

Community Futures Central Island's Role in Community Economic Development

Over the years, Community Futures Central Island has demonstrated their ability to establish partnerships and leverage resources on behalf of their communities. We understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face, and can respond quickly to changing circumstances.

The focus of Community Futures is to build community economic and entrepreneurial capacity, with an emphasis on long-range strategic planning and results. CFs are proactive, locally autonomous and non-profit organizations that are working hard to mobilize their communities to achieve stronger, more sustainable futures.

Community Futures, through their strategic planning, determine the role they will play in CED in their communities. For example, they may decide to be the leaders; or the facilitators; coordinators; partners, etc. CF has many "tools" which they can use to affect CED within their area. These tools can include such resources as a loans portfolio, technical support, business counselling, training programs, strategic planning for organizations/communities and project development and access to grant capital.

Community Futures Central Island's Historical Success and Contributions to Community Economic Development Initiatives

Benefactors of Community Futures Central Island in our Region:

- **Salmon in the City – \$75k**

A three-year multi partner initiative from 1998 to 2000 that designed and constructed fish ways that provide permanent access to the abundant, good quality, spawning and rearing habitats in the Millstone watershed.

To meet this goal, and to harness the educational and economic benefits of a sustainable salmon run through the heart of Nanaimo, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans promoted a new business model by establishing a pivotal partnership with the Community Futures Central Island (CFCI). In support of 'Salmon in the City', CFCI agreed to co-ordinate a round-table of interested community organizations and offered administrative, media, budgetary and program support services (\$25,000) as well as a funding (\$50,000). Total project value \$350,000.

The initial focus was:

- the two fish barriers located in Bowen Park - the plan encouraged co-operative development/construction of fish ways and education/interpretation facilities.
- for areas of degraded or eroding stream banks on private land, the plan recommended joint action between land owners and stream restoration initiatives.

- for the 'Salmon in the City' partnership, initiate Public Meetings, organize media program, and solicit broad membership from interested organizations in the community and develop funding initiatives as appropriate.

- **Nanaimo River Fish Hatchery**

Community Futures Central Island operated the Nanaimo River Fish Hatchery from its inception in 1979 - until 2004 when the Nanaimo River Stewardship Society was formed. Assisted by a very capable management team of volunteers representing a wide range of community organizations, including Nanaimo First Nation, Nanaimo Fish and Game, Malaspina College (now VIU) and others, the facility has contributed greatly to the maintenance of salmon stocks in the Nanaimo River watershed.

- **Vancouver Island Conference Centre - 25K**

Community Futures Central Island was an inaugural sponsor of meeting room space at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre. We sponsored the Community Futures Central Island meeting room which is now the Millstone River Room.

In 2004, the City of Nanaimo was approved for the Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative (SICEAI) in the amount of \$ 1 million dollars through Community Future Central Island and Western Economic Diversification; however, with the collapse of negotiations with Front Street Projects Ltd. in October 2003, and with the delay in selecting a new site, project plan and private sector partner, such a Contribution Agreement could not be finalized within the March 31, 2005, deadline for the SICEAI program.

- **Vancouver Island University - WestCAPP Funding**

Community Futures Central Island provided funding to VIU to assist in the design and construction of two projects:

- 1) **VIU Deep Bay Marine Field Station - \$500K**

To design and construct the first aquaculture field station in Canada - the Deep Bay Marine Field Station which will:

- Cluster scientific, environmental, economic and public engagement programming into one facility thereby creating a center of excellence and innovation to support sustainable shellfish aquaculture development
- Achieve LEED platinum green building designation with special purpose venues that can accommodate the simultaneous delivery of multiple shellfish-related programs.

- 2) **International Centre for Sturgeon Studies - \$500K**

A multi-partner funded infrastructure project sought to build a state of the art 13,000 sq. ft. research facility on VIU's Nanaimo campus. The ICSS building was completed in January 2011. With the only white sturgeon brood stock at an academic institution in Canada, the ICSS acts as a "business incubator" by:

- Maintaining a healthy White Sturgeon brood stock
- Forming academic / industrial commerce partnerships to provide a secure source of eggs, fry and juveniles to commercial grow-out operators – to grow an industry
- Building on existing models of collaborative success (e.g. as with Target Marine Hatcheries Inc.)

- Becoming a knowledge and innovation hub to produce, acquire and share the latest scientific knowledge on white sturgeon to BC aquaculture producers and conservation organizations.

