

Conservation Officer Service

PROGRAM PLAN







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Welcome

For more than 100 years, the Conservation Officer Service (COS) has worked to protect British Columbia's natural resources and environment as well as the safety of its citizens. Beginning primarily as Game Wardens, Conservation Officers have since evolved into modern law enforcement officers whose roles and responsibilities now extend far beyond hunting and fishing issues to include environmental protection, water monitoring and ensuring compliance with a variety of provincial and federal statutes.

In line with its evolving mandate and service responsibilities, the COS has undergone numerous improvements and adaptations. The most recent changes include a new management and supervisory structure, the creation of the Commercial Environmental Investigations Unit, the implementation of the 24-hour Report All Poachers and Polluters Call Centre, an intern program and a variety of initiatives linked to our New Relationship with First Nations People that explore the provision of restorative justice and cost sharing agreements.

This Program Plan also represents a change for the COS. It presents a clarified direction that will support the delivery of the services that our clients expect. We believe that these changes will ensure that the Conservation Officer Service continues to provide unparalleled service for another 100 years.

Mark Hayden

Chief Conservation Officer

Moving to the Future

Sustainable environmental management has emerged as one of, if not the most critical issue of our time. For the Conservation Officer Service (COS), this issue, combined with the challenges of significant demographic change and a shrinking work force means that the future will be filled with both challenges and opportunities. Helping to manage and protect the province's natural resources over the coming decades will require an increasing emphasis on shared stewardship, a commitment to innovative and integrated problem solving, new outreach and educational activities, improved organizational capacity for enhanced collaboration and coordination of compliance management and service delivery, and perhaps most importantly, a dedication to continuous improvement at every step along the way.

This Program Plan has been developed to articulate the vision, objectives, strategies and more broadly, the way forward for the COS. It is my belief that this Program Plan will provide you with a greater appreciation for the business functions of the COS and how they link to the goals of the Ministry of the Environment and the province.

It is my hope that this document will give you a clearer understanding of the Conservation Officer Service and its role in the big picture, and an invigorated notion of how you can help the ministry move forward.

Brian Rendell

Executive Director
Compliance Division



WHO WE ARE

Who We Are

The Conservation Officer Service is a professional, natural resources law enforcement agency that has proudly served British Columbia since 1905.

Our Vision

The Conservation Officer Service is a progressive and respected leader in environmental compliance and enforcement, shared stewardship and public safety.

For the COS, our vision means making informed decisions that reflect the goals and objectives of government and the Ministry of Environment while communicating openly and honestly. It means providing high-quality and timely service and being leaders in the field of natural resource compliance and enforcement.

Achieving this vision will require us to be a highly competent learning organization, one that provides opportunities for staff to develop and excel. It will require an engaged leadership and a healthy work environment that is based on respect, trust, open dialogue and, most importantly, teamwork.

COS Motto

Our motto is, “Integrity, Service and Protection.” This captures the heart of our organization’s ideals and the commitment of our staff.

Integrity: We maintain the public’s confidence and trust by acting with sincerity and transparency.

Service: We strive to provide compliance and enforcement, stewardship and public safety services in collaboration with our partners and communities.

Protection: We remain committed to protecting British Columbia’s natural environment and those who enjoy it.

In addition to the ideals espoused in our motto, we are also guided by the following principles.

Accountability: We are accountable for our performance in light of our authorities, duties and responsibilities. We commit to measuring, achieving and reporting results and to using public dollars wisely.

Impartiality: We perform our duties and interact with all people in an impartial and objective manner, without favour or ill will.

Respectfulness: We treat each other and those we serve with respect.

Our Vision

The Conservation Officer Service is a progressive and respected leader in environmental compliance and enforcement, shared stewardship and public safety.

