M</li> </ul>			
<b>BCTS Total</b>	206.742	<b>236.929</b>	30.187
<b>Fire Management</b> – increase includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Mandate - \$4.585M</li> <li>• Budget 2022 decision: Fire Management internal resourcing approval - \$5.250M</li> </ul>			
<b>Vote 31 Total</b>	194.285	<b>204.120</b>	9.835
<b>Crown Land Special Account</b>	0.500	<b>0.500</b>	-
<b>Forest Stand Management Fund</b>	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>824.293</b>	<b>925.117</b>	<b>100.824</b>
Percent Change			12.2%

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

Table 2: Capital Budget	2022/23 Restated Estimates (\$M)	2023/24 Estimates (\$M)	Increase (\$M)
<p><b>Ministry Operations</b> – increase includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest Service Roads critical infrastructure replacements – \$4.5M</li> </ul> <p>Decreases include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Budget 2023 Decision that reduced current budget - Vehicles reduction – (\$3.103M)</li> <li>• Reprofitting: specialized equipment and buildings reallocated to a later year – (\$1.584M)</li> </ul>			
<b>Vote 30 Total</b>	35.936	<b>35.749</b>	(0.187)
<p><b>Fire Management</b> – increase includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire fighting equipment under new federal agreement – \$13.425M</li> </ul>			
<b>Vote 31 Total</b>	2.575	<b>16.000</b>	13.425
<p><b>BC Timber Sales Special Account</b> – increase includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease to align BC Timber Sales Roads with performance targets in road building – (\$2.649M)</li> <li>• Budget 2022 lift based on anticipated increase in road building activity – \$3.085M</li> </ul>			
<b>BCTS Total</b>	40.671	<b>41.107</b>	0.436
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.182</b>	<b>92.856</b>	<b>13.674</b>
Percent Change			17.3%

**Contact:**

Sonja Martins    ADM/EFO    Corporate Services for the Natural Resources    250-889-1774



**MINISTRY OF FORESTS**  
**2023/24 Budget Highlights**

**OPERATING BUDGET: (\$925.117 M - an increase of \$100.824 M or 12.2 % from 2022/23 Restated)**

The Ministry operating budget changes include:

**Section A**

**Pre-Budget 23 Decisions that increase current Budget - \$13.311 M:**

- o \$1.803 M Net increase in Ministry Operations based on: \$1.783 M approved lift for the Climate Program and Adaptation Strategy; \$0.018 M approved budget lift to the former Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations; and \$0.002 M approved budget lift for the Clean BC initiative.
- o \$5.250 M Net increase to the Fire Management Vote.
- o \$6.258 M Net increase in BC Timber Sales. In plan 22/23 costs were lower than 23/24 costs as they were based on previous year's costs of goods sold expenses.

**Section C**

**Budget 23 Decisions - \$87.513 M:**

- o \$11.817 M - Approved budget lift for Forest Service Roads
- o \$25.000 M - Approved Budget lift for Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)
- o \$ 1.267 M - Approved budget lift for Permitting / Authorizations
- o \$30.479 M - Approved budget lift for Shared Recovery Mandate
- o \$18.946 M - Approved budget lift to align BC Timber Sales Budget with performance targets
- o \$ 0.004 M - Approved budget lift for Minister's Office

**CAPITAL BUDGET: (\$92.856 M (an increase of \$13.674 M) or (17.3%) from Restated 2022/23)**

**Section A**

**Pre-Budget 23 Decisions that reduce current Budget - (\$2.754 M):**

- o (\$5.269 M) decrease represents the reduction needed to meet the vehicle replacement schedule.
- o (\$0.570 M) decrease represents funding reprofiled to 23/24 due to delay in project completion on Vanderhoof Fire Hanger project as a result of staffing shortages and supply chain issues
- o \$3.085 M BCTS in plan 23/24 costs were higher than 22/23 costs based on anticipated increase in road building activity

Inter-Ministry Program Transfers - No transfers

**Section C**

**Budget 23 Decisions - \$16.428 M:**

- o (\$1.014 M) - Decrease in Specialized Equipment due to reprofiling
- o \$ 2.166 M - Approved budget lift for vehicle replacements
- o \$ 4.500 M - Approved budget lift for Forest Service Roads
- o \$13.425 M- Approved budget lift for fire fighting equipment
- o (\$2.649 M) - Decrease to align BC Timber Sales Roads with performance targets

**FTEs and Staffing**

**FTEs** - Continue to be budgeted at a summary level for the Province.

**Staff** - TBD Complement of staff at January 1, 2023 was 3508, however this will change throughout the year, particularly in field and fire season when an additional 1,200 - 1,400 staff will be hired on a temporary basis.

