



# **Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship**

## **Estimates Binder April 2023**

**ESTIMATES BINDER  
FOR MINISTER NATHAN CULLEN  
APRIL 2023**

<b>Material</b>	<b>Tab</b>
<b>Budget Information</b>	
Budget 2023 Summary	1
Budget Realignments due to NRS Restructuring	2
Minister's Office Budget & GCPE Resources	3
Budget Highlights	4
<b>Land Use Policy, Planning and Ecosystems (LUPPE)</b>	
BC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework	5
Modernized Land Use Planning	6
Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas	7
Government Actions Regulation	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Agreement</li> <li>• Approach to 30 Percent Protection by 2030</li> </ul>	9
TNG and the Nen Transformation Table	10
Spotted Owl Recovery and Canada's Imminent Threat Assessment	11
Caribou Recovery Program (Southern Group, Central Group, Boreal, Northern Group and Northern Mountain)	12
Predator Management for Caribou Recovery	13
Species at Risk Recovery General	14
Together for Wildlife and MWAC	15
Wildlife Act Review	16
Cumulative Effects Framework	17
<b>Water, Fisheries and Coastal Policy &amp; Planning (WFCPP)</b>	
Watershed Security Strategy and Fund	18
Water Sustainability Act	19
Water Sustainability planning	20
Groundwater Licensing Policy	21
Source Water Protection and Drinking Water	22
Drought Management	23
Livestock Watering	24
Koksilah Water Management	25
Hullcar	26
BC Water Table	27
Development of a Coastal Marine Strategy	28
Coastal Marine Planning Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Marine Plan Partnership (MaPP)</li> <li>b) Marine Spatial Planning South Coast</li> </ul>	29
Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan	30
BC's Marine Economy	31
Salmon Aquaculture Policy and Decisions	32
Wild Salmon Strategy in Action	33
Fisheries and Aquaculture 2023 Outlook	34
BC Salmon Restoration & Innovation Fund	35

**ESTIMATES BINDER  
FOR MINISTER NATHAN CULLEN  
APRIL 2023**

Pacific Salmon Treaty and Alaskan Bycatch	36
Herring Fisheries Closures	37
First Nations Fisheries Council	38
Hatcheries in BC	39
Provincial White Sturgeon	40
Fish Species at Risk	41
Fish Passage Remediation Program	42
Flood Recovery for Fish	43
Riparian Areas Protection Regulation	44
Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP)	45
Aquatic Invasive Fauna	46
Wild Steelhead	47
<b>Reconciliation and Natural Resource Sector Policy</b>	
Conservation Financing	48
Guardians	49
Co-management	50
Declaration Act Action Plan Items	51
Reconciliation and Natural Resource Sector Policy	52
<b>Natural Resource Information &amp; Digital Services (NRIDS)</b>	
Provincial LiDAR Program	53
<b>Permitting, Authorizations and SDM Solutions</b>	
Permitting Challenges	54
Housing Action Task Force	55
<b>Cumulative Effects NRS Solutions</b>	
Implementing Agreements with BRFN and Treaty 8 First Nations	56

# Budget 2023 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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### **Issue: Budget 2023 Summary**

#### **Recommended Response:**

- The Ministry budget for 2023/24 is \$124.009M, representing an increase of \$32.001M compared to the original 2022/23 estimates of \$92.008M.
- The 2022/23 restated estimates of \$103.747M represents an increase of \$11.739M for Inter-Ministry Transfers:
  - \$4.439M - Budget Realignments due to Natural Resource Sector Restructuring
  - \$7.300M - Indigenous Funding Program for Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Forums
- The 2023/24 estimates budget is an increase of \$20.262M, or 19.53 percent, compared to the 2022/23 restated estimates of \$103.747M.
- Base Budget Lifts of \$20.262M include:
  - \$7.060M - April 2022 Budget Letter 488919 – 99 Net New FTEs
  - \$3.973M - Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority
  - \$9.208M - Shared Recovery Wage Mandate
  - \$0.021M - Minister's Office

# Budget 2023 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

### Key Facts:

	2022/23 Estimates (Original)	2022/23 Estimates (Restated)	2023/24 Estimates	Variance
<b>Ministry Operations by Core Business</b>				
Land Use Policy and Planning and Ecosystems	42.274	55.032	57.465	2.433
Water, Fisheries and Coastal Policy and Planning	8.052	7.917	10.355	2.438
Natural Resource Information and Digital Services	18.846	19.731	26.225	6.494
Reconciliation and Natural Resource Sector Policy	1.992	1.835	3.254	1.419
Natural Resource Sector Secretariat	6.088	4.396	6.953	2.557
Executive and Support Services	14.756	14.836	19.757	4.921
<b>Total Ministry Operations</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>103.747</b>	<b>124.009</b>	<b>20.262</b>
<b>April 2022 Plan</b>				
	<b>92.008</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>99.068</b>	<b>7.060</b>
Total Inter-Ministry Transfers	11.739	11.739	11.739	-
Total Base Budget Lifts (Reductions)	-	-	13.202	13.202
<b>February 2023 Plan</b>	<b>103.747</b>	<b>103.747</b>	<b>124.009</b>	<b>20.262</b>
<b>Percentage Change</b>				<b>19.53%</b>

