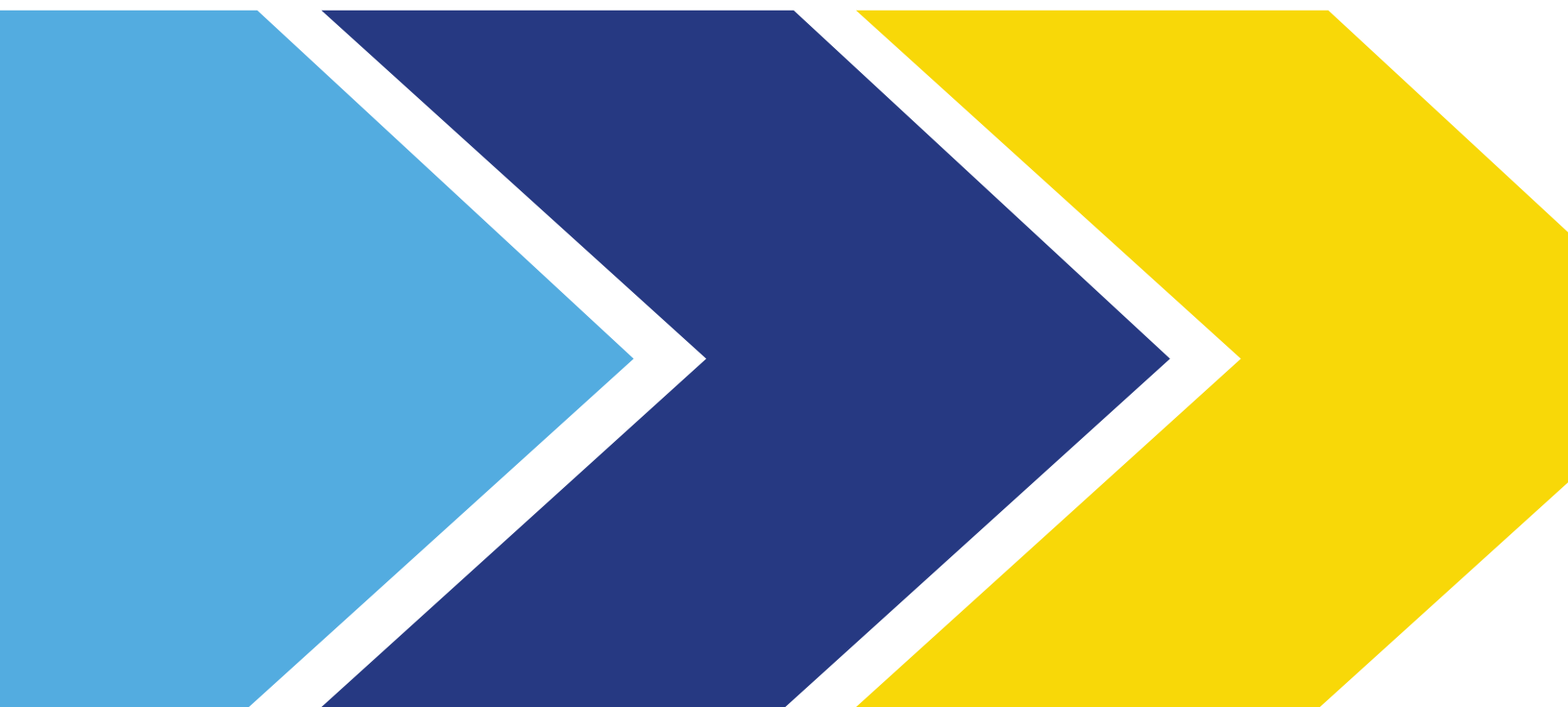


**BUSINESS
PLAN**
2022-23



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister	Page 1
Minister's Mandate	Page 2
Department Strategic Priorities	Page 2
About the Department	Page 2
Key Initiatives for 2022-2023	
Continuing to Adapt to COVID	Page 3
Advancing Green Energy, Transportation and Infrastructure	Page 3
Supporting Sustainable Resource and Business Development and Monitoring Energy Projects	Page 4
Promoting Forest Sector Innovation and Transformation:	Page 4
Maintaining the Provincial Parks System and Achieving Land Protection Commitments	Page 4
Conserving Wildlife, Species at Risk and Biodiversity	Page 5
Managing Crown Lands for Public Benefits	Page 5
Departmental Expenses Summary	Page 6

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2022-23 Annual Plan

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, we are pleased to present the 2022-23 Business Plan that outlines our strategic direction for the year ahead.

