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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

### **LONG-TERM FORESTRY AGREEMENT AIDS TOURISM ACTIVITIES**

**LIKELY** – A long-term forestry agreement to be issued by the Province to the communities of Likely and Soda Creek will help create jobs and raise revenue to help boost tourism in the region, announced Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman today.

“We recognize the benefits the Likely-Xats’ull Community Forest has provided to the area over the last several years and we want to build on this success by providing them with longer-term certainty on the land base,” said Coleman. “This 25-year agreement will help Likely-Xats’ull deliver on its vision for a strong, vibrant economy.”

The Likely-Xats’ull Community Forest is a coalition between the Soda Creek Indian Band and the community of Likely. The agreement covers about 12,000 hectares of public forest land and has an allowable annual cut of 15,000 cubic metres in the Central Cariboo Forest District. The community forest organization collaborates with local residents to ensure multiple uses of the area, as it is located on the Gold Rush Trail and includes historic sites such as the Bullion Pit and scenic views of the Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers.

“This agreement will benefit everyone, as our loggers get to spend more time with their families and less time in camp,” said Robin Hood, manager of the Likely-Xats’ull Community Forest. “We also use the funds from harvesting timber to help diversify our economies by developing our historical and wilderness tourism infrastructures. This agreement means our town is alive again.”

First issued with a five-year community forest agreement in 2003, the Likely-Xats’ull Community Forest has directed a portion of its forestry income towards restoring area tourism attractions, including those that depict the history of the old Quesnel River Dam.

As well, 22 signs designating the Gold Rush circle tour and points of interest around the community will be installed between Likely, Wells and Barkerville. One of the unique signs will feature the blade from an old D-10 tractor painted bright yellow, and will mark the entrance of the new Bullion Pit picnic area offering hiking trails, mining equipment displays and picnic tables.

Since August 2004, government has provided new or expanded community forest opportunities for 29 communities across the Province. These agreements give local governments, community groups and First Nations the opportunity to more fully participate in the stewardship of local forest resources.

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Media contact: Jennifer McLarty  
Public Affairs Officer  
Ministry of Forests and Range  
250 387-4592

Robin Hood  
Coordinator Manager  
Likely-Xats’ull Community Forest Ltd.  
250 790-2458

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