	2022/23 Estimates (Original)	April 2022 Budget Letter - 99 Net New FTEs	2022/23 Estimates (Restated)	Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority	Shared Recovery Wage Mandate	Minister's Office	Inter-Ministry Transfers (Incl internal STOB adjs)	2023/24 Estimates
Land Use Policy and Planning and Ecosystems	42.274	(0.008)	42.266	0.158	2.283	-	12.758	57.465
Water, Fisheries and Coastal Policy and Planning	8.052	1.678	9.730	0.081	0.679	-	(0.135)	10.355
Natural Resource Information and Digital Services	18.846	0.125	18.971	3.091	3.278	-	0.885	26.225
Reconciliation and Natural Resource Sector Policy	1.992	1.098	3.090	0.164	0.157	-	(0.157)	3.254
Natural Resource Sector Secretariat	6.088	1.811	7.899	0.288	0.458	-	(1.692)	6.953
Executive and Support Services	14.756	2.356	17.112	0.191	2.353	0.021	0.080	19.757
<b>Total Ministry Operations</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>7.060</b>	<b>99.068</b>	<b>3.973</b>	<b>9.208</b>	<b>0.021</b>	<b>11.739</b>	<b>124.009</b>

### Date Prepared/Revised:

#### Ministry Executive Sponsor:

Name: Sonja Martins, EFO

Phone: (250) 889-1774

#### Program Contact for Issue:

Name: Tamra McQuitty, CFO

Phone: (250) 882-4429

# Budget 2023 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

### **Issue: Budget Realignment due to Natural Resource Sector Restructuring**

#### **Recommended Response:**

The creation of the new Water, Land and Resource Stewardship Ministry and the reorganization impacts to Ministry of Forests were effective on April 1, 2022.

Ministry budgets for 2022/23 were published in February 2022 and reflected a point in time understanding of the impacts from the reorganization.

Post restructuring, ministries reviewed the changes that were reflected as of February 2022 and compared to further changes that were effective April 1, 2022. Ministries identified and transferred misallocated budgets between ministries and across divisions.

#### **Key Facts:**

Budget Realignments - Natural Resource Sector Restructuring (\$M)	Divisions	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>WLRS Transfer to FOR</b>				
96 positions: Regional Land Use, Species-At-Risk and Resource Planning and Provincial Stewardship program areas	LUPPE	(8.281)	(8.281)	(8.281)
14 Front Counter and 2 ADMO positions	NRSS (PASS)	(0.937)	(0.937)	(0.937)
11 Geomatics positions	NRIDS	(0.488)	(0.488)	(0.488)
<b>Total WLRS transfer to FOR</b>		<b>(9.706)</b>	<b>(9.706)</b>	<b>(9.706)</b>
<b>FOR Transfer to WLRS</b>				
Together for Wildlife	LUPPE	7.872	7.872	7.872
Caribou Recovery Program	LUPPE	5.078	5.078	5.078
30 positions: Geospatial Services, Aquatic Ecosystems Branch and Provincial Stewardship Strategies and Planning	NRIDS/ WFCPP	2.520	2.520	2.520
Overhead for 249 positions	WLRS OH	1.992	1.992	1.992
<b>Total FOR transfer to WLRS</b>		<b>17.462</b>	<b>17.462</b>	<b>17.462</b>
<b>WLRS Transfer to ENV</b>				
Groundwater Hydrometrics Program	NRIDS	(3.136)	(3.136)	(3.136)
<b>WLRS Transfer to MUNI</b>				
2 positions: to resolve financial, procurement and SHR issues	CSNR	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.181)
<b>Total Budget Realignments - Natural Resource Sector Restructuring</b>		<b>4.439</b>	<b>4.439</b>	<b>4.439</b>

#### **Date Prepared/Revised:**

#### **Ministry Executive Sponsor:**

Name: Sonja Martins, EFO

Phone: (250) 889-1774

#### **Program Contact for Issue:**

Name: Tamra McQuitty, CFO

Phone: (250) 882-4429

# Budget 2023 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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**Issue:** Minister's Office Budget & GCPE Resources

**Recommended Response:**

- For FY 2023/24, the Minister's Office budget is \$863,000.
- The increase of \$249,000 over FY 2022/23 includes:
  - Two additional FTEs: Second Parliamentary Secretary and Executive Assistant to support both.
  - Base Salaries increase of 5%.
  - Legislative Salaries (for Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries) increase to current salary rates.
  - Office and Business increase of \$5,000 for training.
- The Salary and Benefits budget of \$732,000 supports 9 FTEs:

Positions	2023/24 Estimates	Name
Minister	1	Honourable Nathan Cullen
Parliamentary Secretary	2	Fin Donnelly + Kelly Greene
Chief of Staff	1	Roari Richardson
Ministerial Advisor	1	Scott Andrews + Tristan Jones
Executive Assistant	2	Quinn MacTavish + Vacant
Administrative Coordinator	1	Hailey Walters
Administrative Assistant	1	Nicole Moreira
<b>Ministers Office Total</b>	<b>9</b>	

- WLRS is supported by six Government Communications and Public Engagement (GCPE) staff:
  1. Communications Director, Band 4 (Sean Leslie)
  2. Communications Manager, Band 3 (Glen Plummer)
  3. Senior Public Affairs Officer, Band 2 (Thomas Winterhoff)
  4. Senior Public Affairs Officer, Band 2 (Vacant)
  5. Public Affairs Officer, Band 1 (Katie Norris)
  6. Public Affairs Officer, Band 1 (Chitra Arcot)

# Budget 2023 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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### Key Facts:

STOB	STOB Description	2022/23 Estimates (Original)	2022/23 Estimates (Restated)	2023/24 Estimates	Variance
50EA	Base Salaries	384,000	384,000	479,000	95,000
5298	Employee Benefits	101,000	101,000	122,000	21,000
52EA	Legislative Salaries - Indemnities	15,000	15,000	38,000	23,000
54EA	Legislative Salaries	40,000	40,000	93,000	53,000
	<b>Salary and Benefits Sub-total</b>	<b>540,000</b>	<b>540,000</b>	<b>732,000</b>	<b>192,000</b>
57EA	Public Service Travel Expenses	42,000	42,000	71,000	29,000
63EA	Information Systems-Operating	7,000	7,000	12,000	5,000
65EA	Office and Business Expenses	7,000	7,000	17,000	10,000
82EA	Legislative Assembly	9,000	9,000	15,000	6,000
85EA	Other Expenses	9,000	9,000	16,000	7,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>614,000</b>	<b>614,000</b>	<b>863,000</b>	<b>249,000</b>

