Speech by Denis Ducharme, Minister of Community Development
Announcement of the Agreement to Purchase Land from the Harvie Family for a New Provincial Park
August 23, 2006

<check against delivery>

Good afternoon everyone. I am honoured to be here with:

- The Harvie family, their extended family and friends;
- Local M.L.A.s, Ted Morton and Janis Tarchuk; and
- All my colleagues who have joined us today.

On behalf of Premier Klein and the Government of Alberta, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here today.

I invite you to marvel at the landscape that surrounds us. It is an oasis of nature that includes a vast valley of native grasslands, rolling hills, treed valleys buffeted by sandstone cliffs and an impressive view of the Rocky Mountains.

It is one of the most visually spectacular and environmentally important pieces of land in Alberta.

Its environmental impact is huge…given its location near two urban centres, Calgary and Cochrane, and given that it encompasses the north shoreline of the Bow River, which is world-renowned for fly-fishing.

That's why today's announcement is so important. It is my pleasure to announce that the Alberta government has agreed to purchase 3,246 acres – five full sections – of the Glenbow Ranch from the Harvie family.

This land agreement will allow us to create a new provincial park and legislatively protect this spectacular landscape including 14 kilometres of the Bow River shoreline.

Protecting this beautiful landscape and conserving it for all time was a dream of the Harvie family. It was their dream to preserve a rich ranching history and celebrate this land and its unique ecological attributes.

It is a dream that is being realized today through this announcement.

To the Harvie family – we thank you for sharing your dream.

Through your vision, we will create a lasting legacy that will be shared and celebrated for generations to come.

There are few places in the province where landscape, natural history, and educational opportunity combine to teach and influence as large a population.

This location is within easy access of more than one million nearby residents including school children for whom this will be an unequalled outdoor classroom.

Speech by Denis Ducharme, Minister of Community Development
Announcement of the Agreement to Purchase Land from the Harvie Family for a New Provincial Park
August 23, 2006

Children will have opportunities to learn respect for the land and water as they study and witness first-hand the value of native grasslands and their role in the health of Alberta's ecosystems.

A new park will make this a place of learning where people can develop an appreciation for this land and its heritage.

A new park will showcase Alberta's ranching heritage.

A new park will also help meet a growing demand for walking, biking and other trails between Calgary and Cochrane.

The pressure to develop this area for residential purposes was great. We had, thanks to the Harvie family, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve the area for future generations, before it became too costly for the government to purchase.

The government agreement reached includes the purchase price of $40 million along with a $27 million charitable donation tax receipt for the Harvie family, based on an independent appraisal completed late last year that placed the land value at about $67 million.

Recent land sales in the area indicate the value of this property may be even higher now. In fact, unofficial estimates indicate it could be as high as 80 million dollars.

Our lives in Alberta have been blessed and shaped by the rich natural resources of our province.

Our continued prosperity, and our quality of life, is dependent on striking a balance between development pressures and environmental protection.

As the late Lieutenant Governor, Lois Hole, once said:
"If we hope to preserve our way of life, we need to rediscover our respect for the land, the water and the natural world."

Join me in celebrating this land agreement that will allow us to create a new provincial park to will help us fulfill this vision for future generations.

Once again, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Harvie family for your vision and for allowing us to share in it.

Thank you.