



**MINISTRY OF NATURAL
RESOURCES**

2012-2013

Annual Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

Each year, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Every ministry participates through the preparation of its annual accessibility plans, as required under the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 \(ODA\)](#).

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) is Ontario's roadmap to becoming accessible by 2025. It requires the development of accessibility standards in five key areas of daily living:

- Customer service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation, and
- Built environment

This year, the accessibility plans must also address the [Integrated Accessibility Regulation \(IASR\)](#) under the AODA enacted in June 2011. The IASR required the OPS to develop a multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. It published the [OPS MYAP](#) on January 1, 2012. This included a statement of commitment for the OPS to demonstrate leadership for accessibility, "the OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our products, services and facilities."

Building on the OPS Statement of Commitment, the OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the Ministry of Natural Resources' (MNR) 2011-12 Accessibility Plan, the current plan (2012-13) will continue moving the ministry and the OPS toward the goal of demonstrating leadership in becoming an accessible province for all Ontarians.

This plan outlines the specific steps the ministry is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. To view every ministry's Accessibility Plans, visit [Ontario.ca](#).

Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2011-2012

The Government of Ontario's goal is to achieve the most accessible province by 2025.

Since 2001, the OPS has complied with the obligations of the ODA and prepared an annual accessibility plan, which it has made available to the public through the Government of Ontario's public website.

During the last ten years, MNR has been a leader in accessibility.

Accessibility In Action

There have been many shining examples of accessibility-in-action over the years at this ministry and we wish to highlight two areas in particular: first, the vision and dedication to accessibility by the Ontario Parks organization is to be commended; second, the ministry's strong commitment to accessibility training for all of its employees regardless of location, circumstance or duration of employment.

Ontario Parks

Showcasing some of the most significant natural and outdoor recreational spaces in the province, Ontario Parks has shown true commitment to serving all visitors. In the past decade, 100 million dollars were spent on transforming many of its unique recreational opportunities for use by visitors including those with disabilities. These improvements were primarily made in operating parks with high visitation, as the following example illustrates. In 2011, Ontario Parks welcomed 8.7 million visitors in 85 of its most popular parks, all of which offer barrier-free facilities. This number represents 91 per cent of Ontario Parks' total visitation for 2011.

Through new construction and upgrade projects, facilities in more than 53 parks were improved to better meet accessibility needs, including comfort stations, picnic shelters, registration offices, viewing platforms, visitor centres, trails, and boardwalks.

All primary signs in the parks have been upgraded to meet accessibility design features using universally recognized symbols. The improved signage enhances service not only for persons who have disabilities but for all park users including international visitors.

For more than 20 years, Ontario Parks has offered discount fees for Ontario residents with disabilities. The basis for the reduced fee is that visitors who do not have full mobility or who have a visual or hearing impairment are often limited in their enjoyment of the park facilities. Consequently, these visitors often cannot take advantage of the full extent of the park facilities and programs offered such as trails or beaches. A lower user fee for persons with a disability is extended to benefit all members of that person's party, whether for overnight camping or day-use activities. The consideration is especially appreciated by families.

Examples of Ontario Parks' Commitment to Accessibility

Awenda Provincial Park – The tall sugar maples and red oaks that shade the campgrounds at Awenda Provincial Park on Georgian Bay, 20 minutes northwest of Penetanguishene, are just some of the natural features one can find at this Natural Environment Class Park.



Photo credit: Ontario Parks

Persons with disabilities can now enjoy the beauty of this rugged landscape thanks to the vision and dedication of park staff in partnership with The Friends of Awenda Provincial Park. Together, they have made the park experience more accessible for those with disabilities by providing:

- Six accessible campsites
- Barrier-free washrooms and shower facilities

- A platform to the water's edge of a picturesque lake for fishing or viewing
- Almost a kilometre of accessible boardwalk and nature trails, and
- A non-motorized all-terrain wheelchair available for use at no cost to visitors, enabling them to explore beaches, trails and other areas that would otherwise not be accessible to all. (All-terrain wheelchairs are available for use in seven other provincial parks, free-of-charge.)

According to the Park Superintendent, "It just makes sense to make the park as accessible as possible... My motivation is simply about treating others the way I would want to be treated. These ongoing improvements and services will benefit everyone."

French River Visitor Centre – Located just east of Georgian Bay on the historically significant French River, this accessible visitor centre is a stunning example of what persons with mobility limitations would likely have missed were it not for Ontario Parks' commitment to providing accessible facilities.