**Date Prepared/Revised:**

**Ministry Executive Sponsor:**

Name: Sonja Martins, EFO

Phone: (250) 889-1774

**Program Contact for Issue:**

Name: Tamra McQuitty, CFO

Phone: (250) 882-4429



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# **MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**

## **Vote 46: Ministry Operations**

**DRAFT**  
**February 28, 2023**

**MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**  
**2023/24 Budget Highlights**

**OPERATING BUDGET: \$124.009M (Increase of \$20.262M, or 19.53%, from 2022/23 Restated)**

Budget Lifts: \$20.262M

April 2022 Budget Letter 488919 - 99 Net New FTEs	\$7.060M
Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority	\$3.973M
Shared Recovery Wage Mandate	\$9.208M
Minister's Office	\$0.021M

Inter-Ministry Program Transfers: \$11.739M

1. Budget Realignments due to Natural Resource Sector Restructuring	
From Ministry of Forests	\$7.756M
To Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy	(\$3.136)M
To Ministry of Municipal Affairs	(\$0.181)M
2. Transfer from Indigenous Funding Program for Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Forums:	
From Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	\$7.300M

*See Inter-Ministry Program Transfer worksheet for specific details on individual transfers.*

**CAPITAL BUDGET: \$0.003M (Decrease of \$0.242M or 98.78% from 2022/23 Restated)**

1. Budget 2022 provided capital funding of \$0.245M for one-time costs associated with setting up the ministry.
2. Budget 2023 is reduced to \$0.003M as recurring CRF capital funding for Office Furniture and Equipment.

**FTEs/ STAFFING:**

FTEs - 1,282 Approved

1. Budget 2022 included funding for 1,240 FTEs: 1,141 FTE transfers and new funding for 99 net new FTEs.
2. Budget 2023 adds 40 new FTEs, for the Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority.
3. Budget 2023 adds 2 new FTEs, for the Minister's Office: 1 Parliamentary Secretary and 1 EA.

Staffing

1. As of April 1, 2022, 1,141 staff were transferred to WLRS.
2. As of December 31, 2022, 89 of the 99 net new positions were filled.
3. As of February 1, 2023, the WLRS Headcount is 1,292, with 1,239 Active and 53 On Leave.

MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP  
2023/24 Budget Briefing  
THREE YEAR BUDGET CHANGES FROM FEBRUARY 2023 PLAN  
OPERATING (\$Ms)

	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>A April 2022 Plan</b>				
Vote 38 - Ministry Operations	92.008	99.068	99.068	99.068
<b>Total April 2022 Plan</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>99.068</b>	<b>99.068</b>	<b>99.068</b>
<b>Year-to-year change in 2022/23 Service Plan</b>	-	<b>7.060</b>	-	-
<b>B Inter-Ministry Transfers</b>				
Budget Realignment - from Ministry of Forest	7.756	7.756	7.756	7.756
Budget Realignment - to Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy	(3.136)	(3.136)	(3.136)	(3.136)
Budget Realignment - to Ministry of Municipal Affairs	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.181)
Transfer from Indigenous Funding Program for Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Forums - from Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	7.300	7.300	7.300	7.300
<b>Total Inter-Ministry Transfers</b>	<b>11.739</b>	<b>11.739</b>	<b>11.739</b>	<b>11.739</b>
<b>C Base Budget Lifts (Reductions)</b>				
Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority	-	3.973	5.711	5.711
Shared Recovery Wage Mandate	-	9.208	11.095	11.095
Minister's Office	-	0.021	0.021	0.021
<b>Total Base Budget Lifts (Reductions)</b>	-	<b>13.202</b>	<b>16.827</b>	<b>16.827</b>
<b>Total Transfers and Adjustments</b>	11.739	24.941	28.566	28.566
<b>Year-to-year change in 2022/23 Service Plan</b>	<b>11.739</b> <b>12.76%</b>	<b>24.941</b> <b>25.18%</b>	<b>28.566</b> <b>28.83%</b>	<b>28.566</b> <b>28.83%</b>
	<b>2022/23 Restated Estimates</b>	<b>2023/24 Estimates</b>	<b>2024/25 Plan</b>	<b>2025/26 Plan</b>
<b>D February 2023 Plan</b>				
Vote 46 - Ministry Operations	103.747	<b>124.009</b>	127.634	127.634
<b>Total February 2023 Plan</b>	103.747	<b>124.009</b>	127.634	127.634
<b>Year-to-year change in 2023/24 Service Plan</b>		<b>20.262</b> <b>19.53%</b>	<b>3.625</b> <b>2.92%</b>	-
<b>Year-to-year change from April 2022 Plan to February 2023 Plan</b>		<b>32.001</b> <b>34.78%</b>		-

MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP  
 2023/24 Budget Briefing  
 THREE YEAR BUDGET CHANGES FROM FEBRUARY 2023 PLAN  
 CAPITAL (\$Ms)

	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>A April 2022 Plan</b>				
Vote 38 - Ministry Operations	0.245	-	-	-
<b>Total April 2022 Plan</b>	<b>0.245</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Year-to-year change in 2022/23 Service Plan</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(0.245)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<hr/>				
	2022/23 Restated Estimates	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>D February 2023 Plan</b>				
Vote 46 - Ministry Operations	0.245	<b>0.003</b>	0.003	0.003
<b>Total February 2023 Plan</b>	<b>0.245</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>0.003</b>
<b>Year-to-year change in 2023/24 Service Plan</b>		<b>(0.242)</b> <b>(98.78%)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**  
**2023/24 Budget Briefing**  
**THREE YEAR BUDGET CHANGES FROM FEBRUARY 2023 PLAN**  
**Inter-Ministry Transfers (\$Ms)**

