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Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2015 and future accessibility commitments for 2016.

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Executive summary

Under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*, ministries are required to produce, and make available to the public, annual plans that identify how ministries will identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

Like all ministries, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) complies with the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service \(ASC\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/070429) (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/070429>) and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191#BK3) (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191#BK3>). These regulations establish phased-in requirements in the following accessibility standards - Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and Design of Public Spaces.

In 2012, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) released its first multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) entitled [Accessibility in the Ontario Public Service: Leading the Way Forward](https://dr6j45jk9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/105/ontarioaccessibilityplanen.pdf) (<https://dr6j45jk9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/105/ontarioaccessibilityplanen.pdf>).

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNRF) 2015 *ODA* Plan, celebrates the tenth anniversary of the *ODA*, demonstrates the ministry's ongoing commitment to being an accessibility leader and how the measures taken in 2015 and proposed for 2016 support the key outcomes and deliverables of the *OPS MYAP* as we continue on our path to an accessible Ontario in 2025.

The ministry and its two obligated agencies (the Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner and the Niagara Escarpment Commission) remain committed to ensuring that information and services are provided in a manner that present no barriers to Ontarians with disabilities, including employees.

In 2015, making our websites and web content accessible was a high priority, and MNRF launched a ministry-wide Digital Accessibility Initiative to achieve that goal and build awareness and capacity among staff to embed "Accessibility@Source." Under this initiative, which continues in 2016, resources are being created to assist staff across the ministry in making and keeping web content accessible.

In addition, MNRF is working to make maps more accessible. As part of the *DAI* project, an inter-ministerial team developed cartographic guidelines and best practices for creating accessible maps, and ministry staff

created the first of its kind accessible map - the Baseline Connectivity Mapping for the Settled Landscapes of Southern Ontario.

MNR's most visible accessibility efforts are in Ontario Parks, where we continue to provide more barrier-free campsites, comfort stations and leisure areas. Ontarians with mobility issues can more easily enjoy beaches at several parks, where specially-designed mats provide a wheelchair-friendly way to access the water or all-terrain wheelchairs are available to use to navigate the sand. MNR even supported accessibility at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, lending two new all-terrain wheelchairs to the games before putting them to use at Ontario Parks.

MNR could not meet its mandate without skilled and dedicated employees. We support individuals with disabilities through the hiring process as well as those who develop a disability while working for the ministry. We are committed to ensure our recruitment process is as inclusive as possible by identifying potential barriers and further building on our awareness of diversity, accessibility and inclusive practices. In addition, all staff receive the necessary training to better understand their rights and obligations under the *AODA* and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In 2015, a dedicated Inclusion Unit was established in the Strategic Human Resources Business Branch to promote accessibility and build capacity among staff. The unit supports our Inclusion Council, which has representatives from across the ministry and is working to enable, inspire and promote an inclusive workplace. This includes promoting Accessibility in general and the ministry's *DAI*.

Section one: report on measures taken by the ministry in 2015

Customer service

OPS

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Measures taken by MNR in 2015

MNR continues to be committed to providing accessible services to our staff and the public we serve.

MNR continued to implement the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy>) and associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation.

As an example, if Ontarians need any information in an alternate format, the Natural Resources Information and Support Centre is ready to respond by email, by phone toll free, or by teletypewriter (TTY).

The Centre serves both the public and government and provides:

- information and publications on Ontario fish, wildlife, forestry, lands and waters and provincial parks
- information about Ontario Crown land and public land, and will direct calls to appropriate areas

Outdoors Card Centre staff are also trained in TTY systems. Both centres ensure notices are in place when services are disrupted at call centres and the automated interactive voice response system.

