

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2017FLNR0069-000988  
April 1, 2017

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource  
Operations

### **New community forest likely for area near Likely, Big Lake**

LIKELY – Opportunities for increased local forest stewardship near Likely and Big Lake, east of Williams Lake, could become reality following an invitation from Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson to the Likely-Xat̓s̓úll Community Forest and Big Lake Community Association to apply for a community forest agreement.

The invitation to apply is for approximately 20,000 cubic metres of allowable annual cut over a 25-year term, providing 10,000 cubic metres to each partner that could be combined and used jointly in a partnership for the benefit of the local area.

The partnership will need to submit an application, including a management plan to the ministry's district manager for approval prior to the community forest agreement being issued. The management plan will help the district manager determine details of the community forest, including its allowable annual cut.

As part of the community forest application, the Likely-Xat̓s̓úll Community Forest and Big Lake Community Association will need to demonstrate community awareness and support for the community forest, including building relationships and sharing information with neighbouring First Nations and area communities.

The invitation to apply for a community forest supports the Province's goals in the forest sector competitiveness agenda to support rural, resource-dependent communities and to build economic capacity, community opportunities and develop partnerships with First Nations in the forest sector.

Community forest agreements are long-term, area-based tenures designed to encourage community involvement in the management of local forests. A community forest is managed by a local government, community group or First Nation for the benefit of the entire community.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations –**

"I am pleased to invite the Likely-Xat̓s̓úll Community Forest and Big Lake Community Association to jointly apply for a community forest agreement. A successful application by these two partners would help stimulate the local economy, bringing benefits and opportunity to community members. This new community forest would align with our goal through the forest sector agenda to help keep resource-dependent communities and First Nations strong and stable."

#### **Coralee Oakes, MLA for Cariboo North –**

“A new community forest under joint partnership of the Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest and Big Lake Community Association would work to stimulate the local economy, expanding employment and forest stewardship opportunities for an area that has experienced recent struggles in the resource sector. This is great news and the partners have my full support in their pending application.”

**John Stace-Smith, director, Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest –**

“This is a great opportunity for the Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest to expand its already successful model of forest stewardship – in partnership with the Big Lake Community Association. We have already demonstrated the locally focused rewards that community forests bring and we look forward to bringing increased benefits to community members.”

**Bee Hooker, president, Big Lake Community Association –**

“We are thrilled with this invitation to apply for a community forest jointly with Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest. Forestry is vital to our community for economic, recreational and heritage values. A successful application will result in a community forest that will create economic, educational and capacity building opportunities for Big Lake and area. With the considerable pressures that have affected jobs in the mining and forest sectors, this is extremely welcome news, giving us more opportunity to help ourselves over the long term.

“We wish to express our gratitude to Minister Thomson, to our MLA Coralee Oakes, Minister Barnett, CRD director Sorely and all those that worked so hard to make this opportunity a reality for our community.”

**Chief Donna Dixon, Xat’sūll First Nation (Soda Creek Indian Band) –**

“The invitation from Minister Thomson for Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest and Big Lake Community Association to apply for a community forest is exciting news for the nation and our local area. The Xat’sūll First Nation fully supports the increased opportunities in forest stewardship and the community benefits derived from local management that a new community forest represents. We look forward to developing working relationships with our neighbouring communities as we move forward with the application.”

**Erik Leslie, president, BC Community Forest Association –**

“The Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest is known for its ability to innovate and find ways to leverage the community forest agreement for local economic diversification and benefit. This new partnership with the Big Lake Community Association will create even more opportunities, and will enable the kind of community engagement and local decision making that leads to sustainable forest management.”

**Learn More:**

Likely-Xat’sūll Community Forest: <http://likely-bc.ca/chamber-commerce/likely-community-forest>

Big Lake Community Association: <http://www.biglakeranch.ca/CommunityAssociation/tabid/58/Default.aspx>

Xat'sull First Nation (Soda Creek Indian Band): <http://xatsull.com>

Strong Past, Bright Future: A Competitiveness Agenda for British Columbia's Forest Sector, along with the Value Added Sector Action Plan, British Columbia Pulp and Paper Sustainability: Sector Challenges and Future Opportunities, and other supporting documents, can be found at: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/competitive-forest-industry](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/competitive-forest-industry)

BC Community Forest Association: <http://bccfa.ca>

**Contact:**

Media Relations  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and  
Natural Resource Operations  
250 356-5261

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)