<b>Inter-Ministry Transfers</b>	<b>Operating</b>	<b>EAT #</b>	<b>Note</b>
	(8.281)		<i>Duplicate budgets for 96 positions - LUPPE</i>
	(0.937)		<i>14 Front Counter and 2 ADMO positions not transferring - PASS</i>
	(0.488)		<i>11 Geomatics positions remaining in FOR - NRIDS</i>
Budget Realignment - to FOR	<u>(9.706)</u>	T004001	
	7.872		<i>T4W - portion not yet transferred</i>
	5.078		<i>CRP - portion not yet transferred</i>
	2.520		<i>30 positions for Geospatial Services, Aquatic Ecosystems, PSSP</i>
Budget Realignment - from FOR	<u>15.470</u>	T004003	
Budget Realignment - from FOR	<u>1.992</u>	T004006	<i>Overhead for 249 positions</i>
Budget Realignment - from FOR	<u>7.756</u>		<i>Note 1 - for additional details</i>
Budget Realignment - to ENV	<u>(3.136)</u>	T004002	<i>Groundwater Hydrometrics program (NRIDS)</i>
Budget Realignment - to MUNI	<u>(0.181)</u>	T004011	<i>TACS: Two level 21 positions related to NRS restructure</i>
<b>Total Net Budget Realignments</b>	<b><u>4.439</u></b>		<b>Budget Realignments due to Natural Resource Sector Restructuring</b>
IFP Transfer - from MIRR	7.300	T004014	<i>Transfer from Indigenous Funding Program for Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Forums - from MIRR to LUPPE</i>
<b>Total Inter-Ministry Transfers</b>	<b><u>11.739</u></b>		

**Note 1**

Transfers from WLRS to FOR:

NRSS (PASS) (0.937) *Return budget for 14 Front Counter and 2 ADMO positions not transferring - PASS*

Transfers from FOR to WLRS:

LUPPE 4.669 *Return duplicate budgets for 96 positions, add T4W and CRP program dollars*  
WFCPP 1.086 *Add \$1.086M (of \$2.520M)*  
NRIDS 0.946 *Return budget for 11 Geomatics positions remaining in FOR, add \$1.434M (of \$2.520M)*  
WLRS Corporate Overhead 1.992 *Overhead for 249 positions omitted in original transfer*  
Total 8.693

**Net transfer from FOR to WLRS** **7.756**

**MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**  
**2023/24 Budget Briefing**  
**Budget 2023 Summary (\$M)**

	<b>2022/23 Estimates (Original)</b>	<b>2022/23 Estimates (Restated)</b>	<b>2023/24 Estimates</b>
<b>Ministry Operations by Core Business</b>			
Land Use Policy and Planning and Ecosystems	42.274	55.032	57.465
Water, Fisheries and Coastal Policy and Planning	8.052	7.917	10.355
Natural Resource Information and Digital Services	18.846	19.731	26.225
Reconciliation and Natural Resource Sector Policy	1.992	1.835	3.254
Natural Resource Sector Secretariat	6.088	4.396	6.953
Executive and Support Services	14.756	14.836	19.757
<b>Total Ministry Operations</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>103.747</b>	<b>124.009</b>
<b>April 2022 Plan</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>92.008</b>	<b>99.068</b>
Total Inter-Ministry Transfers	11.739	11.739	11.739
Total Base Budget Lifts (Reductions)	-	-	13.202
<b>February 2023 Plan</b>	<b>103.747</b>	<b>103.747</b>	<b>124.009</b>
<b>Percentage Change</b>			

**MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**  
**2023/24 Budget Briefing**  
**Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority (\$M)**

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
Priority Projects (Housing, Connectivity, Aggregate)	0.422	0.718	0.718
Strategic Work	1.860	3.167	3.167
Corporate Services for Natural Resources	0.191	0.326	0.326
<b>FTE Related Operating Funding</b>	<b>2.473</b>	<b>4.211</b>	<b>4.211</b>
NRIDS Contracting and Data Costs	1.375	1.375	1.375
Aquatic Ecosystems Data and Systems	0.125	0.125	0.125
<b>Total Program Operating Resourcing</b>	<b>1.500</b>	<b>1.500</b>	<b>1.500</b>
<b>Total Permitting, Authorizations and Housing Priority</b>	<b>3.973</b>	<b>5.711</b>	<b>5.711</b>

**MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**  
**2023/24 Budget Briefing**  
**Budget Realignment - Natural Resource Sector Restructuring (\$M)**

<b>Budget Realignments - Natural Resource Sector Restructuring (\$M)</b>	<b>Divisions</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
<b>WLRS Transfer to FOR</b>				
96 positions: Regional Land Use, Species-At-Risk and Resource Planning and Provincial Stewardship program areas	LUPPE	(8.281)	(8.281)	(8.281)
14 Front Counter and 2 ADMO positions	NRSS (PASS)	(0.937)	(0.937)	(0.937)
11 Geomatics positions	NRIDS	(0.488)	(0.488)	(0.488)
<b>Total WLRS transfer to FOR</b>		<b>(9.706)</b>	<b>(9.706)</b>	<b>(9.706)</b>
<b>FOR Transfer to WLRS</b>				
Together for Wildlife	LUPPE	7.872	7.872	7.872
Caribou Recovery Program	LUPPE	5.078	5.078	5.078
30 positions: Geospatial Services, Aquatic Ecosystems Branch and Provincial Stewardship Strategies and Planning	NRIDS/ WFCPP	2.520	2.520	2.520
Overhead for 249 positions	WLRS OH	1.992	1.992	1.992
<b>Total FOR transfer to WLRS</b>		<b>17.462</b>	<b>17.462</b>	<b>17.462</b>
<b>WLRS Transfer to ENV</b>				
Groundwater Hydrometrics Program	NRIDS	(3.136)	(3.136)	(3.136)
<b>WLRS Transfer to MUNI</b>				
2 positions: to resolve financial, procurement and SHR issues	CSNR	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.181)
<b>Total Budget Realignment - Natural Resource Sector Restructuring</b>		<b>4.439</b>	<b>4.439</b>	<b>4.439</b>



## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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**Issue:** B.C. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework

**Recommend Response:**

- We are working hard at laying the foundation for a new B.C. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework (“Biodiversity Framework”) to prioritize ecosystem health and biodiversity, in response to a recommendation made in the Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR) report.
- We are collaborating with First Nations on the content of this biodiversity framework, as well as engaging with interested parties, local governments, and communities.
- We had previously referred to this as a Declaration on Ecosystem Health, however the term “declaration” has confused some groups and the feedback from the ongoing engagement has been to shift away from this term. In order to provide clarity, we are now referring to this work as the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework.
- In January and February, the Province brought together more than 300 First Nations and multi-sector participants at two provincial forums to share ideas and better understand the current state, opportunities for improvements and the future management of our forests and ecosystems.
- We are continuing those conversations through a series of virtual sessions scheduled through April and May to hear additional insights on how a new Biodiversity Framework could be created to sustainably manage land, water, and resources.
- We expect to have a final draft of this framework, prioritizing the conservation, and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity across all ecosystems and all sectors in June 2023.

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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- That will be followed by the co-development of a legislative framework, and other enabling tools, to support implementation.
- The B.C. government is already leading the way on various aspects of ecosystem health and biodiversity, including implementing the Together for Wildlife Strategy; contributing over \$67 million for watershed, wetland and species, ecosystem conservation, and restoration projects since 2021; and establishing a new conservancy area in the Incomappleux Valley.

#### **Key Facts:**

- The conservation of long-term ecosystem health and biodiversity is crucial for the health and well-being of communities, economic sustainability, maintaining clean air and water, and the responsible stewardship of wildlife and natural resources for future generations.
- In September 2020, the B.C. government committed to implementing all 14 recommendations of the independent OGSR report, including Recommendation #2 to *“declare the conservation and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity of British Columbia’s forests as an overarching priority and enact legislation that legally establishes this priority for all sectors.”*
- This recommendation is led by the Land Use Policy, Planning and Ecosystems Division in the WLRS with support from the FOR.
- Initiatives already leading the way on various aspects of ecosystem health and biodiversity include:
  - Protection of at-risk species
  - Biodiversity enhancement and restoration
  - Development of co-managed land and resource stewardship practices with Indigenous peoples
  - Modernized land use planning.
  - Together for Wildlife Strategy
  - Watershed Security Strategy
  - Coastal Marine Strategy
  - Cumulative Effects Framework
- The Biodiversity Framework will apply to all sectors and be developed in partnership with Indigenous Peoples (in recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights) and with guidance and input from all sectors, local communities, municipal leaders, academia, and other interested parties.
- The process will consist of two phases:

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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- Phase one will focus on the co-development of the Biodiversity Framework on prioritizing ecosystem health and biodiversity with First Nations.
- Phase two will focus on developing or updating legislation and other enabling tools to achieve the vision and intent of the Framework.
- The Province has committed to support communities as this gradual shift to more sustainable jobs and economies occurs.
- The Province has contributed over \$67 million for watershed, wetland and species and ecosystem conservation and restoration projects since 2021. In 2021, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy contributed a total of \$37 million for watershed, wetland and species, and ecosystem conservation and restoration:
  - The Healthy Watersheds Initiatives (HWI) received \$27 million (in partnership with the Real Estate Foundation).
  - The Conservation Economic Stimulus Initiative (CESI) received \$10 million (in partnership with the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation).
- \$30 million was provided in Budget 2022 to improve B.C.'s watersheds.
- The potential socio-economic impacts of the Biodiversity Framework will be assessed in the coming months as this framework is developed.

**Date Prepared/Revised: March 3, 2023**

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## ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL  
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource  
Stewardship  
Date: Feb. 28, 2023  
Minister Responsible: Hon. Nathan Cullen

# Declaration on ecosystem health and biodiversity

### ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

Advice/Recommendations

#### Other actions related to ecosystem health and biodiversity:

- The B.C. government is already leading the way on various aspects of ecosystem health and biodiversity. Examples include:
  - continuing to implement the Together for Wildlife Strategy, including Goal 12 to review and improve the *Wildlife Act*
  - contributing over <sup>Advice/Recommendations</sup> for watershed, wetland and species and ecosystem conservation and restoration projects since 2021
  - establishing a new conservancy area in the Incomappleux Valley
- Together with First Nations, we're building on and implementing B.C.'s Wild Salmon Strategy and developing a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, as well as B.C.'s first-ever Coastal Marine Strategy.
- The implementation of the declaration will include the identification of potential changes to programs, policies and regulations.

- **This will be supported by improved information and data sharing, while also considering longer-term changes to B.C.’s legislative framework to support the vision and intent of the declaration.**

## **KEY FACTS:**

On Feb. 15, 2023, the Ministry of Forests issued a news release about old growth and forest stewardship, which included a backgrounder on a variety of forestry-related initiatives. In that backgrounder, a reference was made to a declaration to prioritize ecosystem health and biodiversity in B.C.

The conservation of long-term ecosystem health and biodiversity is crucial for the health and well-being of communities, economic sustainability, maintaining clean air and water, and the responsible stewardship of wildlife and natural resources for future generations.

In September 2020, the B.C. government committed to implementing all 14 recommendations of the independent Old Growth Strategic Review report, including Recommendation #2 to “*declare the conservation and management of ecosystem health and biodiversity of British Columbia’s forests as an overarching priority and enact legislation that legally establishes this priority for all sectors.*”

A declaration to prioritize ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation will improve land management practices in B.C. to: better protect species; conserve vital ecosystem resources; and ensure the long-term social and economic well-being of communities throughout the province. The earliest expected opportunity to announce the declaration would be June 2023.

