



CITY OF QUESNEL NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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City sends letter to Minister of Forests and Range

QUESNEL, B.C. – The City of Quesnel and Lhtako Dene First Nation are formally requesting that the Minister of Forests and Range invite the community of Quesnel to apply for a community forest.

In a letter co-signed by Mayor Nate Bello and Lhtako Dene First Nation Chief Geronimo Squinas, the pair urge Minister Pat Bell to offer a formal invitation for Quesnel to apply for a community forest.

“We’ve been pressing for a community forest invitation for years,” said Mayor Nate Bello. “We feel our proposal is an innovative way to handle a community forest. It will help us better understand the workings of a forest through study of the effects of silviculture and commercial thinning while offering learning opportunities in a real forest classroom. I’m pleased with Minister Bell’s interest and hope that we can work together to find a way to bring our initiative to fruition.”

“This project is one of the several that our First Nation has found a way to partner with the City of Quesnel, fostering a positive working environment,” said Chief Geronimo Squinas. “As First Nations have always been stewards of the land, the opportunity to be a meaningful part of land and forest management is important.”

Council recently lobbied the minister at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities conference to make a decision regarding Quesnel’s status as a potential community forest licensee. At that time the Minister had indicated an answer would be forthcoming by the end of October.

A meeting last week between the Mayor, Chief Geronimo Squinas and Minister Bell was held that lead to this next stage of interest. If a formal invitation is offered, the City and Lhtako Dene First Nation would work on developing a feasibility study around a community forest to determine the best next steps.

The site in question is about 25,000 hectares east of Quesnel that could encompass Dragon Mountain and extend to highway 26 near Cottonwood House Historic Site. While much of the area burned in the 1960s and ’70s, it is the perfect site for innovation with silviculture, development of training programs, commercial and First Nations non-timber forest product harvesting, recreation, and other opportunities.

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Editor’s Note: This release is available online at www.city.quesnel.bc.ca

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