



Island Coastal Economic Trust Announces Funding for Alberni Valley Trails Project – Stamp River Trails and Signage Project

**For Immediate Release
May 8, 2008**

Lake Cowichan - Mayor W.J. (Jack) Peake, Chair of the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET), today announced funding approval of \$84,000 for the Stamp River Anglers' Trail proposed by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District in partnership with the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$168,200.

“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. I understand that trails appeal to the growing interest in eco-tourism and this will help to tap into the outdoor recreation market both provincially and beyond. Construction of a trail along the Stamp River, combined with a major signage project is part of ICET’s diversification initiatives in the Alberni Valley,” stated Chair Peake.

Hira Chopra, Chair of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District explained that the planned activities include the completion of a further 4 kilometers of trail; construction of two bridges and several minor stream crossings; design and installation of directional and educational signs and an associated brochure promoting “A Salmonid Tour of the Alberni Valley.” The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District will oversee financial administration of the project. Trail construction, crew management and scheduling will be done by the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association. The AVEA will take the lead on the signage component.

Rick Avis, Director of the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association, stated , “Taken together with work on other trails in the Alberni Valley (notably the historic CNPR Inlet 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.” Improved access to the Stamp River, considered one of the best steelhead rivers on the Island, will appeal to all outdoor enthusiasts.

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.

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FACT SHEET

Stamp River Anglers' Trail and Signage Project

Goals

This project is part of a major conservation and access initiative on the Stamp-Somass River system which has been ongoing for the past three years. The Stamp-Somass is one of the most productive salmonid rivers in the province and the most productive steelhead system on Vancouver Island. In contrast to other rivers in the south island, the upper reaches of the Stamp still retain much of the ambience of a "wild river". The goals of this project are to improve access to the river for bank anglers and outdoor enthusiasts and to raise awareness of its importance.

Project

Over the last three years, 7.5 kilometres of riverside trail has been constructed in Stamp Falls Provincial Park. The objective of this funding initiative is two-fold:

- completion of the trail project by constructing a further 4 kilometres of trail, two bridges and several minor stream crossings;
- signage and an associated brochure promoting "A Salmonid Tour of the Alberni Valley". Visitors and residents will be directed to sites throughout the valley illustrating different aspects of the salmonid life cycle; the cultural, social, ecological and economic importance of the river will also be highlighted.

Team Partners

The Stamp River Project is a prime example of a successful working partnership involving provincial and local governments, First Nations and NGO's. In addition to the Island Coastal Economic Trust, contributing partners to this phase of the project include the Ministry of Environment, BC Parks, the Hupacasath First Nation, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Port Alberni Port Authority, the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club, the Alberni Valley Lions Club, the Alberni Environmental Coalition and Katimavik.

Location – Stamp Falls Provincial Park

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 Stamp Anglers Trail and the Historic Alberni Inlet Trail could jointly contribute between \$250,000 and \$500,000 annually to the local economy.

Schedule – Work will begin in spring 2008, with an anticipated completion date of early 2009.