The B.C. government is moving toward a co-management system that fosters improved ecosystem health. Initiatives already leading the way on various aspects of ecosystem health and biodiversity include:

- protection of at-risk species
- biodiversity enhancement and restoration
- development of co-managed land and resource stewardship practices with Indigenous peoples
- modernized Land Use Planning
- Together for Wildlife Strategy
- Watershed Security Strategy
- Coastal Marine Strategy
- Wild Salmon Strategy
- Cumulative Effects Framework

A declaration prioritizing ecosystem health and biodiversity will apply to all sectors and be developed in partnership with Indigenous Peoples (in recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights) and with guidance and input from all sectors, local communities, municipal leaders, academia, and other interested parties.

The process will consist of two phases:

- **Phase 1** will focus on the co-development of the declaration on prioritizing ecosystem health and biodiversity with First Nations.

## ADVICE TO MINISTER

- **Phase 2** will focus on developing or updating legislation and other enabling tools to achieve the vision and intent of the declaration.

B.C.'s long-term economic stability and jobs for many British Columbians will rely on a healthy environment. In the short-term, the Province is committed to supporting communities during this transition. The Province has committed to support affected communities as this gradual shift to more sustainable jobs and economies occurs.

The Province has contributed over \$67 million for watershed, wetland and species and ecosystem conservation and restoration projects since 2021. In 2021, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy contributed a total of \$37 million for watershed, wetland and species and ecosystem conservation and restoration:

- The Healthy Watersheds Initiatives (HWI) received \$27 million (in partnership with the Real Estate Foundation).
- The Conservation Economic Stimulus Initiative (CESI) received \$10 million (in partnership with the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation).

An additional \$30 million was provided in Budget 2022 to improve B.C.'s watersheds.

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File created	Feb. 28, 2023	
File updated	Date	

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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**Issue:** Modernized Land Use Planning

**Recommend Response:**

- My mandate letter state's "continue to transform the management and stewardship of our waters, lands and resources, together with First Nations, and work toward modern land use plans and permitting processes rooted in science and Indigenous knowledge that consider new and cumulative impacts to the land base."
- Modernized land use planning (LUP) sets the strategic direction to guide sustainable resource stewardship and management of provincial public land and waters that meets economic, environmental, social, and cultural objectives.
- LUP is a partnership-based model between First Nation governments and the Government of British Columbia, that also includes meaningful and targeted engagement with stakeholders, including local governments, industry, non-government organizations and the public.
- The WLRS will continue to strengthen B.C.'s commitment to land-use policy and planning to bring more certainty to investors, communities, and First Nations by confirming social choice on the land base.
- The \$7.78 million annual budget will continue to support LUP program development and implementation.
- Additional funding may be allocated to address emerging planning pressures resulting from B.C.'s strengthened commitment to land use policy and planning.
- Developing strong relationships with First Nations using a partnership-based approach to the LUP process takes time and helps to establish trust in the process, benefitting all parties as planning implementation continues.
- Projects are being initiated in high priority areas, at the appropriate scale, varying between comprehensive to issue specific plans that seek to address defined community needs

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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and assist implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

- The Government is actively working to ensure coordination and alignment between other provincial planning initiatives, including Forest Landscape Planning and Water Sustainability Planning. This is particularly important where planning boundaries of different initiatives overlap and may impact the work and outcomes of one another.

#### **Key Facts:**

- WLRS is the lead for all land use planning initiatives in B.C.
- Land use planning sets the social choice and management regime for land use in a given region. Other ministries in the natural resource sector (FOR, Ministry of Energy Mines and Low Carbon Innovation {EMLI}, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation {MIRR}, ENV) participate in land use planning projects and will support the implementation of land use plans.
- Drivers for land use planning include reconciliation, a strong sustainable economy, addressing cumulative effects, landscape level disturbance, water sustainability, climate impacts, and species at risk.
- The Indigenous Funding Envelope provided First Nations capacity funding for involvement in modernized land use planning in the amount of \$700,000 in 2021/2022 and will require a similar amount for 2022/2023.
- Modernized land use planning program funding supports eight staff in branch and 24 staff distributed across the eight regions. In addition, program funding also supports staff in each of MIRR and EMLI.
- Alignment with other ministry priorities including supporting implementation of the Old Growth Strategic Review Recommendations, the Together for Wildlife action plan, and collaboration with other levels of planning will help advance a more coordinated approach to planning in the province.
- Branch staff are involved in provincial-level engagement, policy, communications, tool development, and program administration. Regional staff are involved in active land use planning, foundational work to support future projects, including cumulative effects assessments, laying the groundwork for Indigenous partnerships on projects, and engagement regionally with stakeholders.
- The Province continues to engage First Nations provincially to collaboratively refine program principles and products that guide the program. A public engagement platform to support modernized land use plans was launched in January 2020.
- In February 2023, five LUP projects advanced to the stage of detailed plan development and formal multi-sector and public engagement on draft plan recommendation and direction on managing for plan area values. These are:



## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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- **Previously Initiated:** Tahltan Nation: Tahltan-B.C. Land Use Plan; Gitanyow/Nisga'a: Meziadin Salmon Habitat Plan; 'Namgis: Gwa'ni Land Use Plan.
- **New:** Kaska Nation – Dene: K'éh Kusān Land Use Plan; Taku River Tlingit: Tulsequah River Watershed Plan.
- All projects share the same next key steps:
  - Explore, identify, and analyse new land use zones and options, including new conserved areas, socio-economic analysis on options, and reconciliation benefits.
  - Work in partnership with the partner First Nation(s) to engage stakeholders and the public in options, seek feedback, and develop recommended options for both governments.
- Other plans include:
  - Fort St. John LRMP Update Project and Extensions (3 projects within)
  - shíshálh Nation Land Use Planning Project
  - Nicola Watershed Land Use Planning Project
  - Southeast Wildlife Corridor Land Use Planning Project
  - Wetzin'kwa Water Sustainability Project

