



## **Island Coastal Economic Trust Announces Funding for Alberni Valley Trails Project – Historic Alberni Inlet CNPR Trail**

**For Immediate Release  
May 8, 2008**

Lake Cowichan, BC - Mayor W.J. (Jack) Peake, Chair of the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET), today announced funding approval of \$76,000 for the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District in partnership with the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$152,280.

“The intent of this trails project is to help develop a major trail network in the Alberni Valley as one means of diversifying its economy. This project complements another trail project ICET is supporting – namely the Stamp River Anglers’ Trail – to further strengthen the economic diversification of the Alberni Valley,” stated Chair Peake. “In the long-term, the objective is to reopen the historic route of the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway grade between Port Alberni and Lake Cowichan via the Alberni Inlet. This would create a major mid-island trail ultimately connecting up to the Trans Canada Trail system along the east coast of the island and the Galloping Goose in Victoria.”

Hira Chopra, Chair of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District explained that the planned activities include finalizing the route; completion of trail use agreement and permitting; construction of up to 17 kilometres of trail with required stream crossings; and the development of a parking area and signage.” The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District will oversee financial administration of this application with assistance in crew management and scheduling with the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association and the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club.

Rick Avis, Director of the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association stated, “Taken together with work on other trails in the Alberni Valley (notably the Stamp River Anglers’ Trail), this proposal is expected to make a significant financial contribution to the economy of Port Alberni. It is conservatively estimated that the trail projects could contribute between \$250,000 and \$500,000 annually to the Valley economy.” Work will be undertaken by a six person crew, with several years of trail construction and the project will begin late in 2008/early 2009 and be completed before the end of 2010.

### **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 makes strategic investments in regional economic priorities such as forestry, transportation, tourism, mining, energy, Olympic opportunities,

economic development, agriculture and aquaculture, and small business. Information about the Trust can be found on [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca).

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## **FACT SHEET**

### **Historic Alberni Inlet CNPR Trail**

#### **Goals**

This proposal has the potential to be one of the most exciting segments of the Alberni Valley trail system. The long-term goal is to reopen the route of the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway between Port Alberni and Lake Cowichan. This right-of-way is the northern limit of the former railroad grade which begins in Victoria as the Galloping Goose and continues up island via the Kinsol Trestle and the Cowichan Valley. Construction was underway on the Alberni Inlet section of the route in the early 1900's but was discontinued at the onset of the First World War. Today's trail includes magnificent views of the Alberni Inlet as well as historic features including impressive rock cuts and the remains of original culverts and trestles. Over time, there is also the potential to connect up to the Trans Canada Trail system on the east coast of Vancouver Island, creating a major mid-island recreational corridor.

#### **Project**

Between 2004 and 2006, volunteers from the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club and Katimavik built 10 kilometres of trail along the Alberni Inlet between China Creek and the Franklin River Estuary. The objective of this funding application is to complete work on two additional phases of the route – the first, between the City of Port Alberni and China Creek and the second from Franklin River Estuary to Headquarters Bay. The route for both sections will be finalized, permitting completed and the trail constructed; parking and signage will be established at the trail head

#### **Team Partners**

This project is another example of a successful working partnership between local and provincial governments, industry and NGO's. To date, in addition to the Island Coastal Economic Trust, partners include the Ministry of Tourism, Sports & the Arts, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association, the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club, the Alberni Environmental Coalition, Island Timberlands, Western Forest Products, Mountain Equipment Co-op and the BC Federation of Mountain Clubs. Fundraising is still ongoing.

**Location** – The route of the Historic CNPR Trail follows the east side of the Alberni Inlet for approximately 27 kilometres between Port Alberni and Headquarters Bay.

#### **Economic Impact**

The project is expected to bring significant economic benefits to the Alberni Valley. Both the 2007 Macauley report on the Port Alberni Forest Industry and the Alberni Valley Trail Study completed in 2006, speak to the importance of diversifying the local economy and the potential for increased tourism. This is borne out by the high number of inquiries on hiking opportunities being received by the Tourist Information Centre. It is conservatively estimated that the Historic Alberni Inlet Trail and the Stamp Anglers Trail could jointly contribute between \$250,000 and \$500,000 annually to the local economy.

**Schedule** – The trail route will be finalized over the summer and fall of 2008. Construction will begin in late 2008/early 2009 with anticipated completion by fall 2010