

Published plans and annual reports 2021-2022: Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Plans for 2021-2022, and results and outcomes of all provincial programs delivered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in 2020-2021.

Ministry overview

Ministry's vision

The people of Ontario benefit from the health and wealth of the province's natural resources, today and in the future.

Ministry's mission

To sustainably manage and promote the responsible use of our natural resources.

Mandate

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is responsible for protecting and sustainably managing the province's diverse natural resources to support Ontario's economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and quality of life for the people of Ontario.

To achieve its mandate commitments, the ministry oversees and implements five key activities:

- **Protect the Public from Natural Disasters or Hazards**, such as floods and wildland fires.
- **Deliver Direct Services to the Public and Industry**, such as fishing and hunting licences.
- **Promote Economic Growth and Job Creation** by supporting industries like forestry, aggregates and hunting.
- **Conduct Monitoring, Research, and Planning** for the management and use of Ontario's natural resources.
- **Develop Legislation, Policies and Implement Programs** to regulate the sustainable and responsible use and management of Ontario's natural resources and Crown Lands.

In addition to its key activities, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is continuing to explore opportunities to advance the government's fiscal commitments to put Ontario on a sound financial footing so we can protect against threats like COVID-19 and create opportunities for the people of Ontario to prosper. These commitments include driving further internal efficiencies, such as modernizing business processes and functions, innovative improvements to program efficiency and effectiveness, collaborative partnerships and horizontal streamlining with other ministries.

COVID-19 response

The ministry continues to work closely with our stakeholders to protect jobs and support Northern and rural communities through the economic recovery of various sectors in Ontario directly effected by

COVID 19. In support of this work the ministry has provided relief and opportunity for economic growth and recovery including the Forestry, Petroleum, Commercial Fisheries and Resource-Based Tourism sectors.

In 2021, the ministry is continuing to provide relief and opportunity for economic stimulus, by providing targeted support for resource-based tourism businesses that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible Commercial Outpost Camps and hunting and fishing outfitters would receive another year of relief from certain rents and fees, providing approximately \$1.3 million in financial assistance. This relief will help with the recovery of the sector by supporting businesses that employ residents and contribute to local communities.

2021-22 Strategic plan

The ministry's strategic plan contains clearly focused long-term goals, and desired strategic outcomes that will guide MNRF and focus our efforts to advance the achievement of our mandate and priorities.

MNRF is committed to an emphasis on economic development, job creation, responsive customer service and fiscally responsible service delivery. MNRF continues to use evidence-based decision-making throughout its strategic planning and priority setting. As a result of these efforts, the ministry is improving its ability to more accurately measure its performance in achieving outcomes and value-for-money.

The ministry is undertaking several initiatives throughout 2021-22 to advance the government's priorities. Select ministry initiatives in relation to each priority are described below.

Ministry contribution to government priorities and results

Government priority: Advance economic development

- **Ministry priorities**

- Increased business and job creation in Ontario's natural resources economy.

- **Deliverables**

- Promote economic growth and job creation in Ontario's forestry, aggregates, and fishery sectors.
- Promote sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities.

- **Key activities**

- **Implementation of Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy** – On August 20, 2020, Ontario released a Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy. The Forest Sector Strategy (FSS) was developed through discussions at seven roundtable sessions with the forestry industry, municipalities and First Nations communities. The strategy aligns with the government's priorities to reduce red tape, create jobs, and promote economic growth and prosperity across the province, while ensuring forests continue to be managed sustainably for future generations. The strategy also works in conjunction with the government's draft Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan and Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan to help the province achieve its objectives to grow the forest sector, creating opportunities for the many people who depend on it. In 2021-22 an FSS committee will be created to provide input support to the Ministry as an implementation plan is developed for the strategy. MNRF will then implement the FSS, with the input of the FSS

committee, and develop key performance indicators to measure and report on the progress of implementing the actions and the overall success of the FSS.

- **Forest Policy Framework** – The ministry is:
 - Enhancing forest management planning requirements to enable a First Nation to undertake forest management in support of a community biomass energy generation project. The projects support economic development and energy security for a Far North community;
 - Continuing to review forest management planning requirements to identify and implement further modernization opportunities;
 - Reviewing the *Professional Foresters Act* to clarify the scope of practice in support of improved governance;
 - Developing strategic direction for managing forest pests in Ontario; and
 - Revising the Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scale.
- **Public Land Act Policy Framework** – The Ministry will enable economic development on public lands in rural and Northern Ontario by continuing to provide policy direction on how development can proceed where approvals may be required under the *Public Lands Act*.
- **Conservation Authorities Act Regulatory Amendments** – The Ontario government is proposing to update conservation authority development permit regulations, so conservation authorities focus on actions that best protect people and property from natural hazards. These proposed changes will also streamline conservation authorities' permitting and land use planning reviews to increase accountability, consistency and transparency.
- **Far North Act Review** – The ministry has proposed amendments to the *Far North Act* that are expected to establish a more stable environment for investment and development and support economic development opportunities (e.g. Ring of Fire, all-season roads and electrical transmission projects) while also encouraging greater collaboration between First Nations and Ontario. MNRF is working closely with other ministries to consider input received from Far North First Nations, Tribal Councils and Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), stakeholders and the public through engagement and consultation efforts.
- **Aggregate Resources Policy Framework** – The ministry is focused on ensuring the new regulation requirements that come into effect in 2021 and 2022 are clearly understood by the industry and the public. The Ministry remains committed to providing business certainty, while also maintaining our commitment to limit impacts to our communities and the environment.
- **Geospatial Data Services** – The ministry provides foundational geospatial data that is critical to supporting the province's Open for Business and Open Government initiatives, and Ontario's digital economy. This includes the geospatial and land tenure data required for resource development and economic growth in the mining, water and wind power, engineering and construction industries. The data also underpins the delivery of mobile, cost-effective, location-based services to Ontarians.
- **Science and Research** – The ministry is an authoritative source within the Ontario Public Service of science services that contribute to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of Ontario's natural resources. The ministry provides an inventory of available resources, such as wood supply, and support to evidence-based decision-making and policy development.
- **Outdoor Recreation Opportunities** – The ministry promotes fish and wildlife outdoor activities through marketing and communications, including social media, delivery of annual fishing and hunting regulation summaries, email newsletters, outreach events, the Learn to Fish program and Fish ON-Line.

- **Fish and Wildlife** – The ministry supports commercial fisheries through the development and implementation of science and monitoring programs that support sustainable quotas for the industry. Further, fishers have access to programs that provide for licensing and quota tracking that support business needs. The ministry directly (through staff and management work) supports industry initiatives such as Marine Stewardship Certification. This certification allows fisheries to get access to markets that require “eco-certification” and ensures that Ontario’s commercial fish products are well represented in the broader marketplace and can command premium prices. The ministry supports the recreational fishery which is important to the province, both economically and socially. With more than 250,000 lakes and countless rivers and streams, Ontario’s vast aquatic resources give these anglers a wide range of fishing opportunities, from fishing from shorelines in the city to fly-in fishing trips in remote areas of the province. The 1.2 million licensed anglers who enjoy Ontario’s recreational fisheries spend \$1.6 billion per year on recreational fishing in Ontario.

Government priority: Fiscally responsible service delivery

- **Ministry priorities**

- Prudent fiscal management.
- Service delivery that maintains service level standards.

- **Deliverables**

- Managing from within Treasury Board approved allocations.
- Promote innovative strategies that enable more efficient and sustainable public service delivery that effectively maintains service level standards.

- **Key activities**

- **Budget Management** – The ministry demonstrates fiscal responsibility and supports the government’s commitment to put Ontario on a sound financial footing so we can protect against threats like COVID-19 and create opportunities for the people of Ontario to prosper. This includes modernizing and transforming our processes and functions using lean six sigma principles to ensure sustainable public services, improving business outcomes, and continuing to sustainably manage Ontario’s natural resources. The ministry has increased rigour and discipline in expenditure management to identify efficiency savings without impacting the service levels our customers expect.
- **Integrated Resource Monitoring** – The ministry is completing the development of options for implementing Integrated Monitoring Framework recommendations to modernize and increase the efficiency of monitoring programs that support effective management of forest and wildlife resources.
- **Geospatial Data Services** – The ministry coordinates partnerships to acquire, use and distribute foundational geospatial data across governments, the broader public service and the public, academic and business sectors to reduce costs and ensure that geospatial data is accurate and accessible. The ministry delivers mapping tools, enterprise agreements and shared solutions that reduce duplication and costs.
- **Crown Land Management** – The ministry ensures that users and occupiers of Crown land under the *Public Lands Act* pay- fair market value for the private and commercial use of Crown land, including implementing sector-based initiatives.
- **Lean** – The ministry is committed to using Lean processes to develop efficient, effective and nimble public services. A strategy was developed focused on communications, training and

applying lean practices with a vision of actively seeking to continuously improve our business processes and work experience by challenging business as usual. The ministry increased its capability to use Lean processes by leveraging dedicated training and a community of practice to implement lean processes.

Government priority: Fiscally responsible service delivery

- **Ministry priorities**

- Deliver services that are flexible, customer-focused, and cost-effective.

- **Deliverables**

- Promote service delivery modernization strategies that enable more accessible and convenient service delivery to the people of Ontario.

- **Key activities**

- **Fish and Wildlife Licensing** – The ministry continues to provide exceptional customer service to two million anglers and hunters, including licensing and big game draw services, contact centre support, social media and the fish and wildlife licence issuer network. In 2020, the Natural Resources Information and Support Centre (NRISC) handled approximately 76,000 calls and 21,000 email inquiries related to fish and licensing and/or hunting in Ontario.
- **Natural Resources Enforcement** – The ministry received approval for increased funding for 2021-22 and 2022-23 to hire an additional 25 Conservation Officers. This will allow the enforcement program to increase its focus on enforcement priorities such as prevention of illegal moose hunting, promotion of hunting safety, prevention of illegal trade and commercialization of Ontario's animal and plant species, and prevention of the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. Conservation officer activities continue to involve making contact with the public both while on duty in the field and at outreach events to ensure people are aware of their responsibilities for safe and sustainable natural resource use. Each year, conservation officers make over 240,000 contacts with members of the public while on duty in the field and at outreach events. Approximately 530 events are attended each year where educational messaging is provided on a variety of topics including hunting safety and hunter education.
- **Natural Resources Information Portal** – The ministry continues to implement the online Natural Resources Information Portal to reduce burden on businesses and people by providing them fast, accessible and secure online approval and activity reporting services. In 2021 the expectation is to expand online services to the aggregates industry. Also, enhancements will be made to further support the forest industry. Additional functionality will also be included to enable the ministry to undertake more efficient review and approval of applications.
- **Approvals and Authorizations Modernization** – The ministry is committed to modernizing services and approvals by reviewing 100% of all regulatory approvals under 23 pieces of legislation, seeking to optimize delivery. This initiative underpins the ministry's commitment to service modernization and plan to move to 100% of all approval types being available in digital channels, an increase of 88% over three years.

Ministry programs

The ministry's key program objectives and initiatives are described below.