**Date Prepared/Revised: March 3, 2023**

**Ministry Executive Sponsor:**

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Page 026 of 206

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Advice/Recommendations ; Cabinet Confidences

Page 027 of 206

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Advice/Recommendations ; Cabinet Confidences

Page 028 of 206

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Advice/Recommendations ; Cabinet Confidences

Page 029 of 206

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Advice/Recommendations

# 2023/24 Estimates Debate

## Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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### **Key Facts:**

- Engagement on IPCAs will be led by WLRS due to the relationship with modernized land use planning and to confirming social choice on the land base as well as a co-managed land and resource regime. Other ministries in the natural resource sector will support this work (ENV, EMLI, MIRR, FOR).
- In 2017, Canada brought together Indigenous experts along with federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) government experts as a committee to explore a new approach to protected areas built, in part, from the international Indigenous Community Conserved Areas model. The committee (Indigenous Circle of Experts, or ICE) wrote the report *We Rise Together* a collection of 26 recommendations and advice to all governments on considering IPCAs.
- IPCAs continue to be an emerging issue in BC due to various factors including:
  - Direct federal funding to BC First Nations to pursue IPCAs in their territories;
  - Interest in the new 30% protection targets;
  - Nations who are seeking renewed land use plans with the province; and
  - Nations who wish to exert and express more formally rights and title.
- The concept of an IPCA is desirable to many First Nations. This, together with federal encouragement including resources, has resulted in several IPCA proposals from Nations across the province. Although IPCAs may vary in approach, most will result in two critical land management results:
  - change the current land designation configurations resulting in a different social land use outcome; and
  - overall reduce economic activities on the land base affecting jobs, revenues, and the economy.
- Addressing IPCA proposals is best managed through publicly involved land use planning projects, and those projects should occur where there are land use conflicts or where new land use objectives are needed. Currently, the land use planning program is a modest program that has fully allocated resources.

**Date Prepared/Revised: March 3, 2023**

**Ministry Executive Sponsor:**

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## ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL  
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource  
Stewardship  
Date: Jan. 16, 2023  
Minister Responsible: Hon. Nathan Cullen

# **Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)**

### **ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **We respect and acknowledge the efforts of First Nations to protect ecosystems within their territories and care for the water, land, animals and other natural resources that their communities have relied on for millennia.**
- **My ministry is committed to working together with First Nations on a co-managed approach to land and resource management.**

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

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- **Our government welcomes the opportunity to work with First Nations to better understand and share our collective perspectives and to jointly develop an approach to land stewardship.**

### **If asked why the Province hasn't recognized a specific IPCA:**

- **We respect and acknowledge the efforts of First Nations to protect ecosystems within their territories and care for the water, land, animals and other natural resources that their communities have relied on for millennia.**
- **We understand the importance of doing this through Indigenous laws, governance, and knowledge systems.**

- **The Province is open to working with First Nations to understand their perspectives and the values reflected by their communities.**
- **There have been increasing numbers of IPCAs declared in recent years. Each of them is unique and reflects that First Nation’s perspective on land and water stewardship.**

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

## **KEY FACTS:**

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) typically encompass lands and waters where Indigenous governments have a primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. They reflect Indigenous peoples’ multi-generational perspective on resource stewardship.

However, declarations of Indigenous governments’ expectations in their traditional territories have led to uncertainty amongst B.C. citizens and government staff about their ability to access infrastructure and facilities (e.g., roads, parks, campsites) and undertake certain activities on public land, especially those for which a fee is paid (e.g., fishing and hunting licences).

## **BACKGROUND:**

Interest in Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship measures like IPCAs has increased significantly since the 2018 *We Rise Together* report was issued by the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE). The Province participated in the report’s development as a member of ICE, along with a wide cross-section of representatives from Indigenous governments, environmental non-profit organizations, academics, and the federal government.

Dozens of IPCA proposals in various forms are currently existing or being contemplated by First Nations in B.C. It’s expected that more First Nations are planning or preparing to declare IPCAs within their territories. An increasing number of IPCAs is one of the challenges the Province faces in developing its response to these declarations.

Although IPCAs differ in size and scope, they often include interests in Guardian-like activities and often include Indigenous-led goals related to:

- maintaining the ecological integrity of the area
- protecting fish, wildlife and ecosystems
- protecting cultural and archaeological sites and features, or
- protecting harvesting and hunting areas



## ADVICE TO MINISTER

In some cases, IPCAs have been identified in areas of shared territory between Nations. <sup>Advice/Re</sup>  
<sub>commenta</sub>  
Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

### **Examples of recently declared IPCAs** (see more extensive list at bottom of document):

- In June 2022, the Kitasoo Xai Xais Nation declared a Marine Protected Area in the Kitasoo Bay (Gitdisdzu Lugyek) area of the Central Coast (on the west coast of Swindle Island), stating that the bay “and all of its lands, waters, fish, and wildlife are integral to Kitasoo Xai’xais culture and way of life.” The Kitasoo Xai Xais Nation is looking to strengthen protection measures for fish resources in the area, particularly herring, salmon and groundfish.
- On April 28, 2022, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) declared an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area in the Ashnola Watershed west of Keremeos, encompassing the entire Ashnola River watershed from its headwaters in the United States to where it joins the Lower Similkameen River. In late September 2022, LSIB sent out a ‘Notice to Vacate Ashnola’, stating that access to the area would be restricted to visitors. In October 2022, \$200,000 in provincial funding was secured for LSIB through the Indigenous Funding Program to help relieve some of the pressure LSIB has been experiencing and bring them to the table for discussion about their interests in protecting and conserving the Ashnola Watershed.
- In November 2021, the Mamalilikulla First Nation declared part of its traditional territory on the Central Coast as an IPCA, calling for a five-year moratorium on logging and protection of a marine area called Hoeya Sill. The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship and the Ministry of Forests have entered into an agreement with Mamalilikulla First Nation to explore and implement a variety of land/sea integrated management techniques.

