

A New Approach

THE PATH WE SHARE

A Natural Resources Strategy
for Nova Scotia 2011-2020
Five-year Progress Report

APPENDIX 1

GOAL 1: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Build a culture of collaboration, innovation, and mutual accountability that equips government to implement the natural resources strategy.

1 Identify and develop leaders and other contributors to work on resource management priorities.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- In 2014–15, the department set five integrated planning goals to help guide progress on the Natural Resources Strategy. Cross-branch teams created frameworks to address process improvement and change management, risk management, and service delivery. To date, several process improvement projects are underway, multiple risk assessments have been completed, and a 10-month review focused on service delivery challenges related to balancing existing resources.
- In April 2014, the Premier of Nova Scotia appointed an associate deputy minister to the Department of Natural Resources to help government make the innovative changes needed in the forest industry as the province maximizes economic opportunities.
- In January 2016, five staff members won the 2016 Don Eldridge Memorial Award for promoting sustainable forest stewardship practices. The award is from Forest Nova Scotia (formerly Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia) for their collective work on publishing *Forest Ecosystem Classification for Nova Scotia*.
- In June 2014, 22 staff members from the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment Parks and Protected Areas Team received a Premier's Award of Excellence for their exemplary commitment to public engagement and collaboration with community groups, industry, non-governmental organizations, and hundreds of Nova Scotians during the development of the Parks and Protected Areas System Plan.
- In June 2016, four staff members from the Integrated Resource Management Team (Western Region) received a Premier's Award of Excellence for their work in modernizing the province's approach to the approval of forestry harvesting on Crown lands.
- In 2013, a senior department geologist was awarded the Gesner Medal, the Atlantic Geoscience Society's highest honour, for work on bedrock mapping in Nova Scotia.
- The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for new ways to ensure consistent application of appropriate tools for public participation and for deeper engagement with the public in government's decision-making process. A draft guide on principles and guidelines was built on the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) philosophy that there is a spectrum of public participation. Feedback was solicited from academics and stakeholders. DNR is now working with the departments of Energy, Environment, and Fisheries and Aquaculture to develop a shared public participation policy built upon that foundational work.
- The department created a Forest Biodiversity Science Advisory Committee to enhance the management of Nova Scotia's Crown-owned woodlands. Members of the committee have experience in biodiversity science, and their independent advice will improve government's capacity to address complex biodiversity conservation and resource-use issues. The committee will focus on helping government identify knowledge gaps that have to be filled for successful implementation of an ecosystem approach to forestry and forest biodiversity conservation.

- The department participated on the steering committee for the creation of a forest summit. The first Forest Summit—established by the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators (NSWOOA)—was held in May 2015. It brought together key stakeholders from across the forest sector, including environmental groups, private woodlot owners, pulp mill owners, industry representatives, senior government decision makers, policy makers, and entrepreneurs. The session laid the foundation for the Forestry Lab (see 1.9.1).
 - The department contributes funding to the NSWOOA to support a unique project called the Forestry Lab to address challenges in Nova Scotia’s forest sector. The Forestry Lab focuses on business model innovation that aligns the industry with existing and potential competitive advantages of operating in Nova Scotia, the long-term productive capacity of our forests, and the values of our communities. The lab will be a dedicated incubator for new business ideas, particularly in the areas of new technologies, harvesting capacity, and supply from private woodlots.
 - The department also participated on the steering committee for the second Forest Summit. The summit, held in April 2016, again brought together key stakeholders from across the forest sector. It provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about the work and accomplishments of the Forestry Lab experiments, which included prototypes in the form of business start-ups, service delivery models, and policy reforms.