Information and communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and Communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Accessible formats and communications supports

Measures taken by MNRF in 2015

Accessibility is a powerful concept – it improves our communication, it brings more people together, and it increases our competitive advantage. MNRF is committed to providing accessible communications and information products to staff and the public we serve. Our websites, such as Ontario.ca and OntarioParks.com, are a key way for customers, partners and stakeholders to get information and services from us. Making sure they are accessible to all Ontarians is essential for us to serve them effectively, and to meet our legislative requirements and mandate. It's just good business.

The ministry continued to support and implement the OPS' Accessibility@Source information campaign, communicating to all MNRF staff on the requirements for:

- including accessibility considerations in procurement practices
- creating accessible documents, upon request
- OPS policies for accessible employment (OPS Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy)

In early 2015, MNRF created the Digital Accessibility Initiative (DAI) to focus on making the ministry's websites, and the content sitting on those websites, compliant with the ASR. This initiative is a cross-ministry effort sponsored by MNRF's Chief Administrative Officer and co-led by the Directors of the Strategic Human Resources Business Branch and Communications Services Branch.

The DAI is managed by a core team led by two project leads, and supported by a working group with representation from each branch in the ministry. The team works closely with internal partners (e.g., Land Resources Cluster, Legal Services), other ministries and agencies to collaborate, leverage experience, and define standards and best practices.

The DAI's governance structure, practical action plan, tools and resources will guide MNRF's work in making its digital communications compliant with the AODA. The DAI will empower program areas to make informed decisions related to online information by:

- clarifying our interpretation of the legislation's intent
- ensuring the ministry develops and acts on a plan to reach compliance
- building awareness and capacity of staff at all levels of the organization to embed "Accessibility@Source"

The DAI has begun work on a compliance toolkit for staff with:

- a risk management framework and remediation business case
- a guide for creating accessible documents
- a guide and technical report for PDFs – developed in collaboration with Ontario College of Art Design University
- a suite of accessible templates all MNRF staff can use – with "how to" demos
- best practices for cartography
- an "active offer" notification process when staff receive requests for accessible information and communication supports

A key component of the DAI's project model is leveraging partnerships and sharing of best practice resources across the OPS. Recently, the I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence endorsed our Guide for Creating Accessible Documents as an OPS-wide tool.

Across the ministry, staff have been developing more accessible websites, web content, and digital documents. This includes:

- Ontario Parks assessed its website and ensured it complies with *AODA* requirements.
- The Niagara Escarpment Commission's new website, which will go live in 2016, is *AODA* compliant.
- The Commercial Fisheries Harvest Information login page was made *AODA* compliant.
- a compliance remediation plan for the Licensing Automation System, through which anglers and hunters purchase licences and tags, has been developed.
- work is underway to comply with *AODA* requirements on a number of applications, including:
 - Electronic Forest Management Plans
 - Forest Information Portal
 - Forest Operations Information Program website
 - Renewable Energy Atlas
 - Crown Land Use Policy Atlas
 - Natural Resources Activity Registry
 - Accessible public documents developed or in development include:
 - Land Information Ontario newsletter and annual report
 - Surveyor General's annual report
 - 30 official geographic name decisions
 - 15 Crown land survey procedure and technical guides
 - eight web mapping applications
 - more than 300 complex technical documents
 - 180 documents related to Crown land and forests
 - Cottage Lot Development on Crown Land guide
 - Science and Research Branch reports and information products are being re-designed to ensure compliance with the *AODA*
 - accessible internal documents developed include:
 - the nomination form for the ministry's new recognition program, Appreciation in Motion
 - Health and Safety newsletter
 - Corporate Management and Information Division Intranet content

MNRF uses video conferencing for delivering presentations and holding meetings with colleagues across the province, including other ministries and organizations. In 2015, *MNRF* held an average of 240 video-conferencing events each month, totalling approximately 200 hours monthly of "on-air" time. Video-conferencing supports the diverse needs of ministry staff and clients, allows greater access, and enhances user experience by breaking down barriers such as travel and mobility. Because of its common usage in the ministry, employees with disabilities can feel that participating in meetings through this alternate mode is simply business as usual.