- **French Creek Harbour Improvement Project – WestCAPP Funding - \$84K**

The French Creek Harbour Improvement Project was a partnership project between the Harbour Authority of French Creek (proponent), Community Fisheries Development Centre, Small Craft Harbours/ Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Social Development and the West Coast Community Adjustment Program.

French Creek Harbour, located approximately 40 kilometers north of Nanaimo, has been providing a valuable service to the marine community of Parksville/Qualicum and surrounding area since the early 1950's. It provides marine services to commercial and recreational fishermen; charter boats, Coast Guard and the marine community by way of a well-managed, safe, environmentally sensitive working harbour facility.

The harbour restoration and improvements have provided a direct economic benefit of over \$50,000 per year to the immediate surrounding community during the summer tourist season. This has included the expenditures on moorage, restaurants, groceries and supplies, retail and fuel directly in French Creek. The upgrade has provided much needed infrastructure to support new forms of fisheries, aquaculture and marine based tourism businesses locating in French Creek. The newly appointed fish sales dock is providing easily accessible fresh seafood products to the public at a reasonable cost and is helping to support local fishermen. The 120 foot visitors' dock is providing much needed space for transient vessels requiring safe accessible moorage. Both of these amenities are attracting more visitors and in turn more economic development opportunities in the region.

As well as creating long-term employment and business opportunities in the community the project also provided six months of work experience and skill enhancement to six unemployed fishermen, assisting them in upgrading their skills to reenter the local workforce. Community Fisheries Development Centre through a Job Creation Partnership Agreement with the Ministry of Social Development provided the project with four labourers and a site supervisor. A total of six different participants gained valuable skill enhancement and work experience in carpentry, construction, plumbing, reading blueprints and float construction techniques. They also received training and instruction in a wide variety of power, air and hand tools during the project. Of the six participants, four found full time employment prior to the end of the project, one went back to school and a sixth went on to further training.

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- **Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce (GICC)**

After the dissolution of Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation and Tourism Nanaimo in 2016 a collaboration formed between the Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures Central Island to assist the GICC in seeking funds to develop an economic development and tourism strategy for the Area B of the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Community Futures seeded the GICC with a micro loan so that they would have matching dollars to obtain a grant from Island Coastal Economic Trust to support the development of an economic development strategy that they then could present to the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) to fund Economic Development in Area B. ICET did fund the grant to GICC and Community Futures Central Island helped to facilitate and write the economic development strategy that was presented to the RDN and they successfully were awarded \$65,000 to deliver the strategy annually. They then with the support of Community Futures successfully wrote a proposal to the Rural Dividend Fund that resulted in a \$100,000 contract over 2 years to hire a Community Economic Development Officer to deliver the strategy.

Community Futures Central Island also assisted in the revision of their Board of Trade bylaws, value statements for the Economic Development Advisory Council to aid in contract awards and other various projects and workshops. Community Futures Central Island has found their work with Gabriola to be very rewarding and looks forward to continued relations.

- **LEAP! Oceanside 2019 – \$20K**

This project was a new and unique initiative for Community Futures Central Island for the Oceanside area. It was the first time LEAP! (a local entrepreneurial accelerator program) was offered on Vancouver Island. This program is aimed at cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit of the community by assisting start-ups and small businesses with the development of networking/collaborative learning, market research and determination of their minimum viable product based on the lean model canvas business plan.

Measurable Results and Economic Benefits:

- Leveraged funding from the private sector (Coastal Community Credit Union), municipal government (Regional District of Nanaimo) and not for profit organizations (Chambers of Commerce)
- Engaged in a post-secondary education partnership with SFU as well as a collaborating with the three local chambers of commerce
- Provided the fertile ground for the seeds of creativity and business ideas promoting an entrepreneurial community and LEAP alumni/culture
- 12 new venture ideas that are fully examined and tested
- 7 new ventures launched within the year
- 1 existing start-up expanded from test or home based to commercial/store front
- Entrepreneurs gain skills, knowledge, confidence and community support
- Community engagement and buy in through the LEAP! Launch Event
- A strengthened and more visible social venture eco-system

- **Other Initiatives**

Over the years, Community Futures Central Island has supported the local community hosting numerous conferences (a Youth Conference, a Value Added Forestry Conference, and Provincial CF Conference to name a few). It has supported initiatives such as Junior Achievement, Leadership Vancouver Island as well as Start Up Nanaimo. Countless workshops and roundtables, industry studies and strategic planning for not for profits. We were also an active member on EDG (Nanaimo's Economic Development Group) until it was disbanded. Over 44 years, we have served Nanaimo well; not to mention our regional community whose numerous initiatives/projects have not been mentioned.