

## **The Coast Sustainability Trust**

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**November 7, 2003**

### **News Release**

#### **The Coast Sustainability Trust invests in the North Island**

The Coast Sustainability Trust has approved \$655,000 in funding for six initiatives that will help create jobs and stimulate economic activity on Northern Vancouver Island.

In their October, 2003 meetings the Mount Waddington and the Comox Strathcona Regional Steering Committees identified these six initiatives and invited fourteen other applicants to proceed to the next stage of the application process.

“The Regional Steering Committee members, Chief Tom Nelson, Dawn Nicolson, Mayor Larry Pepper, and Brenda Swanson in Mount Waddington, and Rick Everson, Bill Harrison, Peter Rambo and James Wilson in Comox Strathcona, are all working hard to sift through the many worthwhile projects,” said Trustee Eric van Soeren. “Their task is to decide which of the initiatives seem most likely to provide sustainable long-term economic development in the communities of the North Central and North Island.”

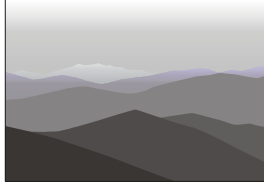
“The \$35 million trust fund approved by the province last year is part of a broader strategy, which has a focus on economic diversification,” said Minister of Sustainable Resource Management, Stan Hagen. “The trust fund is designed to help workers, contractors, communities and companies whose interests have been negatively affected along the coast.”

“Over the next year The Coast Sustainability Trust expects to invest \$2,000,000 in North and North Central Island community based projects,” said van Soeren.

The six initiatives chosen for funding are:

- Tourism North Central Island and the Vancouver Island North Visitor’s Association - \$200,000
- Vancouver Island Economic Developers Association - \$200,000
- Comox Indian Band - \$100,000
- Village of Port Alice - \$100,000
- Wild Island Foods Co-operative in Sointula - \$50,000
- Regional District of Mount Waddington - \$5,000

For more information on these initiatives please see the Backgrounder.



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### **Backgrounder**

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Tourism North Central Island and the Vancouver Island North Visitor's Association were successful in their joint request for \$200,000 over the next three years. This will help fund a direct marketing sales program that will see them traveling to a variety of trade shows to market North Central and North Island tourist destinations. It will also assist in the development of an inbound reservation system that will provide point of contact support for tourism operators. Matching funds will come from the District of Campbell River and a number of smaller communities.

The Vancouver Island Economic Developers Association will also receive \$200,000 over three years. This will assist them in the New Marine Frontier project to attract investment to grow the shellfish industry. Matching funds will come from the Program for Export Market Development, Community Futures Development Corporations in Cowichan and Strathcona, Mid Island Science Technology and Innovation Council, and the communities of Nanaimo, Parksville, Cowichan, Comox Valley, Campbell River, Aberni/Clayoquot, Ladysmith, Ucluelet, Mount Waddington and Port Hardy.

The Comox Indian Band has been approved for \$100,000 to help them build a 60-unit campground and RV park. This venture is expected to help stimulate other Band tourism services, including guided tours, whale watching, wild life viewing and equipment rental. Matching funds are being secured, likely through a combination of band and federal funds.

The Village of Port Alice will receive \$100,000 towards the construction of a light industrial park to accommodate up to 10 businesses. Eight businesses have already made a financial commitment to set up operations in the community, so at least 20 jobs are expected to be created immediately. The total project size is \$560,000, with matching funds coming from the federal government through the Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative, the Village of Port Alice, and the Regional District of Mount Waddington.

The Wild Island Foods Co-operative in Sointula has been approved for a \$50,000 contribution to enable it to construct its proposed food processing facility. This facility will allow it to add value to a wide variety of local resources such as seafood, agricultural

products, wild berries and forest botanical products. Funding approval is subject to identification of matching funds, but the co-op is optimistic that it will be successful.

Finally, the Regional District of Mount Waddington received \$5,000 to help develop a Regional Economic Development Strategy.

The Mount Waddington Regional Steering Committee also decided to ask 6 other stage one applicants to advance to a more detailed stage two application. In the case of the Comox Strathcona Regional Steering committee, 8 stage one applicants were asked to proceed to stage two. These applications include regional economic development planning, shellfish aquaculture, infrastructure and cultural and eco-tourism related initiatives.