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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on
Resources**

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Department of Environment and Conservation

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Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Department of Environment and Conservation

Chair: David Brazil, MHA

Vice-Chair: Jim Bennett, MHA

Members:

Eli Cross, MHA
Dwight Ball, MHA
Lorraine Michael, MHA
Tracey Perry, MHA
Keith Russell, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Elizabeth Murphy

Appearing:

Department of Environment and Conservation

Hon. Tom Hedderson, MHA, Minister
John Drover, Director, Policy and Planning
Ross Firth, Assistant Deputy Minister, Natural Heritage
Martin Goebel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Environment
Denise Hanrahan, Departmental Controller, Municipal Affairs
Peter Howe, Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands
Shane Mahoney, Executive Director, Strategic Science & Sustainable Development
Melony O'Neill, Director of Communications
Bill Parrott, Deputy Minister
Sharon Vokey, Executive Assistant to Minister

Also Present

Randy Edmunds, MHA
George Murphy, MHA
Kevin Parsons, MHA
Kevin Pollard, MHA
Peter Miles, Official Opposition Office
Ivan Morgan, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Randy Edmunds, MHA for Torngat Mountains, substitutes for Jim Bennett, MHA for St. Barbe.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, George Murphy, MHA for St. John's East, substitutes for Lorraine Michael, MHA for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Kevin Parsons, MHA for Cape St. Francis, substitutes for Tracey Perry, MHA for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

The Committee met at approximately 9:00 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

MR. BRAZIL: I would like to welcome everybody.

Before we start, the formalities are that we need to call for a Chair of the Committee. Then, once the Chair is selected, he will take over from there and ask for a Vice-Chair. Then we will get into the formalities of introductions and outline as we get to present from the department.

Elizabeth.

CLERK (Ms Murphy): Nominations for Chair?

MR. CROSS: I nominate David Brazil.

CLERK: Any further nominations?

Any further nominations?

Any further nominations?

Mr. Brazil is acclaimed Chair.

On motion of Mr. Cross, Mr. Brazil was elected Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Elizabeth.

I call for nominations for Vice-Chair.

MR. K. PARSONS: I nominate Eli Cross.

CHAIR: No, it has to come from the Opposition.

MR. K. PARSONS: Oh, I am sorry. Randy Edmunds.

CHAIR: Randy has been nominated. Any other nominations?

No further nominations?

Randy Edmunds, Torngat Mountains MHA, is the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

On motion of Mr. Parsons, Mr. Edmunds was elected Vice-Chair *pro tem*.

CHAIR: Once again, I would like to welcome everybody here. Before we get into the dialogue, discussion, and debate, there is a bit of housekeeping from last year's Resource Committee that we need to take care of.

We have the minutes from the May 22, 2012 Resource Committee meetings with Advanced Education and Skills. Because of the length of the discussion and some follow-up information, we never had a chance to adopt the minutes.

Could I have a motion to adopt the minutes from May 22, 2012, Advanced Education and Skills Estimates review?

MR. RUSSELL: So moved.

CHAIR: So moved, Mr. Russell. We do not need a seconder for that?

OFFICIAL: No.

CHAIR: No.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

The minutes are carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: The format I am just going to explain to the minister and his staff. Normally how I operate as Chair is I will give twelve to fifteen minutes to each of the members as they are asking questions. If they are close to a certain section or some clarification on another point, I will let them go on and I will ask for that clarification. Then we will move it to the other party to go from there. We will start with the Official Opposition as we go through the process.

I would like to first start by asking the Committee if they would introduce themselves and the district they represent.

MR. EDMUNDS: Randy Edmunds, Torngat Mountains.

CHAIR: As well, any staff members who are accompanying you.

MR. MILES: Peter Miles, Opposition Office.

MR. RUSSELL: Keith Russell, MHA, Lake Melville.

MR. CROSS: Eli Cross, MHA, Bonavista North.

MR. K. PARSONS: Kevin Parsons, Cape St. Francis.

MR. MURPHY: George Murphy, MHA for St. John's East.

MR. MORGAN: Ivan Morgan, NDP Office.

CHAIR: Thank you, gentlemen.

I might note, too, and I think people – oh, sorry.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible).

CHAIR: Oh, yes, he is an observer.

MR. POLLARD: Kevin Pollard, MHA, Baie Verte – Springdale, observer.

CHAIR: Welcome to our colleague from Baie Verte – Springdale.

I might note, too, particularly for the staff - and, Minister, you are aware of it - when you are asked to respond, or if the minister asks you to respond, wait until your light comes on and say your name for Hansard.

Mr. Minister.

MR. HEDDERSON: It is a tough job for myself, as minister.

I am Tom Hedderson, MHA for Harbour Main, and basically the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

MR. PARROTT: Bill Parrott, Deputy Minister.

MR. GOEBEL: Martin Goebel, ADM Environment.

MR. FIRTH: Ross Firth, Assistant Deputy Minister, Natural Heritage Branch.

MR. MAHONEY: Shane Mahoney, Executive Director, Strategic Science and Sustainable Development.

MR. HOWE: Peter Howe, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Lands Branch.

MR. DROVER: John Drover, Director of Policy and Planning.

MS HANRAHAN: Denise Hanrahan, Departmental Controller.

MS VOKEY: Sharon Vokey, Executive Assistant.

MS O'NEILL: Melony O'Neill, Director of Communications.

CHAIR: Okay, I want to thank everybody.

What I will do, Mr. Minister, is give you a five or ten minute lead-in to explain where we are in the Estimates and some of the programs and services. Then I will turn it over to the Official Opposition for the first round of discussion.

MR. HEDDERSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I welcome everyone here this morning. I am looking forward to going through the Estimates of my department. Of course, we have officials here who can give you some of the details of what we have done in estimating the amount of monies for whatever particular purpose as we go into this new fiscal year.

I think all of us are aware of the importance of the Department of Environment and Conservation in the scheme of things. Our responsibilities are certainly for the protection and enhancement of the environment and management of the Province's biodiversity, endangered species, wildlife, inland fish, water, climate change, and Crown land resources.

Functions include controlling air, water, and soil pollution by developing and implementing appropriate water resource and land management policies; coordinating environmental impact assessments of proposed development projects; regulating and controlling industrial and domestic waste disposal issues, industrial emissions and discharges, pesticides, hazardous material storage, and used transportation disposal; management and cleanup of contaminated sites; regulatory protection of wildlife and inland fish; provincial parks; ecological and wilderness reserves; natural areas; Canadian Heritage Rivers; Crown land; providing map and air photo services to government; and management of the provincial Crown lands registry.

That in a nutshell is the mandate that has been given to us as a department, and it is our responsibility to make sure we have allocated the funds appropriately in order to carry out that particular mandate. Of course, with this Budget, with a deficit of \$500 million, we were asked to make sure we were doing it in an efficient and effective manner. Of course, the balance had to be between the amount of money we have been allocated with regard to matching that up with our capacity and with human resources, and making sure that we were taking care of our core mandate.

I believe that with the help of my officials and on their advice we have been able to put together a budget for this department that does cover off on making sure that we are doing what we have been made responsible for.

So, Mr. Chair, on that word, I know that the members opposite are just chomping at the bit to delve into this. So we look forward to it, and of course I will try to make sure that we involve all of our officials here to give you all the information you need. In the event there is further investigation, quite naturally we would offer to go away and bring it back at a future time.

Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

What we will do is we will first call for the first heading, 1.1.01, Minister's Office, and we will start from there.

Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What our plan here is, it is actually quite simple, we plan to go through the line by lines. Where there are discrepancies we will certainly question it but as we come to topics that are relative then we will probably have probing questions. If my hon. colleague from the Third Party gets ahead, then when it is our turn again we may come back to certain sections and have some more questions.

My first question is on General Administration, 1.2.01, item 04. Last year's budget was \$9,600 and the revised was \$16,200, and it is back to \$9,600 for this year. What explains the increase in your revised budget last year as opposed to what you budgeted for? Why is it the same again this year \$9,600 up to \$16,200, back down to \$9,600, line 04 Supplies?

MR. PARROTT: The change is related to public relations and advertising that we had related to Environment Week last year.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. Just one line down from that, on Purchased Services you had budgeted \$17,000, your actual was \$40,000, and again it is back down to \$17,000 projected for this year. There is a notable difference in the amounts. I am just wondering, what caused it to peak last year?

MR. HEDDERSON: When you look at Environment Week, sometimes we get some guest speakers, sometimes we move further out from the capital city. Basically, sometimes we would do more advertising. That is what happened last year, we had a little bit more than we usually do but we feel we need to just get back to basics this year and henceforth the decrease. Environment Week will go ahead, except that obviously we will be more conscious of the cost of it.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, thank you.

I would like to jump ahead, Mr. Chair, to General Administration, section 1.2.03, Policy Development and Planning, just going through the items there, item 03, Transportation and Communications. Last year's budget projection was \$125,000, the actual was \$30,000, and now you are projecting close to \$67,000 for this year.

MR. PARROTT: The decrease reflects funding under a federal-provincial program that ended last year. So the budget for this year reflects the newer numbers for this year without the federal contribution money.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, thank you.

Just to run down to the Amount to be Voted, the \$283,000 deficit is right across the board into this year. It seems that your federal contribution was also removed last year.

MR. PARROTT: Could you repeat that? I cannot hear what you are saying.

MR. EDMUNDS: I am just jumping down to federal contributions there next to the \$283,000. It was not in the projection, it was not in the actual, and it is not there again this year, yet your line amounts on Transportation and

Communications has gone from \$125,000 in your budget last year, to an actual of \$30,000, and then an increase up to nearly \$67,000.

MR. HEDDERSON: John, do you want to –

MR. DROVER: There is a muffled sound. I am sorry.

You are referring to the Transportation and Communications piece. The program is a national program with the federal Natural Resources Canada. When we first developed the program we thought we would be bringing some of the municipalities and subsidizing some of the travel for municipalities to attend a number of sessions. Now, that did not really happen and that is why we actually have the savings in that.

Next year now, we have a major piece of work that guides municipalities in terms of adapting to climate change and impacts of flooding, storm surges, and things like that. We have a whole series of things going around the whole Province presenting on that. There may be some cases where we would be funding those kinds of seminars and things like that.

At this point in time, the federal government is actually having just issued a call for proposals that this would feed into. For example, we have allocated \$283,000 to subsidize directly an application that might come from the university or one of the NGOs, those kinds of things. Some of our travel would be associated with that.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. Just go down a littler further to Professional Services and Purchased Services, 05 and 06, under Policy Development and Planning. Professional Services was originally budgeted last year at \$152,000, nearly \$153,000. The actual was \$15,000, and there is still a substantial difference. What do you see as the reason for a \$20,000 difference as opposed to over \$130,000 in the budget for 2012?

MR. DROVER: Again, that is the ACASA program, we called it, or the funding program with the federal government was actually delayed. The overall program was not in place

until late in the game. That is where the savings are coming. This is why we reflect next year as well that we anticipate spending the same sort of money when the new program comes out.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. I would imagine the same is for Purchased Services. There is a marginal difference, over a \$300,000 increase for this year as opposed to the actual that was spent last year, line 06.

MR. DROVER: In Purchased Services, again, that was savings under the ACASA program as well.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

MR. DROVER: There are some small other reductions that we have taken, but the major portion of it is from ACASA.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Mr. Chair, I think I have come close to my time allocation. I will turn it over to my hon. colleague from the Third Party.

CHAIR: Okay. I will move to Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much.

Good morning everybody. Good morning to all your staff as well. I can appreciate that, no doubt, they have their plates full, especially in this round of budget cuts. They have a hard job in guarding our natural heritage.

I think at this juncture of our economic developmental history, there is no other department that is more important right now to the guarding of our natural heritage than Environment and Conservation. I will quantify my remarks by saying this: I think that government has done a mistake here and an injustice to our environmental heritage and our natural heritage by having to make such substantial cuts as what they have through Environment and Conservation at this particular juncture of time.

To start things off, Minister, I would like to know a little bit more about the cuts to your department, particularly when it comes to wildlife and the guarding of biodiversity in the Province; because, as you know, one of the big issues in this Province, particularly when it comes to the West Coast, happens to be development.

We are at a point, I think, in our economic history where we have the advent of the fracking industry which is on the way. We have pressures on West Coast natural resources. I would like to get a comment first about that, if I may, before I get into some of these line items.

MR. HEDDERSON: Just a very straightforward one I would say to the hon. member is that I have already outlined to the Committee here this morning what our mandate is. I have given the assurance that we have managed our resources to ensure that mandate is carried out. I do not know how much further I can go than that.

MR. MURPHY: I say that in light of a couple of things that we have been finding, not to mention another article in the *Northeast Avalon Times*, particularly when it comes to appointments to various boards. The Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council; there have not been any appointments there in a long time. The Species Status Advisory Committee, I believe, has not met in quite some time as well.