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

**Title:** Budget 2023 Refinement

**Revised:** March 7, 2023

**Issue:** Budget Transfer Summary

**Response:**

- The creation of the new Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship Ministry (WLRS) and the reorganization impacts to Ministry of Forests (FOR) were effective on April 1, 2022.
- After 2022/23 budgets were published, additional budget adjustments were required to align ministry programs with the budget allocations.
- FOR transferred an additional \$7.756M to WLRS to ensure budgets align with ministry programs.
- Minor transfers were also made to the Ministries of Environment, and Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport.

**Contact:**

Sonja Martins

ADM/EFO

Corporate Services  
for the Natural  
Resources

250-889-1774

**2023/24 Estimates Note  
Advice to the Minister**

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

**Title:** Blueberry River First Nations and Other Treaty 8 Agreements

**Revised:** March 5, 2023

**Issue:** Implementing the Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN) Implementation Agreement and the Treaty 8 Consensus Document agreements

**Response:**

- The Ministry of Forests is committed to implementing the recently signed agreements with Treaty 8 First Nations, including the historic Blueberry River First Nations Implementation Agreement.
- These agreements are designed to address the cumulative impacts of industrial activity, which have negatively impacted their treaty rights, and specifically in Blueberry River's case, infringed on their Treaty rights.
- These agreements include changes to how and where resources are developed, and the details of these directions will be developed through collaborative planning with the Treaty 8 First Nations.
- Change can be challenging, and uncomfortable. I recognize we all, and especially residents in the Northeast, are facing change.
- We must insist on dialogue that is respectful for everyone. We must focus on our shared interests and what brings us together. We all care about the land, and to uphold our promise as treaty people – we are all treaty people.

***If asked about the forestry sector:***

- The Ministry of Forests is committed to working with the forest sector, First Nations, and local governments to reimagine a forest sector in the Northeast that is sustainable and meets the commitments in these agreements.

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

- I acknowledge that there will be change. Developing a new path for the forest sector in the Northeast will take time.
- The Ministry of Forests believes strongly that a forest sector that collaborates with First Nations and addresses Treaty rights will build a successful future.

### ***If asked about permitting:***

- I acknowledge there are existing applications for access to natural resources that Ministry of Forests will need to address collaboratively with Treaty 8 First Nations. I expect the processes outlined in the agreement will enable greater predictability into the future.
- Ministry of Forests is committed to collaborating with First Nations to build a working relationship and process that produces environmentally responsible and durable decisions in a predictable manner. It will take time to build this future state. That said, we are ahead of where we would be if we had litigated, and that is why this government is committed to collaboration not litigation.
- Focusing on a collaborative approach has resulted in an agreement with the Blueberry River First Nations supporting the Province's issuance of 340 forestry authorizations, which will support the forest sector in the Peace region in the near term.

### ***If asked about public engagement:***

- Agreements have been and will continue to be posted publicly once their signatories are ready, similar to any government-to-government agreement.
- The cross-government teams responsible for implementation are engaging local governments and stakeholders as part of the work.

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

### Background/Status:

- Four Treaty 8 First Nations have signed Letters of Agreement (Saulteau, Halfway River, Doig River and Fort Nelson) that are based on a co-developed “Consensus Document” which is a framework document addressing initiatives needed to better protect treaty rights and support responsible development.
- Agreement negotiations continue with three Treaty 8 Nations: West Moberly, Prophet River, and McLeod Lake. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) anticipates negotiations may conclude by late March/early April.