Photo credit: Ontario Parks

Winner of the 2010 Governor General's Medal in Architecture, this impressive visitor centre presents exhibits that engage the Canadian mythology and tell the historic tale of the fur trade as it developed over two centuries along this magnificent river. Here, you can imagine your life as a voyageur and walk in the footsteps of a French explorer, fur trader and aboriginal guide as they risked everything to reach and transport their precious cargo.

The dedication and passion of Ontario Parks' staff help to make it a world-class organization, hosting visitors from across the globe in a diverse system of provincial parks. Their devotion to providing visitors with a one-of-a-kind experience is no doubt due, in part, to an organization that places a high priority on recognizing its people.



Photo credit: Dave Sproule

Formal awards in five distinct categories are presented each year to individuals who continually go that extra mile or who bring a high level of creativity or innovation to their work. One of the awards honours “role models who embrace ... diversity associated with delivering services as part of the Ontario Public Service.”

By embracing the accessibility challenge and actively seeking to eliminate barriers throughout its 114 operating parks, the Ontario Parks organization has helped brighten not only its world-class reputation but also, the quality of life for many individuals with a disability who can now participate in what Ontario Parks has to offer.

Commitment to Accessibility Training Across the Ministry

Since 2009, the ministry has trained over 14,000 staff and third party service providers on how to provide accessible service. Hiring an average of 2000 students annually ensures that much-needed work gets done, particularly in the Ontario Parks system where the majority of students are stationed. The youth also represent a significant responsibility for this ministry as an employer.

Since many of our employees are located in more remote areas, many without access to computers, they typically cannot take advantage of the on-line training that most government employees receive. Instead, the ministry delivers the training in alternate formats by making local arrangements that are best suited to the employment situation, whether by sending the material on CD or paper, or by delivering the training directly by telephone.

As part of MNR's summer employment practice, we actively encourage students to identify any accommodation needs they may have during their employment. Through a survey conducted at the conclusion of the work term, we know that most students who received accommodation were satisfied with the arrangement. Many expressed appreciation for the responsiveness of the team leaders, as exemplified by the following comment.

"Due to a (previous) wrist injury, I was not able to work with clippers for long periods of time. Supervisory staff responded by allowing me to switch tools with co-workers at regular intervals, which was an excellent solution. I was thoroughly pleased with the way they handled the issue."

The ministry engages a roster of third-party service providers to deliver hunter safety training across Ontario. The more than 300 instructors have all received training in how to accommodate persons with disabilities and are passionate about ensuring that their students receive training of the highest calibre, regardless of disability. This includes hiring sign language interpreters for the 20-hour course or providing one-to-one training for the individual who uses a wheelchair. The instructors' willingness to go the extra mile in accommodating a person with a disability is perhaps best captured by the ministry's Hunting Program Administrator, "It's not a burden but rather gratifying for instructors and employees to help others obtain the knowledge and skills required to be safe and responsible hunters."

A number of examples within the ministry further illustrate the employer's commitment to accommodate. For instance, some employees use specially-designed workstations that accommodate their needs resulting from back injury. Other individuals have been accommodated in their jobs in response to mental health issues.

MNR will continue to actively offer accommodation and to deliver annual training on accessibility to all new hires, students and seasonal employees in our many locations across the province.

Reporting on 2011-2012 AODA Obligations

In 2011-12, the government continued to comply with the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation](#). As well, it had begun applying initiatives to meet compliance of some of the requirements of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) in the areas of employment, information and communications, transportation, and procurement. The government continues to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in other areas such as the built environment.

The following is a summary of the accessibility initiatives the Ministry of Natural Resources implemented last year, as a result of the [2011-2012 Annual Accessibility Plan](#).

Customer Service

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Ensured all new staff completed the necessary training to meet or exceed requirements specified in the Accessible Customer Service Standard (ACSS) of the AODA. In addition to newly hired employees, the Ministry of Natural Resources provides training to approximately 2000 youth, the largest number of summer students hired by one ministry in the Ontario Public Service. Because our students can work in the far north and other remote locations throughout the province, often without access to computers, the ministry must often forego on-line training, choosing instead other appropriate methods such as providing material on CDs or paper copies, and in some cases providing training via telephone.
- Updated the corporate 'Contact Us' feature on the ministry website to enhance the ministry's responsiveness to feedback on accessibility-related matters. Rather than having separate feedback pages for the ministry's different programs, we grouped the information all on the corporate site. Further, on the feedback form we updated the drop-down menu to better reflect the major program areas, making it easier for website visitors to select the topic on which they want to give feedback. We also clarified the 'accessibility' selection in the drop-down menu, which had previously led to confusion, by adding 'for people with disabilities.' We found that this new wording better represented the topic.