I am a little bit worried about the status, for example, of some of the endangered species in the Province that have not had any kind of protections put on it now. They have been on the endangered species list now for a long time, plant species and such.

I am wondering about that, why government has not moved on the endangered species list, for example, in spite of its own legislation out there. I think once it is recommended to go on the endangered species list, for example, I think it is given ninety days to do something. It has not acted now in a couple of years in spite of some of the requirements in the act.

There are a lot of things here. Some of these species are indelible to the Port au Port region, for example, and some areas of the Northern Peninsula. I would like to get some answers with regard to that.

CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr. Minister and Mr. Murphy.

I would ask that when we are on the specific headings that you stick to the tone of that heading. Issues relevant to what you are doing there can be addressed if it is under wildlife, under one of the programs and services. The plan will be as we finish a heading we will adopt that heading and move to the next one.

While your questions are no doubt valid, I would ask that you keep it under the heading once we address that, please.

MR. MURPHY: Okay.

CHAIR: Right now we are doing heading 1.101 down to the end of 1.2.06.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. I don't know if the minister in the meantime –

MR. HEDDERSON: As a point, with the question on the table, I would just as soon answer it so that we could move on and then do it, if that is alright with the Chair.

CHAIR: Sure.

Go ahead Mr. Minister, please.

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, when you talk about endangered species you are talking about animal and plant life. I am very proud of the fact this government is out front, especially on our most important priority, which are caribou herds here in this Province to the tune of, over the last number of years, \$15 million. Not only that, but of course we are going take that now and incorporate it into our longer term plans and our base activities that we do.

With the endangered species, there is a little bit of a line up right now. Since I came in, which is

basically just last December, I have put six of those into recovery situations. Again, it is a situation where there is a little bit of a back up and we are working through those. A lot of the work has been done. As a matter of fact, we have brought in extra personnel over the last number of years to get us, as a department, back up to an even keel. We had a lot of catch up to do.

In 2003, when we came in here as a government, there were a lot of infrastructure deficits and a lot of deficits in other areas as well. We have bulked up, certainly, the particular area that you are asking about to catch up.

At this point in time, I am very confident in saying that these well-skilled individuals, these professional people who we have brought on have made a big difference and have put on our plate what I believe is a good baseline information in data and research. Also, some very good progression in making sure that we are protecting the endangered species that is in our jurisdiction.

MR. MURPHY: Okay.

CHAIR: Just one little housekeeping thing, Mr. Murphy before you go.

I think your Blackberry is interfering with the microphone; if you can move it, Mr. Minister. It could be buzzing or something. They are having some trouble with the questions on the recordings.

Thank you.

Mr. Murphy, continue please.

MR. HEDDERSON: Should we turn them off?

OFFICIAL: No, sometimes there can be interference.

MR. HEDDERSON: Okay.

MR. MURPHY: I believe in the electronics world they call it a harmonica, Mr. Chair.

MR. HEDDERSON: I am not going to be singing here this morning, George.

MR. MURPHY: No, absolutely not.

CHAIR: It may be your iPad.

MR. HEDDERSON: Oh gee, you want to strip me or what?

OFFICIAL: Take your Blackberry back. Just move it out of the way of the mic that is all.

MR. HEDDERSON: I was just trying to run some interference and I was caught.

CHAIR: There you go, thought process. Mr. Murphy, continue please.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you.

Mr. Minister, line 1.02.03. Policy Development and Planning, line 10, I wonder if I can get some clarification on that. It is down by approximately \$2.2 million. What are we not doing here in this particular section? We had budgeted \$3.6 million, down to \$1.347 million in the revised, and it has been budgeted now for \$1.486 million.

MR. HEDDERSON: John has been dealing with that and dealt with the last question. If you would not mind, I am going to defer it to him. There is a whole series of things there that one thing leads into another. It is all about ACASA and a federal program. I am going to defer to John, if you would.

MR. DROVER: Some of our Grants and Subsidies relate to our Green Fund, and we have some major projects. We have a major project with Transportation and Works, for example, to upgrade some of the buildings, even the West Block, in terms of energy efficiency. Once that is done it reduces greenhouse gases. However, some of these projects are being delayed. About \$1 million of that, for example, relates to a delay in implementation of some of the upgrades that are going on in the building related to energy efficiency.

On top of that, also we are doing some work on Salmonier Nature Park on the visitor's centre out there. That is being upgraded to LEED standard, which is a national standard on energy efficiency. That project has also been delayed. There is a portion of that funding as well that has been carried over to next year. We have not given up on the project; it has just been delayed by a year or so.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, so the \$2.2 million is direct for green projects more or less for government buildings?

MR. DROVER: It is not all related to that, no. There are a couple of other projects that are minor. The major piece of it would be government buildings, yes.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, thank you. Carrying over to 1.2.04, Sustainable Development and Strategic Science, the first line in Salaries, it looked like you had a massive cut here in salaries. I presume this is where the majority of the layoffs are happening: \$981,600 was the revised number for last year, down to \$352,800. I wonder, could we get a breakdown on what positions were lost here, number one; and number two, if this in fact had to do directly with salaries?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, under that heading, I would say that five of them are involved with the Caribou Strategy. I am going to get my deputy minister just to go down through the other six positions there. There are six other positions there. Do you want to find out where they came from or where they were?

MR. MURPHY: Please do.

MR. PARROTT: Yes, five of those were temporary positions that were hired on for the last four years for the Caribou Strategy. The funding for that ended at the end of the last fiscal year.

The other six positions were with the Sustainable Development Branch in various capacities related to IBES and SDSS in terms of temporary positions in their research.

MR. MURPHY: Just for clarification, IBES being and SDSS?

MR. PARROTT: Oh, I am sorry. SDSS is Sustainable Development and Strategic Science.

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

MR. PARROTT: IBES is Institute for Biodiversity, Ecosystem Science. I will just ask Shane Mahoney, the Executive Director, to give some more detail on that.

MR. MURPHY: Sure.

MR. MAHONEY: Are you requesting additional information on IBES? Is that the question here?

MR. MURPHY: Yes. I was going to get into that a little bit as well as regards to how this is going to affect our protection of the species within the Province, the work that these people were doing, the six positions in IBES and SDSS.

MR. MAHONEY: IBES, the Institute for Biodiversity, Ecosystem Science and Sustainability is essentially a body that facilitates research between the university and government. It tries to fund graduate student research that looks at questions of an applied nature, and works as a liaison between the university and the government to fund projects that we think are necessary.

This institute has been in place for ten years or so. It has had considerable success in funding graduate student work at a variety of universities, including our own. I think it is fair to say that over that time period evaluations of some of the positions that were there, that were related to program development and also fundraising aspects, upon fair evaluation I do not think they were performing or required at the level that was anticipated when we brought this organization to bear ten years ago.

There has been over time, periodic review of that. Those were the positions that were lost from the institute. Of those positions that were let go, the full six of them that are referenced

here, four of those positions were actually vacant at the time that these cuts were made.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, perfect. Thanks.

Down to line 03 in that same section, Transportation and Communications, from \$1.37 million down to \$76,500 – line 03.

MR. HEDDERSON: Okay, 03. That is the long-term caribou strategy. It was decreased because of that particular one.

Our caribou strategy is, let me say, in the works now of getting drafted but there is still a little bit of work to do on it. We have scaled back, basically, and that is reflected in the positions that were lost in that first heading. Also, obviously, transportation and communications will not be needed as much as well.

MR. MURPHY: I am just wondering about that because knowing the caribou is in a little bit of trouble, particularly in some areas of Labrador as well, I am just wondering, is it prudent for government to actually leave that and budget that for another year? I am surprised that amount would be so low in this particular instance; \$76,500 is not a lot of money.

MR. HEDDERSON: What you have to understand is the strategy is to inform us now as to how we take care of our core mandate. The strategy is part of our core mandate, naturally, but it would inform us now as we go forward. There is a little piece of work, and I can give you some more detail if you want outside of this, but basically that is the last piece on bear predation. That has been looked after now, and, of course, all the research has been collated and put together so that we can have a presentation of the strategy.

As we go forward, what I am saying is this is involved with the research that was needed but we have come to a point where we do not – but for our base operations, that would be covered somewhere else.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. All right, perfect.

CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr. Murphy?

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

CHAIR: Your fifteen minutes has elapsed. Unless you are getting close to the end of something, I would like to go back to Mr. Edmunds.

MR. MURPHY: No, go ahead, I digress.

CHAIR: Okay.

Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to go back to Policy Development and Planning, 1.2.03, the amount to be voted in line 02. Last year there was no funds budgeted for but you did manage to come up with nearly \$101,000. It is no longer there this year. Is there a chance that that pile of money could show up again this year? Was it a provincial or a federal contribution? It is the Amount to be Voted on under –

MR. HEDDERSON: Under the amount, number 02?

MR. EDMUNDS: Yes. It was \$100,900. It is just a question of where it actually came from.

OFFICIAL: Invoices that were paid under that federal program.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. Under Policy and Development Planning, I do not know if this is the right place but you did come out with a Climate Change Action Plan to combat greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It is under development and planning, so I am going to throw a question out there. I realize that it may come up in Executive Council under climate change.

It is probably a long-winded question, but of the thirty-eight or forty action plan items, I am just wondering if this is the appropriate place to ask for some of the –

MR. HEDDERSON: I defer that to the Executive Council.

MR. EDMUNDS: Executive Council?

MR. HEDDERSON: It is the Office of Climate Change of which I am responsible for, but that falls under Executive Council.

MR. EDMUNDS: Yes.

MR. HEDDERSON: Not that I would not answer the question. As a matter of fact, afterwards I will go through it with you. I do not want to bring it into and open up other questions, because that is an area that is already going to be covered somewhere else.

CHAIR: It is for another division.

Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, thank you.

Last year, I think it was last fall; there was quite a bit of controversy on cosmetic pesticides. It did carry on and there was quite a debate on it outside of the House of Assembly.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. EDMUNDS: I am just wondering if you still plan to spray and what this program looks like. In addition to that, last year there were certain products that were banned that were still on the shelves. How are you enforcing this ban of pesticides being still on the shelves when they were deemed as banned? Just for an update on that.

MR. HEDDERSON: Well, just the ones that are on the shelves, it is an important one because obviously there are some that we have banned and they are still on shelves in different areas. We do the inspections and make sure that all of these are of the quantity that they are supposed to be, under an inventory and under the express purpose that these cannot be used.

Many of them are stored there waiting for the opportunity to get rid of them. Every year we go

back and make sure that the inventory is up-to-date and that basically what is supposed to be there is there, and what is not has been used in a proper manner. That inventory is checked and monitored.

As for the spraying programs, obviously we have the inspectors and the regulations that cover the pesticides; and, of course, our people work with the companies making sure they understand the regulations and help them in any way to ensure they are complying with those regulations.

Martin, do you want to add anything to that for the member?

MR. GOEBEL: I can only reiterate what you said, Minister. Last year, after the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, the pesticides that were involved were banned. We went to vendors throughout the Province who had traditionally sold that and made sure they took those off the displays and were not being sold. Now, some of those pesticides still could be backroom in storage, but they would not be sold. We did inspect all the places where pesticides were being sold on a retail basis to the public and where they were found on the shelf, the vendor was asked to remove them. In every single case, they did so immediately.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you.

Just a couple of more questions on that. Now, last year it was out in the media that there were certain effects on people in our Province due to spraying. I cannot determine if they were affected by the spray program or not, but you have been monitoring effects on vegetation and on wildlife as a result of the roadside spraying?

MR. GOEBEL: There is really no program to monitor effects as such, other than to see if the pesticides were used in an appropriate manner. If they are used in an appropriate manner, then the risk to wildlife and to water resources is considered minimal.

For instance, if there is an effect on, say, fish in a stream, then the way to ensure that there are no

effects on those fish is to make sure that there is an adequate buffer and that the spraying that is carried out is carried out within those guidelines and those stipulations of the operating permit that is issued to the person who is doing the spraying. There would be no way to, let us say, capture fish and see if there was a pesticide link; you would not expect to find anything because the guidelines would be met. That is the way that we would monitor and ensure there are no effects.

MR. EDMUNDS: Let us carry on with some of the lines here. To pick up where my hon. colleague left off under Sustainable Development and Strategic Science, 1.2.04, I guess it is all relative to the layoffs. In Professional Services, last year you had budgeted for a little over \$250,000. Your actual was probably a little bit higher than that, closer to \$300,000. This year you have not budgeted. I am just wondering: if you have a big staff reduction and you are still trying to deliver services, would you not have a demand for Professional Services due to the shortage in your own office?