Divisional initiatives

Corporate Management and Information Division

- A pilot Inclusion Unit has created a visual identity for ministry inclusion initiatives (including accessibility) to communicate events, training and resources to staff. All in-person events are designed with the use of the *OPS* Inclusion Lens to ensure that they are inclusive and accessible (e.g., scent-free events)
- Mapping and Information Resources Branch (*MIRB*) led an inter-ministerial team to develop cartographic guidelines and best practices for creating accessible maps. This branch created the first of its kind accessible map, the Baseline Connectivity Mapping for the Settled Landscapes of Southern Ontario
- In addition, *MIRB* is leading the update and refresh of *CMID*'s internal facing webpages applying an accessibility lens to content
- The Strategic Human Resources Branch has implemented a new approval form that requires staff to sign-off that all products/content developed are accessible.

Communications Services Branch

- Communications staff ensured that all new web content on Ontario.ca was posted according to accessibility standards. A team of five staff was established to enhance the accessibility of legacy documents on Ontario.ca and identify solutions to help continue to improve the accessibility of digital content
- The branch provided advice to the ministry about accessible document design. Staff developed a suite of resources about accessibility standards for web content and presented it to ministry colleagues, including a new cross-divisional working group whose role is to help grow ministry expertise about web best practices and digital accessibility
- Branch staff explored new ways to produce digital marketing materials that would reach the widest possible audience. For example, MNRF was one of the first ministries to produce HTML 5 ads for digital banners, a format chosen for its enhanced accessibility features
- Select staff participated in accessible document training and attended the 2015 University of Guelph Accessibility Conference
- Since documents are regularly sent from the Deputy Minister's office to all staff, a representative from this office attended a training session in order to create documents in accessible formats.

Provincial Services Division

- Regional staff participated in piloting a new training module as part of the DAI that aligns with the information and communications standards in the IASR. All presentations are reviewed to ensure they are accessible
- The Lake Ontario Management Unit hosted public consultation in accessible venues
- Licensing and Client Services Section has updated its forms for third party service providers to larger print.

Agencies, boards and commissions

Niagara Escarpment Commission

The commission promoted staff awareness of accessibility through the use of OPS-wide information opportunities (e.g., training and email and website communications). The commission has continued to provide educational, training resources and material in accessible formats upon request.

Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner

A complete information binder is available on site, in accessible format, for the public or staff who wish to obtain information on:

- Guidelines to an Administrative Tribunal
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Personal Health Information Protection Act*
- Ontario Regulation 429/07, *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*
- Ontario Regulation 430/07, *Exemption from Reporting Requirements*
- OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy and OPS Accessibility Guidelines
- OPS Customer Service Standards
- Other accessibility contacts for ensuring high-standard accessibility delivery

An Assistive Listening System is available in the commission's courtroom. This system allows the public or staff with hearing impairments to fully participate in the court process.

Accessible feedback

The ministry continued to provide feedback mechanisms for the public through a range of communication channels, including:

- electronic contact through the ministry internet site
- telephone contact, including TTY service, through the Registry and Approval Services Centre, the Outdoors Card Centre, and the Natural Resources Information and Support Centre
- contact by correspondence and facsimile
- client satisfaction surveys sent to clients directly through the Review and Approval Service Centre

Active offer

The ministry is committed to ensure an “active offer” of assistance so that persons with disabilities know what additional options may be available to help them access information and services. Current examples of an “active offer” include:

- Ontario.ca webpages that states: “We are committed to providing [accessible customer service](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy>). If you need accessible formats or communications supports, please [contact us](https://www.ontario.ca/feedback/contact-us?id=26930&nid=47824) (<https://www.ontario.ca/feedback/contact-us?id=26930&nid=47824>).”
- the Natural Resources Information and the Outdoors Card Centres are ready to respond by email, by phone toll free, or by teletypewriter (TTY)

The DAI project team is designing a ministry-wide “active offer” process to support staff and program areas in responding to public and internal requests for alternate formats and communication supports. This includes partnering with the Natural Resources Information and Support Centre to incorporate in the “active offer” process for public facing inquiries. The ministry will be implementing this formal process early in 2016.