1. Forest industry

The Forest Industry Program leads economic development for the forestry sector and implements initiatives to promote an economically viable forest industry in Ontario. The program oversees activities related to the allocation, use and pricing of Crown timber, the management and collection of Crown timber charges and the delivery of business development policies and initiatives affecting Ontario's forest products sector. The program also includes the development and maintenance of sustainable forest management policy and programs that are critical to supporting a healthy forest industry while protecting forests for future generations.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Lead the multi-ministry Ontario Bioheat Initiative to improve the business and policy environments for the use of biofuels for heat in Ontario. This initiative supports the increased demand for wood-based biofuels, which contributes to economic growth in Ontario's forest industry by providing new markets for Crown forest resources.
- Defend Ontario in the ongoing softwood lumber dispute with the United States. MNRF works closely with representatives from Ontario's forest industry, and federal and provincial governments to maintain market access in the United States.
- Implement Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy. The Forest Sector Strategy (FSS) was released on August 20, 2020 and is built on four pillars of action:
 - 1. Promoting stewardship and sustainability:
 - earning recognition for Ontario's sustainable forest management practices
 - conducting applied research and best science to support forest management planning teams
 - establishing and strengthening partnerships with Indigenous Peoples
 - improving collaboration in managing forests
 - respecting Aboriginal rights and protecting forest values
 - determining effects of climate change
 - 2. Putting more wood to work:
 - investing in advanced remote sensing technologies
 - removing policy barriers to accessing wood
 - developing a path to increase forest growth
 - providing wood supply certainty, ensuring use and attracting new investment
 - 3. Improving our cost competitiveness:
 - maximizing the use of mill by-products
 - making strategic investments in Forest Access Roads
 - reviewing energy costs
 - reviewing certain components of stumpage
 - reducing regulatory burden / streamlining
 - 4. Fostering innovation, markets and talent:
 - making strategic investments

- promoting innovation
 - increasing wood use
 - reaching new markets
 - addressing barriers to trade
 - making Ontario Wood the natural choice
 - collaborating on carbon analysis
 - growing talent in the sector
- Establish an FSS committee to provide input support to the Ministry as an implementation plan is developed for the strategy. Consideration is being given to the membership of the committee.
 - Implement the FSS, with the input of the FSS committee, and develop key performance indicators to measure and report on the progress of implementing the actions and the overall success of the FSS.
 - Finalize and begin implementation of the five-year Forest Biomass Action Plan, as committed to under Pillar 3 of the FSS. The action plan focuses on protecting jobs and encouraging sustainability for the forestry sector, supporting northern economic development; and understanding the role biomass facilities have in supporting the forestry sector and forestry dependent regions of Ontario
 - Continue to deliver the Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (FSIIP), which supports an action in the Fostering Innovation, Markets and Talent pillar of the FSS. The Ministry currently has a \$10 million annual allocation for FSIIP but due to COVID-19, several projects have been delayed or put on hold in 2020-21, resulting in \$3 million in unspent funds. One-time approval has been obtained to move the unspent \$3 million to 2021-22, resulting in a total allocation of \$13 million in that fiscal year. FSIIP will continue to encourage regional economic development, business growth and job creation in forest-dependent regions across northern and rural Ontario by emphasizing:
 - Impact on the regional economy
 - Importance to Ontario's forest sector
 - Process and / or product innovation
 - Exports / market expansion
 - Productivity improvements
 - Continue to deliver the Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding Program to support rural road infrastructure in Crown forests used by the forest industry, mining companies, utilities, railways, hunters, campers, anglers, and Indigenous communities, and to support emergency preparedness.

2. Natural resources policy

The Natural Resources Policy Program leads the development, guidance and evaluation of evidence-based provincial legislation, regulations, policies and programs. The program ensures that its activities meet the Crown's rights-based obligation to consult with Indigenous peoples and communities, and engages relevant partners, stakeholders, government and non-government interests across the province.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Implement Ontario's Flooding Strategy by working with several ministries, and partners, to make Ontario more resilient to flooding in the long term.

- Develop policy to ensure the sustainable use and management of natural resources across Ontario, such as Crown land, forests, natural heritage, mineral aggregate resources, and fish and wildlife.
- Implement the *Invasive Species Act* and priority actions in the Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan. These actions include conducting risk assessments to identify priority invasive species for possible regulatory or other management actions and working closely with external partners to mitigate impacts to the outdoor recreation and natural resource sectors.
- Work with the Niagara Escarpment Commission to implement the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* and the Niagara Escarpment Plan to conserve this important feature and the social and economic benefits it provides.
- Continue to implement risk-informed approaches to dam safety under the *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act*, including streamlined approaches for low risk dam repairs and agreements with qualified dam owners.
- Through implementation of the Forest Sector Strategy, the Ontario government, working with the forest industry, along with partners in the research and education sector, Indigenous communities and other levels of government, will create a business climate that fosters growth, promotes innovation, and helps the industry adapt to an ever-changing business climate. The Forest Sector Strategy provides for actions related to four pillars: promoting stewardship and sustainability, putting more wood to work, improving our cost competitiveness and fostering innovation, markets, and talent.

3. Natural resource science and research

The Science and Research Program provides quality science services to inform natural resource management decisions that contribute to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of Ontario's natural resources. The program accomplishes this by leading, coordinating, and developing applied research; developing and implementing provincial resource inventory and monitoring programs; and information management, analysis and reporting. MNRF also provides science support including research, expertise and access to data / mapping resources for species at risk to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP).

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Utilize a new technology to inventory Ontario's Crown forests, which is used to monitor the land base and wood supply in Ontario. The new inventory will use LiDAR technology to create a three-dimensional image of the forest. The technology will provide more accurate measurements and forecasting of wood supply than previous inventories. Ontario's application of the technology is one of the largest LiDAR projects in Canada. LiDAR's application across the broader natural resource sector will also be explored.
- Use applied aquatic research and broad-scale monitoring of inland lakes to provide information on the health of Ontario's freshwater ecosystems and support management of recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Utilize forest health monitoring to support forest pest management, including undertaking annual forest health surveys to assess the impact of forest pests, supporting pest control programs for jack pine budworm and spruce budworm in the Boreal forest and forecasting potential gypsy moth infestations in 2021.
- Undertake wildlife research and monitoring to inform Ontarians about the health of wild game across the province; conducting aerial inventories of moose populations and monitoring of double-crested cormorant populations, delivery of Ontario's black bear population monitoring project; rabies control program; and testing to monitor for the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal disease

affecting white-tailed deer, American elk, moose and woodland caribou. Given the recent cases of CWD found in Quebec, additional testing will be conducted throughout 2021-22 in an area east of Ottawa that stretches to the Quebec border. Sightings of wild pigs, a potentially costly invasive species, will be investigated.

4. Mapping and geographic information

The Mapping and Geographic Information Program provides geographic information, Crown land surveying and information management services to government, academia, business and the public. In support of this program, Land Information Ontario (LIO) ensures geographic data is effectively collected, managed, and maintained and meets the objectives of Ontario's Open Data Directive. Geographic data has many uses across the public, private and academic sectors, by supporting locational insight, place-based decision-making and navigation. The program also supports the *Surveyors Act*, *Surveys Act*, *Mining Act* and *Public Lands Act* to ensure Ontario's property framework continues to support a strong economy.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Provide public access to over 350 geographic datasets through Ontario GeoHub, a data discovery and access tool. By providing public access to government data, MNRF is supporting the Ontario government's Open Government and Open Data initiatives as well as Ontario's digital economy and ensuring Ontario is delivering simpler, faster and better services for people and businesses.
- Provide survey advice to the mining, waterpower, and construction industries to accurately delineate land boundaries, and to support land claim negotiations.
- Expand external partnerships through LIO to collect and improve a range of foundational geospatial data such as land parcels, aerial photography, elevation and roads and water in order to avoid duplication, reduce costs and enhance data quality.
- Encourage Ontarians to participate in geographic naming decisions within their communities by completing online questionnaires. These names help to identify historic, cultural and natural features on the landscape that are essential for mapping, emergency response, resource management, travel and tourism and law enforcement.

5. Forest management

The Forest Management Program enables a healthy and viable forest industry in Ontario by fostering a competitive business environment, jobs and investment opportunities for the province's forest and wood products sectors. The program accomplishes its mandate through: inter-governmental co-operation on national forestry initiatives; Crown forest management planning, renewal and protection from pests; monitoring; auditing; information management; and public reporting.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Draft revisions to the Forest Management Planning Manual and the Forest Information Manual and associated technical specifications to provide for small scale forest management in an area north of the current managed forest. The addendum will allow a First Nation to undertake forest management in support of community economic development and energy security.
- Undertake a review of the forest management planning framework to identify additional modernization opportunities for the preparation of new forest management plans (FMPs). Areas of consideration include broader scale planning for some components of FMPs, increased focus on

professional reliance, and allowing planning effort to be matched to the level of forest management activities (i.e., reduced effort where reduced activities are occurring).

- Continue to review the *Professional Foresters Act*, in partnership with the Ontario Professional Foresters Association. Changes to the act may be proposed to clarify the scope of practice in support of improved governance.
- Continue to develop strategic direction for managing forest pests in Ontario that proposes establishing strategic, risk-based direction to enhance our response to forest pest outbreaks, help protect forest health and improve resiliency of Ontario's forests. The objective is to maintain healthy and resilient forests, minimize socioeconomic impacts from forest pests, and raise awareness of forest pests.
- Continue active participation in intergovernmental initiatives such as the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM), including involvement in the CCFM's Forest in Mind Program. Other initiatives include the implementation of the Canadian Wildfire Management Strategy, updates to the National Forest Pest Strategy, and participation in ministerial conferences to contribute to strategic priorities for future inter-governmental activities.

6. Fish and wildlife

The Fish and Wildlife Program manages Ontario's fish and wildlife resources to ensure the sustainability of fish and wildlife populations, and the management of fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities for the ecological, social, cultural, and economic benefit of Ontarians. The program accomplishes its mandate through resource management planning, research and monitoring, and the delivery of public services to sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations for Ontario's future.

As part of the ministry's program review cycle, MNRF has initiated a review of this program. The management of fish and wildlife is becoming increasingly complex as a result of environmental factors and the changing ways Ontarians are accessing and using the resource. In recognition of this, the program review aims to ensure that collective work across the ministry will strengthen the focus on client-centered service delivery and provide better value to residents of Ontario, while helping to achieve fish and wildlife resource management goals.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Manage the Great Lakes fisheries to ensure long-term sustainable economic and social benefits from both recreational and commercial fishing on those water bodies. This includes developing fisheries management objectives with Fisheries Management Zone Councils, neighbouring jurisdictions, stakeholders and partners; sharing information; and engaging the public and local recreational fishing clubs in Great Lakes fisheries work; and research and monitoring to understand the status of and factors affecting fisheries and the health of the lakes.
- Provide of fish culture services to maintain, enhance, and create recreational fisheries through stocking and rehabilitating degraded native fish stocks.
- Implement changes resulting from Ontario's Moose Management Review (e.g. regulation changes, new moose tag allocation system, client communications).
- Continue emphasis on moose research and monitoring efforts to identify science priorities to ensure sustainable management of Ontario's moose population and optimization of monitoring programs such as the moose aerial inventory program.
- Implement the ministry's Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) plan, and new legislative and regulatory amendments to support CWD prevention and response.

- Implement changes to Ontario's trapline allocation policy to improve consistency, clarity and fairness for the management and allocation of vacant registered trapline areas.

