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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

### **SLOCAN ISSUED COMMUNITY FOREST AGREEMENT**

SLOCAN – The Province has issued the Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative a five-year probationary community forest agreement that will give the group increased control of local resource management, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

“The community forest agreement allows area residents to benefit from the employment and revenues that forestry generates, and allows the local stewardship of more than 15,000 hectares of Slocan’s forests,” Coleman said. “This agreement has brought people together, to work towards sustaining environmental and economic benefits.”

The agreement grants the right to an annual harvest of 16,300 cubic metres of timber on about 15,850 hectares of public forest lands in the Arrow Timber Supply Area. The Cooperative has representatives from the Village of Slocan, the Winlaw Watershed Committee, the Elliott-Anderson-Christian-Trozso Watersheds Association and the Red Mountain Residents Association and has adopted an ecosystem-based management plan. The Cooperative’s strategies emphasize the maintenance of fully functioning ecosystems and watersheds while creating and supporting local jobs, profits and entrepreneurs. The Cooperative will also use forestry techniques to reduce the risk of interface fires.

“The community forest is very much representative of the diversity of our population and the teamwork of our spirit,” said Marc Septav, Village of Slocan councillor. “A wide range of stakeholders are all committed to developing a forestry operation that will improve our economy and village and preserve the integrity of our environment.”

“This community forest is situated in the heart of some of the most highly contested lands in B.C., areas that have been part of the ‘war in the woods’ for over 30 years. Today is a good day for this community, one that shows that many different perspectives can indeed come together and create a solution that considers all of these perspectives. The mountains, the forest, the water and the people are ultimately inseparable,” said Stephan Martineau, president of the Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative. “This community forest will bring people from all walks of life together to work for the benefit of all – the result will be a healthy environment and an economic return to the local community.”

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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