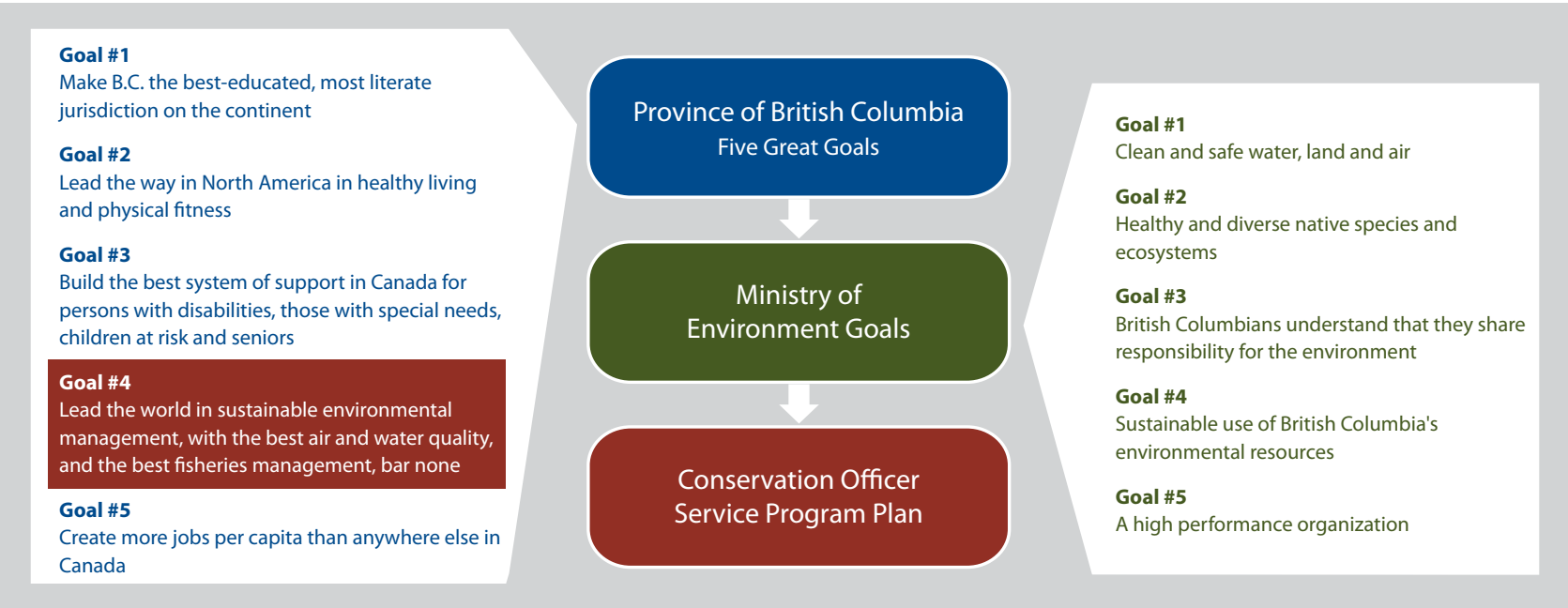
Introduction to the Program Plan

The Conservation Officer Service (COS) is a professional, natural resources law enforcement agency that has proudly served British Columbia. Our plan was designed through a consultative process that gathered input from all parts of our organization as well as from our Ministry of Environment divisional partners. From this process, we have created a document that provides strategic direction to our staff, while informing our partners of the various activities we undertake in support of their mandates.

The Program Plan aligns with the Province of British Columbia’s strategic vision, articulated in the Five Great Goals. While these goals provide an overall vision for government, the Fourth Great Goal, to lead the world in sustainable environmental management, requires leadership from the Ministry of Environment.

Within this plan, we have organized our activities and services under three core business areas: Compliance and Enforcement, Public Safety and Stewardship. Each area demonstrates how we support the achievement of Ministry and government goals. We believe that aligning our work with these areas will provide clear direction to staff, help determine priority activities and improve transparency.

Our commitment to ensuring a high-performing, innovative and healthy workforce is at the foundation of our core business. By providing ongoing training and mentoring to our staff, clearly defining our annual priorities, and providing the best equipment and tools, we are creating a work environment where employees can flourish and provide the best services possible.



CONNECTING THE PROGRAM PLAN

In the following pages you will find an overview of the COS and our clients and partners and a description of our core business areas, including our objectives and key initiatives. As you read this document, we encourage you to provide feedback so that we can consistently improve its utility and effectiveness.



The Way Forward for the Conservation Officer Service

The Conservation Officer Service (COS) is a professional, flexible and innovative compliance and enforcement organization. By valuing our past and continually looking forward, we are able to meet evolving environmental concerns, such as climate change, groundwater impacts, species at risk, urban growth and changing demographics. We will continually evolve our working practices, approaches and partnerships to effectively deliver our mandate and support our government as it tackles these important challenges.

For the Conservation Officer Service, this means:

- Providing leadership and support for natural resource agency collaboration and coordination of compliance and enforcement service delivery through the Resource Management Coordination Project and other initiatives
- Demonstrating our performance through insightful measurement and reporting to achieve a culture of continuous improvement
- Continuing to invest in our people to help us evolve into a healthy, learning organization
- Employing “intelligence-led” information gathering and trend analysis to identify non-compliance trends to improve provincial compliance, enforcement and stewardship efforts, and to focus on priority risk areas
- Formalizing partnerships with stewardship groups to enable them to assist the COS in providing compliance and outreach services that help protect the environment and further provincial stewardship goals
- Working with the Ministry of Environment’s operational divisions to identify provincial compliance and enforcement themes and aligning annual activities to enable us to continually support their goals and objectives
- Ensuring effective, joint-annual compliance priority-setting occurs in a coordinated fashion with all clients and partners
- Applying innovative approaches to strengthen relationships with First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples throughout the province

Overview of the Conservation Officer Service

The COS is part of the Ministry of Environment's Compliance Division. Within the Service there are three primary units that report to the Chief Conservation Officer, including Regional Operations, Planning and Business Practices and Provincial Operations, which includes the Commercial Environmental Investigations Unit (CEIU), the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and the Intelligence Analyst.

Regional Operations

Conservation Officers deliver a variety of services provincially, including compliance inspections, investigations and enforcement, human-wildlife conflict management and outreach. Officers undergo highly specialized training in a number of disciplines and deliver services in a variety of settings, ranging from corporate boardrooms to remote corners of the province.

Regional Operations is administered through three regional centres - South Coast (Nanaimo), Interior (Kamloops) and Northern (Prince George). Approximately 120 field staff are located in 46 offices throughout the province, from Atlin to Victoria and include full time and seasonal employees.

Provincial Operations

Commercial Environmental Investigations Unit

This unit undertakes complex commercial and industrial investigations. Plainclothes officers are located throughout the province and assist uniformed personnel and Ministry of Environment staff with major investigations, such as those involving significant threats to human health and safety. The Commercial Environmental Investigations Unit is the primary tool used to identify emerging and serious non-compliance threats to the environment.

Special Investigations Unit

This unit focuses on illegal activities with the greatest potential for environmental impacts. Cases can involve large-scale investigations and organized-crime style operations. The Special Investigations Unit addresses non-compliance by employing covert investigative techniques that enable officers to infiltrate illegal operations in ways not achievable by the Ministry's higher-profile, uniformed staff.

Intelligence Analyst

The Intelligence Analyst collects data from multiple sources, internal and external to the Ministry, and then collates, evaluates and analyzes the information in order to identify emerging non-compliance trends and issues. The Intelligence Analyst is responsible for making recommendations to support and improve the enforcement activities of COS operations both regionally and provincially.

