



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

\$4 MILLION TO MAKE NORTHWEST FOREST SERVICE ROADS SAFER

TERRACE – Residents of the northwest will benefit from \$4 million to improve travel and safety conditions on nearly a dozen local Forest Service roads, Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell announced today.

“Forest Service roads play an important role in keeping northwest communities connected and providing residents with access to recreational areas,” said Bell. “They also play a vital role in supporting new economic opportunities across the Skeena-Stikine and Kalum forest districts. By providing \$4 million to improve travel and safety conditions, we’re also supporting job creation across the region.”

The Ministry of Forests and Range will fund \$4 million in capital and operating expenditures by the end of fiscal year 2009/10. The funding will provide for a wide range of road improvements, including grading, resurfacing, bridge repair, culvert repair and replacement, improving gravel supplies, brushing, ditching, road widening, and stabilizing hill slopes and road beds.

“Communities in the northwest have told this government they value the economic and social opportunities that come from having a stronger road network. We listened and we are taking action to strengthen the connection between isolated communities and city centres in the northwest,” said Kevin Krueger, Minister of Community Development. “Whether its accessing health care, exploring new mineral opportunities or opening new regions to tourism, the benefits of this investment will strengthen the region as a whole.”

In the Skeena-Stikine forest district, the roads involved include the Nass, Suskwa, Moricetown-Suskwa, Nilkitkwa, Mitten Main, Babine Slide, Kuldo, and Kitseguecla West Forest Service roads. In the Kalum forest district, the roads include the Copper, Kleanza, West Kalum, Big Cedar, and Williams Creek Forest Service roads.

The Nass Forest Service road, known locally as the Cranberry Connector, will be surfaced with gravel and the Nass River Bridge on the Nass-Kinskuch Forest Service road, a branch of the Nass, will be redecked to improve safety for residents and recreational users heading to the village of Kitsault. Other works on the Nass include road resurfacing, bridge maintenance, hazard mitigation, a complete road survey, and gravel pit development.

“The Cranberry Connector serves as an important alternate link to Terrace when major events close Highway 16,” said Bell. “It also serves several First Nation communities. The road has received some much needed upgrades over the past few years and this additional funding will further improve safety and year-round access.”

British Columbia’s 55,000-kilometre network of Forest Service roads is bigger than the provincial highway system. As first announced by Premier Gordon Campbell at the 2008 Union of B.C. Municipalities convention, the Ministry of Forests and Range is providing \$20 million over two years to improve travel conditions on Forest Service roads that serve as crucial transportation links for rural communities and recreation sites.

New road maintenance funding is the latest in a series of initiatives to improve safety on Forest Service roads, which include the establishment of radio protocols, speed enforcement through expanded use of radar guns, and the expansion of the Vehicle Identification Plates Program.

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