
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

KASLO OFFERED COMMUNITY FOREST OPPORTUNITY

KASLO – The already successful Kaslo and District Community Forest Society has been offered a five-year probationary community forest agreement, which will provide ongoing employment and benefits in the district, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

“The Kaslo and District Community Forest Society’s operation of a forest licence exemplifies how community-run forestry can benefit everyone,” Coleman said. “Stable employment has been created and the Society has contributed \$675,000 to projects that benefit residents. A community forest will increase that legacy.”

The agreement grants the Society, which is jointly operated by the Village of Kaslo and the Central Kootenay Regional District Area “D,” the right to an annual harvest of 25,000 cubic metres. The community forest will consist of about 35,000 hectares of public lands within the Kootenay Lake timber supply area and more than double the annual allowable cut the Society’s non-renewable license had.

“I am delighted that the Kaslo and District Community Forest and the government have concluded a long-term agreement that will expand the community’s tenure in Area D,” said Andy Shadrack, Kootenay Regional District area “D” director. “This continues to allow residents of the area to work together to improve forestry practices.”

“Kaslo and District Community Forest stands as an example of what this community can accomplish through hard work, co-operation and dedication. Kaslo and District will benefit from the forestry employment opportunities, as well as having a greater role in the management and stewardship of our forests,” said Jim Holland, mayor of Kaslo. “The Village, District and Society have worked together to improve the lives of everyone here. The Society has reinvested into recreation, heritage, arts and cultural initiatives, which have greatly enhanced the quality of life in this area.”

The Society has operated a non-renewable forestry licence since 1997 and contributed funding to projects such as the construction of a skateboard park, improvements to sports fields and hockey rink, a high school forestry program, outdoor festivals, and a seniors’ housing complex.

“This agreement will bring long-term stability, certainty and opportunity to our forestry operations. We can now undertake longer-term management initiatives that will benefit the resource and the community at large,” said Robert Mitchell, chair of the Kaslo and District Community Forest Society. “We can look forward to providing our community with the ongoing quality of life dividends that community forests provide.”

Probationary 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 forest resources such as timber and botanical forest products, recreation, wildlife, water and scenic views.

Community forests are intended to stimulate long-term employment, forest-related education and skills training, as well as other social, environmental and economic benefits, while meeting environmental stewardship standards. After an initial term of five years, the agreements may be extended for an additional term of up to five years or replaced with a long-term agreement of not less than 25 years.

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