### Fiscal components of the agreements (with accountable ministry noted in parentheses):

- **BRFN restoration fund** (“Blueberry River Restoration Society”) Government commitment by June 30, 2025 (Water, Land and Resource Stewardship Financial (WLRS)).
- **Treaty 8 restoration fund:** Government commitment by 2031 (WLRS).
- **BRFN capacity funding:** Government Financial Information for various components (MIRR).
- **Treaty 8 Nation capacity funding** (each) including FY22/23: Government years generally and shared Government Financial Information for stewardship, cumulative effects assessment and management, and land use planning activities (MIRR and WLRS).
- **Wildlife management:** All Treaty 8 Nations (including BRFN) shared: Government Financial Information years specific this FY (WLRS and Ministry of Forests).
- **Water quantity management:** BRFN/B.C. only: Up to Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications specific to this FY (WLRS).
- **Incentive payments** for rapid development and restoration planning: BRFN - up to Government by 2025; Treaty 8 shared - up to Government by 2025 (MIRR and Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI)).
- **Honouring the Treaty action plans:** BRFN - Government, Treaty 8 shared - Government (MIRR).
- **Revenue sharing** based on model for 10% of petroleum and natural gas (PNG) revenues: BRFN - Government Financial Information minimum, can increase based on PNG activity generating royalties, Government min. specific to this FY; Treaty 8 – over Government Financial Information expected, will vary based on PNG activity generating royalties, with minimum contributions set by each First Nation (MIRR). **No revenue sharing for timber harvesting.**

### Forestry:

- The land protection and management measures negotiated in the Blueberry River First Nations Implementation Agreement and the Treaty 8 Consensus Agreement will have a significant downward pressure on available timber supply within the Peace District.
- The forest sector is a major employer in Northeast region. It is estimated to support approximately 7,700 direct, indirect, and induced jobs, which is

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

approximately 20% of the Northeast workforce (COFI 2019).

- The current total allowable annual cut for the Peace District is set at 4.846 million cubic meters per year.
- There are currently six primary timber processing facilities within the Peace District, which also support three smaller secondary facilities. The primary facilities are: Canfor Fort St. John sawmill; Canfor Chetwynd sawmill; Canfor Taylor Pulp; West Fraser Chetwynd Forest Industries sawmill; Louisiana Pacific Canada Ltd. Fort St. John Peace Valley Oriented Strand Board facility; and Louisiana Pacific Ltd. Dawson Creek siding facility.
- Combined, these facilities are estimated to directly employ approximately 1,060 people and utilize approximately 4.7 million cubic meters of fibre annually.
- Canfor has recently announced the permanent closure of its Chetwynd sawmill and has indicated that it has no intention of re-opening their Taylor Pulp mill which has been curtailed since early 2022.

### Permitting:

- Non-forestry decisions are diverse, ranging from wind power projects, to cattle ranching, to recreational cabins, and repairing in-stream bridge supports.
  - This includes authorizations made under authorities in the *Land Act*, *Water Sustainability Act*, *Range Act*, *Wildlife Act*, and *Mines Act*.
- Ministry of Forests, collaboratively with the other natural resource agencies, are working to develop a consultation process with the Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN) and other Treaty 8 First Nations.
  - Priority has been placed on guiding operational decisions with BRFN that are outside of the PNG and restoration areas which have specific processes outlined in the agreement.
  - Processes with other Treaty 8 First Nations will be developed with the support of a common technical table that will enable all Consensus Document signatory First Nations to discuss new approaches to consultation collectively.
    - From this collective discussion new consultation processes will be formed with each Treaty 8 First Nation in bilateral arrangements.
- The BRFN agreement includes a defined process for a large number of existing Ministry of Forests authorizations, and approval of 340 forestry decisions (schedule K of the agreement).
  - Schedule O (non-forestry) of the agreement includes 256 authorizations which will proceed via an expedited review process.
  - There are 240 other non-forestry authorizations not part of Schedule O that will proceed through the consultation processes noted above.

