



BC's LANDS

Update



Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Featuring News From the Lands Sector of B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

JUNE 2006

FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

While many of you are likely gearing down for the lazy days of summer, things have become even busier for me now that the House has wrapped up in Victoria.

I recently attended the official opening of our newest FrontCounter BC office in Prince George. This is a tremendous innovation that will help build the economy across British Columbia. Industry asked us for a single point of contact for natural resource information, permits, licenses, tenures and related authorizations. I am proud to say that we are right on target with the delivery of FrontCounter BC; the response from industry has been very positive. And the office in Prince George is just the beginning. Offices in Nanaimo, Surrey, Smithers, Williams Lake, Cranbrook, Fort St. John and Victoria will be open by the end of the year.

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Minister Bell and Britannia Water Treatment Plant partners cut a copper ribbon to symbolize the end of more than a century of contamination.

Industry Innovation: Britannia Water Treatment Plant

Until now, the former Britannia Mine had the dubious distinction of being one of the largest metal pollution sources in North America due to contaminated water entering local waterways. Now the area has a new lease on life thanks to a remediation program, including a water treatment plant that removes contaminants from the mine water discharge before it enters Howe Sound.

Britannia Mine, located 50 kilometres north of Vancouver adjacent to Howe Sound on the Sea-to-Sky corridor, opened in 1904 and by 1929 it was the largest copper producer in the British Commonwealth. The mine closed in 1974, but the mining activities exposed naturally-occurring metal sulphide ores that have been exposed to air and rain, resulting in acid rock drainage. The contaminated water flowed directly into Howe Sound.

For 30 years, various governments talked about cleaning up the old mine site. In 2004, following a competitive process, the Province entered a public-private partnership with EPCOR. EPCOR was selected to finance, design, build and operate the water treatment plant. The partnership approach maximizes value, minimizes costs and risk to taxpayers, and raises the bar on innovation and accountability.

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One person who helped build FrontCounter BC Prince George from the ground up is Jim McGregor. FrontCounter BC was one of the last projects Jim worked on in his 35-year career with government before retiring last month. As of May 26, if you want to find Jim, he'll likely be on the links at the Smithers golf course. He'll be easy to spot driving the shiny new golf cart his wife Carol bought for him.

On May 11, I attended the Roots and Shoots "Breaking Down the Walls" Festival sponsored by the Jane Goodall Institute. This was a great opportunity to speak to young future leaders, teachers and guests about the historic Central Coast and North Coast land use decisions and the success that was achieved through First Nations, environmentalists, resource industries and government working together. These exceptional young leaders will be dealing with exactly this type of complex process in the future and the event was an excellent opportunity to showcase a success.

Until next month,

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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Ministry of
Agriculture and Lands

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Ultimately, the partnership will save B.C. more than \$10 million compared to the Province going it alone.

The plant is now fully functional and will be run by EPCOR for 20 years. The Province pays EPCOR a monthly fee based on the volume of water treated, provided it complies with the environmental standard established by the Ministry of Environment.

An official opening of the Britannia plant was held on June 5. Many different players contributed to this significant accomplishment including Ministry of Agriculture and Lands staff from the Crown Contaminated Sites branch, led by project manager Barry Azevedo and director Brian Clarke. Partnerships BC played a critical role in managing the P3 procurement and contract negotiations to achieve the agreement with EPCOR. The project was also supported by a cooperative working relationship with the Ministry of Environment in the role of provincial regulator.

Steve Carr Wins 1st Ever Minister's Award of Excellence

Steve Carr of Kamloops is the first recipient of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Minister's Award of Excellence. The award recognizes the hard work and dedication of ministry employees in their service to the citizens of B.C.

Steve is the Regional Executive Director of the Southern Interior Region for the Integrated Land Management Bureau with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Steve is recognized for the excellent job he does serving the needs of the community and the region through his exceptional work on FrontCounter BC. He is also recognized by his colleagues and community members for his work with First Nations on land use planning as well as the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Steve has worked for the province since 1986.



Minister Bell and Assistant Deputy Minister of Regional Client Services Dave Byng congratulate Southern Interior Regional Executive Director Steve Carr (seated) on his award.

All staff with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Integrated Land Management Bureau are eligible to receive the Minister's Award of Excellence through nominations by fellow staff and managers.