7. Regional natural resources operations

The Regional Natural Resources Operations Program is responsible for the localized coordination and delivery of ministry programs and services. Specifically, the program delivers public services through a network of regional, district, and field offices located across the province via an inter-disciplinary workforce. Services that the program delivers include land-use planning, management and allocation of resources through agreements, permits, licences and approvals in the areas of forests, fisheries, wildlife, Crown lands (including dams), waters, wetlands, aggregates and the petroleum sector.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Issue and maintain Sustainable Forest Licences to enable the harvest and use of forest resources within a management unit and confer responsibility for forest management activities on the forest manager.
- Continue to implement and improve the ministry's Natural Resources Information Portal, including service delivery modernization for forest management planning, aggregate resource management services, and other natural resource approvals. The new portal will make it easier and faster to exchange mandatory information with the forest and aggregate sectors, reduce costs and risks associated with outdated software, eliminate complex and confusing paper forms, and provide more effective online public engagement and access to natural resource management information. The portal will provide a digital first approach and be the central data repository to store submitted information, which will enable more efficient and cost-effective approval processes for forestry, aggregates, and other resource approvals.
- Advance economic development through the localized operational delivery of the ministry's Forest Sector Strategy, wildlife review, and modernization of the aggregates program.
- Work with qualified dam owners to streamline approvals for low-risk alterations, improvements and repairs to dams to reduce burden to the waterpower industry, while enhancing dam safety.

8. Natural resources enforcement

The Natural Resources Enforcement Program delivers professional enforcement services and activities to ensure compliance with natural resource legislation for the protection of Ontario's natural resources and public safety. The program accomplishes its mandate through public engagement, investigations, focused deterrence activities, responses to public complaints and prosecution of natural resource offenders. The program also contributes to the development and renewal of natural resource management policy and legislation.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Promote awareness of unsafe hunting practices and their contributing factors through public communication and outreach to hunters and the public.
- Inspect for compliance with rules aimed at preventing the introduction or spread of invasive species in specific pathways (e.g. angler bait use inspections including at points of entry to the province; live food fish markets/restaurants/ suppliers) and take a focused approach when appropriate.
- Compliance actions related to moose: increase public and stakeholder awareness of harvest rules and identification of moose, monitor to address non-compliance, complete focused analysis of occurrences

and investigate reported moose harvest violations.

- Enforce actions related to illegal commercialization and trade of Ontario's natural resources: gather information for the development of intelligence products to inform focused enforcement and outreach efforts.
- Work with Indigenous communities through the Collaborative Compliance Initiative to resolve natural resource offences involving Indigenous persons through community-based restorative justice. This initiative involves working with Indigenous communities on a case-by-case basis to determine if restorative justice is appropriate based on specific eligibility criteria.
- Modernize compliance through the Smart Regulation initiative that is focused on digital innovation, improvements to customer service and continuous improvement of compliance services. This modernization initiative will introduce new technology or improve existing systems to improve the efficiency of conservation officers, natural resource provincial offences officers and compliance technical staff with the analytical and intelligence supports they require.
- The ministry received approval for increased funding for 2021-22 and 2022-23 to hire an additional 25 Conservation Officers. This will allow the enforcement program to increase its focus on enforcement priorities such as prevention of illegal moose hunting, promotion of hunting safety, prevention of illegal trade and commercialization of Ontario's animal and plant species, and prevention of the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species.

9. Far North

The Far North Program is responsible for the delivery of the *Far North Act* within a specific geographic area. The program implements a joint community-based land use planning process with willing Far North First Nations partners. It also supports the review and approval of economic development opportunities, including all-season roads, transmission corridors and mining development in the Ring of Fire region.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Continue to implement a joint community-based land use planning process with Far North First Nations. MNRF will focus on supporting joint planning with willing First Nations partners.

- Continue to work with districts on all proposed projects to determine potential application of the *Far North Act*. Current proposed amendments to the *Far North Act* would remove the requirement under the Act for Minister's or Lieutenant Governor in Council Orders to facilitate development in the absence of a community-based land use plan.
- Continue to support strategic initiatives including the Ring of Fire and all-season road proposals; and provide expert advice and input to MNRF and OPS policy initiatives that impact the Far North.

10. Public safety & natural hazard emergency response

The Public Safety and Natural Hazard Emergency Response Program provides specialized wildland fire, emergency management and aviation services to protect people and economic values from the following seven natural hazards: wildland fires, floods, drought/low water, dam failure, oil, gas, salt solution-mining and underground storage emergencies, erosion, soil and bedrock instability. The program aims to prevent the loss of human life and injury, and to prevent and mitigate other losses and economic and social disruption. The program also delivers frontline operations for wildland fire management and provides support to the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Emergency Management Ontario and other ministries in the delivery of their emergency response responsibilities

in Ontario. This includes the evacuation of residents in communities affected by flood, fire and smoke risks.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Continue to promote the FireSmart program to educate the public and communities about how to prepare for the risk of wildland fire, as well as actions they can implement to prevent and mitigate these fires in and around their properties and communities. The FireSmart program enables property owners and land managers to act to mitigate the undesirable impacts of wildland fires on their properties or other values, and appropriately plan for the threat of a wildland fire emergency.
- Plan for, monitor and respond to wildland fires based on the Wildland Fire Strategy for Ontario while ensuring COVID-19 prevention and mitigation efforts are in place to ensure emergency response capacity is maintained. Continue to support mutual aid partners across Canada, the United States, and internationally.
- Promote understanding of the ecological role of fire and use of fire to benefit resource management as well as supporting wildland fire management objectives as indicated in the Forest Sector Strategy.
- Provide active emergency management training and development of staff and continuity of operations planning. Lead and support inter and cross-ministry prevention, mitigation, and preparedness planning as well as coordination of response to emergencies. Participate in provincial corrective action initiatives to provide for the public safety of Ontarians.
- Provide specialized aviation services in support of MNRF's Natural Hazard Emergency Response, and Natural Resource Management programs.
- Implement Ontario's Flooding Strategy by working with several ministries, and partners, to make Ontario more resilient to flooding in the long term.
- Continue to conduct a robust review of the ministry's wildland fire prevention and mitigation programs with the intent of expanding, streamlining and increasing the effectiveness of these programs.

11. Corporate management

The Corporate Management team leads the ministry's strategic business planning, which is integral to effective and efficient ministry operations. Corporate management functions include fiscal controllership and financial governance; sustainable infrastructure and facility management; strategic human resources planning and management; supply chain management; records and information management and the administration of the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act*.

Key program initiatives in 2021-22 include:

- Continue to support digital improvements to the Freedom of Information (FOI) request process to improve response rates, and provide Ontarians with better access to information.
- Support Ontario Digital Service and Open Government priorities by continuing to share data and information openly, promoting transparency and opportunities for innovation.
- Advance the ministry's modernization efforts through ongoing hiring controls and vacancy management, development and implementation of organizational changes to support the government's fiscal commitments and better align workforce capacity with priority outcomes.
- Play a critical role in establishing and supporting the implementation of financial processes and centralized initiatives, such as the further growth of MNRF's risk profile for Enterprise Risk Management and other ongoing horizontal streamlining initiatives across the Ontario Public Service.

- Lead the ministry's efforts to create and nurture a respectful, equitable, accessible, diverse, and inclusive (READI) organizational culture and workplace that is anti-racist and free from discrimination and harassment for all employees - through key initiatives such as senior leadership diversification and Anti-Racism action planning.
- Lead the ministry's recovery and renewal efforts including:
 - Making Ontario's programs and frontline services more convenient, more reliable, and more accessible. MNRF is committed to moving from 12% to 100% of services online over the next 3 years providing clients anytime, anywhere and on any device with information at their fingertips.
 - Launching a paper digitization initiative which will make information available digitally to clients and staff who need it, even when working remotely.
 - Overseeing and supporting the reintegration of staff in our workplaces to ensure a safe and healthy work environment (whether in office or working remotely).
 - Implementing our reintegration plan which will support the return of over 1,000 staff back to the physical workplace throughout the province.
 - Continuing to enable our workforce with the technology needed to deliver services remotely where needed.
 - Continuing to advance culture change within the ministry promoting modern, flexible, and empowered practices leading to improved employee experience results.

12. COVID-19 response

MNRF continues to collaborate with its key stakeholders to protect jobs and support Northern and rural communities through the economic recovery of various sectors in Ontario directly affected by COVID 19.

The ministry continues to adapt to ensure continuity of its operations during the COVID-19 response and recovery, by modernizing the way we deliver services to Ontarians. The ministry is implementing its Service Modernization Program, that will ensure Ontarians can enjoy reliable, timely and client-focused services anytime, anywhere and on any device by expanding its digital and online approval services for permits, licences and authorizations.

Ministry performance measures and achievements

Performance measures	2018-19 Achievement	2019-20 Achievement	2020-21 Target	2021-22 Target
Learn to Fish 10,000 participants target achievement	107%	107%	0% [1] (foot-1)	100%
% of available Crown timber harvested	50.40%	46.50%	49.80%	49.80%
% online-self-service/automated registrations [2] (foot-2)	94%	94%	94%	94%

Performance measures	2018-19 Achievement	2019-20 Achievement	2020-21 Target	2021-22 Target
% of program compliance rate with the Ministry's external service standards	82.30%	85.80%	90.00%	90.00%
Number of provincial flood messages warnings issued	102	110	116	116
Percentage of fires that require a full response held by noon local time the day after they were reported to MNRF or were 4.0 hectares or less in size	92.30%	91.90%	96.00%	96.00%
% of high-volume services available online	n/a	33%	70%	70%
% of high-volume interactions that can be conducted digitally	n/a	70%	50%	50%
% satisfaction rating for digital services	n/a	Under Development	75%	75%
% completion of Emergency Management Program legislative requirements	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total number of Outdoors Cards, fishing and hunting licenses sold	2.066 million	2.147 million	2-2.3 million	2-2.3 million
% annual increase in Ontario's forest industry exports	2%	-4%	2%	2%
Variance in spending of approved allocation	1%	1.84%	1%	1%
Regulatory compliance requirements affecting businesses in MNRF legislation, regulations, policies and forms	8,481	7,882	6,361	6,361
% of eligible First Nation communities covered by a resource revenue sharing agreement	n/a	Under Development	100%	100%

Highlights of 2020-21 results

In 2020-21, MNRF delivered on its mandated key activities as exemplified through the following achievements:

- Established five Ministerial Advisory Councils with key sectoral stakeholders to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister and the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee to support recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sectors represented included: aggregate resources, commercial fisheries, forest, petroleum, and hunting, fishing and resource-based tourism. Council discussions focused around four key topic areas: COVID-19 impacts, crisis response measures, transitional and post-pandemic measures and fiscal prudence. Ministry actions to support these sectors in 2020-21 included deferred royalty payments, land use fees and licence fees in addition to other actions including the release of Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy, legislative amendments to provide a long-term solution for addressing species at risk under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* and advancement of aggregate approvals; and project funding.

- The ministry's Recovery and Renewal Secretariat supported multiple objectives, including recovery planning that aligns with the Gradual Re-opening of the OPS Workplaces, developing strategies and business submissions that advance the objectives of Ontario Onwards (Future State Modernization), supporting the economic and business recovery of the ministry's sectors, and accelerating the Technology Roadmap and Investment Plan (TRIP).