### **Contact:**

Mike Hykaway                      ADM    North Area Regional Operations                      250-893-7516

**2023/24 Estimates Note Template  
Advice to the Minister**

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

**Title:** Yahey Decision and Peace Region Moose Hunts

**Revised:** March 6, 2023

**Issue:** Yahey Decision and Peace Region Moose Hunts

**Response:**

- The Province has a duty to live up to its treaty obligations. Honouring this duty can also help create a pathway to improving wildlife management and establish certainty for the benefit of all British Columbians.
- The Province implemented a suite of hunting regulations and management actions towards meeting the Crown's obligations coming out of the Yahey vs. B.C. decision.
- These hunting regulations are aimed at addressing the ability of Treaty 8 First Nations to continue their way of life and begin to address the impacts of industrial development on the rights guaranteed in this Treaty.
- We are in year two of interim hunting regulation changes to address these obligations and they will be reviewed after this year as part of the next regular hunting regulation cycle.
- Broader opportunities for dialogue with Treaty 8 communities, industry, stakeholders, local governments, and the public will support this work, and ensure a collaborative path going forward.

**If asked about compensation for closed hunts**

- The Province is under no legal obligation to provide compensation for lost hunting opportunity as a result of a regulation.
- That said, my staff are working closely with affected guides, on how best to assist those impacted by the decision. That work is still underway.

# 2023/24 Estimates Note Template

## Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

### **Background/Status:**

- The current interim hunting regulation in the Peace Region is a measure addressing the infringement of treaty rights by reducing hunting pressure and investing in inclusive wildlife co-management.
- The final changes, which seek to create space for improved dialogue and negotiation on the future of hunting in the Northeast, included;
  - Full closure of caribou hunting as precautionary measure,
  - A 50% reduction in harvest of moose and a 50% reduction in hunters to support First Nations in practicing their way of life and achieving their sustenance needs and,
  - Moose hunting was changed from General Open Season (GOS) to the more restrictive Limited Entry Hunting (LEH) in two of the region's four game management zones and hunting seasons were closed in specific areas of most concern to First Nations.
- Then Minister Conroy approved an allocation split of the available moose harvest for licensed hunters at a ratio of 90% for residents and 10% for guide outfitters.
- First Nations were involved in the regulation changes for moose and caribou.
- Results of the regulatory change has led to increased interest in regulatory change with First Nations across the remainder of the North (Skeena, Omineca Regions) as well as in the Cariboo Region.

### **Background on compensation:**

- Conversations with individual guides as well as the industry association (Guide Outfitters Association of B.C.) are underway.
- Total lost hunt revenue is roughly estimated at \$1-1.5 M for moose and \$1.2 M for caribou.
- Previous legal review confirms the Province is under no legal obligation to compensate guide outfitters for closed or cancelled hunts, and there is no compensation framework under the Wildlife Act.

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

### **Contact:**

Matt Austin

ADM

IROD

250-360-6317



## 2023/24 Estimates Note Template Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

**Title:** BCTS 2022/23 Performance

**Revised:** February 6, 2023

**Response:**

- On average, BCTS continues to achieve its goal of supporting the Market Pricing System by advertising over 20% of the planned provincial harvest volume for the year. However, due to the impacts of adjusting to the new old growth paradigm and reconciliation commitments, BCTS is not projecting to achieve this target in 22/23 or next fiscal in 23/24.

### 2022/23 Performance Summary:

Key Performance Measure	Target	Projection*	Variance
Annual Timber Volume Sold	6.3Mm <sup>3</sup>	4.9Mm <sup>3</sup>	(1.4Mm <sup>3</sup> ) <sup>1</sup>
Annual Timber Volume Developed	8.6Mm <sup>3</sup>	4.4Mm <sup>3</sup>	(4.2Mm <sup>3</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>
Net Revenue	\$53.7M	\$109.1M	\$55.4M

### 2023/24 Performance Target Summary:

Key Performance Measure	Target
Annual Timber Volume Sold <sup>1</sup>	6.4Mm <sup>3</sup>
Annual Timber Volume Developed <sup>2</sup>	7.4Mm <sup>3</sup>

Net Revenue

Cabinet Confidences; Government Financial Information

<sup>1</sup> The government's old growth strategy has paused timber sales in identified areas adversely impacting volume sold production for the year.