- Provided responses to public feedback on accessibility-related matters, which were primarily in the areas of fishing and hunting opportunities as well as Ontario Parks' recreational opportunities. The Natural Resource Information Centre (NRIC) and MNR program areas responded in a timely and appropriate manner to all feedback received.
- Continued to implement a service disruption protocol in order to fully meet the requirements of the ACSS. The ministry's Emergency Management Section (EMS) led the development of a public service disruption protocol for notifying employees and visitors with a disability in case of emergency. All managers were advised of the protocol and facilitated contact between the employees in question and the EMS to make appropriate arrangements.
- Implemented the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) and associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the ACSS.
- Applied the OPS Inclusion Lens to identify areas for improvement in accessibility with regard to service delivery. From time to time, the ministry's Accessibility Lead is asked to advise program areas on the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens, for example, choosing appropriate language for aboriginal communities in describing an employment program for aboriginal youth on the ministry website.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Ministry of Natural Resources supported the broader efforts of the OPS to meet the key requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The OPS met the requirements listed below by the January 1, 2012 timeframe.

- **Accessibility policies** - The OPS developed a statement of commitment and documented its accessibility policies, culminating in the [OPS Accessibility public website](#) that describes the OPS commitment and policies. The ministry's Chief Administrative Officer sent a message to all staff to inform them of this commitment.
- **Accessibility plans** - The OPS created a public-facing [multi-year accessibility plan to 2025](#) that outlines our vision and how we intend to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.
- **Procurement of goods and services** - The OPS incorporated accessibility criteria and features into its procurement process. MNR complies with the MGS directive and practices for procurement.
- **Self-service kiosks** - The OPS incorporated accessibility features into self-service kiosks it procured, designed and acquired. MNR does not have any self-service kiosks.

- **Emergency and public safety information** - OPS emergency procedures, plans and/or public safety information is made available in an accessible format, upon request, as soon as practicable. Ontario Parks has this information posted at the main gate of its operating parks.
- **New internet and intranet websites** - New or significantly refreshed internet and intranet websites, along with content appearing on those sites, conform to WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 Level AA, other than live captions and audio descriptions (pre-recorded).
- **Workplace emergency information** - The OPS provides individualized workplace emergency response information to persons with disabilities. MNR ensures an emergency evacuation plan is in place for employees with disabilities at all of its locations, including Ontario Parks.

Information and Communications

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Identified areas for improvement in accessibility in MNR communication and information products, including products associated with public recreational activities (e.g., Ontario Parks Guide and Fishing Regulations).
- Worked with I & IT enterprise areas to plan for the conformity of any new internet and intranet websites and web content in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, which excludes live captions and audio descriptions.
- Updated the accessibility section on the ministry internal website to enable staff to easily locate relevant resources.
- Promoted the use of OPS e-learning videos on creating accessible PDF and Word documents and other subjects related to IASR. For example, every manager in the ministry is sent a list of “MNR Learning Opportunities” for themselves and their staff for required and recommended learning; the OPS Mission Possible series, which includes six modules on accessibility topics, is included as ‘strongly recommended’ learning for all staff.
- Encouraged staff to integrate accessibility considerations in the preparation of communication materials. MNR’s Accessibility Lead consulted with key individuals of the ministry’s Communications Branch, ensuring that accessibility is considered at the start of all corporate initiatives and communication products.
- Complied with the guidelines and procedures for meeting public requests for publications in accessible formats.

- Ensured that the Ontario Parks reservation website was compliant to the WCAG 2.0 level AA Standards. As there are no videos used on the site, exceptions allowed under WCAG do not apply.

Employment

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Advised the public that accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request (e.g., accessibility considerations for job interviews).
- The ministry's youth employment program coordinators, in conjunction with MNR's Accessibility Lead, reviewed job advertisements to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.
- Having previously identified barriers to accessibility in our employment practices, we continued to ensure that we utilised barrier-free practices, processes and tools.