- The Ministry supported government efforts to support the Resource Based Tourism Sector impacted by COVID-19, by providing certain Crown land fee and rent relief in 2020.
- In support of the Government's *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* measures to combat the spread of COVID-19, the Ministry implemented an Order regarding recreational camping on Crown land in April 2020.
- Under the Forestry Futures Trust a new purpose "COVID-19 Incremental Silviculture Cost Program" was introduced in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 epidemic to support the forest sector renewal efforts with new safety measures to protect public health.
- In 2020, a comprehensive suite of changes to Ontario's forest policy framework was approved. The changes supported the ministry's burden reduction plan and early implementation of the Forest Sector Strategy, streamlining policy requirements, and supporting jobs and economic growth without compromising the responsible use and sustainable management of Ontario's Crown forests. These changes included:
 - Amendments to the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* to clarify that the forest policy framework is the way by which species at risk and their habitat are addressed in Crown forest operations;
 - Amendments to the four regulated manuals under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*;
 - Amendment of the General Regulation under the *Environmental Assessment Act* to exempt forest management on Crown lands from the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*;
 - A new regulation for Independent Forest Audits under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*;
 - Repeal of an exemption from certain provisions in the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* for Wataynikaneyap Power GP Inc. (Watay); and
 - Revocation of the Nurseries Regulation under the *Forestry Act*.
- In order to mitigate the anticipated economic impacts of COVID-19 on forestry sector, Ontario was the first jurisdiction in Canada to declare the forest sector as essential.
- Ontario supported its forest products industry through a variety of measures to ensure safe and consistent operations to help mills stabilize production. These measures included:
 - A six-month deferral of the payment of Crown charges for timber harvested, from April to September 2020.
 - Accelerating implementation of the 2020-21 Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding Program (\$54 million).
 - \$3.5 million in support for personal protective equipment in tree plant operations.
 - Partnered with the federal government to provide \$5.3 million to compensate small and medium sized forestry companies for costs incurred to implement COVID-19 related health and safety measures.
- As part of the ongoing softwood lumber dispute with the U.S., the MNRF completed an administrative review questionnaire that consisted of hundreds of questions with assistance from three ministries and

one Crown agency and totaled over 70,000 pages. All this was completed over ten weeks during the spring/summer of 2020.

- The ministry supported Ontario's forest industry through targeted funding to help businesses improve competitiveness, promote innovation, access new markets and increase domestic consumption of Ontario forest products. Among several initiatives, the ministry:
 - Led delivery of the Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (FSIIP). After its first five rounds, FSIIP has received 49 inquiries, resulting in six Stage I applications. Two of the six application have been approved, with one contracted while the remaining four are at various stages of the evaluation and approvals process and not yet contracted. This work was done in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and is consistent with the Open for Business business success framework and the Ernst and Young Business Supports Review.
 - Launched the Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund (FSSMF), which will deliver up to \$5.3 million in 2020-21 to help small- to medium-sized forest sector companies overcome the economic challenges faced due to extra costs for the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures. Funding is being provided by the federal government through Natural Resources Canada and the program is being delivered by MNRF.
 - Delivered the Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding Program, which will disburse \$53.2 million in 2020-21 to reimburse Ontario's forest industry for the government's proportional fair share of the costs to build and maintain public access roads in Crown forests. Due to the economic impact of COVID-19, MNRF expedited the implementation of the program in 2020-21 and allowed for costs incurred to be reimbursed earlier as compared to previous years. This resulted in approximately \$8.0 million being reimbursed by the end of August compared to less than \$200,000 being reimbursed during the previous two years for the same period.
 - In March 2020, the Ministry organized an outbound trade mission to Bengaluru, India, to promote export sales by enabling Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to participate in the Indiawood trade missions. MNRF's trade promotion support allowed Ontario's SMEs to reduce their cost of participation by leveraging federal funding through Natural Resources Canada's Expanding Markets Opportunity program.
 - The Indiawood trade mission generated US\$175,000 in actual sales and secured 78 sales leads that could result in an additional US\$2.3 million sales over the next 12 – 18 months.
 - Supported an increase in domestic consumption through the Ontario Wood brand. Ontario Wood aims to provide consumers with a strong sense (i.e., the brand) of 'why' they should buy Ontario Wood products that are produced locally, from responsibly and sustainably managed public forests, while building a connection between wood products and the families and communities who depend on Ontario's forest industry. This increases demand for locally produced wood products and the success of wood-based businesses in Ontario.
- In August 2020 regulatory changes were made under the *Aggregate Resources Act*. The ministry has committed to further consult on policy updates and guidance documents to provide clarification and support to the aggregates industry as these changes are implemented.
- The ministry protected Ontarians from natural hazards by responding to wildland fires and flooding, with collaborative support from other jurisdictions and agencies. In the 2020 fire season, 607 wildland fires were recorded across the province with 15,460 hectares burned, compared to 537 fires and 269,635 hectares burned in 2019. In 2020, Ontario experienced fewer wildland fires than the 10-year average (2010-2019) of 870, and fewer hectares burned than the 10-year average of 162,799 hectares.

- The COVID-19 pandemic introduced many new challenges to emergency response planning in the ministry related to ensuring the safety of ministry staff as well as the general public. To reduce the risk of evacuating communities under difficult pandemic-related conditions, the province implemented an aggressive approach to fighting wildland fires this season, focusing on detecting fires early and combating them with full force to keep them small. This mitigated the risk of large-scale evacuations and allowed the ministry to minimize large, costly escaped fires.
- The 2020 fire season started slowly with low fire activity in spring, likely due partially to a Restricted Fire Zone that was in place to minimize fires during the management of COVID-19. Summer fire activity increased with the majority (70%) of the season's wildland fires occurring in July and August.
- In early August, fire conditions built to extreme levels and many wildland fires exhibited aggressive behaviour. In the Northwest Region, wildland fires and smoke had the potential to threaten the safety of far northern communities, requiring many residents to evacuate to host communities.
- There were two declared emergencies due to wildland fires that the MNRF responded to with suppression efforts or assisted with the evacuation of communities. Aviation, Forest Fire Emergency Services (AFFES) assisted the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) with the evacuation of residents of the communities of Red Lake and Eabametoong First Nation, (Fort Hope), by hiring passenger aircraft to temporarily relocate the residents to other centres.
- Ontario received fire-fighting assistance from other provinces during peak periods of fire activity in July and August, including air support from Manitoba and Quebec with multiple waterbombers and bird-dog aircraft.
- Ontario provided fire-fighting support including waterbombers and specialized fire suppression staff to Quebec in June. In September, Ontario provided highly specialized wildland fire personnel resources to support the fire emergency in Oregon, USA.
- The ministry completed Ontario's Moose Management Review, which included comprehensive regulation changes, a new harvest system, and a new moose tag allocation system.
- There are currently three resource revenue sharing agreements in mining and forestry with Grand Council Treaty #3, Wabun Tribal Council and Mushkegowuk Council, representing 35 communities in northern Ontario. The first payments were made in December 2019 and were based on revenue collected in 2018-19. The second payments, based on revenues collected in 2019-20, were made in December 2020. The third payments are scheduled to be made before December 31, 2021. The First Nations may allocate resource revenue sharing funds towards key priorities that support economic development, education, health, community development and cultural development.
- In support of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, the Ministry carried out several Minister's Advisory Council sessions for Commercial Fishing. In response to the sessions, the Ministry implemented a strategy to support the industry by temporarily suspending royalties and by working directly with federal counterparts to secure pathways for funding through:
 - The Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund
 - The Fish Harvesters Benefit and Grant Program
 - Regional Federal Economic Development Agency programs.
- The ministry monitored commercial fishing vessels on Lake Erie through on-vessel inspections of daily harvest and Daily Catch Records for adherence to licence conditions regarding quota and harvest activities. Port Observers inspected up to 50% of all landings, representing up to 65% of all fish landed from Lake Erie. The ministry conducted Fisheries Assessment programs to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Lake Erie Fishery and the industry that depends on it.

- As part of the Collaborative Compliance Initiative with Indigenous communities, the ministry's Enforcement Branch has successfully completed five restorative justice cases to date in 2020-21 and is anticipating at minimum another ten cases to be completed by the end of March 2021.
- Compliance with laws that support management of Ontario's natural resources continued in 2020-21 with a moose and an aquatic invasive species focus.
 - Examples of operational actions related to moose included increasing public and stakeholder awareness of harvest rules and identification of moose, monitoring to address non-compliance using a focused compliance approach, and investigating all reported violations related to moose harvest.
 - Examples of operational actions related to aquatic invasive species included increasing awareness of rules regulating invasive species through focused outreach, education and compliance promotion, and increasing staff awareness of invasive species and competency in applying relevant legislation and regulations through training, experiential learning and development of reference resources and tools. Also included was a focused compliance monitoring approach that involved inspecting for compliance with rules aimed at preventing the introduction or spread of invasive species in specific pathways.
- Ontario responded to widespread flooding and high-water levels across the province in recent years by releasing "*Protecting People and Property: Ontario's Flooding Strategy*" and is implementing actions within the Strategy.
 - The Flooding Strategy was released publicly on March 9, 2020 and outlines steps the Ontario government will take with its partners over the coming years to reduce flood risk and help Ontarians to be better prepared for flooding events.
 - The Flooding Strategy draws on the expert advice of Doug McNeil, Ontario's Special Advisor on Flooding, who provided his report on how to increase resiliency in October 2019, and the extensive feedback he received during his review.
 - Actions contained in the Strategy focus on long term flood management and are not expected to substantially reduce risks to existing development located within high-risk areas.
- In 2020-21, the ministry's Mapping and Geographic Information Program:
 - provided access to more than 350 open data sets in Ontario GeoHub, a data discovery and access tool that allows users to download or stream the data they need;
 - maintained key foundation geospatial datasets including over 260,000 kilometers of roads and over 75,000 square kilometers of water;
 - partnered with all levels of government, First Nations, the private sector and other organizations to acquire aerial photography in Southwestern Ontario;
 - maintained more than 60,000 official geographic names to aid navigation and emergency response across Ontario;
 - provided survey advice and support to negotiators on several active land claims;
 - updated Crown Land Survey Instructions to provide guidance and direction to Ontario land surveyors retained to perform Crown land surveys
 - supported statutory and regulatory changes to the *Surveys Act*, *Surveyors Act* and *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*.
- The ministry made changes to the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and its regulations to support chronic wasting disease prevention and response in keeping with the recently released Ontario's

Chronic Wasting Disease Prevention and Response Plan.

- The ministry finalized Ontario's Sustainable Bait Management Strategy which outlines a new approach to bait management in Ontario. The policy reduces the ecological risks associated with the use and movement of bait and supports the continued use of bait while providing transparency and certainty for a sustainable bait industry.
- The ministry continued to be a recognized leader in rabies surveillance and control. Since Ontario's recent rabies outbreak began in December 2015, there have been 480 cases of raccoon strain rabies (9 in 2020) and 21 cases of fox strain rabies (0 new in 2020) confirmed in southern Ontario. In response, over six million oral rabies vaccine baits (over one million in 2020), which help immunize most raccoons, skunks and foxes that eat them have been distributed. The ministry's efforts helped reduce the number of annual rabies cases by approximately 50 percent each year since 2016, and by 60 percent in 2020.
- The ministry continued to place a priority on the good stewardship of Crown land, ensuring fair return to the Crown by:
 - adjusting and providing longer term certainty to rental rates for communication towers on Crown land
 - implementing the third year of a four-year phase in of full cost recovery for discretionary administrative fees and
 - successfully completing negotiations with the Province of Quebec and waterpower utility companies on renewal of a new 25-year revenue agreement under the *Ottawa River Water Powers Act, 1943*
- The ministry amended the *Public Lands Act* to ensure clear legal title for third parties who purchased surplus Crown lands.
- The ministry maintained the Guide for Crown Land Use Planning, including providing enhanced clarity about the application of Section 12 of the *Public Lands Act* to Crown land.

For more information on these and other achievements, refer to the Appendix: 2020-21 Annual Report.