<sup>2</sup> Development delays due to the government's old growth strategy combined with reconciliation activities, and managing wildlife are adversely impacting production.

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Ministry: Forests  
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- BC Timber Sales (BCTS) acknowledges both considerable interest and values associated with old growth forests.
- Consistent with BCTS' overarching principle of sustainable forest management, BCTS staff undertake a variety of actions to manage, recruit, and conserve old growth forests and values across its operating areas.
- Maintaining access to harvesting opportunities in old growth stands, while managing associated values, is critical to BCTS achieving its primary goal of supporting the market pricing system as well as generating revenue and employment consistent with government's Economic Plan.
- BCTS is working collaboratively with its Ministry counterparts to implement all recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review, including deferrals of harvest within old growth ecosystems considered to be at very high risk.
- BCTS is actively pursuing partnerships with First Nations and re-engineering Timber Sale Licences impacted by the Old Growth decision and has recently seen an increase in auctions.

### **Background/Status:**

- BCTS continues to play a critical role in the forest sector and the economies of rural communities.
- Each year on average BCTS continues to put over \$170M directly into communities through tendering of its service contracts.
- Its activities also directly support over 4,000 to 7,000 well-paying jobs each year.
- Since inception in 2003, BCTS has:
  - ✓ sold over 200 million cubic metres of timber into the forest economy through competitive auctions;
  - ✓ grown over 1.1 billion trees to support future forests; and,

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Template Advice to the Minister

**Ministry:** Forests  
**Minister Responsible:** Bruce Ralston

- ✓ earned about \$1.8 billion in net revenue for the province, the majority of which supported other government priorities such as education, health, parks and recreation.
- BCTS publishes quarterly and annual public performance reports. The 2022/23 Annual Performance Report will be available in late June 2023.
- BCTS is held publicly accountable for performance through the publication of its quarterly and annual reports. Treasury Board requires these same business plan achievements and also holds BCTS accountable for achieving the requirements of *Forest Act* s 109.
- BCTS is projecting to only achieve 78% of its target for timber volume sold in 2022/23.
- BCTS is projecting to sell less timber volume in 2023/24 than in previous years.
- Implementation of the government's Old Growth Strategy has significantly impacted BCTS' ability to sell timber this year and next fiscal. This combined with wildlife impacts and delays related to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples are the primary reasons for the reduction.
  - 2023/24 will be the fifth year of the 5-year BCTS business cycle. At the end of 2022/23 there was already a short fall in timber volume sold from 2020/21 and 2021/22. It is unlikely BCTS will be able to rectify this shortfall before the end of the business cycle March 31, 2024.
- BCTS is projecting to exceed its Net Revenue target for 2022/23 by about \$55M. The rates billed during the year were higher than expected as licensees took advantage of high lumber prices and continued to harvest high value timber and completed harvest of TSLs sold prior to the old growth decision.
- BCTS is projecting a lower Net Revenue for 2023/24 than earned in recent years. The rates paid for timber harvested are expected to maintain their level over the next year. However, the amount of timber volume harvested is expected to be much less than in previous years.

**Contact:**  
Melissa Sanderson ADM - Timber, Range and Economics 250-812-7253

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

**Title: BC Timber Sales Unused Volume Status**

**Revised: March 5, 2023**

**Issue: BCTS Unused Volume Status**

**Response:**

- As of March 31, 2022, unused BC Timber Sales (BCTS) volume was approximately 34.5 million m<sup>3</sup> provincially.
- The accumulation of unused volume relates primarily to:
  - historic Mountain Pine Beetle AAC uplifts that could not be fully attained,
  - remote/depressed markets (e.g., North Coast),
  - apportionment decisions delayed following Chief Forester AAC reductions, and
  - re-engineering delays and direct impacts from deferrals related to the of the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel polygons.
- BCTS continues to retire unused volume to ensure sustainable harvest rates and is consistent with policy and procedures including consultation with First Nations.

**Background/Status:**

- BCTS is not governed by cut control provisions of the *Forest Act*.
- Under certain circumstances BCTS volume apportionment can remain un-auctioned or un-harvested due to reasons such as:
  - economics (lack of market),
  - reduction of Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) not reflected in the apportionment,
  - imposition of harvesting constraints to protect other resource values, or
  - lack of access due to First Nations concerns.