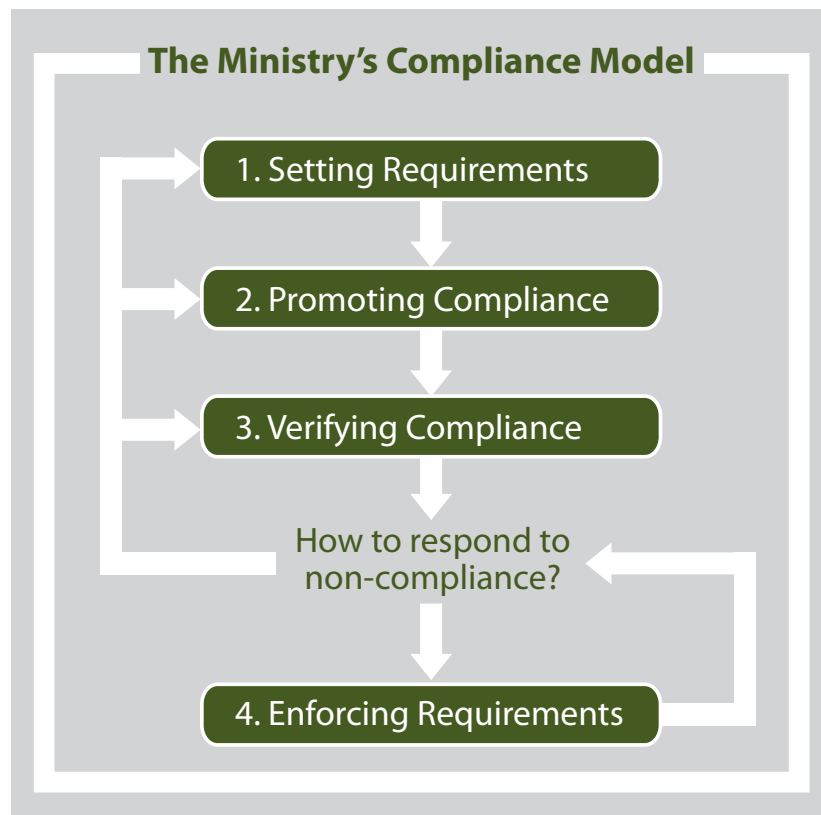
Planning and Business Practices

The Planning and Business Practices Section (the "Section") is located in Victoria. The members of the Section provide leadership, guidance and support to operational units through activities that include: development of tools for program work planning and reporting, communications, policy development and advice, staffing support, human resource development and training, development and management of information technology, and coordination of human-wildlife conflict management initiatives for the COS. The Section provides service to Conservation Officers in the field, regional managers, COS executive, Ministry of Environment Executive, other components of the Ministry of Environment, partner agencies and the general public.

The Ministry's Compliance Model

The Compliance Management Framework sets out the ministry's comprehensive approach to achieving its compliance goals and objectives. The framework emphasizes:

- A balanced approach that uses of a variety of tools to increase compliance
- The use of compliance data, coupled with environmental monitoring data, as the basis for allocating resources to the most significant problems
- The coordination and planning of compliance efforts to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources
- The effective communication of compliance results to internal and external audiences



MINISTRY COMPLIANCE MODEL

When conducting compliance and enforcement activities, the COS participates at all levels of the Compliance Model and employs appropriate action in response to non-compliance.



Our Clients and Partners

To serve the needs of the public and communities across British Columbia, we provide services to the Ministry of Environment’s operational Divisions and partner with a variety of provincial, federal, local and First Nations governments.

The following section outlines the services we provide to our core clients in the Ministry of Environment and our partners, as well as how we prioritize annual activities.

Core Clients – Ministry of Environment Operational Divisions	
For each division, we provide the following services: Compliance, Enforcement, Public Safety and Stewardship	
Environmental Protection Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verifying compliance, investigating non-compliance and enforcing environmental requirements related to the storage, handling and discharge of hazardous waste to open-air burning, the sale and use of pesticides and contaminated sites regulations• Raising awareness of environmental protection requirements through ongoing interaction with the public and regulated businesses
Environmental Stewardship Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigating non-compliance and enforcing environmental requirements, including habitat protection and/or damage to environmental values both inside and outside of parks and protected areas• Verifying compliance and enforcing legislation and regulations concerning fish and wildlife, and recreational and commercial activities• Managing human-wildlife conflicts, including prevention and risk-based response• Raising awareness of environmental stewardship requirements through ongoing interaction with the public and regulated businesses
Water Stewardship Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigating non-compliance and enforcing requirements related to water licensing and Water Act approvals, illegal alterations to and in and around rivers and streams, and unlawful uses of water• Increasing support to the Water Stewardship Division to address compliance and enforcement issues relating to dam maintenance, dike safety and ground water protection• Raising awareness of water stewardship requirements through ongoing interaction with the public and regulated businesses

Our External Partners

Through Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and other arrangements, we regularly partner with the following organizations to deliver a wide variety of compliance, enforcement and public safety services. Through this process, the COS is able to maximize its compliance and enforcement services, employ a wider range of tools, and ensure timely and effective responses.

- B.C. Oil and Gas Commission
- B.C. Ministry of Forests and Range
- B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- Environment Canada
- Local Governments
- RCMP
- B.C. Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- B.C. Wildlife Federation
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
- Bear Aware/Smart Stewardship Groups
- B.C. Conservation Foundation
- Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
- Municipal Police Departments
- Ministry of Attorney General
- Guide Outfitter Association of B.C.
- Canadian Border Services Agency
- Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
- The Resource Management Coordination Project



Government is faced with increasingly complex land use activities, and challenges related to recruitment and retention of staff. The Resource Management Coordination Project (RMCP) for natural resource agencies is designed to achieve a higher level of strategic organizational capacity and enhanced collaboration and coordination on a number of fronts, including First Nation Consultation, Compliance and Enforcement and Front Counter B.C. expansion. The COS is providing leadership and support primarily in relation to the Compliance and Enforcement Initiative and is also actively involved in the development of strategic leadership with respect to First Nations consultation.



The New Relationship

Partnership with First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples

In October 2006, the Government of British Columbia announced its commitment to develop a “New Relationship” with First Nations Peoples throughout the province. At the core of the Relationship is a commitment of respect, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title.

