

Department of Environment and Conservation

Strategic Plan 2008-2011



2008

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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to provide the strategic plan for the Department of Environment and Conservation for the period of 2008-2011.

The department is a category 1 government entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act* and, as such, must plan at the outcomes level. This plan represents the second phase of the department's planning cycle and therefore some aspects of the previous plan have carried over from the 2006-2008 plan. Some of the strategic issues will also be familiar. The plan also identifies new strategic issues that will help the department achieve the mission it had set out for 2011.

In developing this plan, careful consideration was given to the strategic directions of government. These directions represent the desired physical, social or economic outcomes for the province. This plan outlines actions required by the department to fulfill these outcomes. A list of my strategic directions as minister is found on page 18. These directions have been communicated to officials in the department as well as to the entities for which I am responsible.

As the minister, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained herein.



Charlene Johnson

Hon. Charlene Johnson
Minister

Summary of Plan

Vision

The vision of the Department of Environment and Conservation is a clean, sustainable environment and healthy, resilient ecosystems in perpetuity for the social, physical, cultural, biological and economic well-being of the province.

Mission

By March 31, 2011 the Department of Environment and Conservation will have reduced the adverse impacts of human activities on the environment and improved the health of our ecosystems.

Goals and Objectives

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Goal	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have facilitated the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and increased adaptive capacity to respond to climate change.
2008-2009 Objective	By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have updated the provincial climate change action plan to include greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
2009-2010 Objective	By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have released a provincial climate change adaptation strategy.
2010-2011 Objective	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have begun implementation of the adaptation strategy.

Sustainable Development

Goal	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have assessed the province's status in relation to sustainable development to set the foundation for future progress on key areas.
2008-2009 Objective	By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have established and operationalized the Sustainable Development Round Table.
2009-2010 Objective	By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have prepared a Strategic Environmental Management Plan.
2010-2011 Objective	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have developed sustainability indicators for the province.

Caribou Science and Management Strategy

Goal	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have initiated the implementation of science and wildlife management activities designed to assist in long-term sustainability of the caribou resource.
2008-2009 Objective	By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have finalized science-based predator reduction strategies for two study areas dependant on successful establishment and interpretation of the baseline data.
2009-2010 Objective	By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have implemented predator reduction strategies in two study areas and commenced evaluation studies to ascertain their effects.
2010-2011 Objective	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have initiated the implementation of science and wildlife management activities designed to assist in the long-term sustainability of the caribou resource.

Safe Drinking Water

Goal	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in rural communities.
2008-2009 Objective	By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in 20 communities with populations less than 500.
2009-2010 Objective	By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in 60 additional communities with populations less than 500.
2010-2011 Objective	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in the remaining communities with populations less than 500.

Natural Areas System Plan

Goal	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have released a Natural Areas System Plan and an Implementation Strategy.
2008-2009 Objective	By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have identified study areas in each of Labrador's natural regions and prepared a draft Natural Areas System Plan.
2009-2010 Objective	By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have completed consultations on the draft Natural Areas System Plan and prepared a proceedings document.
2010-2011 Objective	By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have released a final Natural Areas System Plan and Implementation Strategy.

Departmental Overview

The Department of Environment and Conservation is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the environment, management of the province's wildlife, inland fish, water, parks, and Crown land resources. The department is also leading on government's response to climate change and the Sustainable Development initiative.

The minister is the head of the department. The deputy minister reports directly to the minister and oversees all operational issues of the department. The department consists of the following branches: Environment Branch; Natural Heritage Branch; Lands Branch; and Sustainable Development and Strategic Science (SDSS) Branch. These branches are further subdivided into divisions and sections. They are headed by assistant deputy ministers, or an executive director in the case of SDSS, who report to the deputy minister. The department also has a Policy and Planning Division and a Communications Division.

The department's main offices are located in Corner Brook, Deer Lake and at Confederation Building in St. John's. The department has other offices in St. John's, Grand Falls-Windsor, Clarenville, Gander and Goose Bay. The department is also responsible for Salmonier Nature Park and numerous provincial parks and reserves around the province. The Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science (IBES) is a component of the SDSS Branch that operates as a partnership between Memorial University and the department. It is located at Sir Wildfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook.

