

## **Strategic Tourism Acquisition by Ka:'yu:'k't'h' / Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations**

The Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations (KCFN) recently purchased a year-round, floating resort that will help with visitor growth and tourism diversification opportunities, through funding support from Island Coastal Economic Trust's Capital and Innovation Program. With the purchase of a 23-room luxury floating facility planned to become more than its original fishing lodge design.

The northernmost Nuu-chah-nulth nation recently announced the acquisition of the facility, encompassing a total investment of over \$2 million, including more than \$1.5 million for the structure plus necessary startup costs ahead of the 2023 fishing season. In the interest of boosting tourism potential on Vancouver Island, the Island Coast Economic Trust provided the First Nation with \$300,000 to help with the acquisition.

Known as the Englefield, the floating facility was purchased from Vancouver Island Forest and Marine, which previously used the barge to house forestry workers on various parts of the West Coast. The Englefield was leased by Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' to serve as Water's Cove Resort last year, a trial run that proved the facility to be a viable investment.

Located on the outer coast of Kyuquot Sound (on the north-west coast of Vancouver Island), Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' have secured funds from Island Coastal Economic Trust to acquire an off-grid marine lodge from the Vancouver Island Forest and Marine Group. The Nation has been leasing the lodge from the Group since the closure of the award-winning Walters Cove Resort in 2020 due to structural issues with its prior small-scale lodge. The closure of the prior lodge was a tremendous loss of accommodation and business impact for the entire community.

The new high-end luxury marine lodge, which will carry the Walters Cove Resort name, will be anchored to Amos Island, a short water commute from the Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' village of Houpsitas. These new accommodations will enable Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' to significantly expand their tourism operations in the summer while also creating rental space for families, gatherings, and meetings for the Nations during the shoulder seasons.

"The short and long-term impacts of this project are so wide ranging," says Gary Wilson, CEO of Tiičma Enterprises, the KCFN Group of Businesses. "There are multiple economic, social, and cultural implications for how this space will allow the Nation to grow and expand its various portfolios."

"The purchase of the floating lodge will allow the Nations to generate community and economic benefits from the sports-fishing sector – a significant local economic driver and large-scale seasonal employer within Kyuquot Sound," says KCFN's Chief Administrative Officer Cynthia Blackstone. "This acquisition also allows us the possibility to explore new eco and cultural tourism projects in the area. Knowing we have adequate and permanent housing to support the staff and rising visitor market opens several new business opportunities for us."

### **Links to other articles of the acquisition:**

Island Coastal Economic Trust [https://islandcoastaltrust.ca/news/kcfn\\_walters\\_cove/](https://islandcoastaltrust.ca/news/kcfn_walters_cove/)

Ha-Shilth-Sa First Nations Newspaper <https://hashilthsa.com/news/2023-02-14/first-nation-buys-floating-facility-walters-cove-resort>