



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUBLIC BACKCOUNTRY HUT IN ACRD A FIRST FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND

COURTENAY – Backcountry skiers, snowshoers, and hikers will soon have access to Vancouver Island’s rugged mountains thanks to a new alpine hut being built by the Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Island (ACCVI), with \$90,000 in support from the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

The heated hut, estimated to cost \$200,000, will build on the region’s natural assets and the growing backcountry skiing sector, to develop and market a new backcountry destination for the region.

This heated public hut will be the first of its kind on Vancouver Island. Located 35km west of Port Alberni, the cabin will be built at an elevation of 1,300m on the west ridge of 5040 Peak. The alpine hut will provide a base for exploring the geography, culture, and history of the region.

“Winter backcountry activities are exploding in popularity,” said Chris Jensen, Chair of the ACCVI’s Hut Committee. “Alpine huts are integral to the backcountry winter experience and the region will now have the infrastructure to grow this adventure tourism sector.”

The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) operates the largest network of backcountry huts in North America and has more than 100 years’ experience building and managing backcountry huts.

Visitor data from other ACC huts shows that most guests come from outside the local communities. The new hut will help to increase visitation and create synergies with other visitor attractions in the Sutton Pass area, such as the nearby rock climbing areas or the Ha’uukmin Tribal Parks’ Zipline. It is also expected to increase year-round demand for supplies and services such as outdoor equipment and rentals, food and accommodation services, professional guiding as well as First Nations art and souvenirs.

“This project will have positive impacts on a number of nearby communities, attracting new tourist spending and further diversifying economic activity in the region” said ICET Chair Phil Kent. “The total annual visitor spending impact of the hut is estimated at almost \$700,000, creating 3.9 new permanent local jobs as a result.”

Once complete, the 800 square-foot cabin will have the capacity to accommodate up to a dozen visitors and will feature a wood pellet stove, solar-powered LED lighting, and a vermiculture composting toilet.

Project planning and development is already underway, with completion estimated by October, 2018. For more information on the ACCVI’s new hut, please visit www.huts.acuvi.ca.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust is celebrating its tenth year of investment in economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization.

ICET is independently governed by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials, MLAs and appointees from the Island and Coast. This exceptional team of leaders collaborate to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community-centred decision-making process, ICET has approved more than \$49 million for over 170 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects. ICET investments have leveraged over \$270 million in investment into the region creating more than 2500 construction phase jobs and 2600 long term permanent jobs.

A full overview of ICET can be found at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca.

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