The department has a staff complement of 394 employees (including contractual, seasonal and temporary employees). Seventy-one percent of employees are male and 29% are female. Staff are distributed as follows: 199 in the Avalon region; 50 in the Central region; 12 in Labrador; and 128 on the West Coast and Northern Peninsula.

The department's work is informed by the Acts listed below and their associated regulations.

Environmental Protection Act
Water Resources Act
Wildlife Act
Provincial Parks Act
Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act
Endangered Species Act
Lands Act
Lands Surveyors Act
Geographical Names Board Act
National Parks Lands Act
Sustainable Development Act (to be proclaimed)

Some aspects of enforcement under the *Environmental Protection Act* and the *Water Resources Act* are administered by the Department of Government Services. Some enforcement activities under the *Wild Life Act*, the *Provincial Parks Act*, the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*, and the

Endangered Species Act are administered by the Department of Natural Resources.

The department's gross expenditure budget for 2008-09 is approximately 48.4 million with planned related revenues of approximately 18.6 million for a net expenditure of 29.9 million.

Mandate

The mandate of the department is derived from various sources:

The Department of Environment Notice, 2003 under the *Executive Council Act* on matters related to the protection, enhancement and conservation of the quality of the natural environment, including water, air and soil quality; and the conservation, development, control, improvement and proper utilization of the water resources of the province;

The Department of Government Services and Lands Notice, 2003 under the *Executive Council Act* on matters related to provincial lands;

The Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation Notice, 2003 under the *Executive Council Act* on matters related to the management, preservation, control, protection and development of provincial parks as defined in the *Parks Act*; provincial interests in all national parks established in the province by the Government of Canada; and wilderness and ecological reserves as defined in the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*;

The Department of Forest Resources and Agrifoods Notice, 2003 under the *Executive Council Act* on matters related to the management, preservation, protection and development of wild life and inland fisheries. This is a shared responsibility with the Department of Natural Resources; and

The *Wild Life Act* on matters related to wildlife reserves and the Salmonier Nature Park.

Values

The core values explain the character of the organization we promote.

- Accountability** Each employee accepts responsibility for his/her own actions and contributions and follows through on requests and commitments.
- Efficiency** Each employee uses resources in an effective and timely manner.
- Leadership** Each employee will carry out responsibilities and make decisions to advance the conservation of the environment and natural heritage.

Professionalism

Each employee will be responsible for maintaining professional competencies required for his/her position and demonstrates excellence and high quality performance.

Lines of Business

The Department of Environment and Conservation provides the following lines of business:

Land resources

The Department of Environment and Conservation is responsible for the administration and management of the province's land resources. In particular, the department:

- maintains a map and air photo library services;
- maintains the Provincial Crown Lands Registry;
- investigates adverse land claims;
- reviews and inspects legal surveys;
- prepares legal documents of title for all dispositions of Crown Land;
- produces and distributes topographic base maps for provincial departments and agencies;
- provides the geodetic reference system for legal and engineering surveys and topographic mapping;
- provides new aerial photography; a repository/archive of provincial aerial photography; and scanning/printing services;
- facilitates the official naming of geographical features and place names and maintains the joint federal/provincial data base;
- provides the central data-store and on-line base layers for GIS applications;
- provides standards and consultation services in geomatics;
- facilitates federal/provincial collaboration in geomatics (Building the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (CGDI) under the Canadian Geomatics Accord);
- produces Crown title maps;
- develops land use management plans;
- maintains the Land Use Atlas;
- enforces lands legislation and addresses incidents of unauthorized occupation of Crown land;
- coordinates within government the inter-departmental review of crown land development through the interdepartmental land use committee (ILUC);
- develops land use policy; and
- administers the leasing, sales and transfers of Crown land.

Provincial parks, ecological and wilderness reserves, natural areas, and Canadian Heritage rivers

The department is responsible for:

- the management and administration of provincial parks (the Newfoundland T'Railway

- Provincial Park is jointly managed by a special T'Railway Council);
- designation and management of wilderness and ecological reserves under the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*;
- development and implementation of environmental education programs within select provincial parks and wilderness/ecological reserves;
- implementation of protection measures for Canadian Heritage Rivers in the Province;
- negotiation of the land transfer to the federal government for National Parks; and
- issuance of various permits for provincial parks, ecological and wilderness reserves, such as:
 - wilderness and ecological reserves entry permits;
 - provincial park daily / seasonal vehicle entry permits;
 - commercial operator permits;
 - commercial operator permits (tour boat);
 - educational tour permits;
 - scientific research permits;
 - seabird ecological reserve special access permits; and
 - seabird ecological reserve guide permits.