Fulfilling IPCA elements and Indigenous perspectives in land and water stewardship is best accomplished through government-to-government land use planning (LUP). LUP begins with identifying a long-term vision for stewardship that includes where identified, appropriate activities (such as any resource extraction or recreation use) can occur while ensuring natural and cultural values are protected or conserved. LUP sets out management responsibilities and roles between the governments and other parties and identifies financial implementation strategies and resources required for successful stewardship outcomes. Overall, LUP helps ensure a common approach to stewardship between governments.

### **Federal funding for First Nations-led conservation initiatives (announced Dec. 7, 2022):**

On Dec. 7, 2022, the federal government announced “\$800 million over seven years, starting in 2023-24, to support up to four Indigenous-led conservation initiatives.” Once completed, the four

projects could help protect up to one million square kilometres and support the federal government's commitment to protecting 30% of Canada's land and waters by 2030.  
<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2022/12/07/protecting-more-nature-partnership-indigenous-peoples>

One of the four projects involves the waters in the Northern Shelf Bioregion of B.C., which includes a design for a marine protected area (MPA) network. This region covers about two-thirds of the B.C. coast from the top of Vancouver Island to Alaska, an area also known as the Pacific North Coast or the Great Bear Sea. The amount of federal funding that will be allocated to the Great Bear Sea project has not been determined yet.

This initiative aligns with the goals laid out in Minister Cullen's mandate letter, two of which are to partner with "the federal government, industry, and communities, and working with Indigenous Peoples, lead the work to achieve the Nature Agreement's goals of 30% protection of B.C.'s land base by 2030, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas" and to "develop a new conservation financing mechanism to support protection of biodiverse areas."

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

# ADVICE TO MINISTER

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

**Media Interest:** Recently declared IPCAs have received a moderate amount of regional media coverage. As the number of declared IPCAs increases, more media interest is expected.

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Page 036 of 206

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Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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**Issue:** Government Actions Regulation

**Recommend Response:**

- Under the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), the Government Actions Regulation (GAR) directs how the B.C. provincial government establishes land designations or stewardship measures for forest and range values.
- On December 7, 2022, Order in Council 658 assigned the responsibilities for certain sections of the FRPA to me as the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.
- Specifically, the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship is designated as the Minister responsible sections of FRPA that relate to stewardship of wildlife, watersheds, habitat and wetlands including:
  - The ability to establish ungulate winter ranges, wildlife habitat areas and general wildlife measures.
  - The ability to designate a community watershed and to establish water quality objectives.
  - The ability to identify an area that has significant fisheries values and watershed sensitivity, and,
  - To establish regulations for the classification of streams, wetlands, and lakes and to establish riparian management areas and temperature sensitive streams.
- In applying these authorities under FRPA, GAR provides the regulatory structure and criteria to implement these measures.
- Typically, the authorities under these sections of FRPA are delegated to statutory decision makers within the Ministry. We are in the process of updating the delegation matrix to ensure that these authorities are held with the correct position in the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.
- The ministry has already applied these sections of FRPA to improve conservation and stewardship of Wildlife and

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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habitat. Most recently we established 19 Wildlife Habitat Areas to support the protection of Northern Goshawk nest sites in the South Coast Region.

- The GAR still requires that any orders must not unduly reduce the supply of timber from B.C.'s forests and that the benefits of the order must outweigh adverse impacts from increase delivered wood costs and constraints to the ability for a licence to exercise their tenure rights.
- These criteria are out of date with our government's commitments improving stewardship and conservation.
- We are committed to prioritizing Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity.
- The ministry will bring forward regulation changes to update this section of the GAR by removing the unduly clause and bring this regulation into alignment with the commitments to prioritize ecosystem health and biodiversity and modernize forest management.

#### **Key Facts:**

- The protection of fish, wildlife and habitat values are significant components of Government's mandate and WLRS mandate. To effectively meet the requirements in the mandate the Minister of WLRS requires both regulatory tools and legal authorities to establish protections for fish, wildlife habitat over the long term.
- The vision of FRPA was predicated on a balance between a forest or range tenure holder's economic interests, the sustainability of the Province's timber supply and the protection of non-timber values.
- Numerous independent reviews and audits deemed that the balance point was not effectively meeting the public interests for the environment or First Nations' affirmed treaty or constitutional rights.
- The GAR enables the establishment of localized land designations for areas and features that require special management for the stewardship of wildlife, fish, water, biodiversity, visual quality, cultural heritage resources, recreation resources and resource features. The role of GAR is crucial with respect to the effectiveness of FRPA as legislation that protects the environment and "non-timber values".
- GAR designations also help to provide operational certainty through the identification of values across the land base and establishment of various

## 2023/24 Estimates Debate

### Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

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measures or objectives that clearly outline government's expectations for outcomes.

- The process of delegating authorities for FRPA (and Oil and Gas Activities Act) to staff positions within WLRS is underway and will be completed in the coming months.
- While WLRS has the authority to establish protection measures for wildlife under these sections of FRPA, FOR retains the authority to issue exemptions to licensees to the requirements of General Wildlife Measures issued by WLRS under FRPA.
- There is a need for Ministry of Forests and WLRS to work together to ensure that government objectives and transparent reporting and decision making process are in place for any exemptions to FRPA conservation measures established by WLRS.

**Date Prepared/Revised: March 3, 2023**

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