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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

### **CRESTON TO BENEFIT FROM COMMUNITY FOREST**

CRESTON – A community forest agreement sets the foundation for environmentally sustainable, long-term economic benefits for Creston’s residents and businesses, Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell announced today.

“Forestry succeeds when all parties share in its success,” said Bell. “Strengthening the link between communities and surrounding forest resources leads to all kinds of benefits, including having a stable source of fibre for local businesses.”

The community forest agreement offers an annual harvest of 15,000 cubic metres over 17,639 hectares of Crown lands north and east of Creston and includes the area around Arrow Creek and its main tributaries. Arrow Creek is a source of Creston’s drinking water and serves local orchards and the Columbia Brewing Company. After the initial five-year probationary term, the agreement can be replaced with a long-term agreement of 25 to 99 years.

“The community forest provides the corporation with a long-term role in our economy and is the direct result of the teamwork and dedication of all involved,” said Creston Mayor Joe Snopek. “It brings extended certainty and security to our water quality, while continuing to support local mills and contractors.”

The agreement was issued to the Creston Valley Forest Corporation, which has directors from the Town of Creston, Regional District of Central Kootenay, the Creston Area Economic Development Commission, and Wildsight. The corporation has used light-touch silviculture and harvesting methods in its operation of a non-replaceable forest licence since 1997, contributing about \$1.5 million to Creston’s economy each year.

“The Creston Valley Forest Corporation has demonstrated its expertise in managing Creston’s highly sensitive and valuable watersheds over the last 11 years,” said Jim Smith, director of the Creston Valley Forest Corporation. “This agreement allows this stewardship to continue for the long term.”

Community forest agreements are a form of legal tenure that enable communities to more fully participate in the stewardship of local Crown forest resources. They are area-based, and give communities exclusive rights to harvest timber, as well as the opportunity to manage other forest resources such as botanical products, recreation, wildlife, water and scenic viewscapes. There are more than 50 community forests operating or in the planning stages in British Columbia.

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