Built Environment

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Ensured that alterations to facilities and improvement projects were designed and implemented in compliance with the Ontario Building Code barrier-free standards.
- Completed a significant number of Ontario Parks facility and infrastructure related projects specifically to upgrade access for persons with disabilities (e.g., increasing door width and installing handrails inside comfort stations), as follows:
 - Marten River – Mini Comfort Station
 - Algonquin – Rock Lake Comfort Station
 - Balsam Lake – Comfort Station
 - Grundy Lake – Comfort Station
 - Sibbald Point – Comfort Station
 - The Massassauga – Entrance Control Office
 - Port Burwell – Comfort Station (2)
 - Long Point – Comfort Station
 - Charleston Lake – Comfort Station (2)
 - Presqu'île – Comfort Station (2)
 - Lake St. Peter – Comfort Station

Procurement

- In 2011-12 our ministry's procurement practices were consistent with the [Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive \(2011\)](#) and MGS' Guidelines for Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement.
- We considered accessibility for persons with disabilities regarding all goods or services purchased through the procurement process, whether for use by the ministry, its employees or the public, for example, in preparing a tender for building an accessible comfort station in a provincial park.

Section Two: Measures Planned for 2012-2013

Our Statement of Commitment

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve through our products, services and facilities.

This year, the Ministry of Natural Resources Accessibility Plan focuses on **seven** key areas including:

1. Customer Service
2. Employment
3. Information & Communications
4. Built Environment
5. Procurement
6. Accessibility Training
7. Accessibility Feedback

In an effort to demonstrate leadership in accessibility, our ministry plans to undertake a number of initiatives that support compliance with the existing Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA. The activities will also strengthen employee accessibility awareness and commitment within all areas of the ministry.

Customer Service

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities receive accessible goods and services. This means they will receive goods and services with the same high quality and timeliness as others do.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to...

- Continue to ensure all new regular and fixed-term staff as well as third-party service providers complete the necessary training to meet or exceed the requirements specified in the ACSS. As always, this training will be extended to employees and service providers located in outlying areas (including the far north and other remote locations) and who may not have access to a computer for the on-line training modules. In these circumstances, the ministry will ensure the individuals receive training in alternate formats as necessary, such as paper copy, CD, or by telephone.
- Periodically review and update the client feedback feature ('Contact Us') on the ministry corporate website as required in an effort to remain responsive to accessibility-related matters.
- Respond appropriately to feedback received from the public on accessibility-related matters. The Natural Resource Information Centre (NRIC) and MNR program areas remain committed to responding in a timely manner to all feedback received.
- Continue to implement a service disruption protocol to fully meet the requirements of the ACSS.
- Implement the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy, as well as the associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the ACSS.
- Apply the OPS Inclusion Lens to identify areas for improvement in accessibility with regard to service delivery in the ministry. MNR's Accessibility Lead will continue to advise program areas on the effective design of programs, services and processes, ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are considered up front.

Information and Communications

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to making government information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the manner in which we communicate it are key to delivering programs and services to the public.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to...

- Continue to identify areas for improvement in accessibility with MNR communication and information products, in particular for products associated with public recreational activities (e.g., Ontario Parks Guide, Fishing and Hunting Regulations, three of MNR's most popular documents, which are reviewed and updated every year; as a matter of course, relevant feedback on accessibility is integrated into the following year's publications).
- Work with I & IT enterprise areas to plan for the conformity as per the IASR of new internet and intranet websites and their content, following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, but excluding live captions and audio descriptions.
- Continue to update the accessibility section of the ministry's internal website to help staff readily access new and existing information, guidelines and tools for ensuring documents and other resources are developed in an accessible manner. The website is periodically updated to keep pace with OPS initiatives and to provide the latest information for staff on tools and resources.
- Continue to promote e-learning videos and other resources by promoting the OPS Accessibility@Source information campaign on creating accessible documents and other topics related to IASR. MNR's CAO will keep employees informed of new resources through memos to all staff; the information will also be posted on the ministry's 'Pathfinder' website for staff news and on MNR's Diversity & Accessibility internal site.
- Comply with the Ontario guidelines and procedures for responding to public requests for publications in accessible formats. Provide expertise for advising staff on how to meet this requirement and provide alternate formats that best address client needs.
- Raise staff awareness to consider accessibility for persons with disabilities when planning for public meetings; post resources for organizing accessible meetings on the ministry's internal website.

