



## **Island Coastal Economic Trust Announces Funding for Wild Pacific Trail Access**

**For Immediate Release – September 24, 2007.** Mayor W.J. (Jack) Peake, Chair of the Island Coastal Economic Trust (Trust), today announced funding approval of \$95,000 by the Board of Directors to provide access to the popular Wild Pacific Trail in Ucluelet, British Columbia. The total project cost is estimated at \$285,000.

Chair Peake noted that the Board of Directors is pleased to support this project which is consistent with the Trust's Strategic Plan of assisting communities in economic diversification by strengthening tourism opportunities, particularly trails.

Ucluelet Mayor, Dianne St. Jacques, stated that the project will assist Ucluelet and surrounding area to continue to diversify its local economy, create jobs and ensure sustainable development. "The intention is to construct a new 60 vehicle capacity parking lot, toilet facilities and over 600 meters of new access trails for the Wild Pacific Trail. This expanded trail network will serve as a catalyst for increased exploration of the Ucluelet area and should encourage increased visitation and longer visitor stays."

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

The Island Coastal Economic Trust was established by Provincial legislation on February 27, 2006. It provides \$50-million that is managed by an independent board of directors made up of 8 locally elected government representatives and 5 provincially appointed members from the community. The board's mandate is to make strategic investments in regional economic priorities such as forestry, transportation, tourism, mining, energy, Olympic opportunities, economic development, agriculture and aquaculture, and small business. Information about the Trust can be found on [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca).

## FACT SHEET

### Community Overview – The District of Ucluelet

Ucluelet is located 288 kilometres northwest of the provincial capital, Victoria, on the magnificent outer West Coast of Vancouver Island. The closest city is Port Alberni approximately 110 km to the east. The District of Tofino is 40 km northwest of Ucluelet. In between Tofino and Ucluelet is the Long Beach Unit of the [Pacific Rim National Park Reserve](#). Ucluelet also provides water access to [Barkley Sound](#); a spectacular marine area that also features the [Broken Group Islands](#) Unit of the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

Vancouver Island is well known for its mild climate and awe-inspiring scenery. It is a world-class destination area for visitors and a paradise for residents. Traveling to and around Vancouver Island is exciting, fun, and always easy. Whether taking in the magnificent coastal scenery or watching for whales from the deck of a ferry, traveling through pastoral countryside on the train or driving along island highways keeping a camera close at hand is a must. The chances of spotting wildlife are superb and the scenery is spectacular. Ucluelet is truly nestled “*on the edge*” of innovation, opportunity, beauty, adventure and lifestyle.

Ucluelet is situated at the southern tip of the Ucluth Peninsula on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. It is surrounded by spectacular natural beauty. The region is isolated from the rest of Vancouver Island by the long spine of the Vancouver Island Range. These mountains provide a visual backdrop to the entire region and, along with the Pacific Ocean, orchestrate the dynamic environment of the outer Pacific coastline.

The District of Ucluelet encompasses 670 hectares of land and 478 hectares of water. Situated on the west side of Barkley Sound, it lies protected from the ferocious Pacific Ocean in the safety of its’ natural harbour. The region is characterized by miles of sandy beaches interrupted by rocky headlands and fringed by an old growth temperate rainforest of Sitka spruce, western red cedar and western hemlock. Local waters are frequented by a variety of marine mammals including whales, porpoise, seals and sea lions, as well as a wide variety of sea birds.

Ucluelet is geographically well positioned to attract large numbers of visitors. The adjacent [Pacific Rim National Park Reserve](#), which attracts nearly one million visits a year, is made up of three geographically separated segments known as Long Beach, the Broken Group Islands, and the [West Coast Trail](#). Long Beach and the Broken Group Islands are both directly accessible from Ucluelet. Long Beach, which features more than 20 km of sandy beaches is only a ten-minute drive from Ucluelet. The Broken Group Islands are made up of over 100 rocks, islands and islets in Barkley Sound. Access to the islands is exclusively by boat and the closest major community to the Broken Group and other islands within Barkley Sound is Ucluelet..

#### **Climate:**

Ucluelet is dominated by its weather. Its location on the Estevan Coastal Plain, wedged between the sea and the mountains, creates a maritime climate unique in Canada.

The climate is characteristically mild and humid. Moderate temperatures and high precipitation combine to produce a long growing season. This wet, maritime climate results in a lush temperate rainforest and freedom from extreme temperature changes so common in other parts of Canada.

**Population:**

The direct population of Ucluelet, according to BC Stats, is 1978 people. The surrounding region, which is serviced by Ucluelet , totals about 3000 additional residents.

**Economy:**

Ucluelet was historically a resource-based village dependent upon commercial fishing and forestry. The economy is now shifting to include more value added industries such as tourism, property development, the service industries and fish processing. All sectors of the economy have room to expand with over half the land in Ucluelet currently undeveloped. Flexible zoning and proactive private and public entities are nurturing existing businesses and embracing and facilitating growth in all sectors.

**Wild Pacific Trail Access and Parking Project: Estimated Benefits:**

The Wild Pacific Trail enhances the quality of the visitor experience by promoting longer stays and/or return visits thus maximizing the economic benefits to the region. This will allow the community to grow and diversify to help meet the needs of the tourism industry (by expanding business during shoulder seasons) and should also make the area more attractive for locals, prospective residents and investors with concomitant impact on the regional and the British Columbia economies.

From May to September 2001 Parks Canada locally conducted an entry survey. Salient information extracted from that survey is as follows:

	<u>NPark</u>	<u>Tofino</u>	<u>Ucluelet</u>
• Average amount spent by group on accommodations	\$64	\$370	\$164
• Average amount spent by group on food	\$64	\$137	\$ 71
• Average amount spent on souvenirs	<u>\$24</u>	<u>\$ 92</u>	<u>\$ 47</u>
• Group average spending by location	\$152	\$599	\$282

*The average length of stay for non Parks groups was two days. Almost half (49%) of the visitor parties consisted of two people. The average size of the visitor parties was three people. Consequently, if we look at daily per person expenditure patterns from visitors **and the fact that 53% of visitors spend less than one day** there is a significant opportunity for local economic gains by providing additional recreational opportunities within the region. The Wild Pacific Trail will act as a catalyst to extend visitor stays and to coerce visitors to re-visit.*

In summary, the Wild Pacific Trail will increasingly act as a destination for visitors to the West Coast of Vancouver Island and will significantly strengthen the local economy.

*This very positive project will:*

- Increase visitation to the area;
- Extend visitor lengths of stay;
- Accelerate the diversification to the local economy; and,
- Provide increased employment (during and post construction).



For further information call:

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