Wildlife and inland fish

The department protects, manages and conserves the province's biodiversity, wildlife resources and wildlife habitat. This includes:

- determining the status of species in the province according to the national Accord for the Conservation of Species at Risk to which the province is a signatory;
- developing and implementing stewardship agreements to support the recovery of species at risk;
- identifying, designating and developing recovery strategies for species at risk according to the *Endangered Species Act*;
- developing and implementing strategies for the conservation of biodiversity;
- designating and managing wildlife areas;
- administering the Salmonier Nature Park - a wildlife rehabilitation, interpretation and research facility;
- developing management plans for consumptive species which are then published in the annual hunting and trapping guide;
- issuing hunting and trapping licenses;
- developing policies and guidelines regarding wildlife utilization;
- issuing Newfoundland and Labrador Guide licenses;
- providing education, awareness and training programs such as firearm safety, hunter and trapper education courses;
- implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, including providing assistance in the development of agreements to support wetland and coastal stewardship initiatives;
- developing long term landscape level planning to minimize conflicts between wildlife and other land uses;
- permitting for the non consumptive use, possession, importation and export of wildlife and

- parts thereof;
- collecting scientific information to provide input into the sustainable management of wildlife, including inland fish populations, and habitat;
- utilizing education, awareness and stewardship programs and initiatives to foster appropriate attitudes, respect, behavior and appreciation towards our wildlife and habitat;

Environmental assessments

The department coordinates the provincial environmental assessment process for new development, which includes:

- accepting proposed undertakings;
- gathering background information concerning the environmental impacts of the proposals;
- analyzing information according to a well defined set of environmental assessment procedures;
- providing recommendations to the minister as to whether a project can proceed in an environmentally acceptable manner; and
- conducting select surveillance on projects released from the environmental assessment process.

Air, soil and water pollution

The department is responsible for prevention of pollution of the province's air, water and soil ecosystems. Responsibilities include:

- preparing and issuing Certificates of Approval and licenses for:
 - industrial operations;
 - waste management systems (in collaboration with Government Services Centre);
 - waste dangerous goods transporters;
 - pesticide vendors, operators and applicators; and
 - heating oil storage tank inspectors;
- developing policies, guidelines, protocols, and regulations;
- developing training material and providing training;
- enforcing Certificates of Approval, license conditions and legislation through:
 - inspections, other than those done by Government Services Centre;
 - the development of environmental monitoring programs in collaboration with industry;
 - audits of the environmental monitoring programs;
 - audits of environmental laboratories; and
 - the monitoring of criteria air contaminants;
- designating contaminated sites and auditing risk assessments based on environmental site assessments;
- providing technical advice and outreach;
- managing remediation of industrial and military contaminated sites that are the responsibility of government; and

- maintaining a registry of contaminated sites.

Water resources

The department ensures that the province's water resources are protected, conserved and enhanced to provide the greatest possible sustainable benefits to the province. Responsibilities include:

- designation of protected water supply areas and protected wellheads;
- monitoring and analysis of chemical water quality of community water supplies;
- issuance of well driller licenses;
- inspection of water well structures in accordance with requirements of the *Well Drilling Regulations*;
- comprehensive training for municipal water operators of community water and wastewater systems;
- hydrologic modeling;
- investigation of water-related problems and complaints;
- overseeing inspections of dams;
- granting of water rights;
- maintenance of a water rights registry;
- issuance of permits for community water and sewage systems, extensions and alterations;
- monitoring and inspection of community water and wastewater systems;
- provision of technical assistance on community water and sewage, hydrology, hydraulics, and environmental design of water related structures;
- maintenance of various online water quality and quantity databases and GIS resources; and
- conducting studies on groundwater resources, flooding, water resource impacts and water use.