MR. PARROTT: Yes, that relates to money that terminated this year on the Caribou Strategy. That was money that was spent doing research to inform the management plan that will come out of the Caribou Strategy. That is why there is no budget for this coming fiscal year.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Executive and Support Services, Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science, 1.2.05. Again, it is in line with this year's Budget. There is a whole range of items there underneath Salaries, Transportation, Supplies, Purchased Services, and Property, Furnishings and Equipment. There is actually nothing budgeted for this year, yet you see Grants and Subsidies at \$200,000. Can we get an explanation here?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, we have scaled down the operation and obviously laid off some employees, and their needs then are reflected in

what you just described. That reduction in needs naturally would give a reduction in dollars.

MR. EDMUNDS: Next page, Executive and Support Services, General Administration, Administrative Support, under Professional Services, again you did not budget anything, but you actually spent \$160,000 and now we are back to not budgeting anything again for this year.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, on this one what we are looking at is the Salmonier Nature Park. This government has made a commitment to basically upgrade the facilities there. This has been over a number of years now. As a matter of fact, we are into the third of three buildings, so what you see reflected is work that has been carried out and now ongoing work.

I am going to punt it out to Ross who can give us a little bit deeper detail into that, if you would, Ross.

MR. FIRTH: That sum reflects architectural contracts associated with the building development and design.

MR. EDMUNDS: One step down, we have seen a budget last year of \$2,771,000. You actually spent \$747,500 and this year again you are budgeting a little over \$1.8 million.

MR. HEDDERSON: Just describe the buildings, Ross, would you?

MR. FIRTH: The funds that are identified there, the bigger project is around the development of three buildings there. There is a technical services building, there is an animal care building, and a visitor centre there. The revised funding there reflects work done to date on the development of the visitor centre.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

I do not have any more questions on this section, Mr. Chair. Certainly, as we go forward into Environmental Management, if you want to close up, as you said, section by section.

CHAIR: Okay, I appreciate that. I will go back to Mr. Murphy and see what remaining questions he may have on heading 1.1 and all the subheadings under that.

Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to come back to section 1.2.05, Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science, section 01. Under Salaries, it has gone from \$353,000 budgeted, down to \$252,000, and this year it is \$173,000. Can you give us a breakdown of how many positions have we lost here and what that position was?

MR. HEDDERSON: Three positions. Shane, do you just want to go through those?

MR. MAHONEY: They were program manager positions and a fundraiser position for the institute. They were currently vacant or were vacant at the time.

MR. MURPHY: All those positions were vacant at the time?

MR. MAHONEY: They were, yes.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, so essentially there were job losses, but there were not.

MR. MAHONEY: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: Would you deem any of those positions as having to be essential at the time, that they should be filled? What would be your recommendation on that?

MR. HEDDERSON: On that particular one, again, looking at our core mandate and looking at what we are doing, those were appropriate positions to move out. The other thing that we have to look at is that in this particular time I wanted to make sure that it was the actual students who would get the benefit. Any savings that we could, I did not want to take it away from the students. In this particular case, we felt that we could run the program without

these particular positions. They were vacant for a period of time; the program went on. That was the rationale behind it.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. I am pretty much done with that section there. We can move ahead or did you want to call the line item?

CHAIR: Yes. Before moving to that I just ask for a motion to adopt heading 1.1.01 to 1.2.06.

Motion to adopt that by the Member for Lake Melville.

All in favour signify by saying 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Opposed.

Motion carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 to 1.2.06 carried.

CHAIR: Mr. Murphy, we will continue then with subhead section 2.1.01.

MR. MURPHY: Under Pollution Prevention, line 01, Salaries again, \$2.47 million was the revised number for this year against \$2.2 million. We are missing about \$404,000. Are we losing positions here, and exactly what were those positions?

MR. HEDDERSON: We would be eliminating three positions here. I think we are freezing one position.

Martin, would you just go down through those three positions for me, please?

MR. GOEBEL: There are two full-time equivalents in the pesticides section and one position in the waste management area. In addition, there is a special project which will come to an end next year and that is the one in Buchans. There is a manager there who is heading up that project. His position will revert back to the former position he had.

MR. MURPHY: That would be for the recovery of the tailings ponds, I think.

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, that is the one. The work that is ongoing is the cleanup of the town.

MR. MURPHY: Right. As regards to the pesticides, exactly what were the duties of those two people? The two people there I believe it was in pesticides?

MR. GOEBEL: I am sorry I did not –

MR. MURPHY: You said that there were three positions altogether. No, sorry, one job in pesticides was it?

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, there is a full-time position there being converted to a seasonal position because most of the work requires inspections is during the summer. There are two seasonal positions which are being retained. There are one-and-one-half full-time equivalents that are being lost there because those people who were full time will be seasonal now.

MR. MURPHY: Those were inspectors?

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, inspectors, licensing, and other duties.

MR. MURPHY: My understanding is that there were only four inspectors anyway Island wide. Is this a good move to be cutting these positions down to one man?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, we are looking at the need. The need is pronounced during a specific period of the year. Obviously in the middle of winter there is very little activity with regard to pesticides. In the interest of making sure that we are still maintaining a good presence, and for filling our responsibility in making sure that the proper number of inspections is done and so on and so forth, this is the strategy that we are using.

MR. MURPHY: Their work term would be going from when to when now? When are they going to be out there in the field doing their

inspections? Do we know the time frame they will be employed?

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, basically during the summer. The idea with this is that of course with the extensive ban on the use and application of these pesticides, they are not being used in the Province anymore. There is no applicator applying them, so they do not need a license to apply them because they will not be using them to apply. With the ban there is less work.

MR. MURPHY: Yes, okay.

Under Professional Services line – oh, sorry, go ahead.

MR. HEDDERSON: Just one more point.

MR. PARROTT: Just a point of clarification. Those two pesticide inspector positions are vacant positions. There is no impact on existing people who were employed with the department. They have been turned into seasonal positions. They will be on for six months of the year during the field season to do inspections at that time.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, so the number of inspectors has not changed then.

MR. PARROTT: It will not change, no. During the critical period of the year they will have the full complement of inspectors, and then we will still have two people in the eastern area in the winter months.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Thank you for that.

Line 05 under Professional Services; there are an awful lot of services there I think compared to what was budgeted between the actual and the number they are calling for this year. I am wondering if you can give us a breakdown exactly what those professionals were, and if we can get a listing of those services that were required?

MR. HEDDERSON: That would be Buchans again.

MR. MURPHY: That is Buchans again, is it?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes it is. That shows up every now and then. Just obviously we are in the final stages of that particular one so any decreases – a decrease this year and an increase next year or whatever. It is just ebb and flow.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Down to Purchased Services on line 06, \$2.7 million that was spent, \$5.397 million projected for this year. I wonder if we can get a breakdown of what is going to be anticipated (inaudible).

MR. HEDDERSON: That is Hopedale?

That is the Hopedale one. I will get one of you just to go down through it.

MR. MURPHY: That is the cleanup of the former US radar sites and that, is it?

MR. HEDDERSON: No, no that is in Hopedale itself. The site would have been –

MR. PARROTT: Yes, the site in Hopedale is the former US radar station on the hill, but contamination is not only on the hill, it is down –

MR. MURPHY: Ran downstream.

MR. PARROTT: No, it has not run downstream as much; there is a possibility of that. There are also facilities in the harbour area and tankage next to the harbour, so there is contamination right adjacent in the town, as well as the road up the hill and the hill site itself. All of that is being looked at, but the emphasis of course is on the area around where people live.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Are we going to have people in the meantime, monitoring for any downstream effects here as well?

MR. PARROTT: There is a monitoring and scientific program ongoing as well as a cleanup.

MR. MURPHY: Perfect.

MR. PARROTT: The monitoring goes on, then they delineate what has to be cleaned up and they continue to monitor at the same time.

MR. MURPHY: I am just trying to remember now off the top of my head exactly how much the government had set aside for that. I am just wondering how much money is probably left in that kitty to look after the clean-up, if we have a risk here, for example, of running out of money before the clean-up is done. Is there a possibility of that? Do we have any concerns as regards to what is budgeted for that?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, we put a budget in place, but oftentimes when you are opening envelopes, you are not always sure what you are going to find. We do a projection, and what you see there is a projection. Of course, as we go further that may mean more or less.

There is a plan in place and we are following through on that plan. We will pick up where we left off last year and we will move forward.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, perfect. Thank you for that. Water Resources Management, 2.2.01.

Mr. Chair, just for clarification, I do not know if you want me to carry on to this next line item, or if my hon. colleague from Labrador would have any question.

CHAIR: Yes, that is fine, keep it going back and forth, and keep an even flow going.

MR. MURPHY: If he wants to do it that way or he just wants me to keep on going.

CHAIR: Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: Yes, I think my colleague has gone through line-by-lines quite thoroughly.

I would just like to talk a little bit about Hopedale; I grew up there. PCB contaminated sites, I think, extend from the radar site, the old base of housing facility, drum fuel storage sites, the dump site. That leads down to the dock site where the latest subdivisions are going up in Hopedale.

I think from the old dumpsite you can probably throw a rock and hit the nearest dwelling now. I know there is a lot of work there, there is a lot of debris that came out of there, and certainly it is an area of concern. The brooks do lead down through into the harbour with housing on both sides of the little stream; so, yes, I would definitely be concerned.

I notice in Amount to be Voted there was contribution by the federal government, but there does not seem to be any. I am just wondering why their input has decreased and why there is no funding allocated for this year; or is the federal government contributing along with the Province for the announcement that was made in Budget 2013?

MR. HEDDERSON: You are looking at the federal revenue in line 01 and I think it was \$30,000 and \$7,000. Is that pesticides there? That is revenue that we get for –

MR. GOEBEL: (Inaudible).

MR. HEDDERSON: Go ahead, Martin. Would you explain that, please?

MR. GOEBEL: I think, to answer your question, for Hopedale there is no federal revenue. There is no federal contribution to that program at all.

MR. HEDDERSON: Just explain the MOU (inaudible).

MR. GOEBEL: There is an MOU on pesticides that we have signed with Health Canada. Essentially what it is, for the purposes of inspections under the federal legislation, Health Canada and us have entered into an agreement whereby we would do those inspections on behalf of Health Canada and we bill them back. Then that reflects this revenue. That is money that will come back to us for doing those inspections on their behalf.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, thank you.

In terms of federal dollar contributions, I think way back there was probably a lump sum or a couple of lump sums that came –

MR. HEDDERSON: Do you know the amounts?

MR. EDMUNDS: – and was dispersed down as a one-time cleanup thing. I think the American government, through partnership with our government in Canada, did make contributions.

While we are on the section of Pollution Prevention, I guess this is an opportune time to talk about the Provincial Waste Management Strategy, teepee type of incinerators, and what the update is on the Labrador strategy.

First, I am just wondering if we can get a very quick update on how our Provincial Waste Management Strategy is unfolding.

MR. HEDDERSON: We support Municipal Affairs in waste management, and I guess we could go through our part of it if that is what you want. I am just looking at my officials there. Could we give just a capsule for the member as to what our involvement would be in that?

MR. PARROTT: Yes, the Department of Environment and Conservation, we provide scientific advice and guidance in terms of preparing the guidance documents for disposal of wastes. The funding for the strategy is in the Department of Municipal Affairs in terms of closure of waste management sites, the building of the transfer sites, and capacity within the regions for waste management. We have engineering and scientific expertise within the department who have prepared guidance documents for handling of waste and how the operations should be and how it should be disposed of.

MR. EDMUNDS: There was a plan not so long ago to do away with the use of incinerators and burning garbage. Now I understand there are still some that are being used. What is the status on eventually doing away with all teepee-type incinerators?

MR. PARROTT: The intent is to get rid of all the teepee incinerators. There are still some incinerators operating in very small, remote communities in Labrador as well as on the Island. These sites are still burning because of the very nature of the soil in the area. It is impossible to get enough cover to bury garbage as you would in some of the areas like at Robin Hood Bay or in Central at the new site there.

The Province is working on a way to overcome that. There have been a number of engineering studies done on it. Hopefully sooner rather than later we will get to the position where we can close all of those remote incinerators.

MR. EDMUNDS: The Robin Hood site, is that part of the Labrador strategy on bringing garbage together? This is a different location. I am just looking for an update on the Labrador strategy in terms of waste disposal, especially on the South Coast of Labrador.

MR. HEDDERSON: Again, it is more under Municipal Affairs; we are the support department more or less with regard to that. If it is our part, we would be able to answer a specific question. The overall strategy I would punt out to my colleague in Municipal Affairs or we can find the information for you.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. It is just that it is my understanding Municipal Affairs actually implements the work that is designed by Environment and Conservation.

MR. HEDDERSON: As my deputy indicated, we do a lot of their research and advise them as to what are the consequences and so on and so forth. We help them in their decision making, but unfolding that strategy is clearly under their mandate.

