



Economic Development Readiness Program Final Report

Organization's Name: British Columbia Ocean Boating Tourism Association_____

Project Name: Marine Tourism Sector Marketing and product Development_____

Commencement Date: August 23, 2016_____

Completion Date: July 31, 2017

ICET Contribution: \$14,400_____

Total Project Budget: \$29,800_____

1. Purpose and Goals

The Project's purpose was to increase and enhance the promotion of three remote coastal sub-regions that are within ICET's area of interest: Vancouver Island West, Discovery Islands and Broughton Archipelago. Increasing the number of boaters, the length of their stays and the extent of the seasons they visit, with the goal of increased spending in these regions, was the aim.

2. Implementation

- a. Enhanced profiles for 14 communities were created. One community did not respond to multiple contacts.

Zeballos, Telegraph Cove, Sointula, Winter Harbour, Refuge Cove, Pender Harbour, Egmont, Hornby Island, Denman Island, Cortes Island, Lund, Alert Bay, Bamfield, Sayward

- b. Regional Showcases were created for Vancouver Island West and Broughton Archipelago. These include maps of marine services, water activities, cultural attractions, guides to best anchorages and food and beverage guides.
- c. A new template for Adventure Tour Charters was created. A dozen operators were invited to provide photos and descriptions of their product. Only three responded, but we continue the offer.

- d. A six-minute video of the Discovery Islands was created. Links to it were distributed to all marinas, marine resorts and community destination marketing organizations in the area.
- e. A travel writer accompanied the film crew. An article was published in *The Triton* and two articles were published in *Harbours Magazine*. A fourth article is pending publication in *Harbours Magazine*.
- f. The Vancouver, Victoria¹ and Edmonton Boat Shows were attended. A brochure (attached) that highlighted Vancouver Island West, Discovery Islands and Broughton Archipelago was distributed at these shows and at the Seattle Boat Show (by a surrogate)². The Edmonton show especially reached out to people interested in fishing and boating around north Vancouver Island.
- g. The BC Marine Parks page was improved and nine parks in ICET's area of interest were listed.
- h. Our newsletter subscribers contest prize this year is a holiday at Pacific Gateway Marina in Port Renfrew, drawing attention to the Vancouver Island West.
- i. Over eight months, approximately 25 Facebook items related to the three remote regions were posted.

3. Impacts

It is too early to evaluate the economic benefits of the remote regions campaign. The campaign will have lasting impact, because many of its products will endure, continuing to influence consumer behavior. AHOY BC is committed to boosting marine tourism in remote regions of interest to ICET and will continue to use all media in that effort.

- a. The communities receiving enhanced profiles have greater market exposure. Four of these communities previously had basic profiles, ten did not have a profile. On average, enhanced profiles are viewed more than twice as often as basic profiles. Viewers see alluring photos, read about attractions and are linked to some of them. The total number of views of these 14 profiles, as of time of writing, is 2688, an average of 192 per community over approximately six months (communities were added over several months).
- b. The two showcases were added in January 2017. Since that time, the Vancouver Island West page and showcase have been visited 1116 times and the Broughton showcase and page 1704 times. These are increases in viewership (of the subregion) of about 30% and 15% respectively. The Vancouver Island West

¹ This report was written the day before the Victoria Boat Show.

² Attendance at the Edmonton show and representation at the Seattle show were among our Next Steps in the report submitted last year.

showcase was featured at the Edmonton show and it received extremely positive responses for its travel planning value.

- c. Since its release in January 2017, the Discovery Islands video has been viewed on our website 1097 times. We will contact stakeholders who have not provided links to it a second time. It is a compelling video with travel planning attributes. We are not satisfied with its exposure. We continue to promote in via social media. It has been viewed nearly 300 times directly from YouTube, but our promotion is to view it from ahoybc.com.
- d. According to value of corresponding paid advertising space, the value of the three articles on the Discovery Islands published so far is \$31,000. The Triton reaches 60,000 readers and Harbours Magazine has a print and digital subscription base over 500,000.
- e. We estimate 2000 individuals were served at boat shows we attended, plus an additional 600 received our brochure at the Seattle Boat Show. Many thousands more saw our logo vividly display, an aid to creating brand recognition. As part of our mandate, we drew attention to the closer remote regions of the Coast: the three that are part of the remote regions project.
- f. Our newsletter has almost 1000 subscribers and our social media reaches about 15,000/week. The accent on the remote regions increases the likelihood of marine tourism in those areas.

4. Community Involvement and Collaboration

Fourteen incorporated and unincorporated communities provided materials for the construction of enhanced profiles.

Over 70 businesses responded to our request for information and permission to list them in the regional showcases.

5. Lessons Learned

On the positive side, we learned that small, even unofficial communities, welcomed the opportunity to promote marine tourism via AHOY BC. Their participation will result in the attraction of boaters and other marine tourists. The addition of photos and information enhances the AHOY BC website and assists visitors to plan travel.

We built the regional showcases in order to encourage marine tourism in those regions, but also because boaters told us they want additional travel planning information. We made a point of showing the showcases to booth visitors at Vancouver and Edmonton boat shows. The best summary of responses is: "We will use this."

A more or less positive lesson is awareness of the logistical difficulty of filming during the height of the boating season. We began in early July to make arrangements for our film crew to occupy a berth and our travel writer to be hosted at marine resorts across the Discovery Islands. Keen as the operators were, some were unable to host our crew during the late August project. This type of project needs to be planned well in advance.

In the line of improvement, we need to find ways to increase viewership of our videos. The number of views is lackluster. We hope in 2017-18 to engage a digital media consultant who will integrate our initiatives, including increasing exposure to what is a captivating and useful video

6. Next Steps

- a. We will continue our efforts to promote remote regions. In 2017-18, we have a partnership with Tourism Campbell to produce a marine tourism video for that city and surrounding ocean area. We will continue to promote remote regions via social media, our blog and our newsletter.
- b. We will stay in contact with the communities that received enhanced profiles through this project, in order to promote them and insure information is current.
- c. Also within the ICET area of interest, we have a partnership with Sunshine Coast Tourism to create a regional showcase.
- d. We will work with stakeholders and via our digital media to promote the Discovery Islands video.

Financial Report

Claims reports filed show all funds received were allocated to the remote regions project and that the project budget was fully spent.

Certification:

I, the undersigned, have authority to represent the recipient and certify that to the best of my knowledge that all the information in this final report is true and complete.

Print Recipient's Name

Title

Recipient's Signature

Date