2 Include interested groups in planning and decision making about natural resources.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for new ways to ensure consistent application of appropriate tools for public participation and for deeper engagement with the public in government's decision-making process. A draft guide on principles and guidelines was built on the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) philosophy that there is a spectrum of public participation. Feedback was solicited from academics and stakeholders. DNR is now working with the departments of Energy, Environment, and Fisheries and Aquaculture to develop a shared public participation policy built upon that foundational work.
- A Request for Proposals for a three-year community forest pilot project in western Nova Scotia was issued in spring 2013. In January 2015, the province signed an agreement with Medway Community Forest Cooperative Ltd to begin managing a community forest in Annapolis County, the first in Eastern Canada. The pilot will be evaluated for economic, environmental, and social benefits to Nova Scotians.
- The department is negotiating a three-year Forest Operating Agreement with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. Under the agreement, the Mi'kmaq will be responsible for managing the forests on approximately 20 000 hectares of Crown lands in central and western Nova Scotia. The goal is for the project to be economically viable in the long run, while providing training opportunities for Mi'kmaw forest workers, supporting traditional Mi'kmaw resource uses, and developing a Mi'kmaq-centric forest management model.
- The province released *Our Parks and Protected Area: A Plan for Nova Scotia* in 2013. In 2012, the province held public meetings in 20 communities and conducted nearly 1,500 interviews with both park users and non-users to examine their perceptions and preferences. Specific properties proposed for protection are also based on extensive consultation with the public and Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq around land selection and use. This consultation was informed by the 2009 Colin Stewart Forest Forum report and the 12 per cent lands review process (2011), which included numerous stakeholder meetings and more than 700 written submissions.
- A collaborative approach was used during a review of the provincial Mineral Resources Act in 2015–16. Industry representatives, associations, and environmental non-governmental organizations were invited to submit position papers and present their recommendations for change to an interdepartmental panel. Follow-up meetings were held for feedback as work progressed. Meetings were also held with the Mi'kmaq, and public input was solicited via online surveys and through written submissions.
- As part of the department's innovative approach to fibre allocations, the department has engaged a group of forest businesses to come together to manage the western Crown lands. The consortium was incorporated in 2015 as WestFor, which will jointly hold one western Crown harvesting licence. A Forest Utilization License Agreement (FULA) negotiation began with WestFor in July 2015 and is expected to be completed by December 2016.
- The department supported the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity by reviewing the ban on Sunday hunting for all types of hunting. This included a 60-day public consultation where Nova Scotians were invited to share their opinions on Sunday hunting via online submissions, emails, letters, and phone messages. After the public consultation and discussion of options with stakeholders, the department allowed hunting on the first two Sundays of general hunting season.

- Between March 18 and April 19, 2013, DNR consulted with people of the province on how the Crown lands in the Western Region should be used in the future. The consultations have helped the department develop a conceptual plan for the management and use of the land. They provided an opportunity for Nova Scotians to give their ideas on sustainable ways to use these lands to create future economic, social, and environmental gains for the Western Region and the whole province. In August 2015, an update of the conceptual plan for the western Nova Scotia Crown lands was released.

3 Develop and share best practices to engage citizens and interested groups in meaningful ways.

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- In November 2013, the department published *Community Consultation: A Guide for Prospectors and Mineral Exploration Companies Working in Nova Scotia*. This document provides guidance and resources to help prospectors and exploration companies with community consultation.
- A guidebook designed to assist communities in their engagement of mineral exploration companies is being developed. The key components of the guidebook are a questionnaire for use by communities to capture relevant information on proposed mineral exploration surveys and tables that outline some potential benefits, risks, and mediation options for mineral exploration surveys. The guidebook also contains educational materials and a question and answer section. It will be ready for publication in 2016.
- In 2013, the department republished *Forest Ecosystem Classification for Nova Scotia*. It combines Part I: Vegetation Types, Part II: Soil Types, and Part III: Ecosites (originally published in 2010) as a single, more-streamlined guide. The guide is a result of 10 years of forest ecosystem classification (FEC) project work.
- In 2013, the department published *A Woodland Owner's Guide to Forest Ecosystem Classification in Nova Scotia*. This guidebook provides a brief introduction to FEC and how a trained FEC professional can help landowners make more predictable and sustainable forest management decisions.
- In August 2012, the department released and officially made the *Code of Forest Practice* mandatory on Crown lands. The code is encouraged on privately owned woodlands.
- Open data—In February 2016, the province launched a new open data portal that makes government data collections publicly available to individuals, researchers, and entrepreneurs. Maps and data sets related to natural resources were included in the launch. See data.novascotia.ca.

