Huu-ay-aht First Nations Explores Allies Tourism Fee Program to Build Stewardship Finance

COURTENAY, September 19, 2023 – The Huu-ay-aht First Nations is investigating a tourism fee program in the Bamfield area to support the Nation's development of ecological and cultural stewardship to strengthen local tourism through a new project investment with Island Coastal Economic Trust.

This potential program, inspired by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation's successful Tribal Parks Allies program launched in 2018, will be adapted to suit the specific needs and interests of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations. This strategy invites businesses and organizations to sign a protocol agreement that commits them to contribute a 1% Ecosystem Service Fee to fund action items defined in community plans, such as environmental and cultural stewardship initiatives. With new road infrastructure improving access to Bamfield and Huu-ay-aht First Nations' traditional territory, Huu-ay-aht is expecting a major influx of tourism visitation. The development of new partnerships with local businesses and tourism operators will create a revenue stream that will be directly reinvested in long-term stewardship of Huu-ay-aht territories enabling sustainable tourism development.

The project includes a strategic planning and visioning phase, which will determine the specifications of the Huu-ay-aht Allies program, as well as the initiative's development and launch. During the second phase, the program will invite Bamfield businesses and other businesses utilizing Huu-ay-aht traditional territory to voluntarily participate.
The "Allies Tourism Fee Development" program will work with participating businesses, recognized as "Allies", and be recognized as such through the display of the Allies logo. Together, allied members and Huu-ay-aht will work in a mutually beneficial way that is respectful of Indigenous rights and help mitigate the impacts of tourism.

Island Coastal Economic Trust is investing with Huu-ay-aht First Nations in the Allies Tourism Fee Development project through the Capital and Innovation Program. The Trust will contribute $45,500 to a total project budget of $95,500. The project will be underway imminently.

Quotes:

"We are very appreciative of the investment from Trust in supporting Huu-ay-aht as we investigate a valuable option that will support Huu-ay-aht's economy and Guardian program. Taking these steps will ensure that the stewardship of our territory is sustained, and protected, and provides visitors with knowledge of Huu-ay-aht's values."

- Huu-ay-aht Chief Councillor, John Jack (Sayaačath)

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"This initiative is a special one for the Trust to invest in with Huu-ay-aht who are leading the way in developing a sustainable local economy along with an innovative approach to stewardship finance as the owners and stewards of their traditional territory. This new initiative will create new partnerships and revenues for Huu-ay-aht First Nations that benefit local businesses, citizens, and visitors in the years ahead."

- Chair, Island Coastal Economic Trust, Aaron Stone

"Bamfield and Huu-ay-aht territories continue to attract visitors who are looking for stunning beauty and adventures in nature. This innovative program will help ensure more of the profits from tourism go back to the Huu-ay-aht Nation and create partnerships that will support the region's ongoing prosperity."

- MLA of Mid Island-Pacific Rim, Josie Osbourne

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About Island Coastal Economic Trust

Founded by the Province of British Columbia in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust works to build a sustainable and resilient coastal economy in reciprocal relationships with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution. Serving over half a million residents, we partner with communities in the development and financing of their economic infrastructure and diversification efforts through our unique structure that is led by, and accountable to, communities.

Since our inception, Island Coastal Economic Trust has approved more than $59 million to economic development initiatives that have attracted over $323 million in new investment to our region. These investments have created over 2,910 permanent jobs, and countless positive impacts, across the coast.

Island Coastal Economic Trust acknowledges that we work for communities across the ancestral territories of the Kwak̓wala, Nuučaan̓uł, Éy7á7juuthem, Ligwilda'xw, Pəntl'áč, She shashishalhem, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, Hul'q'umi'num', diitiid?aatx̱, SENĆOŦEN, Lekwungen, and T'Sou-ke speaking peoples.

www.islandcoastaltrust.ca

About Huu-ay-aht First Nations

Huu-ay-aht First Nations is an indigenous community located on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. It is a part of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation, formerly called the Nootka. Huu-ay-aht is a party to the Maa-nulth Final Agreement, a modern treaty that grants its five member-nations constitutionally protected self-government as well as ownership, control, and law-making authority over their lands and resources. For more information, visit huuayaht.org.

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