MR. EDMUNDS: I had a chance to tour the site in Central and I was actually quite amazed by it. I guess we will make sure that the questions in respect to a central garbage disposal site in Labrador will be addressed by Municipal Affairs.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. EDMUNDS: I would like to go back again to contaminated sites. We talked about Hopedale and I am sure they are still pumping oil out of the ground in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. I did actually question this in the House of Assembly last year. The question was, and this is coming from the question now: Is there an updated list on contaminated sites around the Province? I would like to make reference to Abitibi being one of them and how the government is proceeding with the number. Do you have a handle on how many contaminated sites there are now and what the plan is with them?

MR. HEDDERSON: Do you have a list to give him?

OFFICIAL: Yes.

MR. HEDDERSON: Is it on site?

OFFICIAL: No.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, we do have a list of the contaminated sites, and on that we look at making sure we prioritize. One of the big factors of prioritizing is like we did in Buchans because of the human habitation: if it is a danger to humans, that really moves it up; whereas if it is an isolated spot, that would move it a little bit further down on it.

I do not know if you want any other information.

MR. EDMUNDS: I am just wondering how many there are because we could eventually get into financial liabilities.

MR. HEDDERSON: I am just going to pass it on to my ADM, if you would not mind.

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, there is a list that compiles the contaminated sites of all the government agencies, including Hydro. Currently, that list is 296 sites. That list is something that is updated annually and we are in the process again of going through the annual procedure now. It has been requested by the Comptroller General and we will be providing that information to him. The departments

provide that information to him and we will be providing our own sites that make up part of that list.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

We just talked a little bit about priorities here on contaminated sites. I am just wondering: What is the financial liability of contaminated sites in the Province?

MR. HEDDERSON: Again?

MR. EDMUNDS: What is the financial liability of contaminated sites in the Province?

MR. HEDDERSON: Dollar wise it is 200 projects or something. We would not have that, would we?

OFFICIAL: We do not know (inaudible).

MR. HEDDERSON: No. We could identify the sites but sometimes the engineering is not done. Like Buchans, if we were to do a site then we would go in and do an estimate as part of the whole thing, and then look for the money and do it. As for the exact dollar value of each site, we would not get into that until we started to, I guess, address it.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, just two more quick questions. I will actually put them into one, Mr. Chair, if you don't mind.

CHAIR: Sure, no problem.

MR. EDMUNDS: I mentioned Abitibi, the site in Grand Falls. I guess the question is: What is the current estimated cost of the environment clean up at this site? I guess work is scheduled to begin. Could there be a time frame put on when it would start?

MR. HEDDERSON: Again, when you look at that, it falls under the purview of Transportation and Works. They, basically, would be responsible for bringing forward the clean up of that particular site.

Again, I would defer to the appropriate minister for that update. Naturally we would be involved in it, as we would in supporting any clean up.

CHAIR: Okay. You are good?

Thank you, Mr. Edmunds.

Mr. Murphy, you can continue, please.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Still sticking on the part of the environmental liability, is part of the Province's debt – I know the Auditor General some time ago was talking about the cost of contaminated industrial sites and their effect on the Budget. You already touched on the fact that there are about 296 sites out there. Has your department started to cost these things out, an estimated cost of the recovery of the environment?

MR. HEDDERSON: No, our job would be to prioritize and knock them off. Once we decide we are going forward, once we prioritize and look at it – as we did with Buchans, for example, Hopedale, these were very key priorities. You would go in then and make an assessment, and then go through this Budget process to get the money, usually over a number of years to make sure that commitment was done so that we could clean it up.

I am sure there is some estimation, but I would not want to even venture a guess with that many, and many of which I am not familiar with because they would be associated, like Abitibi or whatever, with other departments.

MR. MURPHY: I know there is some need of setting up some sort of an industrial fund that the Province could draw from, I guess in cahoots with industry, so that if industry happens to set up, for example, tailings ponds and that sort of thing, that there would be a fund set aside that once industry is moving out, there would be some sort of a clean up fund there.

MR. HEDDERSON: That is built in with the project anyway.

MR. MURPHY: Is that being worked on by government, or is government pursuing that idea?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, when any project comes forward now under the new regime, the company has to be held accountable for any possible clean ups down the road. It is project by project but the principle is that there has to be some sort of contingency put aside, whether it is bonding or whatever, to ensure that the clean up is – I think we are all aware, you look at those 296, those should have been the responsibility of whoever polluted them. Of course, we are dealing with the United States, their sites and that sort of thing. Again, as we go forward and over the last decade or so, lessons learned.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. I think the Hope Brook gold mine is probably a prime example of how many times you have to go back to clean up, too.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: Getting back to some line items; under Water Resources Management, 2.2.01, Salaries, \$2,091,000 in salaries was the revised number for this year. It is projected for 2013-2014, \$1.853 million, a difference of \$252,900. I am presuming this, again, is job losses. What positions have we lost here in Water Resources Management?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, you are talking about four positions; three I think were involved with either retirement or vacant, and one layoff. That layoff – I do not know if you want to describe the positions, Martin, please.

MR. GOEBEL: The actual layoff was one position in the water investigations section, which is responsible for permitting and investigations. There are still three people left in that position.

MR. MURPHY: What would be those duties in water investigations? Maybe you can define that a little bit more, exactly what they did.

MR. GOEBEL: For instance, if there was an application for a bridge or a culvert, they would analyze that application and determine the terms and conditions under which a permit would be issued, if a permit is to be issued for that.

There are several categories of projects in order to accommodate this, which will be dealt with through other means rather than through permitting. It would be through a guideline process and through deferral to another regulatory process that already exists in government to take care of it. We are doing a little bit of streamlining in terms of the permitting requirements in order to make sure that we can still cover all the key areas that we have to cover.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. So that same work can probably be done through Transportation and Works or Municipal Affairs, or through various councils, that sort of thing. It has to do with culvert work, obviously, and roadwork.

MR. GOEBEL: Government applications are dealt with in more of a batch manner because we know the oversight is there with the line department that is responsible for the project. In those cases, for instance, if there is a road being built somewhere, rather than assess each and every bridge and culvert individually, we would just get a notification from the department and they would say that these are the locations at which we are building some structures or replacing structures or whatever, and the replacements will be in accordance with the guidelines that were established by our department.

MR. MURPHY: Perfect. Okay, great. Thanks for that.

Line 05, Professional Services, \$1.074 million in the revised column, this year they are projecting \$1.264 million. Can you give us a breakdown of, basically, what is not being done compared to what was budgeted last year and what is being done?

MR. HEDDERSON: This involves an agreement, a hydrometric agreement. I am

going to ask Martin to explain. That, hopefully, will answer your question.

MR. GOEBEL: I guess you have to look at 05 and 06 together. There are decreases there in terms of money that will be spent on flood risk mapping. Some of the decrease is offset by increases in revenue that we will be receiving under the hydrometric program. The hydrometric program being the program whereby we monitor the flow of waters in the Province, and there will be increases there. So there is an offset there to some extent, not totally but to some extent.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Thank you for that.

I just wanted to come down to line 02, Revenue – Provincial, I wonder if you can give us an explanation as regards to what we are looking at here in this line, \$604,800 to \$774,800.

MR. HEDDERSON: That is a new initiative, isn't it? Yes, go ahead.

MR. GOEBEL: The hydrometric program, there is increased revenue coming from that program. The source of that increase is from industrial contribution, such as the mining companies, Kami project in Labrador, for instance, who are committed to monitoring the effects of their operation on the environment by installing stations that will measure both the flow and the water quality. These are funded by industry revenues which will have to be put back into the program for instance. If we get money from a company to monitor we have to buy instrumentation and we have to put staff there to do that monitoring.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, thanks for that. You are expecting revenues to go up? More interest?

MR. GOEBEL: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Perfect, that is good. That is a good sign I would guess in this particular case.

Section 2.2.02 Water Quality Agreement, there is a difference in salaries here. I wonder if we could get an explanation on line 01.

MR. HEDDERSON: The first one would be that is a new initiative under the Real-Time Water Quality project, I think it is something like \$65,000. The employees are at a higher step level, and I think that is about \$28,000. That would account for it and Martin?

MR. GOEBEL: What I was mentioning to you before about the monitoring, there are two parts; there is the actual flow monitoring, and there is actual real-time water quality monitoring. This is the water quality component.

The industrial contribution that we are getting, this will be money that will be used to – there is a lot more work, there are a lot more stations that have to be maintained. There is an increase also for a new position in this particular program.

MR. MURPHY: Great. Okay, so that would be the explanation, well this is an outflow from line 02 in the previous section. Great, that is the connection there. In Supplies I would imagine that is probably for the same thing, for the new positions and for the start up of this program?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: I guess in Purchased Services, can I get a breakdown on that one? That might have something to do with it, a direct tie-in with that.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, that is real-time quality agreement again.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. More in revenue down there, line 02 Amount to be Voted, \$224,000 extra more in revenue there.

MR. HEDDERSON: That is the provincial?

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

MR. HEDDERSON: That comes under what I think Martin already alluded to, that it is

revenue. I might add here too that my department is on the leading edge of this type of technology. As a matter of fact so much on the leading edge that a number of them were selected to participate with the United Nations in Egypt. In NATO, I am sorry.

They are recognized as leading experts in this sort of – Also, as you have pointed out basically, it is a partnership between not only the government but with industry, and industry assisting with revenue that is continuing and allowing us to better monitor the water quality in any particular area.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, so line 01, I presume is a federal contribution to that, \$121,000?

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, there is still the traditional part of that program that is a cost-shared or a work-shared program with the federal government. It is where we measure the water quality in stations throughout the Province.

We have something like fifty or sixty water quality monitoring stations that we have been monitoring for many, many years. The federal government provides a contribution to our program. All of that data, all of the information from those is all available publicly on our Web site, including the real-time monitoring from the industries that we are monitoring.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Thanks for that.

Just a general question then around this particular area of a water quality agreement, I do not know if it falls in there. Minister, you were there at the same conference I was when we were talking about water quality. One of the interesting cases that I listened to, one of the interesting talks was from Dr. Ziegler when she was doing a study on organic matter in rivers which happen to be rising over the last little while.

I am just wondering if the department will be carrying on with a little bit more research. I have to come back, I guess, to Mr. Mahoney's comment about some of the ongoing research that MUN students were doing in this area.

I am just wondering does the government plan on continuing funding into water research. I think she had something interesting possibly to connect in with the amount of THMs that some people are finding in water supplies.

What her study was finding was the increase in organic matter in rivers, not necessarily ponds, but we know that rivers go into ponds and that. I am just wondering if government has sparked any interest themselves within the department to pursue that. Maybe it is upper climate change, I do not know. It stuck with me ever since she gave that talk that perhaps we can be addressing two problems within the Province, for example, climate change and water supply problems, by sinking more money into water research. What is the governments' plan for that?

MR. HEDDERSON: When we look at anything that is going on with regard to water, organic matter, otherwise, development, so on and so forth, we have the capacity to do the investigation, the research if you want to call it. It is often project by project.

Overall we are always looking for ways to improve our ability to react and to get ahead of things, of course the climate change office, and our capacity within our department with regard to taking care of those sort of things. I will point it out to one of my officials just to maybe zero down a little bit. Maybe he can hit on what you just talked about.

MR. GOEBEL: That is an interesting question. The data that would have come from this kind of research would undoubtedly have come from this particular program, where there are some forty or fifty parameters that are measured routinely every season. That data is available to researchers, to universities, to consultants, to municipalities, to whomever. This program measures ambient water quality.

There is another program entirely that deals with the monitoring of drinking water quality. That monitoring of course looks at the effects of organic matter in water by measuring trihalomethanes and the haloacetic acids in all public drinking water supplies.

That is a different monitoring regime entirely because that deals with drinking water. That deals with tap water quality and drinking water safety. There is that overlap.

We have done a lot of research ourselves, but it is applied research, we do not do research for the sake of research. We may have a particular problem; we may have a particular community that has a problem with THMs and then we will look at that. That is the kind of research we would do.

We would also take the data that we have and make it available to everybody who wants it in a form that they would want. We do some preliminary analysis, provide spreadsheets, trends, and things like that with this data.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, that is great.

CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

CHAIR: Do you have much left on section 2? Only because of your timeline, we could go back to Mr. Edmunds?

MR. MURPHY: No, not really. I was just going to follow that up with a comment really. That might a lane that government might want to choose, your department might want to choose as regards to the pursuit of water quality. You could probably save a lot of money there as regards to your work with Municipal Affairs when it comes into that by continuing research for various projects that are on the go at MUN. I know there was a student over there who was coming up with a very interesting thesis. That is why I wanted to bring up the research aspect of it.

I do not know if Mr. Mahoney might want to check in with Dr. Ziegler on that, but I think she struck into something that can probably save a lot of problems for municipalities in this Province at the same time. Maybe your department might be able to consult with them on that.

I digress to my fellow member.

CHAIR: Perfect.

Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, we would just like to respond to that.

