



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

MARCH 2006

FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

Talk about roaring into the month of March like a lion! We have had fantastic coverage of the Central Coast and North Coast land decisions announcement.

Everyone around the world seems interested in what we're doing to protect land in British Columbia, particularly spirit bear habitat.

The list of media outlets carrying the story reads like a who's who of the international media hall of fame: front page of the Washington Post, New York Times, CNN, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Seattle Times, Boston Globe, Forbes, ABC, CBS, NBC, Moscow Times, Irish Examiner, BBC, Reuters, Radio New Zealand, even media outlets in South Africa, India, Taiwan, Netherlands, Germany, Wales, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic couldn't resist sharing the story.

National coverage was also extensive. From coast-to-coast all Canadians heard about this landmark land use decision.

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KNT First Nations chairman Dallas Smith and Premier Campbell look on as Minister Bell addresses the audience gathered to celebrate the Central and North Coast land use decisions announcement.

Spirit Bear Rainforest Land Use Decisions Preserve B.C.'s Diversity

The Province has announced land use decisions for the Central Coast and North Coast that will preserve some of the most spectacular, ecologically diverse regions in the world, including critical Spirit Bear habitat. Premier Gordon Campbell, Minister Bell and representatives from First Nations, Environmental and Industry groups were on hand to celebrate the historic announcement in Vancouver on February 7.

The combined Central Coast and North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) areas are approximately 6.4 million hectares, or more than twice the size of Belgium. The total combined protected areas for these regions are approximately 1.8 million hectares, or more than three times the size of Prince Edward Island.

These protected areas preserve one of the largest intact temperate rainforests in the world and conserve more than 200,000 hectares

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I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved in this process for all their hard work. This was a massive undertaking, involving countless people over a number of years. There's no way we could have achieved this major success without your patience and perseverance.

Finally, congratulations to the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB). The bureau's successful FrontCounter BC project has made it to the finals in the Premier's Innovation and Excellence Awards. FrontCounter BC is one of two finalists in the Cross Government Integration category. The awards ceremony will be held later this month in Victoria.

Until next month,

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Spirit Bear Facts

The Spirit Bear is a black bear that has white fur due to a rare genetic trait.

The greatest concentration is found on B.C.'s Central and North Coasts.

B.C.'s greatest number of Spirit Bears are found on Princess Royal Island.

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Ministry of
Agriculture and Lands

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Premier Gordon Campbell (centre) and Minister of Agriculture and Lands Pat Bell (far left) join First Nations leaders, industry leaders and environmentalists in Vancouver to celebrate the land-use decisions for the Central Coast and North Coast.

of the Spirit Bear's habitat, including the more than 103,000 hectare Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy on Princess Royal Island. In short order, legislation will be introduced around these land use decisions to establish new protected areas and further sustainable logging practices in the region.

The decisions are particularly significant for the balance they bring between the environment and forest management. The land use decisions protect vast areas of temperate rain forest, while providing a unique framework called Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) for the industry to work in. These agreements set the stage for a collaborative model to fully implement EBM in these areas by 2009.

Spirit Bear to Become B.C.'s Official Animal

The Spirit Bear is such an inspiration to British Columbians that in government's recent Throne Speech the province announced it would designate the Spirit Bear as B.C.'s first official animal.

The Spirit Bear symbolizes the essence of the spirit of British Columbia. It speaks to the majesty, uniqueness, and mystery of our province. It evokes our unique aboriginal heritage and First Nations' special relationship with this land and all who live on it. The Spirit Bear is a powerful presence and a thing of wonder that lives in a magical land of beauty, grace and unbridled potential.

The Spirit Bear joins B.C.'s provincial bird, the Steller's jay; gemstone, jade; tree, Western red cedar; and flower, pacific dogwood.