Detailed financial information

Ministry planned expenditures 2021-22	
Cost type	Ministry planned expenditures (\$M)
COVID-19 Approvals	N/A
Operating	623.5
Capital	49.8
Total	673.3

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Ministry allocation of 2021-22 base spending depicting the Ministry's planned 2021-22 expenditures by vote/item, sub-item

Regional Operations

18%

Policy and Planning

4%

Forest Industry

27%

Land and Resources Information Technology Cluster

5%

Public Safety and Emergency Response

19%

Mapping and Geographic Information

1%

Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account

12%

Provincial Services, Science and Research

8%

Ministry Administration

6%

Ministry Planned Operating Expenditures by Vote/Item, Sub-Item 2021-22

Activity Name	Ministry planned expenditures (\$M)
Regional Operations	112.6
Forest Industry	171.4
Public Safety and Emergency Response	120.8
Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account	75.0
Provincial Services, Science and Research	47.1
Total Planned Expenditures by Activity	623.5

Activity Name	Ministry planned expenditures (\$M)
Policy and Planning	22.8
Mapping and Geographic Information	9.4
Ministry Administration	35.6
Land and Resources Information Technology Cluster	29.0
Total Planned Expenditures by Activity	623.5

Operating and Capital Summary by Vote						
Votes/ Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from 2020- 21 Estimates \$	Change %	Estimates 2020-21 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$	Actuals 2019-20 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$

Operating Expense

Ministry Administration	38,388,500	5,257,300	15.9	33,131,200	40,001,398	41,101,113
Natural Resource Management	282,766,900	8,565,300	3.1	274,201,600	273,339,751	275,215,782
Public Protection	130,480,500	959,500	0.7	129,521,000	151,161,729	165,299,922
Land and Resources Information & Information Technology Cluster	29,443,700	1,669,700	6.0	27,774,000	29,565,996	27,126,398
Total Operating Expense to be Voted	481,079,600	16,451,800	3.5	464,627,800	494,068,874	508,743,215
Statutory Appropriations	5,167,014	0	0.0	5,167,014	3,365,029	2,015,183
Ministry Total Operating Expense	486,246,614	16,451,800	3.5	469,794,814	497,433,903	510,758,398
Operating Expense Adjustment- Fish & Wildlife Special Purpose Account	75,000,000	0	0	75,000,000	66,245,000	71,221,914
Consolidation Adjustment- Algonquin Forest Authority	23,795,000	(123,500)	(0.5)	23,918,500	25,588,500	26,587,118
Consolidation Adjustment- Forest Renewal Trust	60,108,500	2,026,500	3.5	58,082,000	63,832,000	49,796,911
Ministry Total Operating and Capital including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including assets)	673,316,414	27,229,600	4.2	646,086,814	676,163,514	665,264,357

Votes/ Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from 2020- 21 Estimates \$	Change %	Estimates 2020-21 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$	Actuals 2019-20 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$
Operating Expense Adjustment- General Real Estate Portfolio	(21,615,000)	(2,571,800)	(13.5)	(19,043,200)	(19,583,100)	(34,012,534)
Operating Expense Adjustment Section 15 Recovery	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	5,139,144
Ontario Infrastructure Lands Corporation	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	(717,059)
Other Adjustments	0	0	0	0	11	0
Total Including Consolidation & Other Adjustments	623,535,114	15,783,000	2.6	607,752,114	633,516,314	628,773,892
Operating Assets						
Ministry Administration	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0
Natural Resource Management Program	4,394,200	(429,800)	(8.9)	4,824,000	3,452,600	2,912,000
Public Protection	49,500	0	0	49,500	54,000	49,557
Land and Resources Information & Information Technology Cluster	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0
Total Operating Asset to be Voted	4,445,700	(429,800)	(8.8)	4,875,500	3,506,600	2,961,557
Statutory Appropriations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ministry Total Operating Assets	4,445,700	(429,800)	(8.8)	4,875,500	3,506,600	2,961,557
Capital Expense						
Natural Resource Management	27,462,900	10,603,300	62.9	16,859,600	22,958,600	21,665,619
Public Protection	5,203,800	3,967,300	320.8	1,236,500	1,236,500	1,321,451
Total Capital Expense to be Voted	32,666,700	14,570,600	80.5	18,096,100	24,195,100	22,987,070
Statutory Appropriations	17,463,400	(2,533,700)	(12.7)	19,997,100	18,197,100	13,899,324
Ministry Total Operating and Capital including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including assets)	673,316,414	27,229,600	4.2	646,086,814	676,163,514	665,264,357

Votes/ Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from 2020- 21 Estimates \$	Change %	Estimates 2020-21 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$	Actuals 2019-20 ^[3] (#foot-3).\$
Ministry Total Capital Expense	50,130,100	12,036,900	31.6	38,093,200	42,392,200	36,886,394
Consolidation Adjustment – Algonquin Forest Authority	250,000	8,500	3.5	241,500	255,000	200,995
Consolidation Adjustment – Ontario Infrastructure and Land Corporation	0	0	0	0	0	(596,924)
Consolidation Adjustment – General Real Estate Portfolio	(598,800)	(598,800)	(100)	0	0	0
Total Capital Expense Including Consolidation & Other Adjustments	49,781,300	11,446,600	29.9	38,334,700	42,647,200	36,490,465

Capital Assets

Natural Resource Management	37,947,100	3,691,800	10.8	34,255,300	27,905,685	25,918,605
Public Protection	8,490,100	(7,118,300)	(45.6)	15,608,400	12,275,908	12,635,851
Total Capital Assets to be Voted	46,437,200	(3,426,500)	(6.9)	49,863,700	40,181,593	38,554,456
Consolidation Adjustment Algonquin Forest Authority	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	370,000	N/A *****
Statutory Appropriations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ministry Total Capital Assets	46,437,200	(3,426,500)	(6.9)	49,863,700	40,551,593	38,554,456
Ministry Total Operating and Capital including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including assets)	673,316,414	27,229,600	4.2	646,086,814	676,163,514	665,264,357

Historic Trend Analysis

Historic Trend Analysis Data	Actuals 2018-19 \$	Actuals 2019-20 \$	Estimates 2020-21 ^[4] (#foot-4).\$	Estimates 2021-22 ^[4] (#foot-4).\$
Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including Assets)	708,312,568	665,264,357	646,086,814	673,316,414
Percent Change		N/A *****	-6%	-3%

Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs)

Classified agencies

Algonquin Forestry Authority

- responsible for forest management, including timber harvesting, in Algonquin Park. The authority sorts, sells and delivers harvested logs to regional mills. It also may advise on, undertake and carry out forestry, land-management and other programs and projects as the Minister may authorize.

Big Game Advisory Committee

- responsible for providing advice to the Minister respecting policy and programs related to the management of species of big game in Ontario, and reviews and recommends changes to the allocation of harvesting opportunities for big game.

Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission

- established under the *Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act*, the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission makes recommendations to the Minister on ways to encourage people to value our fish and wildlife resources, promote more participation in conservation and other programs, and to explore new fish and wildlife-related opportunities.

Nawiinginiima Forest Management Corporation

- responsible for sustainable forest management, and the marketing and selling of wood supplies to both existing forest industry customers and new entrants on two forest management units, the Pic and the White River Forests, and the proposed addition of a third forest (Nagagami Forest) over the next two years.

Niagara Escarpment Commission

- administers the Niagara Escarpment Plan through promoting the objectives of the plan; processing and making decisions on development permit applications; and making recommendations on plan amendments.

Ontario Geographic Names Board

- develops policy and principles for naming geographic features and unincorporated places in Ontario. The Board reviews official geographic feature name submissions on behalf of the Minister and enters approved submissions and suitable place name submissions into the official record.

Ontario Moose-Bear Allocation Advisory Committee

- replaced by the Big Game Management Advisory Committee in April 2019. The committee advised the Minister on the allocation of moose among tourist outfitters and on the issues arising from the allocation of black bear management areas of tourist operators.

Rabies Advisory Committee

- advises on the scientific steps necessary for developing a successful rabies research and response program, which includes developing suitable vaccines and systems for vaccinating wild animal populations.

Temagami Forest Management Corporation (New)

- responsible for sustainable forest management, and the marketing and selling of wood supplies to both existing forest industry customers and new entrants on the Temagami forest management unit.

Unclassified agencies

Council of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors

- regulates the practice of professional land surveying and governs the profession in accordance with the *Surveyors Act*, its regulations and bylaws.

Council of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association

- regulates the practice of forestry and governs its members in accordance with the *Professional Foresters Act*, its regulations and by-laws. The governing council manages, administers and oversees the functioning of the association.

Lake of the Woods Control Board

- regulates the water levels in the Lake of the Woods, Lac Seul and in the Winnipeg and English Rivers between the lake outlets and their confluence. Membership includes representatives from Canada, Ontario and Manitoba.

Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board

- a partnership among Canada, Quebec and Ontario to formulate and review policies that will lead to integrated management of the reservoirs in the Ottawa River basin.

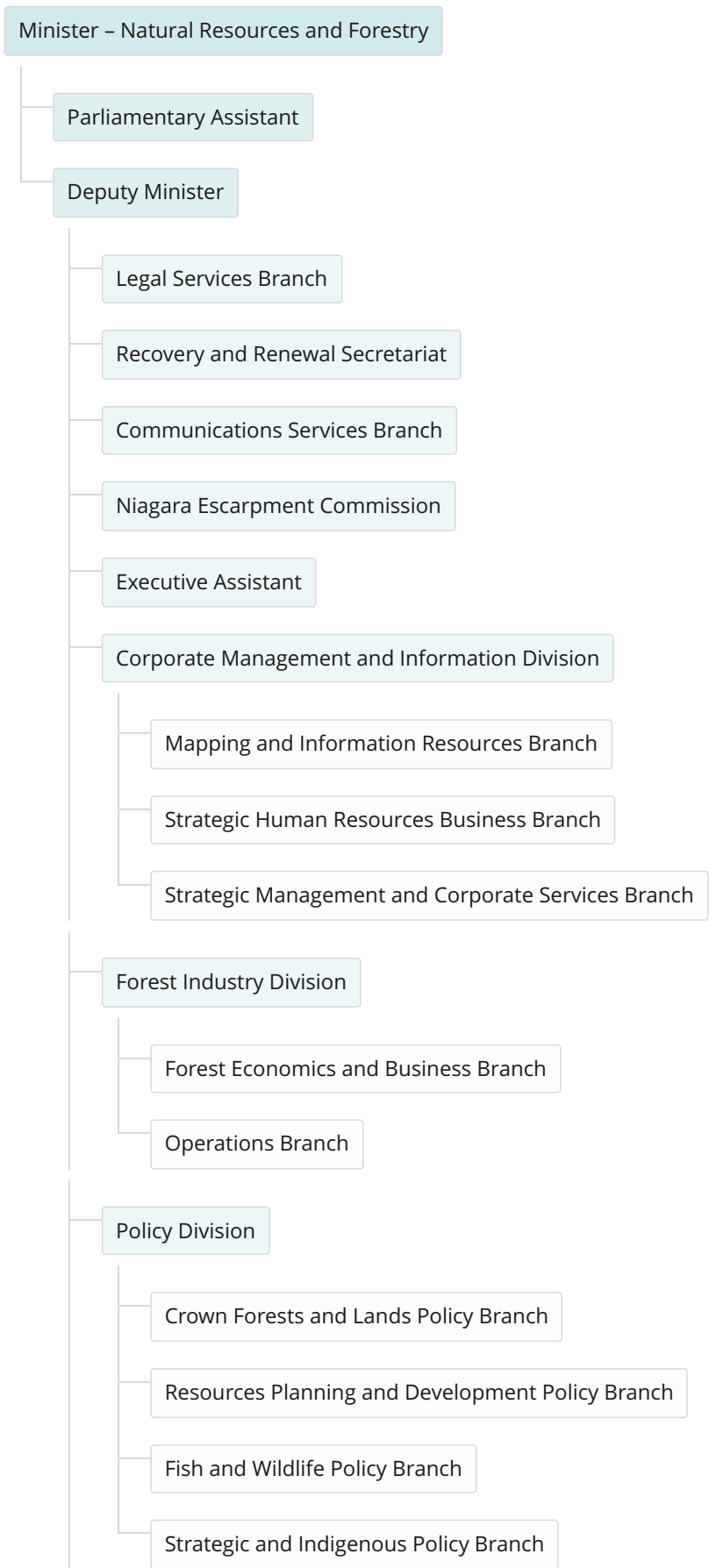
A classified agency, though established by the government, is not considered part of the ministry. The government appoints most of its members, assigns responsibility to perform a public function, and holds the agency to account.