CHAIR: Yes, sure.

MR. GOEBEL: First of all, I think it is a really good suggestion and dialogue. It is a very important issue.

We have over the last five or six years supported a significant number of graduate students, principally here at Memorial University, looking at issues of water quality in conjunction with that branch or division of the department.

This remains one of the sort of priority areas for applied research, doing things that really matter to society and really matter in an application to the environment and to communities and to people. So, just to let you know, there has been support for that kind of research. Certainly, the specific topic that you raise on organic matter could very well be something that we could look at helping to fund going forward as well.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There is not a whole lot in terms of change, in going through the line-by-lines, but it does raise some concern. I guess my first question is on the number of boil water orders that have been in effect. Let's just say from last year to this year, my understanding is over 200 in probably 165 municipalities. If you look at the end intent is to eliminate all boil water orders, there is still a lot to be dealt with, which is my only comment on the budget being the same pretty much as last year.

In terms of the boil water orders, how many are there, and how far have we come since last year on having boil water advisories lifted?

MR. HEDDERSON: Boil order advisories are very important component parts of making sure that there is safe drinking water. When you look at the number of boil orders, you have to look at the number that are mechanical, because of the system not up and so on and so forth.

Again, we, as a department, support our municipalities. We give the proper training. As Martin has already alluded to, we will go into a community when they have problems and we will do the research that is necessary for them to get off a boil order advisory. Oftentimes, the system does not match up with their capacity to run an effective system. The maintenance has not been done and so on and so forth.

We continue to work with the municipalities, trying as best we can to support them technically. Of course, my colleague in Municipal Affairs is also there trying to provide the proper funding in order to help out the municipalities in these situations.

As well, we offer an alternative; PWDUs they are called, Potable Water Dispensing Units. We have had some success there in making sure that in – especially the smaller communities that cannot afford these, what I call Cadillac systems, because of the number of residents that are there. We can provide the assistance to set up a potable water dispenser so at least they have proper, appropriate drinking water.

If you want, I will pass it along to one of my officials to get down more into the details.

MR. EDMUNDS: Yes, just before you do, I do not know if this is a question for Environment and Conservation or for Municipal Affairs. In my opinion, my experience on this, I mentioned about the budget being pretty much the same and probably a need for an increase.

My question is: In terms of a mechanical water supply, if municipalities could afford to treat their water with whatever process they have in

their communities, how many of those 200 boil orders would be automatically lifted?

MR. HEDDERSON: Do you have the number there?

MR. GOEBEL: I do not have the exact number but it is quite high. The number of boil advisories is around 250 currently, but it fluctuates every single day as communities are doing maintenance or as they shut down, or as they correct the situation and then others go on a boil advisory. I would say that only very, very few.

I believe there are only seven boil advisories right now that have to do with the fact that there are bacteriological tests that were untaken and have failed. The rest of the boil advisories all can be grouped into different categories, such as a refusal to chlorinate at all. So there is no disinfection taking place. Even though they may be disinfecting, there may be insufficient residual in the pipeline to ensure that the distribution system is not affected if there is a leak or something like that, or it could be due to maintenance ongoing. If the system is shut down there is a loss of pressure and that could introduce contaminants.

There are many, many reasons why, from mechanical to operational, a boil advisory is in place. We have to remember that a boil advisory is part of the multi-barrier protection. We do not rely simply on one barrier. We rely on things like water shed protection. We rely on water treatment. We rely on proper operation and maintenance, and monitoring by officials on a routine basis in accordance with Health Canada Guidelines.

All of these things are carried out and if only one of them fails then the community is put on a boil advisory. It does not mean their water supply is contaminated. It simply means there needs to be an extra step to make sure there is no chance there is a disease outbreak as a result of contaminated water.

MR. EDMUNDS: Yes, okay, just one question on that. I am assuming, Mr. Chair, I can go into Environmental Assessment or do you want to –

CHAIR: Environmental Assessment, yes, you can continue with that.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. On the boil water issue, I am just curious as to how you would establish your priorities. Would it be on population? Would it be on length of boil water orders? How do you determine priorities in terms of applying resources to try and combat the boil water advisories?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, when you look at boil order advisories they are all top priorities. Our department is deployed to immediately go out and assist to the best of their ability. I do not know if you are asking about funding or – you are asking for priorities according to funding or response?

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Goebel talked about some priorities here. I am just wondering how you would establish priorities on such a broad range and diverse complex problem of boil water orders? There are some communities that come out and say we have had boil water orders for six years. You have a community of 400, you have another community of several thousand; do they get a priority?

MR. HEDDERSON: No, we do not look at priorities. Obviously, the 250 do not happen on the one day, or please God, they do not happen on the one day, but over time. As you pointed out, some are for long periods of time or whatever.

Again, when assistance is asked we provide it. Much of it is pretty common in the sense that you go in and identify, indicate to the municipality what is required and then they have to either cough up the money themselves or make application to Municipal Affairs, but it is not a priority. As they come in we address them because every water system, no matter if you had two people on it or 200 people on it, it is a priority that we get in there and make sure they understand what is wrong, give them

opportunity to mitigate and correct it, and then hopefully bring it back to potable water.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay. Mr. Goebel earlier referenced watershed protection. I am just a bit curious; we do have a lot of mineral exploration that is close to residential areas. I am just wondering what your department's view is on mineral exploration and potential impacts on watershed areas?

MR. HEDDERSON: Do you have that one?

MR. GOEBEL: The question, if I could rephrase it, is: What is the effect of mining on watershed...?

MR. EDMUNDS: Mineral exploration, or in terms of monitoring.

MR. GOEBEL: Any activity in a protected water supply has to be carried out under environmental scrutiny of various types. It could start off with environmental assessment, with a registration with the environmental assessment process, where then the project is reviewed by government and all the government agencies. If it passes that process and the exploration is taking place in a protected water supply area, then the proponent has to make an application to us.

We consult on that application with the community that owns the water supply or that operates the water supply. Then we make a decision as to the manner in which the exploration can be proceeded with, if it can be proceeded with at all. We have guidelines for virtually any kind of activity in a protected water supply and those guidelines would apply to a proponent to ensure the water quality is protected and maintained.

MR. HEDDERSON: Just one correction; I just want to go back a little bit because I want to make the distinction between boil orders and boil advisories. I was talking about advisories and you were talking about orders. The 250 are boil order advisories. Now you are getting me confused.

Basically, they are advisories so it means that they could be fit to drink, but we are not sure. So you have to make sure of it. Boil orders coming from the Department of Health means there would be some contaminant in the water that if you drank it, it could have serious consequences.

If you want to go a bit further, I might be confusing one.

MR. GOEBEL: Yes, Minister, I think you got it right. An advisory is exactly that. We are advising. There is no indication, really, that there is a disease outbreak, which is something that would prompt an order by the Minister of Health. In that case, you have a community where people are sick, where they have gastrointestinal problems. That is an order. We have not had an order in many, many years.

MR. HEDDERSON: Just a point of clarification.

MR. EDMUNDS: It is probably my mistake. I probably just generalized and came up with boil water orders.

The reason I am concerned on the department's views on watershed and potential impacts is because of the highly controversial debate on hydraulic fracturing, probably more so on the West Coast right now. I could be corrected, but I think the latest release by your department on permitting, in respect to Flat Bay, there was mention of possibly getting into hydraulic fracturing. I am just questioning –

MR. HEDDERSON: Shoal Point.

MR. EDMUNDS: Shoal Point? Okay. I am just wondering what your department's view is on trying to protect water resources and the potential impacts of fracking.

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, when we look at oil drilling in the Province, Natural Resources looks after the drilling part of it. They have petroleum regulations about the drilling and so on. If it was offshore, obviously it would be

under the C-NLOPB. This is a combination of both, if we are talking about Shoal Point.

When it became aware to us there was going to be a drilling exploration well put down in Shoal Point and that it was going to involve fracking, we immediately advised the proponent that an environmental assessment was in order and that we would lay out for them basically what would be the expectation as they entered into that assessment. We have had some meetings with them, again, for the purpose of indicating what information we would need in order to make a proper assessment.

As well, that assessment is only kicked in when the proponent actually registers. To this point in time, there has not been a registration of that project with regard to the provincial environmental assessment. Once the proponent does, basically the clock will start ticking into the first phase of that, and maybe the only phase. That will depend on how it unfolds.

In that first part of an environmental assessment, it takes forty-five days. During that particular period of time, all the information and all of the input from the general public, interested groups, and so on and so forth will be recorded online. At the end of that period, officials following their investigation will make a representation to me with that information.

There are a number of options; there is a yes or a no. It could be a yes with conditions. It could be put to further study. So there are a lot of options.

The main concern we have, and it gets back to your original reference, is the aquifer or the ground water supply that is out there. There are other concerns, too; it is not only the ground water, by the way, but the whole geology, what is going down into the hole, what is coming up out of the hole, and what they are going to do. There is a whole list of things. Of course, we are listening very carefully to what is going on and making sure that we are covering off on all of what has been asked so that a determination could be made.

That is where it is right now. I guess this gets back to this team. This team certainly knows their stuff when it comes to environmental assessment. I am very confident the investigation that will be carried out will be thorough and the information that comes up to me will allow me – as well, Natural Resources are part of this. Of course, we do this in tandem. As well, the C-NLOPB is involved. I know the project is probably registered with them, but no project goes ahead – and they have already indicated their proponent – unless the Province has done the proper assessment and the decision made.

CHAIR: Mr. Edmunds, if you have a quick point before I would like to go back to Mr. Murphy, just to keep the flow going.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Just one quick question here. Obviously, we have addressed this in the House of Assembly and I do assume, I will assume, they will be researching the interaction between fracking, the dangers, and subsurface water.

Do we plan to see legislation of any sort, along with guidelines, put in place to enforce these concerns that we have on hydraulic fracturing?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, the environmental assessment allows us, me as minister and we as a government, to impose whatever conditions we see fit to ensure the safety of people, the protection of our environment, and so on and so forth. Naturally, we would be searching other jurisdictions, getting the best practices, and responding to the proponent.

It is a little bit early in the game to make any determinations, but under the Petroleum Act and under the Environmental Act, we are very, very confident that we can basically put together the conditions – regulations, if you want to call it – for this particular project.

As well, simply because one project may be denied or gone forward, does not mean that is

the norm for it all. Every well has to go through this type of an assessment.

There is no assumption can be made that okay, we say no or we say yes and that is it, every project will be looked at. Wherever you drill there is a particular geology of the land and so on and so forth that has to be taken into account.

CHAIR: Okay, Mr. Murphy, I am going to ask you to move along to section 2. After that when we adopt that and once it is completed, I want to take a quick five-minute break so people can go to the washroom or stretch their legs.

Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In Environmental Assessment, before I get into a couple of general questions I want to ask about Salaries on line 01, from \$807,300 down to \$745,600. Have we lost an employment position here?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, one position. It is a temporary- what was that on Martin?

MR. GOEBEL: Environmental Scientist

MR. HEDDERSON: It is an Environmental Scientist.

MR. MURPHY: What were they doing in environmental science? Do we have any idea?

MR. HEDDERSON: Go ahead Bill.

MR. PARROTT: Yes, a number of years ago with a lot of large projects like the mining projects in Labrador, projects on the Island, Inco; government provided extra Environmental Scientists to work on the environmental assessments. That large group of environmental assessment projects have gone through now, so we have reduced the number of Environmental Scientists by one.

MR. MURPHY: I am just wondering about that. The loss of an Environmental Scientist I think is probably a little bit serious knowing

again that when I concluded my remarks we were in a time in the Province of massive development happening here. We are not compromising anything with the loss of that position are we?

MR. HEDDERSON: No, at this particular time as the deputy minister has indicated that we were certainly flat out with some of those large projects, Muskrat Falls included. At this particular time we feel comfortable with the staff who we have. Any project that comes forward will get the full diligence that it requires.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. I want to come back to fracking and water testing. Does the Department of Environment and Conservation have plans to have all companies disclose the type of chemicals they are going to be using in the drilling process?

MR. HEDDERSON: As I just indicated to our member opposite there, we will require all the necessary information in order to make the proper decision. On that particular one, it is obvious that we would want to know what is going down into the hole because that is going to come back up. It is going to have to be properly looked after to ensure that it is not going to be a danger once it comes up out of the hole. We need to know what kind of chemicals are there in order to put the restrictions, if indeed the project were to go ahead.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, well in this particular case you will be asking for that disclosure of chemicals then?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes it will. Yes, absolutely. As I have pointed out, all the information that the proponent brings in to that process automatically goes up online. People will see what exactly is going down in that hole.