Other “active offer” initiatives include:

- Regional Operations Division added an “active offer” to websites such as Electronic Forest Management Plans, the Renewable Energy Atlas, and the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas
- Strategic Human Resources Business Branch has included an “active offer” statement in branch led events and communications to meet staff needs for accessible accommodation
- an “active offer” statement for accommodations, alternate formats and communication supports has been added to Inclusion Unit staff and Inclusion Council members' email signatures.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures taken by MNRF in 2015

MNRF is committed to providing a work environment where staff of all abilities have the opportunity to participate and contribute to their full potential by understanding needs and removing barriers. As an employer, MNRF works to attract and retain talented employees, including those with disabilities.

Best practices in place include:

- embedding accessibility throughout the recruitment process and in orientation materials
- employee accommodation and supports (e.g., provided telephone headsets for staff who have hearing disabilities and office equipment to assist employees with disabilities)
- accommodation where needed for employees returning to work after an extended medical leave
- support for employees who receive employment accommodation, relative to performance management and career development (e.g., performance and learning plans)

Divisional initiatives

Corporate Management and Information Division

- As part of the annual talent management cycle, manager and coordinator performance plans include accessibility commitments
- Divisional branches followed policies, directives and guidance for hiring and working with staff with disabilities, including supporting alternative work arrangements when required and performing ergonomic assessments to improve work stations.

Communications Services Branch

- The branch has developed an employment accommodation template that can be customized to determine the needs of employees with disabilities. It can also be used to guide the accommodation discussion between staff and managers, and ensure that all staff receive the same fair and equal treatment when requesting accommodation.

Deputy Minister's Office

- Employees have been supplied with stand-up desks in order to have the option to stand at points during the day.

Provincial Services Division

- Main and Zone Offices purchased ergonomic furniture for staff (e.g., height adjustable desks)
- Aviation, Forest Fire, and Emergency Services Branch:
 - in collaboration with the Northern Recruitment Centre, met all accessibility requirements during recruitments
 - during building construction projects and office renovations, made alternate work locations available for staff with identified health concerns aggravated by construction activity
 - continues to promote the establishment and use of Quiet Rooms across the regions, including in Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Haliburton and North Bay Fire Management Headquarters
 - made provision at Sault Ste. Marie Bondar facility for designated quiet work to help staff work in open-space office environments
 - supported, and continues to support, flexible work hours to accommodate chronic health conditions
- Fish and Wildlife Services Branch acquired various office support tools for staff workplace wellness, including adjustable-height desks, roller mouse, monitor risers, foot stools, and back rests. A staff member with a hearing disability will be obtaining a telephone that has a Bluetooth-to-hearing-aid adapter.

Policy Division

- The division worked with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness to provide ergonomic assessments for all staff, as required. Employees who

required assistive technology or workplace modifications such as standing desks, adjustable monitor stands, or text-to-speech programs were accommodated

- Species Conservation Policy Branch management supported individuals who were facing mental health challenges, including creating an accommodation plan as required.

Regional Operations Division

- The division hired an ergonomics consultant to assess staff workstations as required, providing accommodation supports such as keyboards, monitor arms, step stools, and ergonomic chairs to staff across the division.

Land and Resources Cluster

- The cluster has a mature Flex Work program, which currently includes both a Compressed Work Week program and a Telework program.

Agencies Boards and Commissions

Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner

The Listening System was implemented in the commission's courtroom to accommodate a hearing impaired employee. This installation also benefits the public, as extra components were added to help accommodate clients and members of the public with hearing impairments. Other examples include:

- a visually impaired employee was accommodated with all of the necessary equipment to ensure their ability to participate fully in their work environment
- employees were provided with ergonomic assessments, which is being considered when structuring workstations, ordering furniture and establishing environmental standards to create an efficient, barrier free and healthy work environment for all employees

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Measures taken by MNRF in 2015

MNRF is committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around its buildings for both the public and staff. Since MNRF is responsible for Ontario Parks, this commitment includes making park space more accessible for all Ontarians.