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- Until 2018, government policy had not provided mechanisms for reconciliation or retirement of un-auctioned or un-harvested BCTS volume apportionment, thus, a significant amount of unused BCTS volume has accumulated.
- As of March 31, 2022, unused BCTS volume was ~ 34.5 million m<sup>3</sup> provincially and is projected to increase to ~ 40.8 million m<sup>3</sup> by March 31, 2023.
- 75% (i.e., 25.8 million m<sup>3</sup>) of current unused BCTS volume has accumulated in ten Timber Supply Areas (TSAs)<sup>1</sup>.
- The accumulation of unused volume relates primarily to:
  - historic Mountain Pine Beetle AAC uplifts that could not be fully attained,
  - remote/depressed markets (e.g., North Coast),
  - apportionment decisions delayed following Chief Forester AAC reductions,
  - impacts from deferrals related to the of the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel polygons.
- BCTS amended (2020) its policy to clarify and streamline the process for retiring unused BCTS volume.
- The process for retirement of BCTS unused volume is aligned with the Ministry policy for retirement of non-BCTS unused apportioned volume.
- BCTS is actively participating in the implementation of the approved (2018) provincial policy that provides guidance on the management of unused volume.
- Initiatives to retire BCTS unused volume are underway in several TSAs.
- BCTS has retired an estimated 11.6 million m<sup>3</sup> since 2018.

### Contact:

Melissa Sanderson    ADM - Timber, Range and Economics    250-812-7253

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<sup>1</sup> Prince George TSA, Williams Lake TSA, Fort St. John TSA, Quesnel TSA, Kamloops TSA, Nass TSA, Kispiox TSA, Dawson Creek TSA, Robson Valley TSA, GBR North TSA.

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Template Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

**Title: 2022 Wildfire Season**

**Revised: March 10, 2023**

**Issue: Recap of the 2022 Wildfire Season**

**Response:**

- Despite underlying drought conditions, the 2022 wildfire season remained below normal in terms of number of fires and area burned statistics.
- The 2022 wildfire season started later than usual due to sufficient winter precipitation and a cool, wet spring.
- The 2022 fire season was characterized by above average lightning-caused fires and one of the lowest human-caused fires seasons.
- The unusual late warm and dry weather of the fall extended the wildfire season, with 'number of fires per week' records set in mid-October.
- A total of 17 wildfires were declared wildfires of note during the 2022 season compared to 67 wildfires of note in 2021.
- The total cost of the 2022 fire season was approximately \$408M. This is just slightly over the 10 year average for costs, which could be attributed to uplift in personnel and equipment.
- As of October 31, 2022, the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) had detected 1,758 wildfires resulting in approximately 133,437 hectares of area burned.
- Comparatively in 2021, there were 1,610 wildfires and over 868,000 hectares burned.
- BC Wildfire service and partners demonstrated 89% initial attack success with only 11% of the fires exceeding five

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**Ministry:** Forests  
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hectares in size, which illustrated effective initial attack response by fire crews, aircraft and heavy equipment.

### **Background/Status:**

- Conditions remained cool and wet for much of the spring, paired with elevated snowpack, resulting in significantly lower wildfire starts and minimal growth of wildfires well into July 2022.
- As a result of a relatively slow season BC was able to lend assistance to several of its resource sharing partners, sending 450 personnel to assist the following agencies with the busy start to their fire seasons: Alberta, Yukon, Parks Canada, NWT, Alaska and Oregon.
- In August there were double the number of lightning-caused wildfires compared to the 20-year average, with over 68% of fires in 2022 resulting from lightning.
- As a part of Crew Modernization efforts BCWS has increased the size of 20% of its 145 initial attack crews from a 3 to a 4-person configuration to meet increased leadership demands, training and mentoring of new staff.
- BCWS Incident Management Teams (6) were deployed 18 times for 229 days managing complex fires during the 2022 season.
- Although overall fewer large impactful fires, the significant fires BCWS responded to allowed for testing of strengthened partnerships with First Nations, industry, local governments, and additional provincial government ministries.
- Fires in the wildland urban interface (WUI) continue to be problematic and require a higher number of structure protection assets and personnel being deployed.
- At the peak of the 2022 fire season 55 different Fire Departments had personnel and assets deployed to support the province's wildfire response efforts.

