

COMPLETION REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

UCLUELET AQUARIUM PROJECT



Ucluelet Aquarium Society, May 2012

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The Big Pool (with view of harbour)

SUMMARY

The Ucluelet Aquarium operated a temporary facility in downtown Ucluelet for five years during which it became highly popular with regional visitors and local residents.

Aquarium operating costs were covered through admission charges with operating surpluses occurring annually. The aquarium is also functions as a significant training facility for would-be biologists, environmental professionals and the hospitality industry.

Construction of a permanent facility immediately adjacent to the current aquarium was completed in March 2012. The catalyst for this new development was the negotiation of a thirty year lease with the District of Ucluelet for waterfront property immediately adjacent to the former temporary building.

The new, 3000 square foot building houses aquarium displays including touch tanks for hands-on experiences display area for static and interactive exhibits, demonstration and teaching stations; a multipurpose lecture and seminar room; marine observation area and functional space with adjacent food preparation area for special events; visitor reception area; a small gift shop; office support space; receiving, delivery/storage space and public bathrooms.

This very positive project will:

- Increase visitation to the region and extend visitor lengths of stay;
- Accelerate diversification of the local economy; and;
- Provide employment.

All levels of government assisted with the funding for this vital new facility. The Government of Canada, through Western Economic Diversification Canada and the West Coast Community Adjustment Program through the Community Futures Development Corporation of Alberni Clayoquot provided the federal component. The Island Coastal Economic Trust assisted with the provincial contribution and the District of Ucluelet provided leased land, some funding assistance and in-kind contributions. The Ucluelet Aquarium Society itself provided over \$300,000 of cash and in-kind.

The successful completion of this project is part of a greater regional strategy to build a more diverse and sustainable economy on the sunny west coast of Vancouver Island.

The key sector strategy for this proposal relates to facility development within the tourism sector. Unquestionably, the Ucluelet Aquarium provides a considerable opportunity to capture new and expanding visitor interest and demand. The objective is to diversify local economy; to take advantage of an outstanding natural area which features a significant opportunity to capture new visitor interests in terms of attracting and retaining visitors

This project, several years in the making, required the hard work and vision of some dedicated local volunteers, the cooperation of all levels of government and region wide support. Unquestionably, the new Ucluelet Aquarium is a positive example of what can happen with a good product and supportive governments from all levels. All should take a bow!

The official opening of this new facility will take place on June 1st, 2012.



East Gallery

STATEMENT OF COMPLETION OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Partnerships were integral to the completion of this project Details are as follows:

This proposal meets the Trust's objective, eligibility criteria and sector strategy as follows:

- The proposal to construct needed visitor facilities is part of a greater regional strategy to build a more diverse and sustainable economy;
- The key sector strategy for this proposal relates to facility development within the tourism sector. Unquestionably, the Ucluelet Aquarium provides a considerable opportunity to capture new and expanding visitor interest and demand
- The objective is to diversify local economy; to take advantage of outstanding natural area and a significant opportunity to capture new visitor interests.

This project:

- Is consistent with the Act, objectives, vision and mission of the Trust;
- Is consistent with established regional, community and sector economic development strategies;
- will help grow and diversify the regional and local economy;
- will provide tangible long term direct and indirect economic benefits;
- demonstrates the Trust's preference for partnerships and leveraged investments as clearly demonstrated by funding from the Government of Canada, District of Ucluelet, the Ucluelet Aquarium Society, and a host of in-kind local donations;
- long term benefits to the regional economy are tangible;
- clearly leverages unencumbered private and public sector dollars;

- includes funding that cannot be covered by existing programs;
- is environmentally sustainable and provides excellent environmental stewardship;
- will demonstrate sound project management and good value for money; financial accountability and sound management with bias for low administrative costs;
- proponents have significant financial investment in the project;
- Return on investment will be achieved by attracting new visitors, increasing visitor lengths of stay and concomitant expenditures.

The inherent value of this proposed project is the provision of a high quality tourism and educational opportunity which attracts **new** regional visitors and which compels visitors to lengthen their stay in order to experience it. This new facility will enhance the quality of the visitor's experience by promoting longer stays and or/return visits maximizing the economic benefits to the community and region. Consequently, the service offer will have an immediate, significant and positive impact on fixed roof accommodation, restaurants and local service suppliers.

