

Model forest plan extended

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The federal government is extending its model forest program for another five years at a cost of \$42 million, Anne McLellan, federal minister of Natural Resources announced Friday.

A new aboriginal-led model forest will also be established in response to demands from natives, McLellan told the Alberta Forest Products Association annual meeting.

The association's incoming president, Dennis Hawksworth, said he was pleased the federal government extended the program.

"The model forest will continue to create opportunities for sustainable forest development in Alberta," Hawksworth said.

The program was established in 1992 to develop innovative approaches to sustainable forest

management.

Funding for the program, however, was cut by about half. It means that each of Canada's 10 model forests will receive about \$500,000 a year for their programs.

The world's largest model forest is the Foothills Model Forest, which includes all of Jasper National Park, provincial Crown lands outside park boundaries and the forest management area allocated to Weldwood of Canada's Hinton division.

Bob Udell, president of the Foothills forest, said Luscar Ltd., which operates the Cardinal River Coal Mine, is also a partner in the Foothills forest. The Cardinal River mine and its proposed successor, Luscar's Cheviot Mine, are both in the model forest's boundaries.

McLellan said she will wait for the results of a federal/provincial environmental assessment before commenting on Luscar's proposal.

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