

Climate Change Strategy (2013 – 2018)

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

September 10, 2013

Setting the Stage

BC's climate is changing: Climatologists have already reported significant temperature and precipitation changes from benchmark decades. For instance, average summer temperatures in the Thompson Okanagan Region are already 0.7 degrees C higher than they were between 1960 and 1990.

BC natural resources are both important to climate solutions and sensitive to change: Globally forests and oceans absorb about 60% of the emissions from fossil fuels and land use change. BC's 60 million hectares of forests provide a green advantage in their ability to sequester carbon. However, BC's natural resource values are sensitive to a changing climate and increasing variability. For example, the enormous impact of the mountain pine beetle can be at least partially attributed to a warmer environment, and pressure on freshwater resources from floods and droughts is intensifying. Ocean acidity, recognised as a measure of marine carbon absorption, has already increased measurably even in BC's near-shore waters, jeopardising the future of many marine species. Internationally, insurance experts now report that drought and weather damage has become the predominant risk factor for insurance.

BC and MFLNRO have taken some action: BC has a [climate change adaptation strategy](#), and has [taken many steps](#) on adaptation and mitigation at the provincial level. The BC Ministry of FLNRO has taken steps on climate action in a number of areas, for example through [heritage](#) and [forest carbon](#) initiatives, and the [Forest Stewardship Action Plan](#) for climate change adaptation.

This strategy goes further: This strategy extends climate action across the mandate of the Ministry. Adapting to and mitigating climate change in the natural and heritage resource sectors requires an understanding of the potential long term impacts of climate change, variability, and the actions we take or forgo today. Our natural and heritage resource sectors must prepare for extreme events in the short term; plan activities to best match our long term climate outlook; and pursue mitigation and adaptation opportunities. The way they are managed will have long term implications for sustainability of resource values and communities.

Vision

"The ministry is a leader in climate change action, ensuring that our natural and heritage resources and values are resilient to the impacts of climate change, and that we contribute towards mitigation."

Goals

The ministry's goals for effectively responding to the impacts of climate change over the next five years and beyond, are:

- 1. Climate change is integrated in ministry core business.**
 - Integrating climate change action into our core business is essential to stable communities and a strong diversified economy. Our continuous strong supply of ecosystem goods and services are predicated upon ecosystem health and resilience as a foundation for jobs and prosperity.
- 2. Climate-relevant science, data and knowledge guide and inform the identification of the ministry's environmental, social, and economic risks, opportunities, and priorities for climate change action.**
 - Climate change research, monitoring, and policy development are key components of a robust integrated decision making model for the natural resource sector.

Climate Change Strategy (2013 – 2018)

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

September 10, 2013

3. Climate change action is undertaken through collaboration, partnerships, communication and outreach with BC's First Nations, communities and natural resource sector.

- Collaboration, communication and outreach are necessary components for taking effective action on climate change, and help foster public confidence in resource management in BC.

Objectives:

The following objectives will guide the ministry's climate change actions:

1. **Public Safety and Natural Disaster Management:** We are prepared for extreme natural events such as wildfires, floods, insect outbreaks and invasive species affecting the natural and heritage resource sectors. All reasonable actions to maintain public safety and minimize ecological, economic and social impacts are taken, based on available information and principles of risk management.
2. **Climate Science:** Climate change science expertise in the Ministry is resourced to ensure it advances equal to or ahead of comparable jurisdictions and institutions in North America.
3. **Climate Knowledge:** Growth of climate change knowledge among staff is resourced and supported. This knowledge is effectively communicated throughout the ministry and related sectors and integrated into Ministry business.
4. **Collaboration:** Climate change actions taken by the ministry are planned and executed in the public interest. Collaboration with external partners, including First Nations, government agencies, industry, academia, related institutions, and communities help to shape enduring project outcomes.
5. **Legislation, Policy and Procedures:** Ministry legislation, policy and procedures address climate change impacts and opportunities.
6. **Management:** Natural and heritage resources are managed to account for and reduce the effects of climate change.
7. **Decision Making:** Statutory, resource allocation, policy, and operational decision processes take into account climate change impacts and opportunities.
8. **Business Opportunities:** Business opportunities related to climate change, such as new species, new products, and the forest carbon project, are explored, tested and implemented where feasible. Business constraints related to climate change will be assessed and managed.
9. **Monitoring Performance:** Climate actions, and the effectiveness of legislation, policy, procedures, and management are monitored. Key indicators are determined and long term performance monitoring established to ensure actions being taken are affecting positive change.

Next Steps

- All MFLNRO regions and branches (including BCTS) will develop climate action plans to address these Goals and Objectives by March 31, 2015. To get this started, the Climate Change Steering Committee will work with high priority / early adopting regions and branches to develop draft climate action plans by March 31, 2014.
- The Climate Change Steering Committee will oversee the process and Competitiveness and Innovation Branch will provide advice, guidance, and tools to assist in the process.

Contact: Paul Knowles, Director, Competitiveness and Innovation Branch. 250 953-3988
Paul.S.Knowles@gov.bc.ca