This whole initiative will not only create employment opportunities within the structure of the initiative through the need for maintenance workers, naturalist/biologists, guides and service staff, but with the increase in visitors will result in higher demand for other tourism related services throughout the region.

Indirect employment will increase as the new Uclulelet Aquarium the Wild Pacific Trail and other new facilities and recreational activities function as a focus for increasing numbers of the general public of all ages.

Given the recent job losses locally in the forestry, fishing and related industries, the employment provided in the construction (1502 labour days plus design and engineering employment) and operating seasons (7.48 person years) in addition to the indirect employment will be critical to the economic sustainability of the community.



Exterior Lantern at Dusk from Harbourside

BACKGROUND

In 2007 the Ucluelet Aquarium Society (UAS) together with the District of Ucluelet, began the process of applying for a parcel of Crown land in the best possible location on which to build the permanent facility. It took several years to secure, but a thirty year lease agreement for this land was completed in 2010.

Subsequently, the Society contracted an award winning architectural firm Blue Sky Architects to design a permanent facility which is a LEED's certified complex with adjacent fish habitat improvements in which various educational programs can take place.

See attached floor plans and design elements from Blue Sky Architects in appendix 1.

The lease area is essentially a water lot. Consequently, construction involved shoreline alterations. A fish habitat study was completed to the satisfaction of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. This produced changes for fish and fish habitat but did not cause alterations to eel grass beds as plans were specifically designed to avoid impacting this sensitive area.

Deleterious impacts on fish and fish habitat were mitigated within the proposed lease area not affected by construction. Geotechnical studies were also completed.

It should be noted that the Society invested in these planning and design processes and complex environmental studies at their own expense in advance of pursuing grants and support from others.

In terms of the actual construction, the UAS hired their own project manager rather than hiring a general contractor. The project manager and the UAS Board administered the project in-house. They carried out their own comprehensive RFP processes that ensured that RFP's were posted on BC Bid, Yellow Sheet Construction Data and Building Links. During the tender process the team ensured that contractors and suppliers throughout the region (and beyond) were aware of the opportunity to bid on this project.

Consequently, by functioning as their own general contractor, the UAS believes that they saved a minimum of 15% of project costs.



Main Entrance



Foundation Work (with the tides) 2011



View from Main Street

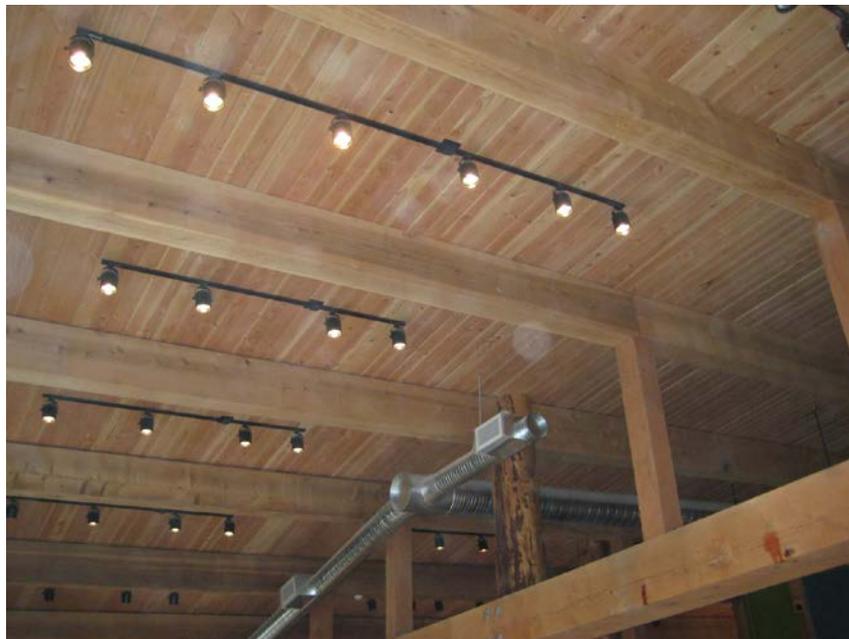


A volunteer painter





Construction: early 2012



Let there be light!



Aquariums are complex systems.....