MR. MURPHY: All chemicals?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: All right. Does the department have any plans on reinforcing the water act for convictions, that sort of thing? I

am wondering about the statute of limitations, for example, when it comes to the after-effects of any drilling? I think there is a six-year statute of limitations on any convictions for spills or damage that happens now. Does government have plans to extend that?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically we can, as I have just pointed out, put whatever conditions we want to on any particular project over and beyond. We would do it as we would see necessary. I am just referring to my deputy minister, just to make sure that we are clarified, or Martin.

MR. MURPHY: It is probably more of a legal question too at the same time.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, it is. Still, I think what I am trying to say is that if there is a particular project and it goes beyond a time period, under the environmental assessment we can extend or put some sort of conditions on any type of drilling. In this particular one we know it is an exploration well. I think you are probably more into the production part of it as well, if indeed it was ever to happen.

MR. MURPHY: Both really.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: My concern here is that while a well might be producing, the company itself may have moved on and sold its assets on to somebody else.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. MURPHY: How do we hold the previous company responsible? That is where I am tying in the whole idea of having a fund there at the same time for environmental cleanup.

MR. HEDDERSON: On that, that goes back to what I talked about these contaminated sites. Under those conditions we want to make sure that there is some sort of, I do not know what you would call it, bonding or some sort of a financial commitment.

MR. MURPHY: Bonding might be a good term.

MR. HEDDERSON: I do not know, just for argument's sake if it is 1,000 people out there who require groundwater, what would be the cost if that was taken away? What about the clean up? What would you estimate to the clean up that would be required if this happened or that happened?

It is very important because lessons learned from the past. We only have to look at what we have to clean up from years gone by to make sure we are not going to put that on our future generations.

MR. MURPHY: I will digress to your deputy.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. PARROTT: I think the minister has explained it quite well. There is a bonding process in place. Bonding is a good word. There would be ongoing monitoring. There would be review.

If a project was approved through the environmental assessment process, it would require significant monitoring and follow-up after the project was over to ensure the Province is not left with any residual problems like we have had historically.

MR. MURPHY: Thanks for that.

I am just wondering if the government now, before I get into the line items again, are going to be waiting for the Scott Vaughan report in March 2014. I believe he is coming out with a report on chemicals, that sort of thing, and the process.

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, from my understanding we have a good handle on what needs to be done. It is a little bit premature because, I cannot give timelines until a proponent comes forward and actually registers with us.

We are looking at all aspects and covering off on every little detail, from the littlest detail to the bigger detail. We have the capacity to make sure that if a project is going forward under environmental assessment, that we have uncovered everything that needs to be uncovered in order to make that decision.

I cannot say yea or nay as to tying it into any other outside event, except to say that we have a responsibility as a government to do due diligence on any project that comes forward. That is what we are going to do. The end result of that I do not know right now because there is no way I can get ahead of that.

MR. MURPHY: Okay, vigilance, ever vigilant, is the word.

Mr. Chair, just for clarification, did you want to stop now for a few minutes or save my time? Did you want to take that break or did you want me to carry on until my time is up?

CHAIR: Are you still on section 2?

MR. MURPHY: No, I am pretty much done with that.

CHAIR: You are ready to go to number 3. Mr. Edmunds has a question or two left on section 2, then we can adopt that and take a break.

Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While we are on the topic of environmental assessments, I would like to speak a little bit about the Lower Churchill development. I realize that environmental assessments are not out yet on the transmission line as well as the Maritime Link. The project has been sanctioned ahead of the environmental assessment release. I am just wondering, is this normal?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, that is normal.

MR. PARROTT: Yes, there was an environmental assessment for the generation that has gone through both the provincial and federal

environmental assessment processes and was jointly released by both ministers. The project that is being built is related to the generation project.

MR. EDMUNDS: Is there any time frame on when we can get environmental assessment releases on both the transmission line and the Maritime Link?

MR. HEDDERSON: When you are talking about assessments, they are rather fluid, in the sense that is why we are going out to investigate and see if there is anything. We cannot assume ahead of time that is going to take this, that, or the other thing. The timeline that we are on, Bill, is –

MR. PARROTT: The transmission from the Lower Churchill to the Island is a separate project from the transmission from Granite Canal to Nova Scotia. Those are two different, separate environmental assessments that are ongoing right now. We are partnering with the federal government on both of them; they are both federal and provincial projects. As well, the transmission to Nova Scotia is a tri-party; we are partnering with the Government of Nova Scotia as well as the federal government on that.

Those are ongoing, and there are environmental review committees set up to review the information. Most of the information is in on the project for Island transmission from Labrador and that is currently being reviewed. It is undergoing a thorough review, so as the minister said it is difficult to put a timeline on a decision based on the information that has been collected and the attempts to make sure everything is done right. It is the same thing for the Emera project from Granite Canal over to Nova Scotia. That is undergoing the assessment now and there is a separate committee set up to review that information.

MR. EDMUNDS: Just one more question, Mr. Chair.

When you look at megaprojects, and Muskrat Falls Project is a megaproject, you are looking at environmental assessment for the construction of

the dam, you are looking at environmental assessment for the transmission line, and you are looking at environmental assessment for the Maritime Link. Now, the laws of our country say that project splitting is illegal. I am just wondering: How do you see the Lower Churchill Project as not an example of project splitting.

MR. HEDDERSON: When you look at the overall project, the lines link into the generation, the distribution, and that sort of thing, but from our perspective we look at it as three projects. It is not really splitting off. Generation is one project, distribution is another, and of course, if we are going to cross the gulf, that is another. Into different jurisdictions, that also poses some problems.

Again, we want to make sure that we do this right. Looking at the project, there is a thorough investigation that has been ongoing. The end result should ensure that we have protected what needs to be protected.

MR. EDMUNDS: We are moving on from here.

CHAIR: I want to adopt this section and then move to the next section.

Okay, if we are good with that, can I have a motion to adopt heading 2.1.01 to 2.3.01?

MR. RUSSELL: So moved, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The Member for Lake Melville, so moved.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Motion carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.3.01 carried.

CHAIR: A five-minute break, if we could come back at 11:00, for everybody to stretch their legs and go to the washroom. Thank you.

Recess

CHAIR: We will start with section 3, which is the heading Lands, 3.1.01.

MR. MURPHY: To start off, in line 01, Salaries, \$3.5 million last year and up to \$4.2 million. I am just wondering, what is happening here, a \$927,900 difference?

MR. HEDDERSON: That is three positions and a delayed recruitment of a managerial position for three months, but I will refer to my ADM to just give you the details of that, if you would.

MR. HOWE: The three positions were three vacant survey inspector positions that were also difficult-to-recruit positions, so we realigned some duties within the division to ensure we were able to meet our targets and a timely service. The one managerial position was a new position we received last year through an organizational review. We are currently going through a recruitment process and trying to determine whether there are any suitable candidates out there. So, the three positions we did cut were vacancies.

MR. MURPHY: There were vacancies already, okay. Alright, thanks for that.

Down to 3.1.02 in Land Management and Development, in Salaries, a bit of a difference there. I wonder if we can get an explanation there, \$50,000.

MR. HOWE: Yes, that was an elimination of one position, a Planner II position, and that also was a vacant position we had.

MR. MURPHY: Okay.

Down to line 05, Professional Services, \$170,000 projected in the Budget and only \$105,000 spent. This year it is projected at \$115,000. I am just wondering about what is entailed there.

MR. HOWE: Yes, those Professional Services are for contracts for planned cottage

developments. We had some delays with some projects and we were not able to spend the money when it came to doing new road construction, survey contracts, and septic design contracts. So we were not required to, obviously, expend as much money with the fewer contracts we were doing on certain developments. In fact, some developments came back and contracts came back a little better priced than anticipated.

MR. MURPHY: Okay.

Down to line 06 then, Minister, Purchased Services, \$200,000 was budgeted last year, \$240,000 was the actual, and the number is gone up this year, \$250,200. I wonder if we can get a breakdown.

MR. HOWE: Yes, that is as a result of increase in contracting road construction.

MR. MURPHY: Road construction?

MR. HOWE: Road construction for planned cottage developments.

MR. MURPHY: Okay.

Do you have a rough idea where these would be?

MR. HOWE: These road constructions would have been in the Salmonier Cottage Initiative we are doing up on Salmonier Line. We recently allocated a bunch of lots up there. We have also done some road contract work in the Butts Pond area out around Square Pond in Central Newfoundland. That is where the bulk of that work came from when it came to road construction. We also did some recapping in the Salmonier area.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Thank you for that.

Down to line 02 in provincial revenue, I notice this year there was about a \$1.2 million bump. I wonder if we can get an explanation as regards why that number has gone up.

MR. HEDDERSON: When you are looking at the revenue, of course, that is about Crown land and cottage development.

MR. MURPHY: That is where that number comes from.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, it does.

We are very pleased with the progress of the division. Obviously, it is a revenue generator. Also, not only a revenue generator, but it gives an opportunity for people to be able to purchase cottage lots, country living, and so on and so forth. Again, it is good to see it progressing in the way it is.

MR. MURPHY: A lot of people looking to get out of town.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, get out of Dodge, is it?

MR. MURPHY: Get out of Dodge.

Continuing to Surveying and Mapping, 3.1.03, a couple of things here, Salaries, number one, are gone up. It was down last year but budgeted for \$735,000. I wonder if we can get a breakdown on the Salaries line.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, it is about \$44,000 in the difference and that is a position. Again, it is the same story, the hard to fill. We are having trouble recruiting the type of people or the skilled people that we need. Industry is our biggest competitor. Now, I do not know if Peter wants to explain what the position is.

MR. HOWE: Yes, the position that we eliminated was a temporary position, and it is also a vacant position. It was classified as a Cartographic Technician I.

MR. MURPHY: Just writing down a quick note here, cartography position.

Carrying on with this particular section, Transportation and Communications, \$42,300 was budgeted for last year and it is the same this year, but you only spent \$25,200.

MR. HEDDERSON: That was reflected in a freeze on it mid-Budget. So, obviously, some savings were gotten there, but we are back to regular –

MR. MURPHY: Regularly scheduled programming?

Alright, down below, as well, in line 02, provincial revenue, the revised number is \$50,000 against a projected \$80,000.

MR. HEDDERSON: I think it is \$30,000 in the difference. I have the number of maps that have been sold. I guess we sell a lot of maps. I am looking at Peter.

MR. HOWE: We do sell a lot of the typical hard-copy NTS map sheets that many people are very familiar with, and aerial photography, but as technology progresses people are going to the digital copies of stuff and digital information. So a lot of this is going from hard copy to digital information. These days, people are going with more online web-mapping services.

MR. MURPHY: Google.

MR. HOWE: Google is a prime example. So you are seeing less and less demand for the traditional hard-copy mapping, as people progress more to a Web-based Internet service.

MR. MURPHY: I presume that is probably one of the reasons the department decided to get rid of the cartography position, one of the factors.

MR. HOWE: One of the factors we decided to eliminate that position is that as we go more into the digital age a lot of the data as you update does not have to be repeated. So you go more into a maintenance mode than a creation mode. That reduces a lot of effort, and there are also cost savings that go along with that.

MR. MURPHY: Perfect, okay. Thank you.

Down to the Geomatics Agreements, 3.1.04, Professional Services, \$210,000 last year against an actual of \$107,000 spent. What was not done here?

MR. HEDDERSON: There was a reduction last year of \$40,000 so that is the reinstated this year. It has to do with mapping, I think, does it Peter?

MR. HOWE: Yes, that has to do with mapping as a result of any kind of intergovernmental, inter-provincial federal agreements on mapping services.

MR. MURPHY: Okay.

Minister, you mentioned \$40,000 that was budgeted. There was only \$107,000 done last year, though. That is what I was wondering about.

MR. HEDDERSON: (Inaudible) for savings. I do not know about the rest of it. It just was not spent, I guess.

MR. MURPHY: The federal and provincial revenue down below that as well. I think that is probably where that is showing where it was not spent.

Carrying on over to Parks and Natural Areas –

CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

CHAIR: If we could stay because that is the heading there and give Mr. Edmunds an opportunity. Then we can conclude that one.

MR. MURPHY: Yes, okay.

CHAIR: Mr. Edmunds, under heading 3.1.01.

MR. EDMUNDS: I think my hon. colleague has pretty much gone through the line-by-line items. I do have a question that comes out of this. This comes from an incident, not so much an incident, but I say a concern where there was an individual, I think it was in a local service district, Clarendville, that wanted to purchase a piece of land outside of the municipality and was actually denied because there was no road access to that site. I am just wondering what the policy is on Crown land sales outside of

municipalities that are not currently bounded by the road.

The reason I say this is because up in Labrador we do have our Labrador Inuit Lands, obviously, but there are areas in between that where there is Crown land and people do use this land and sometimes wish to build cabins there. I know it is a lot of diverse geography that we live in. I am just wondering what the policy is on Crown land sales outside of municipalities that currently do not have road access.

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, road access plays an important part with regard to the development of Crown land. Any time an application is made, that may be one factor; there may be others. I am not sure about that particular application.