### **Contact:**

Ian Meier                      ADM - BCWS                      250 643-0078

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

**Title: BCWS Prevention and Risk Reduction**

**Revised: March 22, 2023**

**Issue: Wildfire Prevention and Risk Reduction**

**Response:**

- The Province has invested approximately \$485M across numerous funding streams and initiatives to date since 2004 for both crown land and community-focused wildfire risk reduction.
- Since the devastating 2017 fire season, the Province has invested \$320M into Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation programs in British Columbia.
- BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) Prevention program administers the Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) to address wildfire risk reduction on crown land and in communities across B.C. with two key complementary funding categories: FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS), and Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR).
- As part of Budget 2022, the B.C. government announced a \$40M per year commitment to reduce wildfire risk, including the CLWRR program, wildfire resiliency partnerships, cultural burning and prescribed fire, and the FireSmart program.
- BCWS is strategically filling gaps in wildfire resiliency funding, and has partnered with the Columbia Basin Trust, Farmland Advantage, BC Cattlemen's Association, Fire Chief's Association of BC, Community Forest Association, and BC Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to support wildfire risk reduction initiatives across the province.



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Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

- The FireSmart program has significant increases in community participation across the province.

### Background/Status:

- **Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) Program**

- FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS):

- Launched in 2018 with an initial investment of \$60M for 3-5 years, FCFS funds regional districts, municipalities, and First Nations for wildfire risk reduction activities.
    - Funding is administered by the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) and is coordinated with First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) for applicable communities.
    - As part of Budget 2022 the B.C. government allocated \$90M to support the continuation and expansion of the CRI program and the BC FireSmart Committee over the next three years, with an additional \$10M allocated in 2023 to extend funding until 2028.
    - The dispersed funding per year since program launch are as follows:

FCFS Intake Year	Total Dispersed*
2019	\$ 8,172,180
2020	\$ 10,237,273
2021	\$ 14,374,647
2022	\$ 14,974,045
2023 (as of Feb. 2023 – intake ongoing)	\$ 1,349,555
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 49,107,700</b>

*Table note: \*the total amount of approved funding is \$53.7M, though some applicants later did not receive full approved funding due to withdrawn applications or projects that came in under budget.*

- From the Ministry year end budget surplus in 2022, \$5M additional will be invested into FNESS for program support for First Nations communities in high-risk wildfire areas to build their relationship with wildfire on the land base, with a focus on reducing barriers to access for funding through FCFS.
    - Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction (CLWRR):
      - CLWRR was launched in 2018 as part of CRI, evolving from the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative (SWPI) which BCWS administered until 2018.

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- Between 2004 and 2017, SWPI funded approximately \$78M of wildfire risk reduction projects. Outside of SWPI, the average budget allocation towards prevention ranged from \$1M to \$3M annually.
- CLWRR is coordinated with BC Parks MoF Regional Operations, the Range Branch, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sports' Mountain Resorts Branch.
- Total funds expended since CLWRR program launch are as follows:

Fiscal Year	CLWRR Program
2019/2020	\$ 7,316,203
2020/2021	\$ 15,566,420
2021/2022	\$ 16,641,961
2022/2023	\$ 18,000,000*
2023/2024	\$ 25,000,000 **
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$59,641,961</b>

*\*this number is an estimate based on ongoing end of fiscal year reporting, journal voucher processing, and surplus returns.*

*\*\*this is an estimate based on Annual Operating Plan development that includes salary, increased provincial target delivery allocations of \$19M, and expanded implementation of cultural burning and prescribed fire.*