For the COS, the New Relationship means examining how we can improve our service delivery to First Nations with respect to Aboriginal values, and developing opportunities to work more effectively together. Our focus is to develop a number of new initiatives that will increase collaboration and cooperation with First Nations throughout all of our business areas. The following examples help provide context as to how we are working to develop this partnership:

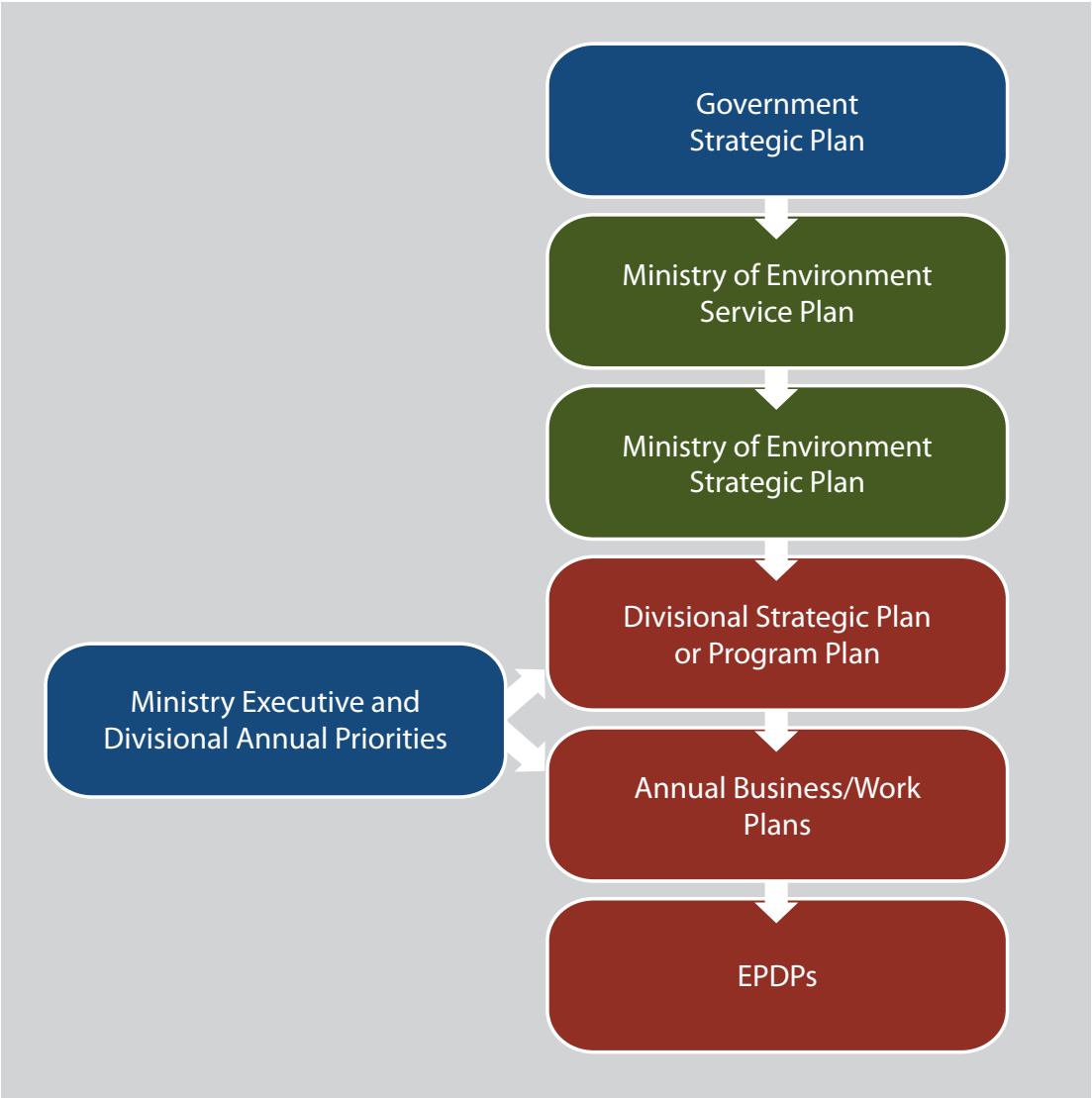
- Providing leadership and support in the RMCP project on First Nations consultation
- Seeking and championing opportunities to engage First Nations communities to build relationships, and provide support and opportunities to work together in the development of mutually beneficial Compliance activities
- Working with South Coast First Nations to facilitate their legitimate ceremonial use of dead wildlife that is in the possession of the province (i.e. eagles)
- Providing adaptive service delivery and training to COS staff to understand and operate within the framework of modern treaty agreements
- Increasing the awareness of restorative justice principles and programs among COS staff
- Implementing strategies to foster recruitment of First Nations into the COS (i.e. hiring First Nations auxillary members to develop outreach)

First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples are important partners and we will continue to explore opportunities to work more effectively together.



Annual Planning and Priority Setting

Given the scope and breadth of our responsibility and competing priorities, a collaborative cross-ministry approach to annual compliance work planning is essential to determining which services the Conservation Officer Service (COS) will give priority to in a given fiscal year.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

This collaborative approach is driven by the establishment of the annual priorities of the Ministry of Environment’s executive and its operational divisions. From these priorities, the annual priorities (provincial and regional) of the COS can be collectively determined by the COS and the operational divisions of the ministry, also taking into account priorities that arise in relation to MoUs with other agencies. These priorities are implemented by staff through the use of annual work plans, created at the provincial, regional, zone and individual levels.

Our Objectives

Our priority is to provide effective compliance, enforcement, public safety and stewardship services to our clients and partners. To achieve this, and to provide strategic guidance to staff, we have identified our four core business areas. In regards to these business areas we have provided context as to how they relate to the COS and the services we provide, and listed objectives and key initiatives that will enable the COS to fulfill its organizational vision. By aligning ourselves with these objectives and ensuring that key initiatives are implemented in a timely manner, the COS will enhance its operational effectiveness over the next three to five years.

To make sure that we meet the objectives, we will develop a series of performance indicators that will be tracked and reported in order to assess progress.



