

## **COWICHAN/LADYSMITH MARINE TOURISM AUTHORITY SETS DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

**DUNCAN** - The Cowichan/Ladysmith Marine Tourism Authority has recently completed two studies that identified key priorities for development of the marine tourism sector, Jim Cosh, Chairman of the Authority announced today.

The two new reports, entitled “Commercial Marine-Based Tourism Study Report” and “Marine Tourism Trends” recommend that the Authority should focus on the following four broad areas to promote development:

- Expanded investments in marine infrastructure such as docks and boating facilities
- Develop a comprehensive marine tourism marketing strategy to promote the industry
- Create a stream-lined process to resolve land use issues
- Work with government agencies to simplify the regulatory environment

"The marine tourism sector is an important contributor to the economy in the Cowichan region," said Cosh. "The recommendations in these reports provides us with a road map that will form the basis of public consultation to establish priorities and help guide the development of industry"

The Authority plans to present the reports' recommendations at a series of public forums later this spring that will allow stakeholders in the region an opportunity to comment on various development initiatives. The reports are also available for viewing and downloading from the Authorities website <http://marine.cowichan.net> The website also include a link that will allow members of the public to provide direct comments on the initiative to the Authority.

Graham Bruce, who was a key champion in the establishment of the Authority, stated that "The marine resources of the Cowichan region are a vital economic boost to our community. The work undertaken by the Authority in consultation with First Nations and other interested groups will help create a more viable marine tourism destination that will attract even more businesses to the valley, bringing more jobs and revenues."

The Cowichan/Ladysmith Marine Tourism Authority includes representatives from the Municipality of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, Cowichan Bay Electoral Area, Cowichan Tribes First Nation and four private sector members representing marine tourism sectors. The Authority has a mandate to encourage and support the development of marine tourist facilities and activities, and a diversified economy in balance with the marine environment, for the benefit of Cowichan residents and visitors.