Employment

The ministry is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees including those who have a disability. MNR intends to support OPS employees who have a disability in ensuring they are well informed and

encouraged to participate fully in all employment services and processes. Consistent with the broader OPS, the ministry is committed to meeting the requirements specified in the Employment Standards of the IASR.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to ensure that as an employer, the accessibility requirements are met in the following areas:

- In its recruitment processes
- In employee accommodation and supports
- In the accommodation for employees returning to work after an extended absence
- In accommodating employees relative to performance management, career development and redeployment
- In ensuring all mandatory training is observed by staff, including upcoming OPS training pertaining to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Built Environment

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to greater accessibility within and around the buildings and public spaces it occupies.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to...

- Ensure that planned facility alterations and improvement projects, as well as any new construction, are designed and implemented in compliance with the Ontario Building Code barrier-free standards.
- Complete a significant number of Ontario Parks facility and infrastructure related projects specifically to upgrade access for persons with a disability (e.g., increasing door width and installing handrails inside comfort stations) as follows:
 - Quetico – Comfort Station
 - N.E. Zone – Various Parks - Barrier Free Campsites
 - Lake Superior – Composting Toilet Enclosure
 - Algonquin – Tea Lake Mini Comfort Station Building
 - Mikisew – Administrative/Registration Office
 - S.W. Zone – Various Parks - Barrier Free Campsites
 - Silent Lake – Comfort Station
 - Charleston Lake – Comfort Station

Procurement

The ministry is committed to employing modern procurement practices that meet or exceed the [Management Board of Cabinet Procurement Directive \(2011\)](#).

Supported by the tools and templates provided by MGS, our ministry intends to...

- Continue to include accessibility considerations in its procurement and evaluation practices that are consistent with the MGS [Guidelines for Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement](#).
- Continue to incorporate accessibility criteria in procurement planning and when developing procurement documentation.
- Continue to consider accessibility for persons with disabilities in all goods or services purchased for the use of the ministry, its employees or the public.

Accessibility Training

The ministry is committed to fulfilling training requirements as specified in AODA regulation. Our ministry will ensure that all regular and fixed-term staff, as well as third party service providers, is provided with the required training on how to plan for and provide accessible products and services.

For 2012-13 our ministry intends to...

- Fulfill the training requirements as specified in the Accessible Customer Service Standard (ACSS) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).
- Encourage all staff to complete additional learning and awareness training as provided by the OPS Diversity Office, including the Accessibility@Source tools and learning supports.

Accessible Feedback

The Ministry of Natural Resources is responsive to feedback received on accessibility.

For 2012-13 our ministry intends to continue providing feedback mechanisms for the public through a range of communication channels including:

- Electronic contact through the MNR internet site
- Telephone contact through the Natural Resource Information Centre (NRIC) including TTY

- Contact by correspondence through postal services
- Contact by correspondence through facsimile

Ministry employees will continue to respond in a timely and respectful manner to feedback received on accessibility matters.

Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies

In support of the OPS commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) continues to review government initiatives, including legislation and policies, to identify potential barriers that need to be removed.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed in 2011-12

The Ministry of Natural Resources supports the province's goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025. MNR fully understands that conducting legislative reviews to identify potential barriers to accessibility is an essential step to achieving that goal. In 2011-12 the MNR developed a broader schedule that supports the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens for legislative reviews, consistent with corporate directions.

Acts, Regulations and Policies to Be Reviewed in 2012-13

MNR will continue to undertake the review of MNR mandated legislation, based on our broader schedule, consistent with corporate directions and using established tools (i.e., the application of the OPS Inclusion Lens).

In 2012-2013 and beyond, MNR will continue to use the OPS Inclusion Lens as a tool to identify potential barriers. Actions may include:

- Continue to encourage staff to use the OPS Inclusion Lens when reviewing or developing legislation, policies, programs, practices or services as part of their normal business.
- Require all staff to include in their annual learning plans the OPS Inclusion Lens on-line course, available through the OPS' Centre for Leadership and Learning.

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

ACSS – Accessible Customer Service Standard (within the AODA)

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

EMS – Emergency Management Section

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

MNR – Ministry of Natural Resources

MYAP – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

OPS – Ontario Public Service

WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

For More Information

Questions and/or comments about the Ministry of Natural Resources Accessibility Plan are always welcome.

Please contact the Ministry of Natural Resources at:

Telephone – Toll free: 1-800-667-1940 (Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, except statutory holidays)

TTY number: 1-866-686-6072

Fax: 1-705-755-1677

E-mail: NRIC.accessibility.mnr@ontario.ca

Ministry website address: <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca>

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](#) web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario an accessible province for everyone.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

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