- A permanent resourcing strategy to provide long-term stability for dedicated CLWRR positions was announced in early 2023 with 37 full-time positions.
- In 2020, the B.C. government invested approximately \$20M into complementary CRI and FireSmart initiatives as part of the economic recovery program to support local communities and organizations.
  - FireSmart:
    - The FireSmart program focuses on the shared responsibility of wildfire resiliency for every person and jurisdiction in B.C., led by the BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC) and its strategic plan to guide prevention and mitigation work for the next five years.
    - The BCFSC is chaired by the BCWS, and includes Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), MoF Regional Operations, FNESS, FESBC, BC Parks, Fire Chief's Association of BC, BC Office of the Fire Commissioner, Parks Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, FireSmart Canada, and UBCM.
    - Approximately \$5M of the \$40M annual budget for BCWS Prevention is directed towards the FireSmart program.
    - FireSmart Recognized Neighbourhoods in BC grew by 17 in 2021, with 41 new neighbourhoods recognized in 2022.

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

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- In 2022, 197 additional Local FireSmart Coordinators were trained, and 37 full time FireSmart Coordinators were hired with Local Governments, Regional Districts and First Nations.
- The Columbia Basin Trust partnership:
  - Initially launched as part of the BC Economic Recovery Plan, became the Columbia Basin Wildfire Resiliency Initiative in 2022/2023 with an investment of \$2.5M to support expanded wildfire risk reduction in the Columbia Basin.
  - To date, there have been 20 projects supported in 18 communities.
  - This partnership will be continued in 2023/2024 with an additional \$1.5M.
- In 2022, Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) received \$25M to support industry in reducing wildfire risk. BCWS and FESBC developed a complimentary funding program for wildfire risk reduction and fibre utilization for communities adjacent to high risk crown land. FESBC has been provided \$50 million in Budget 2023, a portion of which will continue to fund wildfire resiliency work.
- An overview of major wildfire resiliency investment since 2004:

Program/funding stream	Year(s)	Approximate funding
SWPI	2004-2017	\$78M
BCWS wildfire resiliency & risk reduction	2004-2017	\$28M (average \$1-3M per year)
BCWS wildfire resiliency & risk reduction	2018-2022	\$75M
Economic Recovery FireSmart initiatives	2020	\$20M
UBCM funding (CRI: FCFS)	2018-2022	\$60M
UBCM funding (CRI: FCFS)	2023-2028	\$100M
BCWS wildfire resiliency and risk reduction (inclusive of prescribed fire/cultural burning)*	2022-2023	\$40M
FESBC	2016-2017	\$3.6M
	2018-2023	\$75.8M
FNESS community support	2023	\$5M
<b>Total**</b>	<b>2004-present</b>	<b>\$485.5M</b>

*\*ongoing annual funding announced in Budget 2022, includes research initiatives and approximately \$7M in wildfire risk reduction partnerships funding (CBT, Farmland Advantage, Community Forest Association, etc.)*

*\*\*total is to be considered a high-level estimate of major funding since 2004; does not demonstrate budget surplus reallocations towards other wildfire resiliency grants or projects (such as fuel reduction projects with BC Cattlemen's Association, for example)*

**Contact:**

Ian Meier

ADM BC Wildfire Service

250-643-0078

## 2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Forests  
Minister Responsible: Bruce Ralston

**Title: Forest Landscape Plans (FLP)**

**Revised: March 8, 2023**

**Issue: Eight new Forest Landscape Plans will be developed, in addition to the existing four pilot projects, providing a vital opportunity to partner with Indigenous Nations in developing forest management direction.**

**Response:**

- Forest Landscape Plans (FLP) establish clear objectives and direction for the management of forest resource values over a defined area.
- The FLP will direct where and how forest management activities such as harvesting and roadbuilding can occur.
- Forest Landscape Planning is intended to respond to challenges that BC's forest sector has experienced in the last decade by:
  - Implementing the Old Growth Strategic Review by providing a platform to implement recommendations including protection of old growth and the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Framework.
  - Implementing measures to combat climate change.
  - Reducing wildfire risk.
  - Supporting reconciliation with Indigenous Nations and initiating the process of aligning BC's forestry framework with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).
  - Confirming sustainable forest harvest levels to support BC's economy.
  - Creating more resilient forests and rangelands.
- FLPs will be developed by the province in partnership with Indigenous Nations, while engaging with forest licensees, other tenure holders and local communities.