I will get Peter to just go through some of the requirements of land, whether it is in municipalities or outside of municipalities. In many cases, the restrictions or the conditions are the same.

MR. HOWE: When somebody makes an application within a municipality, it has to obviously conform with, in many of the cases, the town's municipal approved plan. People apply within municipalities for various uses, be it a residence, commercial, or a multitude of uses.

In this particular case, it may be as a result that the person was looking to apply for a residential lot that never directly fronted on a publicly maintained road. By not directly fronting on a publicly maintained road, then there is an expectation as to who is going to provide public access. There probably could be a further demand of public access either being placed upon the Province or the municipality.

In that particular case, it may have been the Province or the municipality was not prepared to extend the services or were not able to extend the services to maintain a public access, be it through road maintenance, snow ploughing, snow clearing, garbage pickup, or, potentially in

Clareville, water and sewer extension. There are various reasons within municipalities.

Outside of municipalities, there are also various reasons through which people get approval. There are some communities that are not incorporated under the Municipalities Act as a municipality. They are called local service districts. Within those local service districts, there are designations through a planning process that is undertaken between ourselves, the Department of Municipal Affairs, as well as the Department of Transportation and Works whereby they delineate areas for residential development and commercial development so you do not end up extending and having ribbon developments, which has impacts on public safety when it comes to road access on and off highways, speed limits, garbage pickup, snow clearing, and school bus servicing. There are various reasons within and without municipalities when it comes to development, depending on its proposed use and any kind of extension of services.

If you want, I can go on and on and give you various examples. In any particular case, I would be more than happy to sit down and discuss specifics as to any individual cases you have, to go over why decisions were made on a government whole, and why these decisions were made based on applicable policies. In various cases it could be a number of policies that have to be applied, whether it is policies internally to the department or policies or legislative mandates of other departments that have to be applied to the circumstance.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, no, I would assume that if an individual is looking for Crown lands outside of municipal boundaries, they would come to the full realization that they are not subject to services offered by either the local service district or the municipality. I think in some cases road access is sometimes done by the applicant if he is successful, and then those rules are then incorporated by the Province. I am just fishing out here, but I would think if someone is making an application outside of any boundaries, they have to realize they do not avail of the services offered by the local service

district or municipality and they would be in fact on their own, until the municipality expands to take in the plot of land that he applied for.

Thank you for your answer. I think, Mr. Chair, that is all I have on the topic of Lands.

CHAIR: Okay, perfect. I will ask for a motion to adopt headings 3.1.01 to 3.1.04.

The Member for Cape St. Francis.

All in favour signify by saying aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Opposed.

Motion carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 through 3.1.04 carried.

CHAIR: We will now move into Parks and Natural Areas, 4.1.01.

Mr. Edmunds, I will start with you.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, I will try to go through some line-by-lines and, as I have appropriate questions I will apply them.

CHAIR: If I could interrupt just to be cognizant, we are only scheduled until 12:00 o'clock. If there are certain key components that you wanted to get through, keep that in mind.

Thank you.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, Parks and Natural Areas, 4.1.01, line 07, Property, Furnishings and Equipment. What you had budgeted for in 2012 and what you actually spent was significant. Now we are back to what you had allocated in the 2012 Budget of \$4,500.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, that is replacement of equipment that is necessary, a one-time replacement. I think it was snowmobiles and ATVs. Is that the one, \$38,000?

OFFICIAL: Yes.

MR. HEDDERSON: We would have replaced if a snowmobile went down and that sort of thing, and basically savings from somewhere else, but that was a one-time purchase.

MR. EDMUNDS: The federal contribution, they put in \$2,500 in 2012. It looks like you did not use it and it is there again. Is there a reason? That would be Amount to be Voted, line 01, federal revenue.

MR. FIRTH: That has to do with a Parks Canada contribution, which was not used.

MR. EDMUNDS: On parks and Park Development, I am just wondering what the status is of the registration system. Has it been affected by the cuts that obviously came out in Budget 2013?

MR. HEDDERSON: As a matter of fact, there is a little bit of an enhancement this year in making sure people have an equal opportunity to get in, especially on the first day. We should see no difference, no.

MR. EDMUNDS: With the fee increases that came out in Budget 2013, is there anticipated revenue you expect to make on historic sites? I am just wondering, does it also apply to provincial and national parks in our Province?

MR. HEDDERSON: I did not get the first line.

MR. EDMUNDS: How much revenue do you expect to make from the fee increases that came out in Budget 2013?

MR. HEDDERSON: Okay, I got it now.

Do you want to answer that, Ross?

MR. FIRTH: We are not planning on any fee increases for our provincial park systems for this year.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, that is all I have on parks. I do have some questions on Wildlife.

CHAIR: You can continue because they are all part of one heading.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Administration, Licensing and Operations, a remarkable decrease there in the amount that was actually used last year at \$320,000 in Transportation and Communications and a considerable decrease this year. I am assuming that is based on the Budget cuts.

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, I think there is \$49,000 that the director and the divisional staff in St. John's and Corner Brook – that is the travel cost back and forth. It must be purposeful in the sense that we needed to have meetings and so on, so this accounts. As well, I think there was an increase in postage. So it is just basically operations, travel, and postage.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Line 06, we have seen decreases in line items based on the cuts, but what we are seeing here is over an \$150,000 increase in Purchased Services there. Your revised Budget last year was \$748,500. This year you are projecting \$922,800, nearly \$923,000.

MR. HEDDERSON: That is with regard to our leased accommodations up for renewal, so we expect it is going to be a little bit more. That is just a forecast adjustment, if you want to call it that.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Going down to 4.2.02, Endangered Species and Biodiversity, there is certainly a marked decrease there in Salaries. Last year you projected nearly \$348,000 and you actually spent about \$320,000. This year you are budgeting just over \$200,000.

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, that is the elimination of two positions in that area.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

I have a few questions on this issue, and I guess it is all encompassing. We fully realize that cuts have been made in the Budget, and we have certainly seen that, but I would like to get a brief overview of how many layoffs came out and from what departments within Environment and Conservation.

MR. HEDDERSON: What divisions within?

MR. EDMUNDS: How many layoffs and from what divisions?

MR. HEDDERSON: Do you want to go through that, Bill, quickly?

MR. PARROTT: Yes, there were sixty-one positions in the department total, and of those sixty-one positions forty-two were positions with people in them and eighteen were vacant.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

I am just losing my train of thought here all of a sudden. I would just like to go on there into Wildlife, 4.2.03, Stewardship and Education. In Salaries, I am assuming that it is part of those sixty-one layoffs that were made?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. EDMUNDS: I am going to just assume that Supplies and Purchased Services are reduced because of those layoffs and the elimination of the need for staffing supplies.

In Habitat, Game and Fur Management, can we assume, too, that the reduction from your revised cost last year of \$1,000,400 to \$806,000 is also due to staff reduction?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

With Wildlife, again, I am just going to assume that the projections are lower because of staff layoffs. I am going to ask a few questions, Mr. Chair, and then I will probably turn it over to my hon. colleague, but I may wish to come back afterwards.

CHAIR: Sure, not a problem.

MR. EDMUNDS: My first question is obviously going to be on the Caribou Strategy in our Province because the numbers in I think all of our herds across the Province are on the decline. It is frustrating to know that in some cases we cannot determine the reason. We all have our own theories, obviously.

The question is, and I fully realize that the herd has reduced drastically from 750,000 down to the latest number, but I am a little bit curious, as the herd declined, how you got to your latest numbers. The reason I ask that is because the last census, which is usually done in July, had put forward the number of 27,000.

When you made the decision in conjunction with whoever you consulted with to ban the George River caribou hunt, your numbers came out as less than 20,000. Given that there was no count between July and last November, how did you arrive at the number that was 27,000, down to less than 20,000? Was it an educated guess?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically it was 22,000, 25,000 to 22,000, and I will get Ross to just go through it. Overall, basically, 1,000 here or 1,000 there is academic. It is not educated guesses in the sense that we have a specific way that we count. That goes across whether it is 800,000 or 80,000. That is why we can compare numbers because we do the same type of counting, or the same method of counting.

The herd is in desperate trouble. Obviously, we have been in consultations with the stakeholder groups, the Aboriginal groups, in the Province and outside the Province, our resident hunters, and so on and so forth.

This decline has been coming. In the face of it, we try desperately to ensure that there would always remain an Aboriginal hunt, but when you are talking 22,000 or 20,000, or even a little less or a little more it is all academic because, again, they are in desperate shape.

I am going to pass it over to Ross just to answer your questions directly and make sure there is an

exchange back and forth so you can get the picture.

Go ahead, Ross.

MR. FIRTH: You are correct in that there was a population census done in the summer of 2012, June and July, which was done in collaboration with the Province of Quebec. Subsequent to that, we did undertake what was called a fall classification looking at calf ratios and adult survival as well in terms of males and females. That allowed us to further adjust our projected or estimated population levels. That is why you see that difference between the census numbers in the summer and then the latter numbers which came out subsequent to that later on in the year.

MR. EDMUNDS: Ross, obviously, we have sat on the same board, and I am asking these questions with the full realization that the herd is in trouble.

MR. HEDDERSON: We are not disputing that. As a matter of fact, I say to the hon. member, we are on the same –

MR. EDMUNDS: I think this was last year; the only thing that was probably looking positive was the biomass between the cows and the calves. I am just wondering: In your classifications and in your research and whatever information you got back, is that still the case?

MR. FIRTH: Yes, it is.

What we are finding is that the body condition of these animals is good. What is particularly alarming is that the calf recruitment rate is extremely low. The adult males are a very low as percentage of the overall population, and the mortality rates for female animals are extremely high. It is those combinations of things which are combining to create a significant ongoing population decline here.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay; I fully understand that.

I would just like to have a couple of more questions on caribou. The Mealy Mountains

herd has been showing up in almost the width and breadth of the Mealy Mountains. We are talking the Back Bay area on the south side of Lake Melville to the east end in on the Sandwich Bay Table watershed and south of that.

So I am just wondering: What are the latest numbers, and are the cutbacks in the Wildlife Division going to impact the research ability on all herds in Labrador, as well as on the Island?

MR. FIRTH: With regard to the latest population numbers for the Mealy Mountains herd, as you know, that is a listed herd, so it is listed as threatened under both federal species at-risk legislation, and also our own provincial endangered species act. The most recent estimates that we have on the population indicate a continued decline of that population.

My recollection is that the previous to our most recent count it was in the neighbourhood of somewhere around 2,500 animals. Again, my recollection to the 2012 count was in the region of 1,700 animals. So, we are seeing a decline there.

MR. EDMUNDS: Now, the only herd that you can legally harvest in Labrador right now is the Torngat Mountains herd. I fully realize that for the longest time this herd was attached to the George River herd in terms of defining herds, but we have since realized that is not the case.

I was just wondering: Is the Province entertaining any work on this herd to try to establish some kind of a baseline? Again, I say this because that herd, in my lifetime, has severely declined.

MR. FIRTH: Yes, you are right in that we do recognize the Torngat herd as a distinct herd from the other recognized herds within Labrador. I think there is a general recognition that we – I mean the stakeholders and the groups involved in the management of that particular group of animals – need to improve our knowledge and understanding of that particular herd.

We will be working with the board, the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board, and also the National Park Management Board. Obviously, they have a role to play because so much of the area in which these animals reside is within the national park. So, it is certainly our intent to work with partners to improve our knowledge and understanding of that particular herd.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

Mr. Chair, just one quick question, it is more of a hope or an interest, and that is latest population numbers on the Red Wine herd – are there any left?

MR. HEDDERSON: That is a good question. They are loners scattered around, but, Ross, if you –

MR. FIRTH: Again, we are concerned about that particular herd, and particularly, I think, what has been perhaps occurring this winter with some harvests that have been taking place there. We are led to believe perhaps that there might be some sedentary animals that have been harvested out of that herd.

MR. EDMUNDS: You talk about harvest, but isn't it illegal to harvest?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, it is.

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay, Mr. Chair, I will turn it over to my hon. colleague, but I do plan to come back, not so much on caribou but other areas of wildlife in the Province.

CHAIR: Okay, Mr. Edmunds.

Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Firth, you were just talking about research into some of these herds and everything, referring to having to work with other groups in the area. I want to come back to the minister on 4.2.05, under Research. It looks like a huge cut in Salaries here. Is it prudent for us to be cutting

salaries and research at this particular time, Mr. Minister, when we have so much pressure particularly on caribou at this particular time?

I am a little bit concerned about the cuts to research programming here. I am wondering if you can explain the positions that may have been lost here under this section.

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, I will get Ross to go through the description of the positions (inaudible).

MR. FIRTH: You are talking about three positions which were eliminated within the Research section. One of those positions was an Ecosystem Management Ecologist, another position was a Wildlife Project Biologist, and the third position was a Big Game contract position.