Horizontal Initiatives

The department is lead in two key government-wide initiatives: Government's response to climate change, and sustainable development. These are evolving files and thus the programs and services offered by this department in these areas are also evolving. The programs and services that the public can expect from the department on these two initiatives are outlined below:

Climate Change

Specifically, the department is responsible for:

- Implementation of the provincial Climate Change Action Plan;
- Administration of the Newfoundland and Labrador Green Fund; and
- Creation of stakeholder awareness on greenhouse gas reduction strategies and climate change impacts and adaptation.

Sustainable Development

The department is responsible for:

- Strategic research on wildlife species, notably caribou, in support of the sustainable development initiative;
- Provision of support for the Sustainable Development Round Table;
- the development of indicators and a provincial sustainability report as directed by the *Sustainable Development Act*;
- Development of public education and outreach information related to sustainable development;
- Development and coordination of graduate research projects through the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science; and
- General promotion of sustainable development within Government and the larger community.

Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Department of Environment and Conservation are:

- the general public;
- municipalities;
- large industries such as the pulp and paper companies, mining or oil refining companies;
- businesses involved in such areas as pesticide application, waste management, heating oil or refrigeration services, among others;
- the engineering and waste management consultant community;
- the academic community and student populations;
- environmental non-governmental organizations;
- consumptive wildlife users, guides, outfitters and others involved in the wildlife industry;
- tourists; and
- the federal government and other provincial departments.

Vision

The vision of the Department of Environment and Conservation is a clean, sustainable environment and healthy, resilient ecosystems in perpetuity for the social, physical, cultural, biological and economic well-being of the province.

Mission

By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conversation will have reduced the adverse impacts of human activities on the environment and improved the health of our ecosystems.

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the minister over two three-year planning cycles. The statement above is therefore carried over from the previous Strategic Plan. The mission statement represents the key longer-term result that the minister and the department are working towards as they move forward on the strategic directions of government.

The mission of the department is the reduction of adverse, human-induced impacts on the environment and the improvement of the health of our ecosystems. In achieving this mission, the department recognizes that environmental issues are extremely complex and difficult to measure, and that it will be difficult to effect a definitive positive outcome in all areas. Some environmental issues are global in nature. For example, this province contributes relatively little in terms of greenhouse gas emissions that are at the root of global climate change. Yet the impacts of climate change will most certainly be felt here, and we must take steps to deal with this phenomenon where we can. The natural environment also has a certain capacity to absorb and deal with pollution and it is difficult to determine an exact tipping point in any given ecosystem. To add to the complexity, humans have been impacting the environment for millennia, we cannot easily determine a baseline for a "pristine environmental state." Technology, science and the collective knowledge of environmental impacts improve over time and it is a challenge to keep up with the pace of these developments.

The department can be effective in achieving our mandate by focusing on issues which are within our sphere of control. While the department cannot control transboundary air pollution, for example, it can engage in certain activities such as the remediation of contaminated sites or the development of standards for landfills which will reduce adverse impacts on the environment at the local level. The department can also ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the activities for which the department has jurisdiction. These mechanisms may include regulations, enforcement practices and techniques, monitoring practices and techniques, or scientific measures, among others.

Measure: Reduced adverse impacts of human activities on the environment.

Indicators:

- Five less contaminated sites.
- Increased treatment of septic tank waste by 50%.
- Increase from 15% to 40% in the percentage of the population being serviced by sewage treatment plants.
- One hundred percent of residential oil tanks meeting regulated standards.
- Increased number of standards for landfills.
- Increased number of species specific management plans.
- Land management framework developed.
- Promulgation of a *Sustainable Development Act*.

- Improved enforcement practices.
- Better data management, specifically more comprehensive and more accessible databases.
- Improved quality assurance and quality controls.
- Revised regulations.

Measure: Improved health of the ecosystem

Indicators:

- Improved health of select wildlife populations.
- Increased percentage of the land base which is protected.
- Increased monitoring of biodiversity.
- Decrease the number of communities with elevated trihalomethane (THM) levels by 10%.
- Decrease the number of communities on boil water advisories by 25%.

Strategic Issues

In consideration of government's strategic direction and the mandate and financial resources of the department, the following areas have been identified as the key priorities of the minister for the next three years. The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in the three year timeframe while the objectives provide an annual focus. Measures and indicators are provided for both the goal and the first year's objective to assist both the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

Issue: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The province released its Climate Change Action Plan in 2005 which outlined 40 action items around reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adaptation to climate change. The department has been working since then to implement all the action items in the plan and has been successful in making a start on all of them.

