



# 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

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## FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

Season's greetings! The holiday season is upon us and things are winding down as the fall session has wrapped up in the capital. Just like many of my colleagues, I will be spending the break in my constituency, Prince George – North, with my family where we will definitely have a white Christmas.

As 2005 comes to a close, it's good to reflect on all we've accomplished in the last 6 months. It's no secret that I was extremely happy to be named Minister of Agriculture and Lands in June.

Reorganization of the Ministry to take on responsibility for Lands and incorporate the former Land and Water BC took a lot of really hard work, and long hours. It was no walk in the park, but I strongly believe in this organization that we have built. I'd like to thank all Ministry of Agriculture and Lands staff as well as clients and support agencies for their patience during the transition.

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## Program Profile: Crown Contaminated Sites

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands provides leadership in the management of B.C.'s contaminated sites program. The Crown Contaminated Sites Branch, coordinates the identification and remediation of priority sites located on Crown Land. Contaminated sites are identified and managed on the basis of risk to human health and the environment. The program provides British Columbians with a clear, co-ordinated, cross-government to the management of contaminated sites..



Britannia Water treatment plant clarifier.

## Britannia Mine Water Treatment Plant Under Construction

In 1929, Britannia Mine was the largest copper producer in the British Commonwealth. For the past 30+ years, the mine has had the unfortunate distinction of being one of the largest metal pollution

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Next year is going to be another busy year. So take some time this holiday season to get outside and enjoy all that our magnificent province has to offer. Remember, if you are buying a Christmas tree this year, buy B.C. Support our local economy by buying seasonal gifts from local artisans who use B.C. products. And for your holiday feast, choose local farm fresh products for the dinner table. 'Tis the season to buy B.C. products!

Best wishes to you and your family this holiday season, until next month,

**Pat Bell**

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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Ministry of  
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sources in North America. Rainwater and runoff became contaminated as it passed through the old mine. The resulting contamination, known as acid rock drainage flowed untreated into Howe Sound.

But our government has changed that. Over the past two years remediation work led by the Crown Contaminated Sites Branch has focused on capturing and redirecting surface runoff and contaminated groundwater, removal and placement of contaminated soils and securing an agreement with EPCOR Britannia Inc. for the construction and operation of a water treatment plant. This P3 project treats the mine's acid rock drainage and captures groundwater to remove heavy metals and neutralize the acidic water. In addition to improving environmental quality, this work is enabling new economic development, including a new housing development on the site.

**Remediation Underway at Yankee Girl**

Mining practices have really changed since the Yankee Girl mine in the Kootenays was in operation. The mine, located near the community of Ymir, was active from the late 1800s until the 1950s mining gold, silver, lead, iron, zinc and cadmium. As part of historical mining activities, tailings were deposited over a two hectare area across from Ymir on the banks of the Salmo River and Ymir Creek. The mining activities were consistent with practices of the day.

Today, the province is working with federal colleagues at DFO to clean-up the historic mine site for the good of the local community as well as the environment. The Regional Medical Health Officer considers the risk to human health low. Crews have completed initial remediation at the site with the construction of a rock barrier to stop mine tailings from being eroded into the Salmo River. Work on the site will continue into 2006.



Tailings with rip-rap barrier being installed at Yankee Girl. Ymir is visible in the background.