
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development
Ministry of Skills Development and Labour

MARINE TOURISM TO BOOST VANCOUVER ISLAND ECONOMY

CHEMAINUS – A new Marine Tourism Authority pilot project established today for the Ladysmith-Cowichan area will identify key marine tourism activities and look at infrastructure and administrative impediments to future development.

“We have a unique opportunity to capitalize on existing and future tourism opportunities along the waterfront in the Ladysmith/Cowichan area,” said Skills Development and Labour Minister Graham Bruce, MLA for Cowichan-Ladysmith. “The pilot project will help us develop a marine tourism strategy from Ladysmith Harbour to Cowichan Bay that will create opportunities for scuba diving outfits, small marina operators and kayaking businesses, and improve the waterfront hospitality sector.”

“Our goal is to promote a viable and dynamic marine tourism economy for the region,” said Small Business and Economic Development Minister John Les. “This pilot project reinforces our government’s commitment to sustainable economic development and demonstrates how a co-ordinated effort between governments and the private sector can successfully grow British Columbia’s tourism industry.”

The new Marine Tourism Authority will examine the essential features of marine tourism in the Ladysmith/Cowichan area, including marinas, kayaking, scuba diving, pocket cruise ship development and hotel and pub facilities.

The authority is led by chair Jim Cosh, a retired senior partner of KPMG; Gary Marshall with the Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands Marina Association, Dorothy Alexander, co-owner of the Brigantine Pub; Bud Bell, owner/operator of Sealegs Kayaking Adventures; Herman Thomas from the Halalt Band; Geoff Millar with the Cowichan Region Economic Development Commission; North Cowichan Mayor John Lefebure; Ladysmith Mayor Rob Hutchins; Mike Tansley, Cowichan Valley Regional District director; Pat English, a project development consultant; and Tom Lee, director of Tourism and Small Business Branch for the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development.

“The initial review of key marine tourism activities and potential roadblocks to future development is the first step,” said Cosh. “From there, we can look at expanding the various sectors that make up marine tourism, whether it be eagle watching, kayaking, scuba diving, sailing or marina development.”

The terms of reference for the authority include three primary tasks during the initial year of operation:

1. Develop an inventory and sector analysis of marine tourism assets and activities.
2. Develop a strategic plan for expansion of the various sectors that constitute marine tourism.
3. Identify challenges/impediments to sector expansion and provide recommendations to address the development impediments.

A Marine Tourism Authority builds on the work of the B.C. Resort Task Force, with a broader mandate to develop a local vision for marine tourism. Key areas covered by the task force recommendations released in July include: greater certainty and efficiency in resort applications; increasing First Nations involvement; and the support and involvement of resort communities.

For more information, visit www.marine.cowichan.net online.

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