All planned office renovations, as well as any new office construction in 2015, were designed and implemented in compliance with all regulatory requirements and Infrastructure Ontario's Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. MNRF staff who have responsibilities in the built environment field have been identified and completed the Built Environment Standards training provided by the OPS Diversity Office.

Divisional initiatives

Corporate Management and Information Division

- Considered accessibility during leasehold improvements, including wider hallways and doorways and increased access to natural light.
- Upgraded facilities to meet accessibility standards:
 - Dryden Regional Fire Management Centre washroom
 - Sioux Lookout Fire Management Headquarters
 - Sioux Lookout staff quarters
 - Fort Frances Fire Management Headquarters washroom and shower
 - Red Lake Fire Management Headquarters exterior door
 - Peterborough's Robinson Place
 - London Petroleum Resources Office
- Participated in feasibility studies for accessibility renovations to existing facilities as part of the ministry's transformation initiative; the studies are used as a platform for the development of a strategic plan to ensure existing facilities comply with accessibility standards.

Provincial Services Division

- Ontario Parks trained staff involved with capital project planning, design and construction or major renovations on the Building Code's accessibility changes and Design of Public Spaces Standards as they apply in the provincial park setting. Architectural staff reviewed the 2012 Ontario Building Code changes (in effect January 1, 2014) with respect to accessibility and began implementing those aspects in public facility designs constructed in 2015
- Staff and their vendors created two large comfort station standard designs with a full universal toilet room with adult-sized change table and shower. These building designs also improve accessibility by incorporating two barrier-free unisex toilet rooms in lieu of a barrier-free toilet stall in communal men's/ladies' washrooms. These design layouts were the basis for large comfort stations constructed in 2015 and beyond
- Ontario Parks took measures for improving accessibility for provincial park visitors by ensuring that all new construction and renovations of facilities met Ontario's accessibility standards:
 - Aaron – improvements to an accessible campsite
 - Arrow Lake – replaced a vault toilet
 - Arrowhead – completed a mini comfort station
 - Bon Echo – added two new cabins
 - Bronte Creek – constructed an accessible campsite
 - Charleston Lake – installed new deck and accessible ramp at the Park Discovery Centre
 - Earle Rowe – constructed an accessible campsite
 - Kakabeka Falls – replaced a vault toilet
 - Kettle Lakes – modified gatehouse office entrance to become accessible.
 - Killarney – modified restrooms, kitchen and entry ways at the lodge to be accessible, modified pathways around staff house and lodge to be accessible, constructed an accessible rustic cabin, renovated the existing staff house
 - Killbear - modified a campsite to be accessible, replaced a comfort station
 - Mikisew – modified restrooms to be accessible
 - Missinaibi – modified a campsite to be accessible, modified a pathway to a vault washroom to be accessible
 - Murphys Point – created new barrier free parking space and an accessible pathway to the new playground area
 - Ojibway – betterments to an accessible campsite
 - Pakwash – betterments to an accessible campsite
 - Point Farms – replaced a comfort station
 - Presqu'île – repaved and widened three kilometres of main park road to include a multi-use bike lane to allow better mobility and accessibility
 - René Brunelle - constructed a new accessible rustic cabin
 - Restoule – replaced the entry control office
 - Sauble Falls – replaced a comfort station