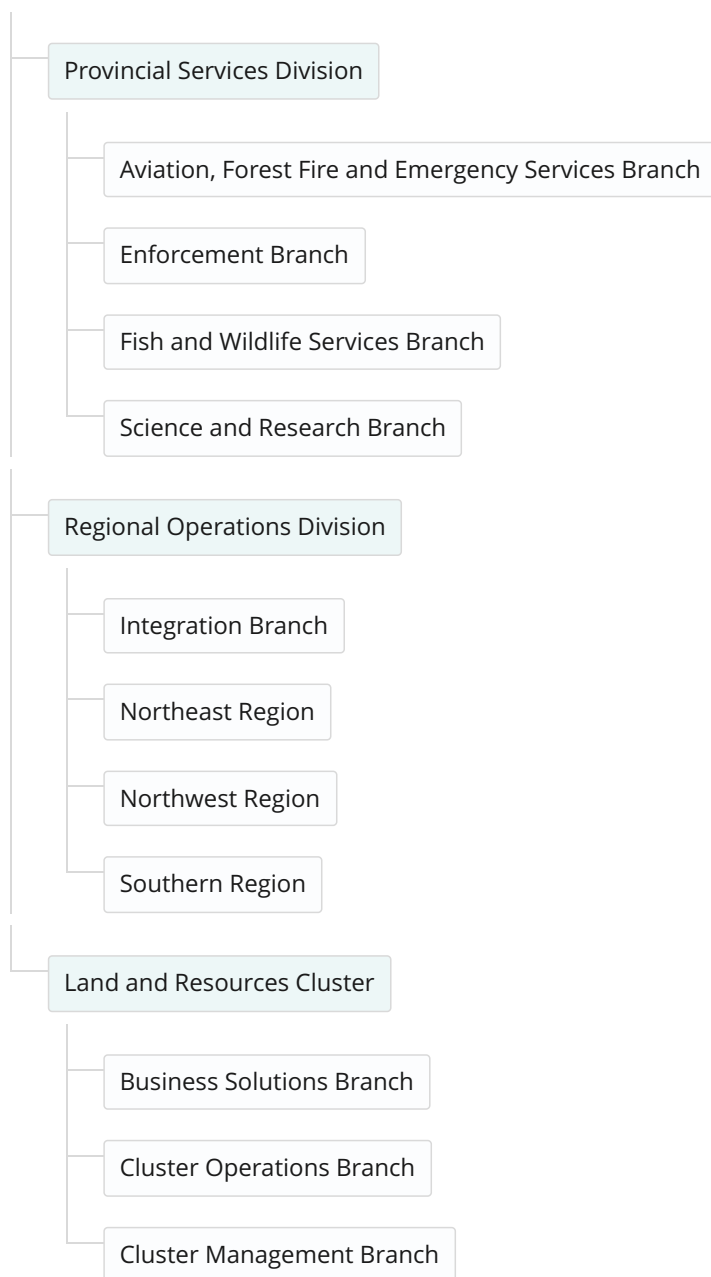
An unclassified agency is excluded from the financial and administrative requirements of the Management Board of Cabinet. The government makes at least one appointment to each non-classified agency board to protect Crown timber and high value forestry products.

Expenditure and Revenue Data for Agencies, Boards and Commissions						
Name	2021-22 Estimates: Expenditure \$	2021-22 Estimates: Revenue \$	2020-21 Interim Actuals: Expenditure \$	2020-21 Interim Actuals: Revenue \$	2019-20 Actuals: Expenditure \$	2019-20 Actuals: Revenue \$

Name	2021-22 Estimates: Expenditure \$	2021-22 Estimates: Revenue \$	2020-21 Interim Actuals: Expenditure \$	2020-21 Interim Actuals: Revenue \$	2019-20 Actuals: Expenditure \$	2019-20 Actuals: Revenue \$
Algonquin Forestry Authority	31,439,000	31,548,000	26,704,000	26,648,000	30,218,000	30,323,000
Big Game Management Advisory Committee	27,383	0	8,183	0	59,962	0
Council of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors	10,500	0	10,500	0	12,951	0
Council of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association	12,500	0	11,000	0	20,100	0
Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission	22,075	0	10,719	0	14,640	0
Lake of the Woods Control Board	0	0	0	0	1,146	0
Nawiinginokiima Forest Management Corporation	4,622,233	6,900,648	4,567,756	8,750,775	5,094,697	6,927,356
Niagara Escarpment Commission	2,647,000	0	2,365,529	0	2,687,145	0
Ontario Geographic Names Board	2,475	0	700	0	2,431	0
Ontario Moose-Bear Allocation Advisory Committee	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board	71,000	0	61,495	0	59,709	0
Rabies Advisory Committee	3,000	0	1,950	0	0	0
Temagami Forest Management Corporation (NEW)	1,102,870	1,174,818	0	150,000	N/A	N/A

Ministry organization chart





[Download printer-friendly organizational chart \(//files.ontario.ca/mnrf-org-chart-2021.png\).](https://files.ontario.ca/mnrf-org-chart-2021.png)

Appendix: 2020-21 Annual report

2020-21 Results

Key activity 1: Protect the public from natural disasters or hazards

- Ontario is recognized internationally as a leader in wildland fire management and remains committed to preserving and protecting our natural resources. The ministry has a renewed focus on adopting a risk-reduction approach to wildland fire management and supporting a shift to a whole-of-society approach to wildland fire and risk reduction. MNRF is currently conducting a robust review of its wildland fire prevention and mitigation programs with the intent of expanding, streamlining and increasing the effectiveness of those programs. Ontario is an active partner in the Canadian

Interagency Forest Fire Centre led steering committee for the development of the National Strategy for Prevention and Mitigation.

- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry took an aggressive approach to fighting wildland fires this season, focusing on detecting fires early and combating them with full force to keep them small. This adjusted approach resulted in fires that normally would have been observed to be suppressed at earlier stages of their detection in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread as a result of large-scale evacuations. The approach required an increased reliance on aircraft to suppress fires and deliver fire ranger crews for initial attack as well as for fire detection flights to ensure immediate response upon fire sightings.
- The ministry has the ability under the *Forest Fires Prevention Act* to implement Restricted Fire Zones (RFZ) inside the fire region of Ontario. On April 3, 2020, Ontario designated the entire fire region in the province an RFZ. An RFZ is a temporary measure put in place to prevent human-caused fires when the fire hazard is extreme or when firefighting resources are limited. Approximately half of the wildland fires in Ontario each season are human caused; the ministry took action to reduce the risk of these preventable fires by implementing temporary restrictions on the use of open fires.
- On May 16, Ontario lifted the RFZ designation. The ministry continued to assess wildland fire hazard conditions throughout the province in case the RFZ designation needed to be reinstated in higher risk areas if warranted.
- To help stop the spread of COVID-19, Fire Rangers were required to follow the health and safety guidelines recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, such as physical distancing, frequent hand washing, and daily self-assessments by staff.
- Ministry staff aided Far North Indigenous communities affected by wildland fire and smoke by the facilitation of evacuations, provision of values protection in communities, and the ongoing communication of current information.
- There were two declared emergencies due to wildland fires that the MNRF responded to with suppression efforts or assisted with the evacuation of communities. Aviation, Forest Fire Emergency Services (AFFES) Branch assisted the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) with the evacuation of residents of the communities of Red Lake and Eabametoong First Nation, (Fort Hope), by hiring passenger aircraft to temporarily relocate the residents to other centres.
- Through the Ontario FireSmart Communities Transfer Payment program, municipalities may apply for funding to assist with the development of wildland fire hazard forest maps and a Community Wildland Fire Protection Plan that identifies mitigation opportunities to reduce wildland fire hazards. Four communities received funding through this grant program in 2020 including Albion, La Vallée, Terrace Bay, and Emo.
- During the 2020 fire season, the ministry provided specialized wildland fire personnel and equipment to support two jurisdictions including Quebec and Oregon.
 - 124 AFFES specialized fire staff along with two CL-415 fire suppression waterbombers and one bird dog aircraft were deployed to Quebec from June 21st to July 11th. In addition, Ontario provided Quebec with approximately 4,300 pieces of wildland fire suppression equipment, such as pumps, hose, shovels and axes.
 - Ontario provided 19 highly specialized wildland fire support staff to help manage fire operations on the ground in Oregon from September 18th to October 2nd. Ontario worked closely with the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre to ensure all requirements for a safe deployment during the global pandemic were met.

- Ontario received aviation support from Manitoba and Quebec during peak periods of wildland fire activity in July and August 2020 in the form of CL-415/215 heavy water bombers. Ontario also utilized our Quick Strike Agreements with partnering provinces and states for rapid response to wildland fire during days of high fire activity.
- The Surface Water Monitoring Centre:
 - Migrated centre operations to 100% remote-location delivery without interruption of time-critical early warning data services during the pandemic response.
 - Issued 55 flood messages to date (as of Jan 25, 2021), down from 63 in 2019-2020, to partners which enable them to respond to local issues;
 - Issued 86 drought messages to date (as of Jan 25, 2021), up from 28 in 2019-2020, due to a long dry summer in 2020.
 - Prioritized return-to-service of critical monitoring stations in the hydrometric network which have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.
 - Added more detailed mapping of Great Lakes water levels and far north watersheds to the flood webpage, to better inform communities of the potential for local flooding.
 - Implemented new flood level, flow and statistical threshold time-series mapping and graphing products to help partners contextualize extreme levels and flows.
- Ministry staff provided foundational geospatial data, mapping tools and technical infrastructure to support the ministry's response in protecting the public from natural disasters, including forest fires and floods.
- MNRF supported natural hazard management and repairs to flood and erosion control structures by providing \$3.8 million in grant funding to the 36 conservation authorities (CAs), plus \$5.0 million in capital funding to 19 CAs for 51 water and erosion control infrastructure projects.
- MNRF is leading implementation of Protecting People and Property: Ontario's Flooding Strategy, released in March 2020, which includes commitments from 10 provincial ministries and partners in 90 initiatives spread across the pillars of emergency management.