OUR BUSINESS AREAS

Program Plan Objectives

Compliance & Enforcement	• Compliance and enforcement provisions of environmental legislation are designed to achieve Ministry objectives
	• Resource users voluntarily comply with environmental legislation
	• Levels of environmental compliance are effectively monitored and reported
	• Contraventions of environmental laws are responded to appropriately and violators are brought into compliance
Public Safety	• COS actions minimize the impact of human-wildlife conflicts
	• COS activities support public use of the environment in a way that minimizes risks to themselves and others
	• COS responses help to mitigate the impacts of emergencies and natural disasters
Stewardship	• Support the Ministry of Environment in achieving its shared stewardship goals
Our People	• COS leadership is engaged, inspiring, supportive and fair
	• COS staff are healthy, engaged, flexible and professional
	• COS resources are aligned with strategic direction
	• COS is seen as a desirable place to work





Deliver compliance and enforcement services to ensure the sustainable use of B.C.'s natural resources

Background

A fundamental role of the Conservation Officer Service (COS) is to promote and enforce compliance with environmental legislation. To do so effectively, we need to be involved across all dimensions of the Ministry's compliance model, from setting requirements through legislation, to actively building awareness as to what is permitted, to verifying and enforcing requirements. The COS works with Ministry of Environment divisions in the design of requirements to ensure that they encourage compliance and are enforceable. The COS also actively promotes compliance through a variety of education and outreach activities, partnering with First Nations, other divisions, stewardship groups and agencies to ensure that resource users are aware of the rules and can undertake activities in a responsible manner. By further developing a risk based approach to compliance and enforcement, and developing the CEIU and SIU, the COS can increase the overall effectiveness of its services.

Objectives

To deliver effective compliance and enforcement services we have established the following objectives:

- Compliance and enforcement provisions of environmental legislation are designed to achieve ministry objectives
- Resource users voluntarily comply with environmental requirements
- Levels of environmental compliance are effectively monitored and reported
- Contraventions of environmental laws are responded to appropriately and violators are brought into compliance

Key Initiatives

In order to meet our objectives and enhance our compliance and enforcement services, we have identified the following key initiatives:

- Participate in key ministry legislative initiatives, such as the Wildlife Act, Water Act and Environmental Management Act regulation review
- Promote voluntary compliance by balancing opportunities for officer presence, partnerships with local groups and First Nations, and participating in community and stakeholder outreach activities, such as trade shows, mall displays and conferences
- Enhance COS participation in inter-divisional annual work planning
- Lead the development and implementation of integrated annual work planning with natural resource agencies through processes such as the Resource Management Coordination Project (RMCP)
- Develop processes for timely reporting of compliance and enforcement outcomes
- Develop "intelligence-led" priority setting through the establishment of partnerships with other law enforcement agencies and organizations, educating COS personnel in the investigative intelligence and trend development processes, and utilizing systems to facilitate and analyze the information developed
- Promote reporting of contraventions to the COS through the "Report All Polluter/Poacher" Call Centre

Our Compliance and Enforcement Services

In line with our priority areas, the COS will provide the following services to its partner organizations:

Setting Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide advice during the development of regulatory requirements to ensure they can be implemented in an effective and efficient way• Review proposed legislation and provide recommendations on the level of resources required to provide effective compliance and enforcement services• Provide input on potential changes to legislation
Promoting Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct outreach activities to educate the public on environmental requirements• Provide and report compliance statistics that raise awareness, such as the publication of the Ministry of Environment Quarterly Compliance Reports• Maintain a visible Conservation Officer presence (i.e. vehicle patrols and uniform presence) to encourage compliance• Develop initiatives that promote compliance (i.e. RAPP and Family Fishing Days) with our partners and stakeholder groups
Verifying Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct proactive patrols to determine compliance, and detect environmental violations• Conduct audits and inspections with Ministry of Environment divisional technical experts to monitor and report-out on environmental compliance• Gather anecdotal information about environmental compliance from clients, which may not otherwise be officially reported• Respond to complaints from the public, First Nations, or our ministry partners, about violations to environmental legislation or regulations• Gather, maintain and report compliance statistics so that information is easily accessible• Develop partnerships with other agencies to share information and report on compliance levels and issues• Utilize information from other enforcement agencies to identify changing trends and areas of focus• Encourage the public and our clients and partners to report non-compliance with environmental legislation through the RAPP
Enforcing Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct standard and covert investigations as appropriate in response to non-compliance• Use compliance tools, including balanced and timely prosecution, to achieve compliance• Work with and enable other Ministry of Environment divisions and other agencies to administer their compliance tools (i.e. engineer's, environmental protection, and pollution abatement orders)

Determining our Compliance and Enforcement Success

By effectively delivering our services, we expect:

- Ministry of Environment operational divisions, First Nations and external partners to seek our expertise when determining provincial and regional compliance priorities and setting regulatory compliance requirements
- Optimal compliance rates resulting from effective verification and enforcement
- Accessible and comprehensive compliance and enforcement data and statistics
- Awareness of and appreciation for the environment and environmental requirements among the public and First Nations, industry and other public agencies



To promote public safety through effective planning, response and outreach

Context

The Conservation Officer Service (COS) is committed to maintaining public safety. This commitment is applied consistently to all of the activities and issues we address, from human-wildlife conflicts, to unsafe environmental practices, to assisting in the mitigation of short- and long-term risks that arise from environmental or natural disasters.

Conservation Officers are the first responder to human-wildlife conflicts. We possess the necessary training, experience and equipment to deal with threats to public safety that may arise from human-wildlife conflicts. To reduce the instances of human-wildlife conflict over the long term, we participate in numerous outreach and stewardship activities. Reducing these conflicts is essential to preserving public safety, conserving biodiversity, reducing property damage, improving animal welfare and expending public resources more effectively and efficiently.

Recreational and commercial activities that take place in the environment are a potential risk to individuals and the general public. Inappropriate firearms use, illegal industrial waste disposal and water contamination are examples of risks that may impact human health and safety. Minimizing these risks is an important responsibility of the COS.

The COS is often the first on the scene in times of crisis and plays a critical role in delivering the government's response to these situations by providing initial assessments and reporting back to the appropriate division or agency.