GOAL 2: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Manage Nova Scotia's natural resources to achieve a sustainable balance of economic, environmental, and social benefits for current and future generations of Nova Scotians.

4 Use an ecosystem approach to strengthen land use planning and natural resource management throughout the province.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- The department is developing a Crown Land Forest Resource Management Policy. Replacing the 1986 Forestry Policy, the new policy will reflect the department's knowledge-based approach to landscape-scale planning, using ecosystem-based management. In addition to internal policy discussions (DNR, NSE), staff have been carrying out external stakeholder consultations, including with the Mi'kmaq. The policy, while binding on Crown land, will provide examples to guide private landowners.
- In August 2012, the department released and officially made the *Code of Forest Practice* mandatory on Crown lands. The code is encouraged on privately owned woodlands.
- In spring 2015, the department initiated a pilot project in collaboration with Port Hawkesbury Paper LLP (PHP) to develop and implement a landscape management framework on Crown lands under PHP licence. Important ecological goods and services are supported across landscapes, not within forest stands or landowner properties alone. This framework is designed to enable site-scale forestry activities to be planned with a greater understanding of how larger-scale values are affected across landscapes. Planning with better knowledge of accumulated values and impacts will enable decision making that will both help conserve biodiversity and maintain a sustainable forest industry.
- The department is working to release a set of ecological landscape analysis reports, which will help guide management on Crown land that is appropriate to the ecological context.
- Through a series of three-week workshops in 2012 and two-week workshops in 2013–14, contractors in both Eastern and Central Regions worked with the Canadian Woodlands Forum to upgrade their skills in forest ecosystem classification and employing partial-harvest techniques in test harvests.
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protection are also based on extensive consultation with the public and Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq around land selection and use. This consultation was informed by the 2009 Colin Stewart Forest Forum report and the 12 per cent lands review process (2011), which included numerous stakeholder meetings and more than 700 written submissions.

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5

Redesign the integrated resource management (IRM) process to guide resource management on public and private land.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- Since 2011, the department reviewed and documented the IRM process in Nova Scotia, studied IRM approaches in provinces across Canada and in jurisdictions with similar land tenure ownership patterns to compare those approaches with Nova Scotia's current IRM process, and consulted with other provincial departments and the Mi'kmaq.
- In spring 2015, the department initiated a pilot project in collaboration with Port Hawkesbury Paper LLP (PHP) to develop and implement a landscape management framework on Crown lands under PHP licence. Important ecological goods and services are supported across landscapes, not within forest stands or landowner properties alone. This framework is designed to enable site-scale forestry activities to be planned with a greater understanding of how larger-scale values are affected across landscapes. Planning with better knowledge of accumulated values and impacts will enable decision making that will both help conserve biodiversity and maintain a sustainable forest industry.
- CrownLINC (Crown Land Information Network Computing) is used to track and manage all applications for the use or sale of Crown land. Using CrownLINC, DNR developed and implemented a workflow management solution for preparing Integrated Resource Management (IRM) reports by Regional Services staff. The IRM process was streamlined by making all of the information and steps required to prepare an IRM report available online and by allowing management and staff to monitor and track progress of IRM reports conducted across the province.

6

Explore complementary ways to use provincial Crown land (e.g., innovative economic development, wind power generation, recreation, carbon management).

