

AHAMINAQUUS WELCOME HOUSE TO CREATE NEW GATEWAY TO NOOTKA SOUND

Visitor centre will expand access to world-class cultural and ecological tourism



COURTENAY, 20 July 2022 – A waterfront welcome house located at the main entrance to Nootka Sound will broaden the range of tourism offerings and showcase the area’s rich Indigenous culture and history, with funding support from Island Coastal Economic Trust’s [Capital and Innovation Program](#).

This project represents a key component of the Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nation’s redevelopment plans for the Ahaminaquus reserve lands, located 13km from the Village of Gold River at the mouth of the Gold River, a main tributary to the Nootka Sound. Other planned activities include a new RV park and campground, trail network and satellite museum on Nootka Island, and upgrades to the marina and boat launch, and Yuquot Cabins.

“The Nation believes Economic development in its territories is vitally linked to Forestry, Fishery, and Tourism. Ahaminaquus Welcome House is a major first step in coordinating tourism industry in the region benefiting Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nation, Gold River, and the province at large, further promoting Nootka Sound as an adventure destination on Vancouver Island,” explains Azar Kamran, Administrator, and CEO of Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nations.

Nootka Sound is widely enjoyed by sports anglers, marine wildlife enthusiasts, and other outdoor adventurers. The existing boat ramp at Ahaminaquus currently provides the only paved-road access to the many highly valued cultural, ecological, and historical tourism destinations in the region.

The Welcome House will enrich the overall tourist experience by functioning as a visitor centre, community hub, and museum. The facility will host ceremonies, dancing, workshops, and educational sessions focusing on Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nation and the settler history in the region, such as Captain Cook’s first landing.



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

“This project significantly expands the region’s tourism infrastructure, providing increased capacity to meet existing and future demand for authentic Indigenous and West Coast experiences,” says Aaron Stone, ICET Board Chair. “Importantly, the Welcome House will support the dispersion of visitors from saturated markets to rural/remote and underserved areas.”

The design of the Welcome House will reflect the traditional style of Nootka architecture and be built out of cedar wood planks and Douglas Fir beams. Building amenities will include interpretive display and programming space coffee and gift shops and public washrooms.

The Ahaminaquus Welcome House project is funded from the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure stream of ICET’s Capital & Innovation Program. The Trust will contribute \$300,000 to the total project cost of \$1,303,000.

The Capital & Innovation Program is accepting applications until October 20th, 2022. For more information on the program please visit our website: www.islandcoastaltrust.ca

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About Island Coastal Economic Trust

Founded by the Province of British Columbia in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust works to build a sustainable and resilient coastal economy in reciprocal relationships with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution. Serving over half a million residents, we partner with communities in the development and financing of their economic infrastructure and diversification efforts through our unique structure that is led by, and accountable to, communities.

Since our inception, Island Coastal Economic Trust has approved more than \$55 million to economic development initiatives that have attracted over \$270 million in new investment to our region. These investments have created over 2,750 permanent jobs, and countless positive impacts, across the coast.

Island Coastal Economic Trust acknowledges that we work for communities across the ancestral and unceded territories of the Kwákwala, Nuučaanuł, Éy7á7juuthem, Ligwilda'xw, Pəntl'áč, shíshálh, Hul'q'umi'num', diitiid?aatx, SENĆOŦEN, Lekwungen, and T'Sou-ke speaking peoples.

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