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Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

CENTRAL COAST PLANNING TABLE REACHES CONSENSUS

VICTORIA – Discussions at the central coast land and resource management plan completion table have concluded and a consensus agreement has been reached, Sustainable Resource Management Minister Stan Hagen announced today.

The table has completed its work and will submit its final report and recommendations to the minister by Dec. 31, 2003.

“Participants of the central coast planning table have shown a great deal of commitment toward the process and I appreciate their investment of time and effort in tackling the enormous issues and decisions presented to them,” said Hagen. “I look forward to taking the next steps toward a final plan for the central coast.”

Recommendations of the completion table will be made public after the report is presented to government. Government-to-government discussions with First Nations will take place in the new year and will help lead to decisions on the legal designation of the lands and finalization and implementation of the land use plan by June 30, 2004.

“I look forward to bringing this back to our communities and beginning the process of government-to-government discussions,” said Dallas Smith, chair of the First Nations Forum. “Bringing this process to a successful conclusion will lead to sustainable economic opportunities for our communities along the coast.”

“I think this marks a real milestone that the table members and their caucuses were able to reach a significant agreement,” said process chair Jim Lornie. “There were some tense moments – but every participant at the table should be proud of the recommendations that we will be turning over to government.”

Planning recommendations included the involvement of First Nations, government, forest companies, mining and other resource sectors, conservation groups, labour and community representatives. The area covers about 4.8 million hectares along the west coast of British Columbia.

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