Our efforts to meet Nova Scotia's ambitious climate change targets will continue in the 2022-23 fiscal year. Working with our partners in government, at the community level and across the region, we will remain focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening Nova Scotia's transition to a clean energy future that delivers economic opportunity and healthier and safer communities for our Province's people. With the new Renewable Electricity Standard raising the target for renewable energy consumption to 80 per cent by 2030, our work to pivot to cleaner sources of energy and the technologies that enable them is accelerating. This work includes continued support for homeowners and businesses to complete energy efficiency and solar energy retrofits. It also includes cooperation with the federal government and other provincial and utility partners in Atlantic Canada to strengthen the ability of our energy grid to expand access to renewable electricity. In 2022, we will launch the most extensive renewable energy procurement in our province's history to add an additional ten percent of clean energy generation to our mix, creating jobs and economic opportunities for Nova Scotians.

Reinforced as a ministerial mandate item in Fall 2021, the Department is implementing a new approach to ecological forestry in Nova Scotia. Stemming from recommendations of the *Forest Practices Review*, it balances conserving biodiversity, nurturing healthy forests and supporting a sustainable industry. We know how important it is to Nova Scotians that we change how we manage our forests and move towards a more sustainable forestry sector. Nova Scotians can be assured that adopting the ecological forestry model is a top priority for our Department. Change is happening now, and more is coming in 2022-23. This includes ongoing training for staff and industry on methods under the new *Silviculture Guide for the Ecological Matrix*.

Our work to safely protect and develop our natural resources and meet our commitments to fight climate change remains at the heart of the hard work being done by our staff. There will be many opportunities for the public and others to engage in this process of change in the coming year.

Original signed by

Honourable Tory Rushton
Minister Natural Resources and Renewables

Original signed by

Karen M. Gatien
Deputy Minister, Natural Resources and
Renewables

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2022-23 Annual Plan

Minister's Mandate

The Department is responsible for the development, management, conservation and protection of energy, forests, geoscience, mines, minerals, parks and wildlife resources and the administration of the Province's Crown lands. The Department achieves this broad accountability through the development and implementation of policies, programs, and research. The optimum economic, social, and environmental value derived from our Province's natural resources is the guiding principle behind all departmental work, activities, and initiatives.

In addition to our core operations and obligations, the Department is working to deliver on Government's commitments identified in the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables September 2021 Mandate Letter (available here: https://novascotia.ca/exec_council/letters.html).

Department Strategic Priorities

The creation of Natural Resources and Renewables was announced August 2021. It is the result of combining the former Department of Lands and Forestry and Department of Energy and Mines. Consequently, the new Department is in a state of transition and is working to shape a merged vision and mission to deliver on an expanded mandate and commitments in the Minister's mandate letter. The Department's priorities for 2022-2023 are the key initiatives presented in this plan, many of which align with the Minister's mandate letter commitments.

About the Department

- The Department of Natural Resources and Renewables has 695 permanent staff throughout the province, including: forestry experts, biologists, park professionals, petroleum experts, geologists, engineers, hydrologists, land surveyors, GIS staff, renewable energy and building efficiency experts, and climate change specialists.
- We operate and maintain 20 provincial camping parks and 109 day-use parks and manage 76 properties for ecological values and future recreation opportunities.
- We operate a number of facilities, including the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, the Core Library in Stellarton, Natural Sciences Library, Crown Lands Information Management Centre and Registry of Mineral and Petroleum Titles.
- We provide a wide range of services to the public and natural resource sectors, from fighting wildfires and issuing hunting licenses, to supporting internships, job training and authorizing the use of Crown lands.
- We undertake onshore geoscience research initiatives to support the circular economic opportunities of exploration and development in the mineral, petroleum and energy sectors, and administer resource rights.
- We work towards fighting climate change by helping people and communities reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money on their energy bills.

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2022-23 Annual Plan

Key Initiatives for 2022-23

Continuing to Adapt to COVID

Throughout 2022-2023, the Department will continue to adapt to ensure a safe and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the Government of Nova Scotia's announcement to lift the State of Emergency and Public Health Order, March 21, 2022, the Department plans to relax COVID-19 related measures in camping and day-use parks, offices and libraries where the public can access our services.

Advancing Green Energy, Transportation and Infrastructure

In 2022-23, the Department will work to deliver on the goal that 80% of Nova Scotia's electricity will be supplied by renewable energy by 2030, by:

- completing Rate Based Procurement to add 10% renewable energy to the province's energy generation
- finalizing the Green Choice Program for large users to add 100% renewable energy to their operations
- developing community and commercial solar programs
- working with stakeholders to prepare regulations and programs to transition the electricity system off coal and support workers and communities
- participating in Federal-Provincial negotiations to retire coal fired generation
- continuing to assist selected public facilities to convert from using fossil fuels to renewable efficient wood heat energy under the Small Scale Wood Heat Initiative

In addition, the Department is advancing green infrastructure, transportation, and energy efficiency to reduce GHGs and energy poverty by:

- expanding energy efficiency and 'off-oil' programming for homes and businesses, with a focus on energy poverty and equity
- investing in low carbon community-based projects [Low Carbon Communities] <https://novascotia.ca/low-carbon-communities/>
- leading the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program Green Stream to fund provincial green infrastructure projects
- developing a plan to grow our electric vehicle (EV) charging network, offering rebates to install charging infrastructure, and working with partners to increase EV adoption
- working with partners to develop Active Transportation (AT) networks, and promote AT as a safe, accessible option to move within communities
- working with transit agencies to electrify public transportation