In 2007, government made a commitment in its Energy Plan to release an updated version of the Climate Change Action Plan and to include targets for GHG reductions. The department will be releasing an updated plan, which is intended to encourage stakeholders to reduce their emissions and to help them develop the capacity to adapt to the expected impacts of climate change. The three - year goal is written to acknowledge that the department is not a direct producer of GHGs and its role is therefore to encourage stakeholders to reduce their own emissions. The department does this by funding awareness and education campaigns, by funding emissions reductions projects and by encouraging adoption of government-wide policies aimed at reducing government's own emissions. Similarly, the department works with stakeholders to increase capacity to respond to climate change by helping them understand the impacts and by educating them about appropriate adaptation strategies. However, the stakeholders themselves are responsible for adopting these strategies.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have facilitated the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and increased adaptive capacity to respond to climate change.

Measure 1: Facilitated reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Indicators:

- Carbon dioxide equivalent reduced or averted.
- Number of projects approved for funding through NL Green Fund.
- Number of seminars held.

Measure 2: Increased adaptive capacity.

Indicators:

- Number of impacts and adaptation workshops held.
- Number of adaptation initiatives with specific communities.

2008-2009 Objective By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have updated the provincial climate change action plan to include greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

Measure: Release of updated action plan.

Indicators:

- GHG forecast developed.
- Plan released with GHG emissions reduction targets.

2009-2010 Objective By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have released a provincial climate change adaptation strategy.

2010-2011 Objective By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have begun implementation of the adaptation strategy.

Issue: Sustainable Development Initiative

The Sustainable Development Initiative was initiated in the last planning cycle. Government has put in place a *Sustainable Development Act* that lays out the mechanisms to ensure that resource development decisions take into account the full range of environmental, social and economic values and that stakeholders have a voice in how these resources are managed. Sustainable development is an ongoing process; indeed the definition of sustainable development is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future to meet their own needs." In practical terms, this means being vigilant of how the province develops and continuously taking steps to mitigate long-term negative impacts while enhancing the positive ones. The department therefore has set its goal for three years as determining what measurements are indicative of a sustainable path to development and by assessing the province's status in relation to these measurements. This will be done through research into appropriate measures and the input of stakeholders, including the Sustainable Development Round Table. Future work on this initiative beyond this current planning cycle will be necessary to monitor the province's status and to take steps to improve performance where required.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have assessed the province's status in relation to sustainable development to set the foundation for future progress on key areas.

Measure: Sustainability report produced.

Indicators:

- Sustainability report document released.
- Procurement goals developed.

2008-2009 Objective By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have established and operationalized the Sustainable Development Round Table.

Measure 1: Round Table is established.

Indicators:

- Press release on establishment of Round Table.
- Members appointed.

Measure 2: Round Table is operational.

Indicators:

- Round Table Secretariat staff hired.
- Number of meetings held.
- Draft statement of indicators prepared.
- Work plan prepared for public consultation on indicators.

2009-2010 Objective By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have prepared a Strategic Environmental Management Plan.

2010-2011 Objective By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have developed sustainability indicators for the province.

Issue: Caribou Science and Management Strategy

In February 2008, government announced over \$15 million in funding for a five-year science and management strategy for the Island's woodland caribou populations. From an estimated peak of over 90,000 caribou in 1996, the current population is estimated at 37,000, representing a decrease of approximately 60%. It is believed that predators such as black bear, coyote and lynx are among the major factors associated with the decline.

The work of the department over the next three years will focus on testing methods to stabilize the decline in the caribou population and support the recovery and long-term sustainable management planning. The activities will include island-wide efforts to encourage enhanced harvest of predators as well as the initiation of predator reduction in a scientifically controlled way within discrete study areas. This will be done to evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of predator reduction as a management tool for caribou recovery. The department will also be focused on improving knowledge of social and economic values of caribou and predators; and of caribou and predator ecology, which is required to develop long-term recovery and management strategies resulting in an increased woodland caribou population while maintaining an ethical approach to predator population management. The strategy will also focus on issues of caribou health and habitat.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have initiated the implementation of science and wildlife management activities designed to assist in long-term sustainability of the caribou resource.

