

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 9, 2015

MALAHAT NATION REVITALIZES MILL BAY WATERFRONT, CREATING JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

COURTENAY – The Malahat Nation is taking the lead in revitalizing the Mill Bay area waterfront by developing new marine infrastructure. With an anticipated 56 new jobs arising from increased tourism and aquaculture business development, the project has attracted partners and funding.

The work will include construction of a new boat launch and parking area on Malahat Nation lands, a waterfront boardwalk as well as enhanced waterfront recreation areas. The project will also be a catalyst for complementary new aquaculture business development by the Malahat and will provide waterfront opportunities for new tourism service businesses such as a cafe, gift shop, eco-tourism operators and a Malahat walking museum.

The Island Coastal Economic Trust is contributing \$400,000 to the project. The Malahat's partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Mill Bay Marina Group is providing some complementary funding to the Malahat's significant investment in the project.

"This space will provide an opportunity to tell the Malahat story of our historical and cultural connection to the land and sea, and convey the Nation's welcome to all visitors," said Malahat Chief Michael Harry. "Our nation is building a sustainable future and through this process, we are understanding ourselves and understanding other local residents."

The tourism business components combined with the project's boost to aquaculture infrastructure means significant economic activity and jobs, both for the Malahat Nation directly, and for the region at-large.

"Our consulting economist noted that this project scores very highly on job-creation and economic impact values," said ICET Chair Phil Kent. "When First Nations, local government and the private sector work together, projects flourish with greater results than the sum of the individual contributions."

The out of town tourists attracted by the new boat launch and visitors attracted by the other amenities are expected to generate approximately \$1.7M in local spending and a dozen new jobs after three to five years of growth.

A joint venture aquaculture operation on the site, initially focused on farmed scallops, is also part of the long-term economic impact and job-creation vision for the project. Within five years, the

Malahat expect 37 new direct and indirect, local jobs to be created through the aquaculture operation.

“Malahat is very pleased to be working with the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Mill Bay Marina toward the construction of these new facilities. This is the first of many “new” relationships being developed by the Malahat Nation as it undertakes its ‘Nation Building’ initiative,” said Malahat Nation Manager Lawrence Lewis. “These new facilities will provide a focal point in our communities to deploy new economic and business opportunities, benefitting us all.”

The existing boat launch in Mill Bay had reached the end of its lifespan, and the Mill Bay Marina Group had undertaken a commitment with the CVRD to build a new launch. Due to parking and traffic limitations, fulfilling the commitment was near impossible.

At the same time, the Malahat Nation had been planning a boat launch facility of their own as part of a larger economic development initiative that would include aquaculture and light industrial development. It was a natural fit to include a boardwalk along the waterfront, to provide a tourism draw as well as improve the overall safety and enjoyment of the site.

The final project will include a free-use boat launch, road reconfiguration, new parking facilities, a washroom and office building, and a waterfront boardwalk. The total budget is \$1.85M, and is expected to be complete by December 2015.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust is a \$50 million endowment established in 2006 by the Government of British Columbia to help diversify the economies of central and northern Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast.

ICET is guided by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials and MLAs and five appointees. This exceptional team of leaders collaborates to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community-centred decision-making process, ICET has approved over \$48 million for over 130 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since implementing its grant program in 2007. ICET investments have leveraged over \$270 million in incremental funding into the region.

A full overview of ICET can be found at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca.

-end-

For further information:

Line Robert, CEO
Island Coastal Economic Trust
Tel. 250-871-7797 (Ext. 227)
line.robert@islandcoastaltrust.ca

Mayor Phil Kent, ICET Chair
City of Duncan
Tel. 250-709-0186
mayor@duncan.ca

Lawrence Lewis, Nation Manager
Malahat First Nation
Tel. 250-743-3231
lawrencelewis@malahatnation.com