- Silent Lake – replaced a comfort station
 - Wheatley – constructed an accessible campsite
- Accessibility was improved in other ways, including:
 - North East Zone provincial parks constructed more wheelchair accessible picnic tables
 - Grundy Lake Provincial Park changed garbage and recycling bins from tall and difficult-to-reach bins to much lower, smaller, more accessible bins
 - Sandbanks Provincial Park added approximately 20 metres of MobiMat (accessible surface for sand) to approximately 30 metres of the existing surface to extend further out onto the main park beach
 - Sandbanks Provincial Park purchased two new all-terrain accessible wheelchairs to replace existing units
 - Killarney Provincial Park modified its front entrance registration counter
- Ontario Parks developed a new building signage specification that meets Building Code accessibility requirements, for use on current and future projects
- Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services Branch took measures to improve accessibility within its facilities, including:
 - Sudbury Forest Fire Management Centre: new disabled parking and front entrances with barrier sloped access and push button door entry, new interior signage including high contrast lettering and Braille for visually disabled clients, visual fire alarm for staff with hearing disability
 - Haliburton Forest Fire Management Headquarters: disabled parking areas with barrier-free front entrance and push button access
 - Sault Ste. Marie Bondar facility: second floor entrance upgraded to meet AODA standards
 - Sudbury warehouse building: addition and renovation included elevator for barrier free accessibility to second floor and a barrier-free washroom upgrade
 - Armstrong Attack Base: accessibility ramp in response centre, ramp, accessible locker rooms and door openers in warehouse
- Science and Research Branch modified access to its presentation lecture pit to accommodate wheelchairs, installed a new accessible washroom with door actuator, and renovated an office to accommodate persons using a wheelchair
- Science and Research Branch completed a number of building renovations to ensure accessibility requirements were met, including relocating the exterior main entrance card reader, installing a new card reader for the interior main entrance, and replacing four accessible actuator buttons to bring entrances up to code.

Agencies, boards and commissions

Niagara Escarpment Commission

The commission is located in a privately owned building which conforms to the AODA. It has barrier-free access for persons with disabilities (e.g., accessible elevator, doors and parking).

Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner

All doors and hallways into and within the office are now 36 inches across to allow for wheelchair access. The washroom and kitchen are now fully accessible.

General outcomes

MYAP key outcome

OPS staff are able to identify barriers to accessibility, in OPS policies, programs, services and facilities, and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them on a continuing basis throughout the organization.

Measures taken by MNRF in 2015

The ministry is committed to being a leader in accessibility.

Procurement

Accessible procurement considers the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the procurement or purchasing process. Goods and services that are accessible not only meet the needs of persons with disabilities, but are also highly practical for all members of the public.

Supported by the tools and templates from the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Supply Chain Ontario, and Management Board of Cabinet's Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive, the ministry continues to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities.

Training

Investing in accessibility makes good business sense and the ministry is committed to ensuring our staff receive the right tools and resources to embed accessibility@source at all levels of the organization.

As such on an annual basis the ministry reviews and launches our mandatory training for all staff. In 2015, our mandatory training aligned to accessibility:

- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) in the OPS
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Information and Communication Standards
- May I Help You? – Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to know About Accessible Customer Service
- May I Help You? Welcoming Customers With Disabilities
- Working Together – The Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA
- Diversity – Using the OPS Inclusion Lens
- Managers & HR Professionals are required to take Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Employment Standards
- managers are required to take:
 - Disability Accommodation
 - Leadership 1.0
- workplace discrimination and harassment prevention for staff
- workplace violence prevention

For ministry staff that do not have access to the intranet, the ministry provides all mandatory training on a Compact Disc to support their access to information and training.

In addition, the ministry requires that all staff include mandatory training in their annual performance and learning and development plans. Managers are to review with staff as part of the annual performance management process/cycle.

