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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource  
Operations

### **Barkerville management agreement extended to 2025**

**BARKERVILLE** – The management agreement for the Barkerville historic site has been extended to 2025 from its original date of 2020, MLA Coralee Oakes announced today, on behalf of Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

Extension of the agreement allows Barkerville Heritage Trust to develop long-term planning and explore more business opportunities for Barkerville. The trust began developing more tourism opportunities in 2016 to help diversify the rural economy of the region.

With almost \$1.4 million from the Province, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Barkerville Heritage Trust, District of Wells and Canada 150 Infrastructure Fund, the trust was able to make many upgrades during 2016. Enhancements were made to the visitor centre, the Barkerville Fire Hall in Wells, and this funding also supported the establishment of a new multi-purpose activity centre, complete with ice skating rink.

The town of Barkerville, named after prospector Billy Barker, is a testament to the early days of B.C. Barkerville's venue of more than 125 heritage buildings, authentic displays, restaurants, shops and accommodations creates a unique experience for visitors. Declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 1924 and a Provincial Heritage Property in 1958, Barkerville is now the largest living-history museum in western North America.

Some of the new business opportunities the trust has implemented involve upgrades to the campsites to include cabins in two of the three campgrounds, the creation of heated winterized cabins, a conveyor belt lift and tube run at the entrance to Barkerville Historic Town and Park.

The Barkerville Heritage Site Management Agreement will also include the management of Cottonwood House Historic Site, effective April 1, 2017.

Cottonwood House was built in the 1860s to offer accommodation, meals and provisions to miners and travellers on their journey along the Cariboo 'Waggon' Road to Barkerville or Quesnel. Today, Cottonwood still offers meals and accommodations, as well as historic attractions and recreation.

By amalgamating the management of the sites, the trust creates efficiencies by sharing maintenance, accounting, marketing and advertising staff. The inclusion of Cottonwood House fits in with the trust's regional approach to tourism development.

Investment in B.C.'s heritage sites is one of the ways the B.C. government is taking action to strengthen, grow and diversify rural communities. The historic site builds on the immediate investments and long-term actions outlined in B.C.'s Rural Economic Development Strategy that are expected to create over 26,000 jobs and add \$2.8 billion to provincial GDP.

**Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations–**

“The extension of the site management agreement, along with inclusion of Cottonwood House Historic Site, follows government’s mandate to have historic parks become more financially sustainable.”

**Donna Barnett, Minister of State for Rural Economic Development–**

“I am pleased to see the ongoing diversification that the trust has created for Barkerville that enables more rural economic activity.”

**Coralee Oakes, MLA for Cariboo North –**

“Barkerville has always been dear to me and I am happy to see the site develop opportunities that will allow for more people to visit rural B.C.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Barkerville maintains and manages 107 heritage buildings and has 62 heritage replica buildings. Between 50,000 to 60,000 people visit Barkerville each year.
- Cottonwood Historic House is one of the last remaining road houses in B.C.
- British Columbia’s historic buildings, structures and sites attract more than 200,000 visitors annually, which create jobs for B.C. residents and supports sustainable communities.
- Heritage tourism brings over \$170 million annually to the provincial gross domestic product.

**Learn More:**

Barkerville Historic Site: <http://www.barkerville.ca/>

Cottonwood House: <http://www.cottonwoodhouse.ca/>

Rural Economic Development Strategy: <https://bcjobsplan.gov.bc.ca/b-c-s-rural-economic-development-strategy>

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