Supporting Sustainable Resource and Business Development and Monitoring Energy Projects

In 2022-23 the Department will continue its work to support sustainable business development in the energy sector by:

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2022-23 Annual Plan

- implementing Clean Growth initiatives that integrate and prioritize climate action, responsible resource development, respond to future energy needs, and maximize clean inclusive economic growth
- supporting the growth of our marine renewable energy sector and optimize existing infrastructure at the Fundy Ocean Research Center for Energy (FORCE) to enable technology advancement and demonstration of innovative technologies, systems and processes that support responsible energy development
- providing scholarships and workforce training programs that support employment opportunities in the energy sector, including incentives, awards and BIPOC and Mi'kmaw training programs to promote diversity.

See: <https://novascotia.ca/energy-scholarship/> and <https://energy.novascotia.ca/industry-development/energy-training-program>

The Department will also continue to monitor energy projects to ensure appropriate economic benefits are collected from the exploration and development of onshore and offshore subsurface energy resources. Activities include:

- monitoring and assessing Offshore and Onshore Petroleum and Mineral Royalties
- enabling and attracting investment
- optimizing economic benefits through local supplier development
- building the knowledge base on subsurface energy opportunities in Nova Scotia

Promoting Forest Sector Innovation and Transformation

Ecological forestry represents a historic shift in how we manage our forests, and our forest sector is in a state of significant transition. Natural Resources and Renewables will continue its work to support this major shift by:

- continuing to move forward with the implementation of ecological forestry and the recommendations from the *Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia* (August 2018) conducted by Professor William Lahey.
- ensuring that the work necessary to support forestry related goals in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* is prioritized
- continued implementation of the new Silviculture Guide for the Ecological Matrix (SGEM)
- communicating progress to stakeholders and the public routinely, including through the Ecological Forestry website: <https://novascotia.ca/ecological-forestry/>

Maintaining the Provincial Parks System and Achieving Land Protection Commitments

In close collaboration with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change, the Department will initiate work to deliver on Government's commitment to protect at least 20% of the total land and water mass of Nova Scotia for nature conservation by 2030. To achieve this goal, the Department will be:

- working towards designating the remaining sites in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan and to deliver on Government's protected land commitment

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2022-23 Annual Plan

- continuing to maintain our network of provincial day-use and camping parks to deliver reliable and accessible services to all park visitors
- promoting and building awareness around accessible parks and services
- for more information see: <https://parks.novascotia.ca/>

Conserving Wildlife, Species at Risk and Biodiversity

Some species have declined to critical thresholds and are at risk of becoming extinct. The Department is responding to this wildlife crisis by making the renewal of the **Species at Risk Program** a priority. This involves:

- delivering on a collaborative approach to update the management system for species recovery
- leveraging diverse resources and using risk management to enhance the implementation of the provincial *Endangered Species Act*
- for more information, see: <https://novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/species-at-risk/>

This work addresses the outcomes of a recent judicial review, recommendations of the Auditor General, and the Lahey Report. The Department will also continue its work to conserve wildlife and biodiversity and modernize wildlife services. This will include:

- reviewing the *Wildlife Act* regulations to address current challenges and gaps
- developing options for orphaned bear cubs

Managing Crown Lands for Public Benefits

Of the 5.53 million hectares of land in Nova Scotia, approximately 25% is Crown lands under the *Crown Lands Act*, administered by the Department. The Department will deliver on its mandate to administer these Crown lands sustainably. This will include:

- increasing the fine under the *Crown Lands Act* for the offence of dumping or depositing materials on Crown lands, without legal justification or the permission of the Minister
- addressing historic contamination on Crown lands in cooperation with Nova Scotia Lands Inc. and Environment and Climate Change
- continuing to conduct ongoing regulatory and business process improvement in the management and administration of Crown lands

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2022-23 Annual Plan

Departmental Expenses Summary			
Natural Resources & Renewables			
(\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2021-2022 Estimate</u>	<u>2021-2022 Forecast</u>	<u>2022-2023 Estimate</u>
Senior Management	941	717	759
Clean Energy	54,804	96,117	34,372
Business Development & Corporate Services	12,123	11,868	11,234
Subsurface Energy Development	2,016	1,887	2,088
Forestry & Wildlife	22,226	24,756	22,439
Geoscience and Mines	5,578	5,568	5,565
Regional Services	41,718	41,877	47,664
Policy and Corporate Services	6,747	7,255	7,146
Land Services	3,648	3,352	3,619
Total – Departmental Expenses	<u>149,801</u>	<u>193,397</u>	<u>134,886</u>
 Ordinary Recoveries	 35,501	 29,448	 16,795
 Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	692.2	657.4	741.7