Demonstrating leadership

In 2015, the Strategic Human Resources Business Branch established an Inclusion Unit with a dedicated team and created a framework for action to guide the activities of the Unit and ministry's Inclusion Council to promote accessibility and build capacity among staff. Activities included:

- providing accessibility expertise to support MNRF's LearnON (learning management system project) and Digital Accessibility Initiative
- piloting accessibility training in Sault Ste. Marie with a MNRF Inclusion Café

- completing and submitting MNRF's AODA Certificate of Assurance to OPS Diversity Office
- promoting mandatory accessibility training for all ministry staff
- continuing to endorse and promote the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens across the ministry in reviewing, developing and implementing ministry policies, programs and services. Examples include:
 - mandatory Inclusion Lens e-training for all ministry staff
 - in partnership with the OPS Diversity Office and OPS Learning & Development, delivered three OPS Inclusion Lens interactive webcast sessions to OPS and ministry staff
 - delivered overview and Lens tactical to practical training sessions across divisions and regions
 - the tool was applied to the following ministry initiatives:
 - Ministry Legislative Review (Phases 1-2)
 - Ontario Parks' Learn to Camp and Positive Space Initiatives
 - Digital Accessibility Initiative
 - Aboriginal Celebration Day (by District Offices)
 - the lens will be applied to other events and programs in the coming year
- partnering with Treasury Board Secretariat to deliver Accessible Document "How To" training to ministry staff
- providing training to MNRF accessibility leads on AODA legislation, the business imperative, and the corporate strategies to addressing and removing barriers to accessibility
- adding Inclusion as a theme for the ministry's new recognition program, Appreciation in Motion
- supporting the OPS Diversity Office's Inclusion Continuum Project and participating with ministry District Offices in the initial pilot

In addition, the ministry launched the 2015-2016 Diversity Mentoring Partnership Program to encourage executive and employee partners to engage in honest, open and meaningful dialogue about inclusion, diversity and accessibility. As well, the ministry had a staff representative on the OPS' Disability Advisory Council.

Agencies, boards and commissions

Niagara Escarpment Commission

The commission is increasing awareness among staff of mental illness in the workplace by promoting OPS resources and program initiatives, such as Healthy Workplace and Healthy Mind seminars.

Section two: report on measures proposed by the ministry for 2016

Customer service

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

MNRF will continue to be committed to providing accessible services to its staff and the public we serve.

MNRF will continue to implement the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy>) and associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation. We will continue to look for ways to ensure the right mechanisms are in place to respond to the diverse needs of the people we serve.

Information and communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Measures proposed by MNRF for 2016

MNRF will continue to be committed to providing accessible communications and information products to staff and the public we serve. We are committed to going above and beyond compliance to demonstrate leadership.

The DAI will continue to focus on making the ministry's websites, and the content sitting on those websites, compliant with the IASR. The project team will be implementing a ministry-wide "active offer" process to support staff and program areas in responding to public and internal requests for alternate formats and communication supports.

The ministry Inclusion Unit will continue to build awareness and capacity through accessibility training to all levels of staff and use of the Inclusion Lens.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures proposed by MNRF for 2016

MNRF will continue to be committed to providing a work environment where everyone can contribute to their full potential. Proposed measures for 2016 include:

- Policy Division will continue to work with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services' Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness to provide ergonomic assessments for all staff, as required.
- the Species Conservation Policy Branch management team intends to undergo training to improve the skills for managing and helping individuals facing mental health challenges.
- the Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services Branch will continue to assess employee wellness/accommodation, including ergonomic needs (e.g., stand/sit desks).

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Measures proposed by MNRF for 2016

MNRF will continue to be committed to greater accessibility in, out of and around the buildings that both the public and staff use.

All planned office renovations, as well as any new office construction, will be designed and implemented in compliance with Infrastructure Ontario's Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

As an example, Provincial Services Division is planning accessibility upgrades to the James Street Complex in Thunder Bay and South Porcupine Ontario Government Building in Timmins.