Key activity 2: Deliver direct services to the public and industry

- The ministry provided fishing and hunting opportunities to approximately two million Outdoors Card holders which generated almost \$50 million in licence sales.
- The ministry trained approximately 15,000 new hunters through the Ontario Hunter Education Program, generating over \$450,000 in revenue directed to the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account. In response to the pandemic, the ministry introduced a temporary online solution for obtaining hunter education certification. The temporary delivery alternative allowed new hunters to obtain hunter education even when health restrictions prevented the delivery of traditional in-person classes.
- In 2020, a new service agreement was signed with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters for the administration and delivery of the Ontario Hunter Education Program. The value for these services will not exceed \$1,800,000, plus HST, for a period of two-years, with an option for two one-year extensions.
- MNRF issued more than 8,000 trapping licences and trained more than 800 new trappers, generating over \$250,000 in revenue directed to the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account.

- The ministry continues to provide exceptional customer service to two million anglers and hunters, including licensing and big game draw services, contact centre support, social media and the fish and wildlife licence issuer network. In 2020, the Natural Resources Information and Support Centre (NRISC) handled approximately 76,000 calls and 21,000 email inquiries related to fish and licensing and/or hunting in Ontario.
- The ministry provided approximately eight million fish for stocking purposes and population rehabilitation through the Fish and Wildlife Program's fish culture stations.
- The ministry established the Hunting, Fishing, and Resource-based Tourism Ministerial Advisory Council to inform the government how the COVID-19 pandemic was impacting the sector and to inform key recovery actions.
- The ministry conducted a designed survey of Ontario white-tailed deer hunters to gather information from clients on their hunting activities and expenditures to better inform program decision making.
- Conservation officer activities involve outreach to ensure people are aware of their responsibilities for safe and sustainable natural resource use. Each year, conservation officers make over 240,000 contacts with members of the public while on duty in the field and at outreach events. Approximately 530 events are attended each year where educational messaging is provided on a variety of topics including hunting safety and hunter education.
- The ministry distributed approximately 1.2 million rabies vaccine baits, tested 3,358 samples for rabies, and vaccinated over 4,000 raccoons and skunks by hand through MNRF's trap-vaccinate-release program. Raccoon and fox strain rabies cases in the province declined by 60% in 2020 from 2019 case numbers.
- MNRF received and considered 96 name proposals from members of the public for geographic features, resulting in 11 recommendations in the process of being finalized, 15 deferrals and 70 pending consultation input. Three names were submitted by Indigenous communities and eight submissions were in memory of servicemen from Ontario who lost their lives in World War II.
- The ministry provided 50 geographic feature names for the Ontario portion of a national map Celebrating Women with Canadian Place Names.
- MNRF collected fees including rent from 11,000 tenants who occupy Crown land for a range of purposes, including those related to aggregates, petroleum, land rentals/sales and renewable energy. This generated \$107.6 million in revenue up to December 31, 2020. The total revenue forecast for 2020-21 is \$139 million. The ministry is continuing to work to ensure that *Public Lands Act* service fees are aligned with the costs of providing services.
- MNRF provided 1,153 Crown Patents records to clients requesting them from April 1, 2020, to Dec 31, 2020.
- The ministry served more than 465 Ontario Wood partners, including recruitment of 20 new partners, and supported current partners by promoting their businesses to the people of Ontario through brand awareness that wood products from Ontario come from responsibly and sustainably managed public forests.
- The ministry leveraged federal funding to support small- and medium-sized forest products companies' access to new markets in other countries.
- The ministry released Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy, which aligns with the government's stated priorities of red tape reduction, job creation, and promoting economic growth and prosperity across the province. The strategy also aligns with several other strategies of the government including the draft Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan and Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. It is designed to help Ontario achieve its objectives to grow the forest sector and create opportunity and

prosperity for the people who depend on it while ensuring forests continue to be managed sustainably for future generations.

- Between January 13 and February 12, 2020, MNRF and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) hosted ten engagement sessions with Indigenous peoples, and six sessions with municipalities. One hundred participants from 45 communities participated in the Indigenous sessions. A draft Forest Sector Strategy was posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) for comment from December 4, 2019 to February 5, 2020. The posting received over 33,000 comments including 483 direct comments from the public, Indigenous communities, municipalities and a range of stakeholders, and 32,653 e-mails as a result of mail in campaigns. Based on what was heard in the various sessions along with the ERO posting and through the work on Ontario's recovery plan, the draft strategy was strengthened before the release of the final strategy in August 2020.
- In 2020, MNRF completed 66 Freedom of Information requests.
- The ministry published 22 new datasets to the Ontario Data catalogue and updated 48 datasets in the Ontario Data catalogue, including moving 14 data sets from restricted access to open access.
- MNRF responded to over 14,000 inquires about Ontario's geospatial data and mapping services and products.
- MNRF processes more than 230 additional approval types to more than 45,500 clients resulting in more than 81,000 interactions annually. At present:
 - 202 approval types are paper based, with 36,000 individuals completing over 70,000 interactions, and
 - 28 approval types are digital, with approximately 8,850 individuals completing 11,250 interactions.
- Over the next three years the ministry will review streamlining opportunities for all approvals and implement digital channels for all approval types, thereby enhancing customer service and reducing regulatory burden on citizens and businesses.

Key activity 3: Promote economic growth and job creation

- MNRF led delivery of the new Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program, in cooperation with MEDJCT. The FSIIIP will provide up to \$10 million per year for strategic investments in the forestry sector that: improve productivity and innovation; enhance competitiveness; support new market access; strengthen regional economies; and, provide benefits to Ontario's broader forest sector (i.e. beyond the direct benefits to the Applicant). The new program is consistent with the open for business – business success framework and the Ernst and Young Business Supports review.
- MNRF launched the Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund (FSSMF), which is intended to help small to medium size forest sector companies overcome the economic challenges faced due to extra costs for the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures, thus supporting vital jobs in communities across the country and maintaining critical forest management infrastructure. Funding of \$5.3 million is being provided by the federal government through Natural Resources Canada and the program was delivered by MNRF.
- MNRF delivers the Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding Program, which is the mechanism Ontario uses to reimburse the industry for the government's proportional fair share of the costs to build and maintain public access roads in Crown forests. Forest access roads benefit not only the forest industry, but also mining companies, tourism operators, Indigenous communities, utility and railway companies, hunters, anglers, campers, trappers, cottagers, and the general public. These roads also provide part of the rural infrastructure for emergency preparedness and response. To support the forest industry

through the COVID-19 pandemic the ministry advanced implementation of the 2020-21 Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding program to enable companies to receive funding months earlier than usual. Total funding is \$53.2 million for 2020-21.

- To support the forest industry through the COVID-19 pandemic the ministry also implemented several measures to provide support to the forest industry to help ensure continued operations while protecting workers and communities. These included:
 - Providing a six-month deferral on payment of stumpage charges.
 - Making \$3.5 million in funding available to support implementation of COVID-19 health and safety measures for silvicultural companies to support the 2020 tree planting season.
- Promoting the use of renewable forest biomass as a heating fuel for northern, rural and Indigenous communities is an important action identified in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan and in Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy. Under the Ontario Bioheat Initiative, MNRF partnered with FPInnovations, Natural Resources Canada and the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-economy (CRIBE) to promote the use of forest biomass as a fuel source through a Solid Wood Bioheat Webinar Series in February and March of 2021. Information about the series including recordings are available on CRIBE's website: <https://cribe.ca/resources/bioheat-webinar-series/> (<https://cribe.ca/resources/bioheat-webinar-series/>)
- The forest sector is an important part of Ontario's history and a critical part of the province's future. The forest sector generated \$18 billion in total revenue annually (Statistics Canada, 2018), \$6.5 billion in export revenue annually (Government of Canada, 2019), contributes \$4.3 billion to provincial GDP (Statistics Canada, 2018) and supports 147,000 jobs across the province (MNRF, 2019). The Forest Sector Strategy sets out key goals and actions to unlock the forest sector's potential over the next 10 years. Together, the Ontario government and the forest industry, along with partners in the research and education sector, Indigenous communities and other levels of government, will create a business climate that fosters growth, promotes innovation, helps the industry adapt to an ever-changing business climate, and ensures that Ontario's forests will continue to be managed responsibly and sustainably for future generations.
- MNRF responded to recent interest in the development of compressed air energy storage technology in Ontario by proposing changes to Ontario Regulation 245/97 under the *Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act*. The proposed changes would provide increased protection of public and environmental safety, as well as provide greater clarity and certainty for the energy storage industry, local and Indigenous communities, and the public.

Key activity 4: Conduct monitoring, research, and planning

- MNRF monitored the health of Ontario's inland lakes using the ministry's broad-scale monitoring program to describe the status and trend of important species to recreational, commercial and subsistence fisheries. In 2020-21 MNRF conducted a modified aquatic monitoring program due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ministry conducted focused aquatic monitoring on two provincially significant inland fisheries, Lake Simcoe and Lake Nipissing. In 2020-21, creel surveys were conducted on Lake Nipissing, Lake Simcoe and small lake trout lakes in Fisheries Management Zone 6 and a netting survey for walleye took place on Lake Nipissing. In addition, lake trout and whitefish egg collections were conducted on Lake Simcoe.
- Aerial angler counts were conducted on lakes across the province to assess the accuracy of angler-reported fishing effort in the 2020 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Ontario and to provide information on potential COVID-19 impacts on the number of people fishing and the amount of time spent fishing.

- The ministry also conducted several science development projects to support constant improvement of its monitoring methods including netting surveys on the Kaministiquia River and Lake Nipigon, whitefish net calibration, and environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring.
- In 2020 the Lake Ontario Management Unit completed the fish community index program for Eastern Lake Ontario/Bay of Quinte and St. Lawrence River. The index program provides critical information on the status and health of key fisheries to inform management planning and actions such as angling regulations and commercial harvest quota that are designed to maintaining and enhance subsistence, recreational and commercial fishery such as walleye, yellow perch and lake whitefish. In 2020 a new Fisheries Management Zone 20 (Lake Ontario) bass regulation was approved that will provide additional angling opportunities while also ensuring greater protection to small mouth bass during the critical spawning time.
- MNRF staff worked with deer hunters to conduct additional comprehensive CWD monitoring in Wildlife Management Unit 65 in response to the detection of CWD on a game farm in Quebec. In 2020-21, two surveillance zones, one in eastern Ontario and one in southwestern Ontario, were monitored for CWD and the disease was not detected.
- The ministry's forest health monitoring program identified 1,065,796 hectares of forest defoliated by jack pine budworm in Northwestern Ontario (NW) and 452,000 of forest defoliated by Spruce Budworm in Northeastern Ontario (NE). MNRF initiated planning for two 2021 insect pest management programs that would include aerial insecticide applications on approximately 100,000 hectares each in the NW for jack pine budworm and in the NE for spruce budworm.
- The forest health program also identified 586,467 hectares of forest defoliated by gypsy moth, primarily in southern Ontario. MNRF provided forecasts on potential gypsy moth impacts for spring 2021 and additional information to help the public and other private landowners determine how to best manage gypsy moth infestations.
- The ministry continued moose aerial inventories throughout 2020-21 with the completion of aerial surveys of 6 wildlife management units. The surveys are conducted annually on a rotational basis to estimate the abundance and demographics of the moose population. The information is used to inform moose tag allocations.
- Forest health research and monitoring continued across Ontario targeting jack pine budworm, spruce budworm and forest tent caterpillar. Invasive species detection and monitoring efforts were undertaken for walnut twig beetle (not currently present in Ontario), emerald ash borer, beech bark disease and gypsy moth. Collaborative monitoring and research are ongoing with the Canadian Food inspection Agency, Canadian Forestry Service and other partners.
- The Crown Land Use Policy Atlas was amended to provide better clarity for fishing and hunting activities.
- MNRF continues to work with the Canadian Food inspection Agency, Canadian Forestry Service, Quebec Wood Export Bureau, Quebec Forest Industry Council, and the Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks to undertake research to test and document the effects of heat treatments in reducing the risk of potential invasive insect like the emerald ash borer and birch bronze borer in exported lumber. This is an ongoing project to help furnish information for addressing regulatory issues threatening the viability of eastern Canada hardwood lumber and value-added wood exports to the European Union. Several presentations and reports highlighting the results of this research have been made to support the argument that the heat treatment programs effectively mitigate risks of pest contamination in exported logs and lumber to support the case for the European Union to change their import regulations.

