



## **Island Coastal Economic Trust Announces Funding for Homalco Tourism Project**

**For Immediate Release**

**July 28, 2010**

**Gibsons, BC** – Mayor Barry Janyk, Chair of the Island Coastal Economic Trust (Trust), and Mayor of the Town of Gibsons, today announced funding approval of \$195,000 to support the Homalco First Nation economic development strategy with the development of wildlife viewing tourism infrastructure. The total estimated cost for this initiative is \$473,900.

In the late summer and early fall months the Orford estuary is a prime bear watching area. The Homalco First Nation will develop an interpretive centre as well as a new bear watching tower. These facilities, located close to the estuary and dock, will be accessible to the general public at minimal cost. The project will also assist with the rehabilitation of the riverbank and road in order to protect salmon habitat.

“The Trust is pleased to have the opportunity to partner with the Homalco First Nation to strengthen the development of wildlife tourism opportunities within their traditional territory at Bute Inlet” stated Janyk. “This is another example of the Trust’s ability to support innovative regional economic development initiatives suited to the specific needs of the local population. The resident population of grizzly bears in the Orford valley is a permanent resource for the Homalco Nation to use as a foundation for their unique wilderness economic development strategy.”

“The emphasis of this project is on innovative and sustainable methods of sharing a safe wilderness experience” stated Alison Trenholm, Band Administrator and Councillor. “We want to welcome the public to learn about wildlife in a safe environment, without stressing the bears. We are also very proud of the work that we do with the hatchery here at Orford and are looking forward to sharing this, and the history of the Homalco Nation, in addition to the grizzly viewing experience.”

Project work on the Interpretive Centre has already begun. “We are looking forward to project completion by mid to late August, which will allow us to welcome the public to our new facilities for the early fall bear season,” concluded Trenholm.

## **About Island Coastal Economic Trust**

The Island Coastal Economic Trust was established by Provincial legislation on February 27, 2006. It provides \$50-million that is managed by an independent board of directors made up of 8 locally elected government representatives and 5 provincially appointed members from the community. The board's mandate is to make strategic investments in regional economic priorities such as forestry, transportation, tourism, mining, energy, Olympic opportunities, economic development, agriculture and aquaculture, and small business.

ICET has approved \$41 million for over 70 projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since the inception of its grant program in 2007. The total impact of these investments is estimated at \$230 million. A full overview of ICET can be found at [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca).

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