- Ontario Parks: In accordance with accessibility standards, complete facility and infrastructure projects may proceed in the following provincial parks:
 - Northeast Zone parks – provide more accessible picnic table assemblies and barrier free campsites
 - Bon Echo – installation of a mini comfort station
 - Emily – as part of the shoreline and dock renewal project, construct an accessible sidewalk and access ramp down to the new dock beside the boat launch
 - Ferris – replacement of an entry control office
 - Finlayson Point – renovation/expansion of the park office
 - Fitzroy, Grundy Lake, Six Mile Lake White Lake – replacement of comfort stations
 - Sandbanks Provincial Park – add 20 more metres of MobiMat product on the sandy access areas to increase accessibility to the park beaches
- Aviation, Forest Fire, and Emergency Services Branch:
 - Haliburton Forest Fire Management Headquarters construction will incorporate new interior signage including high contrast lettering and Braille for visually disabled clients, accessible parking and physical building access
 - Dryden Fire Management Centre/Headquarters complex: detailed design to incorporate accessibility standards
 - Thunder Bay Provincial Logistics Centre/Fire Management Headquarters: detailed design/construction to incorporate accessibility standards
 - Red Lake Fire Management Headquarters: detailed design to incorporate accessibility standards
 - Kenora Fire Management Headquarters: detailed design to incorporate accessibility standards
 - Sudbury Fire Management Headquarters: construction includes accessible parking and physical building access
 - North Bay Fire Management Headquarters: detailed design/construction to accessibility standards
- Enforcement Branch:
 - Planning for an accessible washroom at the Aurora District Office

General outcomes

MYAP key outcome

OPS staff are able to identify barriers to accessibility in OPS policies, programs, services and facilities, and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them on a continuing basis throughout the organization.

Measures proposed by MNRF for 2016

MNRF will continue to be committed to be a leader in accessibility. Proposed measures for 2016 include:

- ensuring accessibility is embedded at source at all levels of the ministry:
 - as part of the ministry's Digital Accessibility Initiative (DAI), the ministry will be launching an accessible document portal that will include the necessary tools and resources to support staff in learning how to create accessible content through templates, demos and guides
 - as well as, the ministry through their pilot Inclusion Unit will be launching training sessions (face-to-face, webcast) on the "why" of accessibility and the "how to" create accessible documents
 - with the support of the ministry's Inclusion Unit, MNRF's Inclusion Council will continue to promote accessibility and associated tools and resources as part of their ongoing implementation of our ministry's inclusion plan
- reviewing mandatory training, identifying gaps and enhancing learning opportunities on an annual basis
- continuing to use the tools and templates provided by Supply Chain Ontario and Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive in support of procurement activities
- using enhanced procurement resources to ensure accessibility is considered at all stages of the procurement process and ensure vendors produce accessible applications and content

- in Species Conservation Policy Branch, reviewing whether there are barriers under Ontario's policies to individuals with disabilities participating in hunting and fishing activities

The Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner is commencing a project to set up guidelines, once research has been undertaken, to offer up its courtroom for rent. This accessible room could be used by other ministries as a hearing room, and provides an excellent environment for training and lectures.

Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation

Introduction

In 2005, the government introduced the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, with the goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. In support of this goal, the government subsequently committed to review Ontario legislation to identify and address accessibility barriers, and undertook a coordinated review of 51 statutes considered to have a high impact on persons with disabilities. This review has now been completed.

The ministry remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation does not create barriers to persons with disabilities. Through our accessibility plan, we will continue to report the actions taken to identify and remove barriers in ministry acts, regulations, policies, programs and services. The findings of the coordinated review of high impact statutes will inform our ministry's approach to carry out this work.

Measures currently in place

MNR is using the OPS Accessibility Review Tool and the Inclusion Lens, including the Accessible Legislation Worksheet, to identify potential accessibility barriers in:

- proposals for acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on persons with disabilities
- existing legislation, to ensure that accessibility is considered

Upcoming plans for review

In the coming year, the ministry will continue with its scheduled review of acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services for barriers to persons with disabilities. We will review the *Mining Act*, *Gas and Oil Leases Act*, and *Ontario Geographic Names Board Act*.

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