I will just work backwards; the Big Game contract position was really involved in doing a lot of data analysis of collar locations and collar points and doing habitat and location analysis of those particular data sets.

The Wildlife Project Biologist was involved in a lot of work with regard to the supervision of our lab facilities within the Province, assisting with the Merasheen Island caribou hunt, and also leading our program with regard to the hunter incentive program.

The EME, or the Ecosystem Management Ecologist, that particular position was involved with facilitating and assisting with our endangered species and particular aspects of things, so looking at the listings, supporting recovery teams, development of recovery plans, and management plans for species as well.

MR. MURPHY: I want to focus on the caribou here, wildlife and big game. You mentioned about collaring these animals. I presume Mr. Mahoney might even be able to answer this one. Are we going to be losing anything, Mr. Mahoney, as regards research and everything into caribou, what is happening in caribou with the loss of these positions?

MR. HEDDERSON: Basically, I go back to the review that we have done. Both of these gentlemen who you referenced were part of the review. The question that you have asked, I have asked. The response I have gotten back is that we can fill any gaps that would be created by the loss of these three positions. We have a robust, well-skilled workforce remaining after these layoffs that, again, will be able to carry out what I believe is the purpose of our department.

MR. MURPHY: It is a little bit disconcerting, in the meantime, the ecologist position that was lost having to do research into endangered species as well?

MR. HEDDERSON: You are picking out a position, but you have to look at the bigger picture and realize that we have more than that person. We also have the capacity to fill any of the gaps that are created.

MR. MURPHY: I still have an underlying concern when it comes to natural heritage here. I want to back up a little bit, too. I just happened to finish off on that particular topic as regards some of the positions that were missed. I do not know only in fifteen minutes if we can cover it all. I do not think so; we are probably going to have to come back.

MR. HEDDERSON: Do not depend on that.

MR. MURPHY: As regards positions that were lost, 4.2.02, when we go to Endangered Species and Biodiversity, we know in the previous section there was one position there that was lost as regards the ecological position under endangered species, under 4.2.05, Research. Now we have lost more positions here under section 01, two positions. What were those two positions we lost there, under 4.2.02, if we lost two positions there under Salaries?

MR. FIRTH: Those two positions, one was a Senior Wildlife Biologist and the second one was an Ecosystem Management Ecologist. The Ecosystem Management Ecologist was associated with our biodiversity program and was looking at mammal research, mammal inventories, and also was looking at our bald

eagle and peregrine falcon inventories and research that we have been doing on that.

The Senior Wildlife Biologist is, again, associated with the biodiversity aspect of that particular program and looking at biodiversity inventories, representation on particular committees or bodies as well, and looking at invasive species programs as well.

MR. MURPHY: Okay. We are dealing with endangered species again and I know you mentioned the peregrine falcon is also on the list. I do not know, Mr. Minister. I think you are probably going to have to go back to the Finance Minister and ask for more money when it comes to this particular department. I hate to say it. You say that it is covered, but I do not think so. I see a shortfall here.

MR. HEDDERSON: In response to that, we beefed up these particular areas during the last eight years and beefed up for a purpose that was to catch up, as I have indicated when we first started off on this session today. We hired a lot of temps for projects or for specific purposes to get that baseline data that we absolutely need as we go forward.

We are at a junction right now and our research division will be looking ahead and putting in place basically where we are going in research for the next number of years because you have to have a plan. I am very satisfied at the tremendous work. These people who are going out the door, let me tell you, these are highly skilled individuals who did stellar work – stellar work – and their work will stand for many years to come.

Again, you have to understand there is a balance that has to be struck here and we will make sure as we go forward. As well, simply because one individual goes does not mean that we cannot find another individual in that department who can do the same work because we have on staff very skilled biologists and so on and so forth as what you are describing are going out the door.

MR. MURPHY: Well, if you have faith in it (inaudible).

MR. HEDDERSON: Again, this exercise of core mandate has spread over even long before I came into the department. Let me tell you, it was not an easy process and we have lost very valuable people. However, their work will stand up and our decisions will stand the test of time. If there are any gaps, I am not one not to say that we will adjust to make sure we fill them.

MR. MURPHY: I am just wondering if we are not cutting off our hands to spite our face. At this particular time, like I said, the focus should be on our natural heritage protections, too. I can appreciate you saying that the gaps might be covered –

MR. HEDDERSON: Again, you know what I am going to say. It is that our focus has not changed, our mission has not changed, and our mandate has not changed. What has changed is that we have less people, but we have been selective in making sure that nobody has gone out the door that is key to making sure that things get done.

MR. MURPHY: I can appreciate what you are saying. To finish my comment, we are at a junction now where we are talking about the possibility of massive industrial development, we are talking Muskrat Falls, we are talking mining in Labrador, we are talking about the possibility –

MR. HEDDERSON: Muskrat Falls is done.

MR. MURPHY: Yes, we are talking about all of these things. We are talking about the possibility of the oil industry on the West Coast and it looks like we are dressing down at a time when industry is building up. I hope you can appreciate my point of view on it, and we will differ on it.

MR. HEDDERSON: When you get to industrial development, some of that is user pay as well. These companies coming in asking for work to be done on their behalf, obviously we will push back on them because it is very, very important that they realize they are taking all the risk and they should put up all the money.

MR. MURPHY: I will carry on, but we differ on that aspect. We will leave that one for a future Question Period.

To carry on, 4.2.03 in Wildlife, Stewardship and Education, it looks like you have a shortfall or cut by about \$262,800. How many positions did we lose here? What did they do?

I know that we lost some educational aspects when it comes to programming and parks. I think that education is also an integral part of Environment and Conservation, educational programming, if we are to preserve our natural heritage.

MR. HEDDERSON: It is under Wildlife. One of the positions was the Caribou Strategy, so we are winding down on that. The other five positions I will refer to Ross.

MR. FIRTH: As the minister said, there are five positions associated with that particular decrease. One of them was a Wildlife Biologist II position, and that position was in part responsible for stewardship and conservation initiatives with regard to wetland habitats, doing field surveys, and community engagement.

Another position was a public information officer. That position was responsible in part for conservation education program development and implementation, and also dealing with inquiries from both residents and non-resident guide applications and doing various outreach activities as well.

The third position was a Data Entry Operator position. As the name suggests, that particular position was responsible for the entry of data associated primarily around licensing and licensing information on it.

The fourth position was a Tradesworker I position. That was a vacant position from Salmonier Nature Park.

The fifth position was an Information and Publications Coordinator position. As the name suggests, that particular position was responsible for the development of brochures, outreach

methods, online information with regard to our Web site, and assistance with the development of reports, layouts, and that sort of it on it.

CHAIR: Mr. Murphy, just to remind, you have a couple extra minutes on your time left, if you have some pertinent questions to ask before I go back to Mr. Edmunds and then we can conclude, please.

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

I want to come back to some more job positions that were lost. I am very concerned, not only for the ecological aspect of things, the wildlife protection, and preservation of natural heritage, the connection sometimes between Environment and Conservation to other departments and the importance of some of these positions of departments, for example, like Tourism no doubt has an impact. It may have an impact on tourism in the future and probably to the prospect of provincial revenues in the future, for that matter.'

I am curious about the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve position that was eliminated. I would like to get a bit of reasoning, if you will, from the department on why that position was cut, knowing the connection that this particular person had with the tourism whale watching aspect, and puffin aspect of it.

A comment, does anybody want to deal with that one?

MR. HEDDERSON: I certainly will.

Basically, ecological reserves are pieces of property or land that we put aside for the protection of the land. Oftentimes the animals that are in it, in this case probably birds or whatever are under federal responsibility.

Our responsibility is to make sure that we put these reserves in place; that we put the restrictions that are necessary on them to protect the ecosystem that they contain. Anything else other than that is gravy.

Of course, the tourists that are going around do a great job of bringing people out to these areas under strict conditions, I might add. These tour operators fully understand the compliance that is necessary for them to operate there. When we looked at these positions, we could eliminate those and still not affect the general public's access to those particular areas.

That activity carries on. It has been carried on by the private sector, and done very, very successfully. We still monitor these areas naturally because we do not want anyone in around there who should not be in there. If they are in there, they must have a permit and be under strict supervision.

MR. MURPHY: I think it is going to be a sorely missed position. Cape St. Mary's, how many positions?

MR. HEDDERSON: Cape St. Mary's?

MR. MURPHY: Did the ecological reserve down there lose positions? I am just wondering the hardship that the gannet has gone through in the last couple of years.

MR. HEDDERSON: That was a manager. The position down there was a manager. That is one of the most visited sites. Ross, how many people do we have going through there?

MR. FIRTH: Over 40,000.

MR. HEDDERSON: The interpreters have been left there, so the service will not be in any way affected.

MR. MURPHY: The management position is gone there?

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes.

CHAIR: Mr. Murphy, I must move now to Mr. Edmunds so we can conclude on time.

Mr. Edmunds.

MR. EDMUNDS: I just had a couple of quick comments and one question. I am sure I do not

need to remind the minister of this. When you are getting into wildlife issues, inland rivers, fish, you are dealing with the very core of our existence, our ancestry, and our culture.

Having said that, just one question, this stems from in Labrador the reduction in caribou and the obvious restrictions and also on the Northern Peninsula and that is moose. Indicators are that the population in the Northern part of Newfoundland is actually decreasing.

I am just wondering the status of moose in general in Newfoundland, and more importantly, what the status is – I know there have been moose licences allocated that go as far north as Okak Bay. Moose have been spotted above the treeline in some cases in the summer.

MR. HEDDERSON: Okay.

MR. EDMUNDS: I just have a question on hopefully population increases in Labrador and a steadiness on the populations on the Island portion of our Province.

MR. HEDDERSON: I will get Ross to do it. Overall, our hunting guide is in the works and it will soon be out. It is imminent as a matter of fact. With our moose population in general, there has been a decline. For Labrador, I think I will leave it to Ross to specifically zero in on that.

MR. FIRTH: What we are seeing certainly along some of the coastal valleys there is a slight increase in some of the moose populations there on it. That is favourable, I think, from our point of view and from a residential point of view too in terms of providing additional opportunities for harvest, and for the acquisition of meat for families. ,

MR. EDMUNDS: Okay.

CHAIR: Mr. Edmunds, are you good?

MR. EDMUNDS: Yes.

I would just like to say that I thank the minister for his time, and his colleagues in the

department. Certainly, it was a very informative three hours.

MR. HEDDERSON: The other thing about it, of course, is that if there are some questions, I say to the hon. member, that come in your mind or anything, obviously Question Period is there, but I would much prefer you come over and ask me.

Also, my officials, you have met them, you have seen them, and basically they are always available. We understand the importance of our environment and any questions that need to be answered, we would like to be upfront and have the information for you.

CHAIR: Okay, I would like to get a motion to adopt heading 4.1.01 to 4.2.06.

The Member for Bonavista North.

All those in favour, signify by saying 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Opposed?

Motion carried.

On motion, subheads 4.1.01 through 4.2.06 carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Environment and Conservation carried without amendment.

CHAIR: I, too, would like to thank the minister and his officials for being open and sharing all the information –

MR. HEDDERSON: Could I have one more word, if I could?

CHAIR: Yes, at the end, I will give you that.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee and (inaudible) –

MR. HEDDERSON: If you noticed that I punched out a lot of questions to my deputy

minister, I am trying to get the maximum out of him. I do not know if you know but Bill has been a stellar public servant for thirty-plus years. I will say thirty-plus?

OFFICIAL: Thirty-plus is good.

MR. HEDDERSON: He has been around Central and that sort of thing and he is a fountain of information – not only of information, but he has been such a mover and shaker through his career. This will be his last Estimates as deputy minister and I guess in government at all. I certainly want to publicly put on the record that this man has made stellar service to our Province and that we wish him well as he goes forward into the next stage of his life.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: With that being said –

MR. MURPHY: (Inaudible).

CHAIR: Sorry. Mr. Murphy, go ahead.

MR. MURPHY: (Inaudible) final word from myself, too. I want to thank the staff for coming in today and answering some of the questions we have. We still have concerns and I hope that minister will also leave the door open so that we can bounce questions off him and continue on with our research.

I guess that is about it. I would have liked to have more time to ask about the cuts and everything, but I guess, Mr. Minister, we will be able to bounce a few questions off you during Question Period. We will continue to ask about that and keep pressing the issues.

I feel that now is the time we have to stand on guard. Your work is more important than ever. Thanks for the work that you have done and thanks for the work that you are going to be doing in the future.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Edmunds, Committee members, staff, and the minister and his staff.

A motion to adjourn?

MR. RUSSELL: So moved.

CHAIR: Moved by the Member for Lake Melville.

All those in favour, signify by saying 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Opposed?

Motion carried.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.