Objectives

In order to maximize our contribution to the maintenance of public safety in British Columbia, we have established the following objectives:

- COS actions minimize the impact of human-wildlife conflicts
- COS activities support public use of the environment in a way that minimizes risks to the public and others
- COS responses help to mitigate the impacts of emergencies and natural disasters

Key Initiatives

To ensure that we are able to employ our resources and human capital in the most effective ways possible, we have identified the following public safety initiatives:

- Review the existing risk assessment model for responding to human-wildlife conflicts, and implement appropriate amendments
- Promote the Bear Smart program in communities across the province
- Deliver human-wildlife conflict awareness training to RCMP and municipal police forces
- Review the Call Centre's response criteria, and revise accordingly
- Ensure public safety issues are addressed during annual priority-setting processes
- Clarify COS roles and responsibilities in times of emergency
- Support B.C. government emergency responses by ensuring all COS staff are aware of, knowledgeable about and appropriately trained in Incident Command System Level 200/300

Our Public Safety Services

In line with our priority areas, the COS will provide the following services in support of its public safety mandate:

Human-Wildlife Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess human-wildlife conflicts to determine the level of risk and action required• Respond to human-wildlife conflicts using non-lethal and lethal techniques as appropriate• Utilize a 24/7 call centre to receive and direct complaints and provide information dealing with human wildlife conflicts• Provide information through a variety of mechanisms about species, where problems have occurred, their causes and advice on how to prevent wildlife conflicts through the COS websites, one-on-one discussions, presentations, media and the Call Centre• Encourage the public, First Nations, and emergency first responders, such as the RCMP/municipal police, B.C. Ambulance Service and Guide Outfitters, to contact the COS in the event of a wildlife attack• Where necessary, provide training or guidelines to first responders on how to deal with human-wildlife conflicts• Gather, maintain, evaluate and report human-wildlife conflict statistics• Train staff to ensure appropriate responses to human-wildlife conflict situations• Use environmental legislation where necessary to achieve compliance with regulations dealing with the control of wildlife attractants• Develop and deliver outreach programs targeted at communities, which focus on conflict reduction and encourage stewardship
Safe use of B.C.'s environmental resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide compliance and enforcement services through patrols, enforcement actions, responses and investigations• Utilize the RAPP Call Centre to facilitate timely responses to public safety threats• Maintain a uniformed presence and front-line interaction with resource users• Educate the public about their responsibilities for keeping themselves and others safe when using the environment• Employ statutory authority where necessary to ensure compliance with legislation related to public safety• Develop and deliver environmental public safety education and training to COS staff
Natural Disasters and Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enforce emergency legislative decisions, such as evacuations and travel and fire bans during times of crisis• Participate on ministry incident management teams as required• Train COS staff to maintain and continually improve emergency response procedures• Provide local knowledge and access to equipment in support of emergency response planning activities coordinated by Ministry of Environment divisions, Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) and other agencies• Respond to emergencies and natural disasters with staff, equipment and local expertise, including search and rescue operations in support of PEP and other agencies and levels of government as necessary

Determining Public Safety Success

By effectively delivering our services, we expect:

- Public safety threats from human-wildlife conflicts and inappropriate use of the environment will be minimized
- Timely compliance and enforcement actions will be taken against those who put themselves or others at risk
- Meaningful COS contributions during environmental/natural disasters and emergencies that minimize loss of life and injury, property and environmental damage
- Nations, industry and other public agencies





British Columbians understand they share responsibility for the environment

Context

Shared environmental stewardship is an essential component of the Ministry of Environment’s strategy. The concept involves promoting environmental sustainability throughout society so that everyone takes an active role in managing and caring for the environment. For the Conservation Officer Service (COS), shared stewardship is an essential component of all of our business areas. When the public is in compliance with environmental statutes and reports acts of non-compliance, we can provide better services and increase our proactive compliance-verification activities. Moreover, as individuals participate in stewardship activities, new environmentally sustainable behaviours are borne, resulting in greater societal participation and dedication to B.C.’s environment.

The COS is uniquely positioned to support Ministry divisions in achieving their stewardship goals through the presence we maintain on behalf of the ministry in communities across the province. This has enabled us to build strong relationships with communities and provides opportunities for us to communicate and deliver the ministry’s important stewardship messages.

Objectives

In support of our goal of sustainable use of B.C.’s environmental resources, we have identified the following stewardship objective:

- Support the Ministry of Environment in achieving its shared stewardship goals

Key Initiatives

Achieving our stewardship objectives requires focus on areas where we can have the greatest impact. With this in mind, we have identified the following key stewardship initiatives:

- Develop key stewardship messages for COS delivery through collaboration with ministry divisions
- Expand stewardship outreach activities to reach non-traditional resource users
- Promote reporting of contraventions to the COS through the “Report A Polluter/Poacher” Call Centre

Our Compliance and Enforcement Services

In line with our priority areas, the COS will provide the following services in support of it's Stewardship mandate:

Supporting Ministry of Environment Stewardship Goals

- Partner with Ministry of Environment division's stewardship and outreach programs and initiatives in the following ways:
 - Participate in inter-ministry working groups and committees to provide enforceability advice, local knowledge and other appropriate support
 - Attend public meetings with staff from other divisions to deliver stewardship messages and programs
 - Provide technical support and human resources to support ministry divisions in conducting their research activities
- Promote and deliver Ministry of Environment stewardship programs and messages through COS activities
 - Represent ministry stewardship interests to people in communities across the province
 - Deliver stewardship messages through contact with resource users, community events, trade shows and media interaction

Our Stewardship Success

By effectively delivering our services, we expect to:

- Obtain positive and constructive feedback from First Nations and our clients and partners with respect to COS support for their outreach activities
- Increase participation in divisional and cross-ministry programs and committees





COS employees are supported and empowered to deliver services

Context

We are entrusted by the public and government to help maintain public safety, encourage environmental stewardship, and deliver effective compliance and enforcement services. To deliver high quality services in each of these areas, all staff must have the tools, training and support they require.

It is also critical that we align our services and resources with the goals of government, the Ministry of Environment, our Program Plan objectives and the expectations of the public. Doing so will demonstrate the impact our services have on the environment and enable meaningful communication from the bottom up and top down. We will enhance our ability to report our success and tell our story.

