

ƘWAXƘALAWADI TRAIL TO EXPAND INDIGENOUS TOURISM OFFERINGS

Improvements will increase economic opportunities for Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Nation

COURTENAY, 6 April 2022 – The Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Nation will transform a remote public trail into an Indigenous interpretive eco-tourism trail, with funding support from Island Coastal Economic Trust's DIVERSIFY Capital & Innovation Program.

In June 2020, the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation (KHFN) purchased Echo Bay Marina and Lodge on Gilford Island, next to the traditional village site ƘwaxƘalawadi, and a 15-minute boat ride from KHFN's main village of Gwa'yas'dums. This acquisition is part of the Nation's community planning and rebuilding process, which includes strategic tourism development. The interpretive trail complements the purchase of the Echo Bay facility, and will connect the marina and lodge with popular Echo Bay Marine BC Park, and local attractions such as the Billy Proctor Museum, which has become a must stop tourist destination.

"Echo Bay is a sought-after, year-round wilderness destination in the world-renowned Broughton Archipelago – and one of the few places for boaters to get out and stretch their legs. While they're there to have a meal and buy gas and provisions, they will now be able to interact in community supported ways with Indigenous culture," says Aaron Stone, ICET Board Chair. "This project will help meet the growing demand for Indigenous tourism experiences, and encourage visitors to stay and explore the area, making use of existing services, and creating new opportunities for cultural and other business development."

"The ƘwaxƘalawadi Interpretive Trail will introduce visitors to the culture and history of the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis people, including an ancient village site with remnants of a shell midden still visible," explains Chief Rick Johnson. "This trail is part of our Comprehensive Community Plan to increase tourism within our traditional territory, to support the local economy and provide an authentic cultural and learning experience."

The project will restore what was once a bustling trail and showcase the area's rich, pre-contact Indigenous history through interpretive signage. Improvements to the 1.5 km trail will include benches at key lookout areas, and accessibility modifications such as widening, rope supports, safety rails, boardwalks, bark mulch and gravel bedding, as well as boat drop-off/pick-up at either end of the loop. Parts of the trail will be rerouted to protect it from rising sea levels and ensure the longevity of the trail.



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

The K̓wax̓w̓alawadi Trail project is supported by funding from the Destination Trails stream of the DIVERSIFY Capital Program.

ICET will contribute \$109,785 to the total project cost of \$219,569. The project is expected to get underway shortly.

For more information about the DIVERSIFY Capital & Innovation Program, please see our guidelines and application form: www.islandcoastaltrust.ca

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About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) mission is to create a more diverse and globally competitive Island and Coastal economy. In partnership with local and regional governments, non-profits and Indigenous communities, ICET serves over half a million residents. Funding and support for economic infrastructure and other economic diversification initiatives is delivered through a unique community centered decision-making process. Since inception, ICET has approved more than \$55 million in funding for over 280 initiatives. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2600 construction phase jobs and 2750 long-term permanent jobs.

For further information:

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