Measure: Initiated the implementation of science and wildlife management activities.

Indicators:

- Appropriate scientific predator reduction activities commenced in two study areas.
- Education provided to hunters/trappers with an aim to enhancing participation in legal, safe and ethical predator harvest strategies.
- Calf mortality studies initiated in three study areas.
- Select herd population estimates completed for all herds at maximum 5 year intervals.
- New data incorporated and analyzed in the Caribou Data Synthesis.
- Enhanced departmental knowledge of social and economic parameters.
- Activities implemented to determine habitat use, requirements and availability for caribou and their predators.
- Initiatives implemented to determine the impact of human-land use patterns and activities on caribou and their predators.

2008-2009 Objective

By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have finalized science-based predator reduction strategies for two study areas dependant on successful establishment and interpretation of the baseline data.

Measure: Predator reduction strategies finalized based on establishment and interpretation of baseline data.

Indicators:

- Education efforts are initiated to improve public participation in predator harvest.
- Baseline information on caribou-predator dynamics is established in the following manner:
 - Baseline estimates established of predators (lynx, black bear, coyotes) abundance in Middle Ridge, LaPoile, and Northern Peninsula
 - Island-wide black bear abundance index is initiated
 - Number of individuals of each predator species (lynx, black bear, coyotes) radio collared in the three study areas
 - Number of adult female caribou radio collared in the Middle Ridge study area
 - Continuation of the monitoring of the female caribou collared on South Coast and Northern Peninsula
 - Graduate student projects are coordinated with IBES on predator ecology, abundance estimation techniques, space-use and habitat selection, and predator interactions
 - Range-use maps are completed for all herds on Northern Peninsula.

2009-2010 Objective

By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have implemented predator reduction strategies in two study areas and commenced evaluation studies to ascertain their effects.

2010-2011 Objective

By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have initiated the implementation of science and wildlife management activities designed to assist in the long-term sustainability of the caribou resource.

Issue: Safe Drinking Water

Following the Walkerton and North Battleford drinking water tragedies of 2000 and 2001, government approved the Multi-Barrier Strategic Action Plan (MBSAP) for drinking water safety in the province. Since the release of this Plan in May 2001, substantial progress has been made. The province has received international recognition for establishing one of the best drinking water monitoring and reporting programs. Despite the progress, concerns remain in small communities in rural areas of the province around high numbers of boil water advisories, high levels of trihalomethanes (THMs) and

issues such as arsenic, colour and turbidity. Analysis done by the department shows that potable water dispensing units (PWDU) are the most appropriate technology to deal with these issues in small communities. In communities where a PWDU is installed, residents come to the units to fill their containers as needed. The communities continue to operate their regular water system for other uses such as laundry and toilet flushing. The PWDU systems typically include some combination of multimedia filtration and treatment systems, water storage tanks and dispensing stations that are located in centralized and easily accessible public locations. These units have already been installed in some communities around the province, and a high degree of satisfaction with the system is reported.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in rural communities.

Measure: Improved drinking water available.

Indicators:

- Total number of potable drinking water units installed.
- Other corrective measures taken.

2008-2009 Objective By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water in 20 communities with populations less than 500.

Measure: Improved drinking water available in 20 communities.

Indicators:

- Number of units installed.
- Other corrective measures taken.

2009-2010 Objective By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in 60 additional communities with populations less than 500.

2010-2011 Objective

By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have improved drinking water available in the remaining communities with populations less than 500.

Issue: Natural Areas System Plan

Government is committed to finalizing a Natural Areas System Plan. Over the past two years, a full complement of study areas has been identified on the island of Newfoundland. These areas are currently undergoing internal review by government departments. Study areas that represent the natural regions in Labrador will be identified and reviewed by government departments in 2008-2009.

The purpose of the Natural Areas System Plan is to establish a comprehensive system of publicly supported parks and protected areas for citizens present and future that protects the province's rich biodiversity and natural heritage, helps support a vibrant culture and sustainable economy, and enhances public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of our natural environment.

The release of the plan and Implementation Strategy are necessary steps towards a carefully planned and managed system of protected areas that will be essential for achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives. Protected areas are also an important element of climate change strategies.