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- In 2013, the department developed and released a new Crown Land Leasing Policy (through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder effort), to guide projects using Crown lands, and a Guideline for Applicants, to provide direction on the process for applying to use Crown land.
- In May 2013, the department completed a Land Asset Management (LAM) Pilot Project to investigate ways to improve decisions made about the use of Crown lands for economic purposes. As part of the pilot project, the department issued a public tender for the development and operation of sugar maple harvesting facilities on Crown lands in Cumberland and Colchester Counties. Steps that usually occur after a client requests a lease (including an Integrated Resource Management (IRM) review and aboriginal consultation) were completed by the department in preparation for the tendering process in order to streamline the leasing process and reduce the turnaround time for bringing these sites into production.
- Bellisle Marsh is the largest parcel of Crown land in the Annapolis Valley. It is valuable as wildlife habitat and for hunting, agriculture, and Acadian archaeological resources. DNR designed and completed a new tendering process to award leases to farmers at this site. This process ensures that proposed farming practices incorporate biodiversity conservation and continued use of the site for waterfowl hunting. It demonstrates how an integrated approach to land management can accommodate multiple conservation and sustainable use objectives.
 - After an open Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the lease was awarded to two companies in June 2015.
- In response to a request from the Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia (WBPANS), DNR and the Department of Agriculture initiated a project aimed at identifying Crown lands suitable for wild blueberry development. Starting in the fall of 2014, an interdepartmental project team (including representatives from Perennia and WBPANS) defined the characteristics of Crown lands suitable for wild blueberry development, identified potential areas, and conducted field trips to confirm suitability of the target sites. Six Crown parcels were tendered in late summer of 2015.
 - After an open Request for Proposals (RFP) process, none of the six parcels were leased. The department worked with WBPANS to modify the process and reissued the RFP in March 2016. Crown lands that will remain available after the RFP closes in August 2016 will be made available for leasing on a first-come, first-served basis
- In November 2015, the Department of Energy released *Our Electricity Future: Nova Scotia's Electricity Plan*. The 25-year plan reflects the findings of a year-long Electricity System Review, which heard from more than 1,300 Nova Scotians and technical experts. It includes targets for electricity generation from renewable sources such as wind, hydro, and biomass. See the plan at energy.novascotia.ca/electricity.

GOAL 3: RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Strengthen research capacity and knowledge sharing so that government and interested groups are well informed about issues affecting our natural resources.

7 Establish an external advisory panel to (1) share new and innovative research; (2) share practices for collecting and managing data; and (3) encourage cross-disciplinary analysis that connects social, scientific, community, and traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- As noted in the 24-Month Progress Report, issued in 2013, the Department of Natural Resources determined that formal advisory panels did not meet the wide range of inputs and guidance needed for complex work. Instead, the department committed to take the approach of engaging and consulting more groups more often.
 - As part of this commitment, the department is looking for new ways to ensure consistent application of appropriate tools for public participation and for deeper engagement with the public in government's decision-making process. A draft guide on principles and guidelines was built on the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) philosophy that there is a spectrum of public participation. Feedback was solicited from academics and stakeholders. The department is now working with the departments of Energy, Environment, and Fisheries and Aquaculture to develop a shared public participation policy built upon that foundational work.
- In addition, the department has shared practices for collecting and managing data:
 - In February 2016, the province launched a new open data portal that makes government data collections publicly available to individuals, researchers, and entrepreneurs. Maps and data sets related to natural resources were included in the launch. See <https://data.novascotia.ca>.
 - In 2015–16, the department developed and implemented the Harvest Plan Map Viewer (HPMV), an interactive web-based application that maps all planned harvesting on Crown lands in the province. All licensees are required to post harvest plans on the viewer and allow a minimum of 20 days for public input. The HPMV includes tools that enable the public to submit comments or request pretreatment assessment data for individual harvest plans directly to the licensee. There is also a provision for map-update notification.
 - To encourage cross-disciplinary analysis, the department created a Forest Biodiversity Science Advisory Committee to enhance the management of Nova Scotia's Crown-owned woodlands. The members of the new committee have experience in biodiversity science, and their independent advice will improve government's capacity to address complex biodiversity conservation and resource-use issues. The committee will focus on helping government identify knowledge gaps that have to be filled for successful implementation of an ecosystem approach to forestry and forest biodiversity conservation.

