

# **The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Conference Centre/Lakeview Park Campsite**

## **Active Business Plan**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Centre is owned and operated by the Town of Lake Cowichan.

In 2002, workshops were held with stakeholders to "Re-Brand" the Education Centre.

The following mission statement was adapted by the council of the day:

The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Conference Centre will provide opportunities for customized programs or training to groups or organizations interested in eco-tourism, environmental education, outdoor recreation, and healthy lifestyle experiences.

The following guiding principles were established by Town Council:

The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Conference Centre will:

- a) Strive to remain an education/arts/nature/lifestyle type of facility.
- b) Strive to be self-sustaining financially.
- c) Strive to contribute to the local economy.
- d) Strive to be a public facility.
- e) Strive to be a legacy for the future.

To this day, the Centre continues to be guided by the noted mission statement and guiding principles.

### **Target Markets:**

- Not-for-profit Organizations and Provincial Government
- Post Secondary Institutions and Universities
- Retreats and Workshops
- Wellness Organizations
- Training Groups
- Tourism and Adventure Groups
- Summer Youth Programs delivered by hosting organizations
- Lifestyle and Arts Retreats
- Groups that are okay with sharing sleeping accommodations:

- two people per room
- three people per room
- four to a room with shared bathrooms
- N.B. Approximately 95% of the bookings are by Non-Profit Groups

## **Business Objectives and Overall Strategy:**

- To continue critical examination of high and best use alternatives to maximize the potential of the Centre
- To continue to attract repeat customers by providing a positive and unique experience to participants
- To leverage the existing customer base
- To prudently manage financial resources
- To renovate and upgrade the facility as funds and grants permit
- To continue to be self-funded and contribute administrative funds to the Town's general revenue
- To manage the Lakeview Park Campground and the Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education Centre as economic generators for our community and region
- To continue to actively research grant and funding opportunities that would enhance the Centre to be in a better position to attract a broader variety of groups
- To explore new markets, products, and partnerships that would allow for physical improvements to the Centre and create more opportunities in the off-season
- To work closely with repeat customers that bring people from all different communities in British Columbia during the summer months. This high-profile organization will work with us to improve our website and increase exposure to new markets. We will work with their team to seek other funding opportunities that will make improvements to the Centre.

## **Financial Information:**

Please note that the financial records and budget for 2024 are included in the monthly committee if the whole agendas for the Town of Lake Cowichan and statements are audited.

## **Bookings for 2024:**

Bookings for 2024 are on target now and a little stronger than 2023. The busy part of the season is fully booked and confirmed.

It is also worth mentioning that we will be hosting some high-profile organizations that will draw participants from British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest of the U.S.A. The British Columbia Wildlife

Federation is one of the organizations, and the Stone Sculptors of the Pacific Northwest will also spend a week at the Centre at a Stone Symposium.

## **Community Development:**

The Centre has played a key role in developing and upgrades of Town owned parks and public spaces that encourage community use and that also support more tourism visits for the Cowichan Lake Area.

It is imperative that this initiative is included in this business plan to continue to explore possibilities and explore source of funding that further develop community owned assets that are economic generators for local businesses. For reference, the following examples provide historical data to indicate the successful nature of the projects that were led by Centre staff and endorsed by Council:

- Numerous improvements to the Cowichan Lake Education Centre
- Re-development of Lakeview Park Campground
- Creation of a Waterfront Walkway that created a 100 metre width of foreshore to the upland area that connects Lakeview Park to the Education Centre that was allocated to Town by the province
- Construction of new washrooms at Central Park
- Construction of washrooms at Saywell Park
- Construction of the Saywell Park dock
- Construction of the Ted Burns Trail
- Upgrading of the rail cars at the Kaatza Museum and construction of a display shed for the museum

These projects were all done with Federal and Provincial grants at no cost to the Town of Lake Cowichan and were managed by Centre staff. Improvements of this nature will continue for the foreseeable future.

## **Job Opportunities:**

- The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Conference Centre continues to offer employment opportunities that have been consistent over the years
- It is a fact that hundreds of local people have worked on job creation grants that met objectives to improve Town owned facilities. These grants were generated by staff from the Centre and will continue in this business plan