Objectives

To help build a strong, supportive foundation for our people, we have established the following objectives:

- COS leadership is engaged, inspiring, supportive and fair
- COS staff are healthy, engaged, flexible and professional
- COS resources are aligned with strategic direction
- COS is seen as a desirable place to work

Key Initiatives

To strengthen our commitment to our people, we have identified the following key initiatives:

- Implement an innovative, COS-specific leadership program that leverages existing Ministry and government initiatives
- Develop and implement a COS Human Resources Strategy
- Implement and support a continuous improvement program that includes review and analysis of core business, strategies, skills and competency development
- Implement annual business planning processes and performance management
- Balance work load impacts to ensure healthy life balances for staff



Our People-First Organization Activities

In line with our priority areas, we have identified the following activities:

COS Human Resources Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a COS Human Resources Strategy to attract and retrain high-performing staff which includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Open and transparent HR practices– Recruitment and succession planning– Plans for addressing future demographic challenges– Professional growth, mentoring and learning– Training (technical, leadership, problem solving)– Health and wellness and officer safety– Performance measures to track our progress• Develop and implement tools and working practices to support the COS Plan
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and celebrate our contributions and successes
Planning, budgeting and resource allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan and develop regional and program annual work plans in collaboration with Ministry of Environment operational divisions• Allocate resources based on government and ministry priorities• Report annually on performance measures related to priorities• Provide leadership and full engagement in improved natural resource cross-agency collaboration and coordination projects
Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a set of criteria for resource alignment• Report COS and individual successes and challenges to each other, our clients and the public• Develop and implement a performance measurement framework• Audit and monitor the implementation of the Program Plan and the annual business plan

Our People-First Organization Successes

By effectively delivering the strategies and activities outlined above, we will:

- Provide a work culture where employees are engaged and supported in achieving the objectives of the Program
- Use our skills, talents and knowledge to achieve personal and organizational goals
- Be respected and respectful of others
- Demonstrate success against our long-term strategic direction and achieve annual work-plan priorities
- Provide strong leadership that encourages a disciplined approach to delivering organizational objectives
- Be a leader and fully engaged partner in natural resource agency compliance and enforcement delivery, collaboration and coordination
- Provide a work environment which encourages the physical and mental health of the employees as well as organizational pride







Appendices

To provide additional information in support of the COS Program Plan, the following appendices have been included:

- Key Initiatives Summary
- COS Locations Across British Columbia
- Our History and Tradition
- Our Legislative Mandate
- Glossary of Terms

Key Initiatives Summary

Our priority is to provide effective compliance, enforcement, public safety and stewardship services to our clients and partners. Over the next three years we will implement a set of key initiatives that we believe will enhance the overall operations of the COS.



	Program Plan Objectives	Key Initiatives
Compliance and Enforcement	Compliance and enforcement provisions of environmental legislation are designed to achieve ministry objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in key ministry legislative initiatives, such as the <i>Wildlife Act</i>, <i>Water Act</i> and <i>Environmental Management Act</i> regulation review
	Resource users voluntarily comply with environmental legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote voluntary compliance by balancing opportunities for officer presence, partnerships with local groups and First Nations, and participating in community and stakeholder outreach activities, such as trade shows, mall displays and conferences
	Levels of environmental compliance are effectively monitored and reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance COS participation in inter-divisional annual work planning• Lead the development and implementation of integrated annual work planning with natural resource agencies through processes such as the Resource Management Coordination Project (RMCP)• Develop processes for timely reporting of compliance and enforcement outcomes• Develop “intelligence-led” priority setting through the establishment of partnerships with other law enforcement agencies and organizations, educating COS personnel in the investigative intelligence and trend development processes, and utilizing systems to facilitate and analyze the information developed
	Contraventions of environmental laws are responded to appropriately and violators are brought into compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote reporting of contraventions to the COS through the “Report A Polluter/Poacher” Call Centre• Ensure the COS is current with legislative requirements and investigative techniques• Utilize the ministry’s Compliance Management Framework to guide decision making• Develop strategic partnerships with the OGC, MoFR and MoTSA• Lead the development and implementation of improved cross-agency collaboration and coordination in delivery of compliance and enforcement services through processes such as the RMCP



	Program Plan Objectives	Key Initiatives
Public Safety	COS actions minimize the impact of human-wildlife conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the existing risk assessment model for responding to human-wildlife conflicts and implement appropriate amendments Promote the Bear Smart program in communities across the province Deliver human-wildlife conflict awareness training to RCMP and municipal police forces Review the Call Centre's response criteria and revise accordingly
	COS activities support public use of the environment in a way that minimizes risks to themselves and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure public safety issues are addressed during annual priority-setting processes
	COS responses help to mitigate the impacts of emergencies and natural disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify COS roles and responsibilities in times of emergency Support B.C. government emergency responses by ensuring all COS staff are aware of, knowledgeable about and appropriately trained in Incident Command System Level 200/300
Stewardship	Support the Ministry of Environment in achieving its shared stewardship goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop key stewardship messages for COS delivery through collaboration with ministry divisions Expand stewardship outreach activities to reach non-traditional resource users
Our People	COS leadership is engaged, inspiring, supportive and fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an innovative, COS-specific leadership program that leverages existing ministry and government initiatives
	COS staff are healthy, engaged, flexible and professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and support a continuous improvement program that includes review and analysis of core business and strategies, and skills and competency development Balance work load impacts to ensure healthy life balances for staff
	COS resources are aligned with strategic direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement annual business planning processes and performance management
	COS is seen as a desirable place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a COS Human Resources Strategy

COS Locations Across British Columbia



CORE BUSINESS AREAS

Our History and Tradition

Since its inception in 1905, the COS has undergone three major transformations in terms of mandate, appearance and authorities: 1905-1960, the Game Wardens; 1961-1979, the First Conservation Officers; and 1980-present, A Modern Law Enforcement Agency.

The Game Wardens (1905-1960)

The first days of the Service grew from lean beginnings. Game Wardens in the earliest days were largely volunteer staff who helped to define the roles and responsibilities of the Service. As the years progressed, the Service evolved, leading to the creation of paid positions, the first budget, provincial conservation laws, the hiring of first wildlife biologist, and eventually the title Fish and Game Branch.

