

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORTH ISLAND COMMUNITIES PLANNING ATV TRAIL NETWORK TO ATTRACT NEW VISITORS

COURTENAY – The Village of Tahsis is taking the next steps in creating an off-road ATV trail system to bring new visitors to the region.

Partnering with the Village of Zeballos, Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, Ehattesaht First Nation and working with more than ten other regional stakeholders, the communities will be developing a comprehensive business case and plan. The Island Coastal Economic Trust is contributing 50% of the \$30,000 project budget.

An economic development strategy prepared by Zeballos in 2013 identified recreational trails as a potentially strong tourist draw. A subsequent strategy developed in Tahsis in 2014 prioritized working with the local First Nations to develop new tourism experiences as a way to attract new visitors to the region.

“Creating a network of ATV trails, developing the marketing tools to promote it, and all the other components of this project requires a great deal of collaboration and cooperation,” said ICET Chair Phil Kent. “Bringing together local government, First Nations, the Province of BC, and private sector partners requires significant effort, but it also means a stronger probability of success in attracting new visitors and economic activity.”

Creating the business case will include everything from trail development plans and route designs, to market research and economic impact assessments.

"Since the completion of our economic development strategies, the Villages of Tahsis and Zeballos in partnership with the Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Ehattesaht First Nation and our other partners, have been exploring the multi-use trail network concept," said Tahsis Mayor Jude Schooner. "We're intent on moving from the preliminary planning stages into concrete action as quickly as possible, and that's a gratifying step."

This phase of the project is funded through the 'Quick Start' module of ICET's Economic Development Readiness Program. The key objective of the Program is rapid implementation of action items identified in recent economic development strategies.

“There are miles and miles of deactivated logging roads crisscrossing the region, and we realized that we have a great opportunity to showcase the region and its history by creating a great trail network,” said Zeballos Mayor Donn Cox. “By working in partnership, we can create real change for our communities.”

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust is a \$50 million fund 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 \$49 million for over 160 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since implementing its grant program in 2007. ICET investments have generated over \$278 million in incremental funding into the region. A full overview of ICET can be found at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca

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