8

Develop and implement a science and research plan that sets priorities and guides the allocation of resources for research on natural resource development and conservation.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- A separate science and research plan has not been created to guide the allocation of resources. The work done within the Department of Natural Resources is informed by best scientific evidence, governed by the Minister's annual mandate letter. It is further explained, and measures set, through the annual business planning process. The Natural Resources Strategy provides an overarching vision that informs that business plan.
 - For this year's mandate letter, see http://novascotia.ca/exec_council/pdf/letters/2015-DNR.pdf.
 - For this year's business plan, see <http://novascotia.ca/government/accountability/2016-2017/2016-2017-Natural-Resources-Business-Plan.pdf>.

9

Develop standards for organizing data and sharing information about natural resources.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- Crown Land Information Network Computing (CrownLINC)—CrownLINC is technology used to track and manage all applications for the use or sale of Crown land. The first release, in January 2014, supports the workflow and business transactions managed by the Land Services Branch. The second release, in October 2014, includes automated processes for preparing Integrated Resource Management (IRM) reports in regional offices, automates document preparation, and provides integration of data across the department to improve decision making associated with Crown lands administration. The third release, in January 2016, allows clients to submit applications for use or sale of Crown lands and pay online.
- The Nova Scotia Registry of Claims (NovaROC)—NovaROC is an online mineral and petroleum registry system that went live on August 2013. It presents current (real-time) mineral tenure information as a searchable map, accessible to any stakeholder via web browser. Prospectors and others in the mining sector are able to access their accounts and apply online for exploration licences and maintain existing rights.
- The GIS Link project—The GIS Link project is a collaborative initiative involving staff from DNR and the Internal Services Department (ISD) to improve the management and promote the sharing of location-based information in government. During Phase 1 of the project (completed in August 2014), the team developed a stewardship model for corporate geographic data, developed the target technical architecture for a corporate geographic data warehouse, and implemented the target hosting environment to be used by all government departments. As part of Phase 2, DNR migrated GIS data related to land and resource management into the corporate data warehouse. To make the data more accessible to government and public users, DNR developed the **Provincial Landscape Viewer** (released in October 2015) and the **Harvest Plans Map Viewer** (released in April 2016).
- Provincial Land Ownership Data—The department worked with Service Nova Scotia (SNS) to develop a technology solution to identify all of the provincially owned land in Nova Scotia. It was implemented in February 2016.
- Open data—In February 2016, the province launched a new open data portal that makes government data collections publicly available to individuals, researchers, and entrepreneurs. Maps and data sets related to natural resources were included in the launch. See data.novascotia.ca
- Research and Information Services (RIS, formerly the DNR Library) provides a public interface between researchers and DNR's information resources. Staff collect, preserve, and make accessible both new and legacy information generated by DNR staff. RIS staff provide expert research support for DNR staff and members of the public.

10 Identify and support the research and development of new sustainable uses of natural resources and green technologies and practices.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- In 2013, the department developed and released a new *Crown Land Leasing Policy* (through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder effort) to guide projects using Crown lands, as well as *Guidelines for the Preparation of Crown Land Lease Applications*.
- The Innovacorp Demonstration Centre in Brooklyn, NS, is an industrial demonstration facility where cutting-edge bioresource innovators and researchers can test their products before bringing them to full market scale. The centre offers access to raw materials such as wood fibre, a port, a wharf, and steam from the nearby biomass-fueled Brooklyn Power plant. The department has provided in-kind support to Cellufuel Inc., a Nova Scotia-based start-up focused on the production of synthetic renewable fuels from the forestry resource. Deploying a next-generation innovative technology at the Innovacorp Demonstration Centre, Cellufuel transforms otherwise low-value wood residues into renewable fuels for the downstream liquid fuels market.
- In 2013, the department became a founding sponsor of Atlantic Wood WORKS!, a regional program of the Maritime Lumber Bureau (MLB). As part of the national industry-led project of the Canadian Wood Council, its goal is to support innovation and provide leadership on the use of wood and wood products.
 - In early 2016, the department hosted an information session on Atlantic Wood WORKS! that included staff from the departments of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, Internal Services, Municipal Affairs, Community Services, and Labor and Advanced Education. The session brought awareness to the Atlantic Wood WORKS! program and outlined opportunities and benefits to using wood in construction.
- The department participated on the steering committee for the creation of a forest summit. The first Forest Summit—established by the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators (NSWOOA)—was held in May 2015. It brought together key stakeholders from across the forest sector, including environmental groups, private woodlot owners, pulp mill owners, industry representatives, senior government decision makers, policy makers, and entrepreneurs. The session laid the foundation for the Forestry Lab (see 10.4.1).
 - The department contributes funding to the NSWOOA to support a unique project called the Forestry Lab to address challenges in Nova Scotia's forest sector. The Forestry Lab focuses on business model innovation that aligns the industry with existing and potential competitive advantages of operating in Nova Scotia, the long-term productive capacity of our forests, and the values of our communities. The lab will be a dedicated incubator for new business ideas, particularly in the areas of new technologies, harvesting capacity, and supply from private woodlots.
 - The department also participated on the steering committee for the second Forest Summit. The summit, held in April 2016, again brought together key stakeholders from across the forest sector. It provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about the work and accomplishments of the Forestry Lab experiments, which included prototypes in the form of business start-ups, service delivery models, and policy reforms.