- Significant progress was made toward completing a draft community-based land use plan with Constance Lake; this community-based land use plan is expected to be released for public review and comment on the Environmental Registry in early 2021.
- Far North Branch led extensive First Nation and stakeholder engagement related to the proposed refocussing of the *Far North Act*, including in-person and virtual engagement sessions, a joint process to review the Act with Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, and an environmental registry posting to seek input on proposed amendments.
- The ministry is engaged in discussions with new First Nation partners regarding developing land use plans under the *Far North Act*.

Key activity 5: Develop legislation, policies and implement programs

- In early 2020, the ministry consulted with industry, Indigenous communities, municipal partners and the public regarding proposed regulatory changes under the *Aggregate Resources Act*. The consultation period resulted in over 200 comments received. With input from consultation, Ontario Regulation 244/97 and the Aggregate Resources of Ontario Provincial Standards were amended to support the growth of communities, reduce burdens to the aggregate industry while managing community impacts, and maintaining strong environmental protections. Among other things, the regulation and standards outline requirements for new pit and quarry applications and specify operating and reporting requirements that apply to all sites authorized under the legislation. A phased approach to implementing the changes has been taken with some changes coming into effect September 1, 2020, while others come into effect on April 1, 2021, and January 1, 2022. Changes made will modernize the way aggregate resources are managed, including:
 - new and updated technical reports and information requirements for applications to establish a new pit or quarry including enhanced water study requirements
 - updated site plan requirements for new pit and quarry applications
 - enhanced notification and consultation requirements for new pit and quarry applications
 - updated conditions that will apply to newly issued licences and permits
 - new application requirements for existing pit or quarry operators wishing to make an amendment to extract below the water table or to expand into an adjacent road allowance
 - new rules requiring custom plans to be prepared for applications seeking to extract from land under water
 - exemptions from needing a licence for some small excavations on private land if rules set in regulation are followed
 - new rules to allow self-filling of some minor routine site plan amendments (e.g. re-location of some structures or fencing as long as setbacks are respected)
 - updated operating requirements that apply to all pits and quarries authorized under the *Aggregate Resources Act*
 - updated annual compliance reporting requirements, including a streamlined report for inactive sites.
- In February 2020 the ministry amended Ontario Regulation 454/96 (Construction) to provide alternate regulatory approval requirements for repairs to existing low hazard wetland dams under the *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act*. The amendment reduces regulatory burden to owners of low hazard wetland dams, such as Ducks Unlimited Canada, while supporting the continued management of Ontario's

wetlands. This is accomplished through providing alternative rules in regulation approach to repairing existing low hazard wetland dams.

- In March 2020, having worked closely with MECP who concurrently revoked existing Permits to Take Water for waterpower dams, the ministry approved the new Minister's Regulation 102/20 (Monitoring of Mercury Near Dams) under the *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act*. The new regulation ensures continuity of oversight of methyl mercury monitoring and reporting at waterpower facilities through the preparation of Mercury Monitoring Plans.
- The ministry completed Ontario's Moose Management Review, which included comprehensive regulation changes, a new harvest system, and a new moose tag allocation system.
- The ministry made changes to the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and its regulations to support chronic wasting disease prevention and response.
- The ministry implemented comprehensive changes to Ontario's black bear management regulations, which included establishing a regular annual spring hunting season, season closures on the Bruce Peninsula to support local population sustainability, changes to baiting rules, and changes to support the bear tourism industry.
- The ministry implemented several burden reduction regulatory amendments to support trapping and furbearer management in Ontario.
- The ministry also implemented regulation changes to reduce burdens on small businesses and support new hunting opportunities (e.g., burden reduction for trappers, fur dealers and airports, new hunting seasons for wild turkey and double-crested cormorants).
- The ministry increased the number of certified humane traps that are regulated for use by Ontario trappers to support the fur industry, as part of the implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards.
- MNRF led and worked with partners to implement priority actions in the Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan to prevent the establishment and spread of invasive species.
- The ministry worked collaboratively with the Ontario Biodiversity Council, other jurisdictions and partners to support nature-based solutions and planning for the post-2020 global, national and provincial biodiversity frameworks.
- MNRF delivered legislated tax incentive programs and stewardship granting programs for landowners, stakeholders and partners, including Indigenous organizations and individuals.
 - The ministry saved \$21,000 in annual expenditures for the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program and Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program after applying modernized approaches to the annual application mailout and to general program communication.
 - For the 2021 tax year, 24,580 properties are participating and receiving a property tax exemption, protecting 702,000 acres (284,000 hectares).
- The ministry continued to engage key dam industry stakeholders through the MNRF Dam Owners Advisory Committee, which provides a forum for regular dialogue between government and industry, and for industry to provide advice to government on policy and programs related to dams.
- MNRF continued to lead projects within the OPS, the broader public service and private sector to acquire aerial photography. This work achieved cost savings of more than 75 percent for participants and ensured the data is accessible.
- The new Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (FSIIP) has received 49 inquiries in its first five rounds, resulting in six Stage I applications. Two of the six applications have been approved with

one contracted while the remaining four are at various stages of the evaluation and approvals process and not yet contracted. MNRF administers FSIP in cooperation with MEDJCT.

- Launched the Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund (FSSMF), which will deliver up to \$5.3 million in 2020-21 to help small to medium size forest sector companies overcome the economic challenges faced due to extra costs for the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures.
- Due to the economic impact of COVID-19, MNRF expedited the implementation of the \$53.2 million Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding Program in 2020-21 and allowed for costs incurred to be reimbursed earlier as compared to previous years. This resulted in approximately \$8.0 million being reimbursed by the end of August compared to less than \$200,000 being reimbursed during the previous two years for the same period.
- In June Cabinet approved revisions to the Forest Management Planning Manual, the Forest Operations and Silvicultural Manual, and the Forest Information Manual to eliminate duplication and streamline requirements for implementation of existing forest management plans (FMPs) for the forest industry. These revisions were facilitated by changes to the *Environmental Assessment Act* which exempted forest management activities from the act and prompted MECP to revoke MNRF's declaration order.
- Cabinet approved changes to the Independent Forest Audit Regulation in June, reducing the number of audits each year while maintaining the integrity of the program for its intended purpose. MNRF also updated supporting policy providing for efficiencies to take effect for the 2021 audit year.
- MNRF finalized implementation of Permits to Remove under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA)* allowing for the repeal of the Watay CFSA exemption via an Order in Council. Cabinet also revoked the nursery regulation (OR 458/90) as part of CFSA maintenance.
- The MNRF continues oversight of two Forests Trusts that are an integral part of delivering forest renewal programs in Ontario. The Forest Renewal Trust provides funding for reimbursement of silvicultural expenses on Crown Forest following harvest. The ministry continues to work collaboratively with the Forestry Futures Committee in delivering on the objectives of the Forestry Futures Trust. Committee members administer programs with a focus on supporting silviculture projects, forest genetics management, Independent Forest Audits, tenure modernization, an enhanced forest inventory program, scientific memberships and a new purpose "COVID-19 Incremental Silviculture Cost Program" introduced in 2020 to help support the forest sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- MNRF supported the activities of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers with participation in national and international events to share information on the sustainable management of Ontario's forests. Ontario was a key contributor to the renewal of Canada's forest strategy, "A Vision for Canada's Forests".
- Ministry staff and forest industry established the Forest Management Planning Advisory Group to collaborate and provide advice to the ministry on the development and implementation of forest management planning policy. Ministry staff continued to engage forest industry stakeholders through the Forest Information and Data Advisory Group, which provides a forum for regular dialogue between government and industry on the exchange of information in support of forest management planning and reporting.
- MNRF played a leadership role on interjurisdictional policy and technical committees, including the Canadian Dam Association, Canadian Council of Geomatics and the Canadian Land Directors Association. Participation has advanced evidence-based policy development through information-sharing and building relationships with regulators across Canada.
- The ministry continued to support the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, the regulator for the land survey industry, in accordance with the *Surveyors Act*, by maintaining a presence at council to serve and protect the public interest and contribute to regulatory change.

- MNRF continued to maintain and update its suite of forest management guides to ensure that direction is based on the most current scientific, community, and Indigenous knowledge, is easy to use, addresses climate change, and does not unnecessarily restrict the forest industry or other forest users. The ministry initiated a project to revise the Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scale direction based upon recommendations from a formal review of the guide, which was completed in 2016.
- Ministry staff, with assistance from partners prepared an Afforestation Guide as a companion to the Southern Ontario Silviculture Guide. The guide contains advice and best management practices to support afforestation planning in southern Ontario. The guide will assist stakeholders, conservation authorities, woodlot owners, municipalities, consultants, and growers in making decisions on plantation establishment.
- MNRF updated the Ontario Tree Seed Transfer Policy to enable adaptation to a changing climate while helping forest managers make informed seed transfer decisions based on local conditions. The policy helps conserve genetic diversity of native tree species and promotes forest health and productivity. The policy provides forest managers a streamlined approval process, decision making support with interactive maps and data, additional choices for seed selection and transfer while protecting their current investments in seed.
- MNRF continued to work with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to implement forest industry heavy equipment and mill operations training among new and incumbent workers in Northern Ontario, and identify further training needs in Ontario's forest sector.

Ministry Interim Actual Expenditures 2020-21

Cost Type	Ministry interim actual expenditures (\$M) 2020-21 ^[51. (#foot-5)]
COVID 19 Approvals	N/A
Operating Expense	633.5
Capital Expense	42.6
Staff Strength (as of March 31,2021)	2,904

For additional financial information, see:

- [Expenditure Estimates \(/page/expenditure-estimates\)](/page/expenditure-estimates)
- [The Public Accounts of Ontario 2019-20 \(/page/public-accounts-ontario-2019-20\)](/page/public-accounts-ontario-2019-20)
- [2020 Ontario Budget \(http://budget.ontario.ca/2020/marchupdate/index.html\)](http://budget.ontario.ca/2020/marchupdate/index.html)

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Further information about the ministry and its programs can be found on the [ministry's website \(/ministry-natural-resources-and-forestry\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-natural-resources-and-forestry).

Footnotes

- [1] [^] ([#ref-1](#)) Program cancelled in 2020-21 due to COVID-19.
- [2] [^] ([#ref-2](#)) Includes Ministry wide by tracking the online adoption and alternative service delivery of programs and services such as fishing and hunting licenses through the Fish and Wildlife Licensing System (FAWLS) and the Natural Resources Approvals Portal (NRIP).
- [3] [^] ([#ref-3](#)) Estimates, Interim Actuals, and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure. Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the 2021 Ontario Budget.
- [4] [^] ([#ref-4](#)) Estimates and Actuals for prior fiscal years have been re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure. The increase to the Ministry's 2021-22 allocation is primarily related to the investment in public service modernization, increased natural resource protection through enforcement enhancements, and the implementation of Insect Pest Management Program to protect Crown timber and high value forestry products.
- [5] [^] ([#ref-5](#)) Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the 2021 Ontario Budget.

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