



## ELK FALLS SUSPENSION BRIDGE PROJECTED TO DOUBLE VISITORS TO THE PARK

*Free-to-use-forever, the bridge is already a major tourist draw*

**THE NEWLY COMPLETED** Elk Falls Suspension Bridge in Campbell River spans 60 metres and, along with a cantilevered viewing platform, provides spectacular views of Elk Falls never before possible.

The vision of the Rotary Club of Campbell River, the bridge was developed in partnership with BC Parks and BC Hydro. With funding from community, government, business and ICET, it is a demonstration of the important role non-profits can play in rallying support for economic development.

“We expect annual visitors to Elk Falls will double, although I think that estimate is conservative,” said Lorrie David Bewza of the Rotary Club of Campbell River.

According to the Campbell River Visitors Centre, travellers to the area spend \$76.53 per person per day, and the huge increase in tourists could mean millions of new visitor dollars spent in the region.

Since opening on May 9, 2015, the 83-stall parking lot has been full most weekends. In the first few weeks of early season operation, an average of two thousand visitors per day have been enjoying the new amenity. With the arrival of summer, those numbers are increasing, and project proponents are seeing their projections around economic impact coming to fruition.

region and 9 jobs outside the region. Early visitation numbers indicate that the bridge will likely more than double Park visitation in the first year, exceeding the anticipated increases far ahead of schedule.

Bewza noted that the project enjoyed the support of local government and the Wei Wai Kum, K’omoks, Homalco, and We Wai Kai First Nations, along with the financial support of BC Hydro, Community Futures Strathcona, BC Parks to match ICET’s contribution of \$325,000.

BC Parks embraced the Rotary Club’s idea to build the suspension bridge, recognizing that it would instantly make Elk Falls Provincial Park a world-class destination that would contribute to their mandate to develop eco-tourism on Vancouver Island.

With a general idea of where they wanted the bridge located, the Campbell River Rotary Club needed to determine the safest site to anchor the bridge. BC Hydro shared their geotechnical report and topographical survey for the area, allowing the Rotary Club to use project funds on the design, engineering and construction of the bridge.

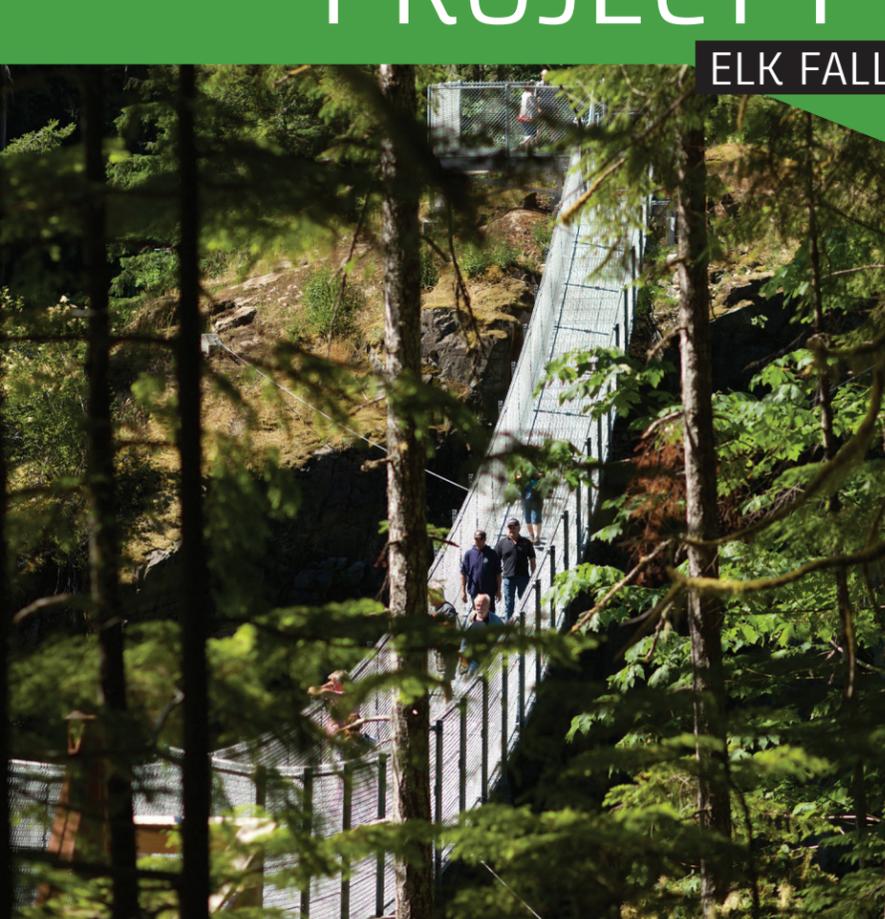
To safely accommodate the increase in visitors the suspension bridge would generate, a new parking lot was required. BC Hydro, inspired about the possibilities for the community, stepped up to the plate to convert a temporary parking lot into a permanent 83 unit parking lot that would properly accommodate visitors, RVs and tour buses.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between BC Parks, BC Hydro and the Campbell River Rotary Club ensuring that access to the bridge be free for all visitors in perpetuity.

The Elk Falls Suspension Bridge project is a successful pilot for infrastructure development that can be replicated around British Columbia, bringing together non-profit groups, government, business and other stakeholders to help realize a community vision.

# PROJECT PROFILE

## ELK FALLS SUSPENSION BRIDGE



**WE EXPECT ANNUAL VISITORS TO ELK FALLS WILL DOUBLE, ALTHOUGH I THINK THAT ESTIMATE IS CONSERVATIVE**

An economic impact assessment prepared by ICET estimated that the bridge would generate approximately 50,000 new visitor days, generating \$3.1 million in economic impact after 3-5 years. This also translates into 35 permanent new jobs in the