- Efforts are underway across government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—by producing cleaner energy; protecting our air, water, and variety of species; using greener building practices; promoting local food; developing active transportation; and practising sustainable management of our natural resources. The 2016–17 provincial budget includes funding for sustainable transportation projects, energy efficiency programs, incorporation of intermittent renewable energy, tidal innovation, and the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps.

GOAL 4: GOOD GOVERNANCE

Ensure that laws and policies are clear and effective.

11 Review and improve laws and policies related to the development and conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- The department developed a legislation review plan. Reviews of several pieces of legislation commenced in the winter of 2013. The plan is updated annually to reflect department and government priorities. Timelines for completion of legislative reviews are variable and range over several months to several years. The review process is collaborative, engaging multiple stakeholders both internal and external to government.
- In 2015–16, a collaborative approach was used during a review of the provincial Mineral Resources Act. Industry representatives, associations, and environmental non-governmental organizations were invited to submit position papers to an interdepartmental panel and present their recommendations for change. Follow-up meetings were held for feedback as work progressed. Meetings were also held with the Mi'kmaq, and public input was solicited via online surveys and through written submissions.
- The updated Mineral Resources Act received royal assent in the House of Assembly on May 20, 2016. Regulations are in development.
- The department is developing a Crown Land Forest Resource Management Policy. Replacing the 1986 Forestry Policy, the new policy will reflect the department's knowledge-based approach to landscape-scale planning, using ecosystem-based management. In addition to internal policy discussions (DNR, NSE), staff have been carrying out external stakeholder consultations, including with the Mi'kmaq. The policy, while binding on Crown land, will provide examples to guide private landowners.
- In August 2012, the department released and officially made the *Code of Forest Practice* mandatory on Crown lands. The code is encouraged on privately owned woodlands.
- The department required that pre-treatment assessments be conducted on Crown lands and that they be encouraged on private lands. These assessments require collection of many stand-level details, including vegetation and soil type, species, tree diameter, existing regeneration, and data on other values, such as special wildlife landscaping, habitat buffers, and geological considerations. This information helps ensure that appropriate treatments—including selection harvesting and pre-commercial thinning—are prescribed.
- Representatives from the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, the Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors, African Nova Scotian Affairs, and the Department of Natural Resources will support people in the Preston area to clarify titles to private properties. A pilot project focused on the three communities will provide free advice. Through this project, government will learn about any issues that can be addressed to make it easier in the future for other communities seeking land title clarification. The additional resources will help with issues such as whether or not a will exists, unclear boundaries, and confusion about land ownership. With clarity of legal title, community members will be able to enjoy freehold on their land, potentially qualify for provincial programming, identify ownership for tax purposes, and reduce conflicts that can result from lack of clear land ownership.

12 Work with interested groups to improve levels of compliance with natural resource laws and policies.

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- On July 1, 2015, the department's enforcement officers moved to the Department of Environment to create a new division. The new division combines the province's enforcement functions to create a more unified, coordinated approach that will lead to improved protection of the public's health, our natural resources, and our environment.