Newfoundland and Labrador will make significant advances towards the international Convention on Biological Diversity goal of "the establishment and maintenance of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas" by 2010.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have released a Natural Areas System Plan and an Implementation Strategy.

Measure 1: Natural Areas System Plan released.

Indicators:

- Natural Areas System Plan document released.
- Implementation Strategy document released.

2008-2009 Objective

By March 31, 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have identified study areas in each of Labrador's natural regions and prepared a draft Natural Areas System Plan.

Measure: Study areas identified for each of Labrador's natural regions.

Indicators:

- Study area boundaries identified for internal government review.

Measure: Draft Natural Areas System Plan prepared.

Indicators:

- Draft Natural Areas System Plan document prepared for internal review.
- Public discussion document prepared for internal review.

2009-2010 Objective

By March 31, 2010, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have completed consultations on the draft Natural Areas System Plan and prepared a proceedings document.

2010-2011 Objective

By March 31, 2011, the Department of Environment and Conservation will have released a final Natural Areas System Plan and an Implementation Strategy.

Strategic Directions

The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires the department to take into account the strategic directions of government in the preparation of the department's Strategic Plan. Strategic directions are the articulation of the desired physical, social or economic outcomes. These normally require action by one or more government departments.

The Strategic Directions for the Minister of Environment and Conservation for the planning period of 2008-2011 are as follows:

Sustainable Development

Outcome: Responsible and sustainable development of our natural resources.

Areas of Focus:

- Round Table
- Development of Strategic Environmental Management Plan.
- Preparation of sustainable development indicators
- Production of sustainability report for province

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Round Table	ENVC	X		
Strategic Environmental Management Plan	ENVC	X		
Indicators	ENVC	X		
Sustainability Report	ENVC	X		

Climate Change

Outcome: Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Areas of Focus:

- Update of Climate Change Action Plan with targets for GHG reductions.
- Ongoing financial support for the Climate Change Education Centre.
- Increased energy efficiency in government operations and transportation sector.
- Climate Change Adaptation strategy.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Update of Climate Change Action Plan	ENVC	X		
Financial support for the Climate Change Education Centre.	ENVC			X
Energy efficiency in government operations				X
Energy efficiency in transportation sector	ENVC			X
Climate Change Adaptation strategy	ENVC	X		

Wildlife Management

Outcome: Enhanced management of wildlife resources.

Areas of Focus:

- Caribou Management Strategy for the island of Newfoundland.
- Assessment and management of big game and some inland fish species in Labrador.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Caribou Management Strategy	ENVC	X		
Assessment and Management of big game and some inland fish species in Labrador	ENVC			X

Natural Areas System Plan

Outcome: Protection of representative areas of the province's ecoregions.

Areas of Focus:

- Public Consultations.
- Finalized Natural Areas System Plan.
- Implementation strategy.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Public consultations	ENVC	X		
Finalized Natural Areas System Plan	ENVC	X		
Implementation strategy	ENVC	X		

Park Renewal

Outcome: Enhanced visitor experience in provincial parks and campgrounds.

Areas of Focus:

- Research / engineering plans
- Capital projects.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Research / engineering plans	ENVC			X
Capital projects	ENVC			X

Comprehensive Land Use Management

Outcome: Improved allocation of Crown land.

Areas of Focus:

- Land use policies.
- Land use framework with dispute resolution.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Land use policies.	ENVC		X	
Land use framework with dispute resolution.	ENVC		X	

Safe Drinking Water

Outcome: Improved protection and delivery of drinking water in communities.

Areas of Focus:

- Implementation of Drinking Water Safety Plan for Rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Capacity building.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Drinking Water Safety Plan	ENVC	X		
Capacity building	ENVC			X

Waste Management

Outcome: Enhanced management of solid waste.

Areas of Focus:

- Expansion of MMSB mandate.
- Development of site and waste handling standards.
- Elimination of conical waste incinerators.

Components	Entity	Addressed in Strategic Plan	Addressed in Operational Plan	Addressed in Work Plan
Expansion of MMSB mandate	MMSB	To be addressed in MMSB plan.		
Site and waste handling standards	ENVC			X
Elimination of conical waste incinerators	ENVC			X

