

April 17, 2018

***WORKING WATERFRONT TRAIL, LOOKOUTS WILL BRING VISITORS TO SAYWARD***

COURTENAY – Tourism is evolving, from a passive pursuit where people simply look at attractions, to an active, experiential event where visitors can be immersed in the history and culture of a place.

The Village of Sayward is embarking on a plan to create an experiential tourism asset, giving visitors an insight to the fishing and forestry industries that are the heart of the community’s working waterfront. This project will form part of a growing network of visitor amenities focused on the region’s rich resource sector history.

The project is being funded with \$183,000 from the Island Coastal Economic Trust as well as contributions from the BC Rural Dividend Fund and the Village of Sayward.

“This is excellent news for the Village of Sayward,” said Claire Trevena, MLA North Island and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. “The new amenities should attract more visitors and businesses into the area.”

The multi-phase Working Waterfront project will create new assets including a trail, gateway, and lookout, and feature historical and cultural information highlighting the community’s history in fishing and forestry.

“The waterfront trail and lookouts will leverage Sayward’s history as a former ‘company town’, and the ongoing activities in forestry and fishing, to attract and educate visitors,” said ICET Chair Phil Kent.

The first phase of the project will see construction of a 1.6km gravel trail; creation of ‘The Gateway’ area that features a defined entry point, way finding signage, and extensive historical and cultural information, as well as parking and landscaping.

One of the highlights of the first phase of the project will be the construction of the ‘Boom Boat Ballet Lookout’. Positioned overlooking the Western Forest Products booming grounds, the lookout will invite visitors to read about the history of forestry in the Sayward Valley and provide them with a front-row view the current operations in front of them – including the intricate dance of the boom boats, known as the ‘Boom Boat Ballet’.

Located at a natural stopping point for visitors travelling to the North Island and back, the project will attract new visitors and encourage visitors stopping in to stay longer.

“The project is already spurring interest in the expansion of existing hospitality businesses and attracting new service providers, eco-tourism operators and residential development,” said Village of Sayward Mayor John McDonald. “This project will also complement and support new initiatives such as a plan for a First Nations and Fishing interpretive centre, which we are working to develop with the K’omox First Nation as well as community based resource sector partners.”

The project, with a total budget of \$367,250, will begin construction this spring, with completion forecast for October 2018.

### **About the Island Coastal Economic Trust**

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC, the Island Coastal Economic Trust has been at the forefront of economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization for the past eleven years.

ICET is independently governed by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials, MLAs and appointees from the Island and Coast. This exceptional team of leaders collaborate to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community centered decision-making process, ICET has approved almost \$50 million in funding for over 180 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2500 construction phase jobs and 2600 long term permanent jobs.

A full overview of ICET can be found at [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca).

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