

Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

## **NEW PAVILION IN BAMFIELD'S WEST PARK CELEBRATES LOCAL HISTORY AND CULTURE**

*Outdoor gathering space will enhance commercial and recreational opportunities in West Bamfield*

COURTENAY, 17 March 2022 – The Village of Bamfield will create a new outdoor gathering space on its popular western peninsula to meet visitor and community needs, with funding support from Island Coastal Economic Trust's THRIVE Small Capital Program.

Bamfield is a beautiful rugged rural coastal community comprised of two geographical areas separated by the Bamfield Harbour.

While East Bamfield is accessible by road, West Bamfield is only accessible by boat and is comprised of a general store, post office and government dock – all positioned along its iconic boardwalk. Residents and visitors arriving by boat have limited options, particularly in inclement weather. This project will create a new gathering place in nearby, underused West Park, the West Side's only large public space. Improvements will include a weather-sheltered pavilion, carvings and signage showcasing the Huu-ay-aht people and stories, as well as interactive forest walks.

“This project is a great example of reimagining and repurposing community assets to create new opportunities and meet evolving demand,” says Aaron Stone, ICET Board Chair. “Increasing options for visitors and locals, in this unique part of Bamfield, will support increased visitation and economic activity throughout this outdoor-pursuit focused rural village.”

New interpretive signage featuring local information and history will draw visitors from the boardwalk area to enjoy West Park's spectacular ocean views of Barkley Sound. The all-weather shelter will provide a welcoming space for gathering and eating, as well as hosting artisan fairs, music events, yoga workshops and more – re-establishing the park as a vibrant community hub. Natural, all-ages interactive forest installations will invite locals and visitors into forested portions of the park to experience and enjoy a slice of the coastal temperate rainforest ecosystem.

Masters Students from UBC's School of Architecture and Landscape are assisting with the park redesign. The pavilion will be built with local sustainably harvested wood from the Bamfield HUU-AY-AHT Community Forest. Traditional HUU-AY-AHT carvings and signage will be incorporated into the shelter to celebrate the people who first called this area home and have culturally significant places nearby.

“Our community is grateful for the funding from ICET and the Targeted Regional Tourism Development Initiative, as well as the dedicated Bamfield Parks Commission Volunteers for their project vision and ongoing hard work,” says Bob Beckett, ACRD director for Bamfield. “We're anticipating significant visitor growth once improvements to the gravel road from Port Alberni are completed. Residents and business owners have identified West Park as a strategic way to accommodate the desires of residents and their



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families, increased tourism and expand opportunities for seasonal commercial ventures, while maintaining our unique village experience.”

The project will receive \$50,000 through a collaborative funding arrangement between the Island Coastal Economic Trust and the Targeted Regional Tourism Development Initiative (through Tourism Vancouver Island), that provides one-stop funding support of up to 100% of project costs to stimulate and promote vitality in downtowns, Main Streets and business districts across the region.

“We gratefully acknowledge the Province of BC for the funding to support the THRIVE Small Capital Program and help community projects such as this be realized,” says Anthony Everett, President & CEO, Tourism Vancouver Island. “As we support tourism businesses and communities in the Vancouver Island region on their road to recovery, reimagining this area of Bamfield will only better the visitor experience.”

The project is set to get underway shortly.

All applications to the THRIVE Small Capital Funding Program are now accepted on an ongoing basis until the program is fully subscribed. For more information on the THRIVE Small Capital Funding Program, please visit our website: [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://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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