
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

DUNSTER COMMUNITY FOREST SUPPORTS VALLEY JOBS

VICTORIA – A 25-year community forest agreement will encourage the startup of local processing and value-added producers in and around Dunster while putting the management of the area in local hands, announced Prince George-Valemount MLA Shirley Bond on behalf of Minister of Forests and Range Pat Bell.

“I am pleased to have worked with the Dunster Community Forest Society to help them reach this significant point in the process,” said Bond. “Each community forest plan is different and this plan includes the opportunity to harvest timber but also ensures that local residents can continue to access and enjoy the forest and manage the area for a secure clean water source. This is an important day for the Robson Valley, and I want to recognize the hard work that has been done by the Dunster team.”

Bell said, “The stable wood supply that community forests provide are often the trigger for value-added craftsmen and entrepreneurs to start operations. “The agreement also lets the area’s watersheds be managed locally, and ensures recreation opportunities and viewsapes will be maintained.”

The community forest covers a total area of about 20,000 hectares on two parcels of land near Dunster, one on each side of the Fraser River. The 25-year agreement grants the Dunster Community Forest Society the right to harvest up to 15,000 cubic metres of timber per year while preserving recreation and conservation areas within the community forest.

“With this offer of a community forest tenure, we hope to ‘go back to the future’ to re-invigorate and reintroduce small, community-based, locally-owned operations to provide jobs for the people who live here,” said Archie McLean, chair, Dunster Community Forest Society.

Community forest agreements are area-based tenures that enable communities to more fully participate in the stewardship of local Crown forest resources.

“The citizens of Dunster have done an incredible job building their vision for their community forest, and we anticipate they will demonstrate innovative leadership as they move forward on the priorities set out by the community,” said Jennifer Gunter, executive director, British Columbia Community Forest Association.

These tenures provide 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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