The First Conservation Officers (1961-1979)

This era was distinguished by increasing environmental awareness. In light of changing social attitudes, Game Wardens were renamed Conservation Officers and staffing changed to include more scientific support, thereby broadening the scope of the Service and changing the traditional conception of a Game Warden from a “bush cop” to a member of the Fish and Wildlife branch.

A Modern Law Enforcement Agency (1980-Present)

Since 1980, the COS has transformed into a professional and modern law enforcement agency that now provides compliance and enforcement services in support of more than 30 pieces of legislation. To ensure continued success in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological and interconnected world, the

COS has expanded its investigative intelligence and trend analysis capabilities, established undercover and Commercial Environmental Investigations units and is increasingly employing more sophisticated technology. The COS has also broadened its mandate beyond enforcement and provides compliance, monitoring and educational activities to generate greater understanding and participation from the public. These changes, in conjunction with the COS’ motto of Integrity, Service and Protection, have positioned and prepared it for its next century of duty.

Our Legislative Mandate

In total the Service deals with 25 provincial and 6 federal acts, which are listed below.

Federal Statutes enforced by the Conservation Officer Service

1. Canada Shipping Act regulations - pleasure craft pollution (black water) prevention regs and boating safety
2. Criminal Code Part III – firearms and other weapons (related to ministry mandate)
3. Fisheries Act and regulations
4. Migratory Birds Convention Act and regulations
5. Species at Risk Act - linked to other Act
6. Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA) (portions only) and regulations including Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) control list

Provincial Statutes enforced by the Conservation Officer Service

1. Commercial River Rafting Safety Act and regulations
2. Creston Valley Wildlife Act and regulations
3. Dike Maintenance Act
4. Drainage, Ditch and Dyke Act
5. Ecological Reserve Act and regulations
6. Environmental Assessment Act and regulations
7. Environmental Management Act and regulations
8. Firearm Act
9. Fish Inspection Act and regulations
10. Fish Protection Act and regulations
11. Fisheries Act and regulations
12. Forest and Range Practices Act and regulations
13. Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act and regulations
14. Integrated Pest Management Act and regulations
15. Land Act and regulations
16. Liquor Control and Licensing Act (portions)
17. Motor Vehicle Act (portions)
18. Motor Vehicle (All Terrain) Act and regulations
19. Park Act and regulations
20. Transport of Dangerous Goods Act and regulations
21. Trespass Act and regulations
22. Water Act and regulations
23. Water Protection Act
24. Wildfire Act (portions) and regulations
25. Wildlife Act and regulations

Glossary of Terms

To ensure continuity throughout the ministry, the COS has included the following definitions for terms used in the Program Plan. These definitions are recognizable and consistent throughout the ministry.

Activity

A routine action that comprises a strategy that moves one towards a goal and satisfies an objective.

Client

An individual, First Nation, organization, arm of government or business who is subject to the Ministry of Environment’s requirements or guidelines, or who uses our services, or does business with us in another manner.

Compliance

Conformity with regulatory requirements established by government to protect the environment and human health and safety.

Compliance promotion

An activity that increases awareness, educates, motivates, or changes behaviour, and encourages voluntary compliance with an environmental requirement. As a subset of outreach, promotion may be conducted as a stand-alone activity or it may occur in conjunction with compliance verification activities.

Compliance tool

Is an action taken on the part of the ministry to resolve non-compliance and includes advisories, warnings, directives, administrative sanctions, tickets, formal charges and alternative measures such as extrajudicial sanctions, diversions and restorative justice.



Goal

A statement of intended direction in the broadest terms; not related to a time period; not quantified (so no direct performance measures). A goal serves two purposes – to communicate management’s aims and relative priorities, and to draw rough boundaries around areas within which an organization will operate (scope).

Guidelines

A set of guiding principles, courses of action and/or procedures that together serve as a non-binding tool used to either assist clients and stakeholders in complying with a regulatory requirement or, where not tied to a regulatory requirement, to achieve specific stewardship objectives.

Investigations

Activities involved in the gathering of information and evidence relevant to a suspected non-compliance where the purpose is to build a case for possible enforcement response.

Objective

A statement that articulates what is trying to be achieved within a multi-year period. Objectives are derived from goals. This is the level at which one can undertake monitoring and reporting to track the efficiency and effectiveness of the program. Good objectives are S.M.A.R.T. (i.e., specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time-limited).



Outreach

Comprises the broad range of activities that are undertaken with the intent to increase awareness, educate, motivate, engage, and/or change behaviour and promote voluntary compliance with Ministry of Environment regulatory requirements, and to foster shared stewardship of the environment among partners, clients and stakeholders. Outreach is sometimes referred to as “promotion” (of requirements, guidelines and practices).

Regulatory Requirements

Are defined as requirements established through acts, regulations, authorizations and other legal requirements.

Partner

An organization, First Nation or individual with whom one works cooperatively to achieve common goals. Partners range from arms-length agencies such as the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation or the B.C. Freshwater Fisheries Society, to small community stewardship groups to whom the ministry offers funding or technical advice or support.

Stakeholder

An individual, private sector, non-governmental organization or other group (generally more specific than the general public) with an interest or stake in a particular aspect of the work of the ministry.

Stewardship

The ethic and practice of careful and responsible management of resources and amenities for the benefit of present and future generations.

Strategies

The specific actions required to achieve program goals and objectives.

Shared Stewardship

The notion that environmental sustainability depends on the collective knowledge, commitment, and actions of individuals, organizations, communities, industries and all levels of government as a whole; and that caring for the environment is a responsibility shared among all sectors of society.

Sustainable Environmental Management

A balanced approach to management of natural resources and the environment that results in a healthy and viable natural system that can sustain native species and ecosystems, as well as human communities and economic activities.

Voluntary Compliance

The goal of the ministry’s approach to compliance management whereby those subject to regulatory requirements comply with them of their own accord; the ministry does not have to compel them to do so through enforcement.

“The Conservation Officer Service is a progressive and respected leader in environmental compliance and enforcement, shared stewardship and public safety.”

R.A.P.P.

Report All Poachers and Polluters

Conservation Officer 24 Hour Hotline

1-877-952-RAPP (7277)

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Also call RAPP to report
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where public safety may be at risk

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