

THE BC MARINE TRAILS NETWORK ASSOCIATION

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October, 2010

TO ALL SUPPORTERS OF THE BC MARINE TRAILS INITIATIVE:

Dear Supporters,

The purpose of this letter is to give an update on progress made during the 2010 year, and the Association's plans for a very busy 2011. The members of the BCMTNA and its Government working partners are very hopeful that the Provincial Government will, by this spring, at the least, make a public announcement of Government's support in principle for the establishment of a Marine Trails Network along the coast of British Columbia. Even better, and what we are all working towards, is an official opening of small segments of one or both of the two proposals written and submitted to Government to date. If this goal comes to fruition, the BC Marine Trails will be officially 'on the map'!

ABOUT THE BC MARINE TRAILS NETWORK ASSOCIATION

The BC Marine Trails Network Association is working in partnership with the Provincial Government through the Recreation, Sites and Trails Branch of the Ministry of Natural Resource Operations, in order to create and maintain the BC Marine Trails Network.

The Association consists chiefly of 9 member clubs, each of which sends one or more representative to its meetings. Its Member Clubs at present are:

- Campbell River Paddlers
- Comox Paddlers Club
- Cowichan Kayak and Canoe Club
- Nanaimo Paddlers
- Pacific International Kayak Association
- Recreational Canoeing Association of British Columbia
- Sea Kayak Association of BC
- South Island Sea Kayak Association
- Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Please note that the BCMTNA is in no way an umbrella organization of paddling clubs in BC. Its sole mandate is to establish and maintain a BC Marine Trails Network along the coast of British Columbia. It has no power or authority over its member clubs. It will work as a member advised independent

organization. The BCMTNA is also presently expanding the number of its advisors at 'Task Force' meetings to include more representatives from the publication, commercial operator/outfitter, and training sectors of the paddling community.

OUR GOAL AND FOCUS

The goal of the BCMTNA is to secure access points and tent sites along the coast of BC for the use of the recreational public for present and future generations. As most of these tent sites are accessible only by water, this network is designed for the use of those with small, beachable watercraft, such as kayakers and canoeists.

FUNDING

Although the BCMTNA's main source of funding at present comes from various Government grants, it has received some donations from individuals who support the initiative.

Since its inception in December, 2007, those involved in the renewed BC Marine Trails initiative have managed to keep working expenses to a minimum by volunteering large amounts of their time and frequently donating their travel costs and other related expenses. With an anticipated opening announcement however, the Association's workload and costs are expected to increase significantly. For this reason, the BCMTNA will be actively seeking funds this coming year from the commercial sector and other sources, as well as further donations from the public.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 2009 – 2010

Two detailed written proposals have been revised and submitted to Government:

- ***The Gulf Islands Trails Network, which consists of three separate interconnected routes (Main, Inner, and Outer), consisting of 53 sites to date***
- ***The West Coast Vancouver Island North Section, which includes sites both on the outer coast and inlets of this Section: 126 sites to date***

Groundproofing, or visiting a site to determine its potentiality, has been completed where necessary on all of the above sites by volunteer means (BCMTNA members and other paddlers). Other work undertaken and ongoing in 2010 includes:

- BCMTNA proposal authors have been working continuously with Government representatives to fine tune the choices of sites and site boundaries and are now involved in the consultative process with Government officials, First Nations, and other stakeholders.
- The BCMTNA Sites Index Database now contains close to 1000 identified possible tenting sites and access points along the BC Coastline.
- The BCMTNA is continuing to work with the Ministry of Environment in identifying potential BC

Marine Trails sites within Conservancy areas.

- The BCMTNA is working on various Government run initiatives which relate to access and conservation of the BC Coastline, including two representatives on the Integrated Oceans Advisory Committee of the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area.
- The BCMTNA is working to promote its purposes and goals to paddlers and the general public. Members participated in several paddling events this past summer, including the Ladysmith and MEC Paddlefests.
- The partnership that has been created between the BCMTNA and the MNRO through joint interest in establishing a Marine Trails Network has made the paddling community and its concerns more visible to the public and the BC Government.

PLANS FOR 2011:

A major focus of the Association at this time is to continue to promote and consult with stakeholders on the two submitted proposals in order to assist in moving the sites through the approval process. As mentioned, our Government partners are working hard to officially open some segments of either or both the Gulf Island Trails Network and the West Coast Vancouver Island North Section by late spring of 2011. If this happens, the BC Marine Trails Network will no longer be just a possibility. It will become a visible entity. This will be a milestone, increasing the initiative's and the Association's credibility. It will greatly assist the continuing work.

Another focus is to develop promotional and guide material for these expected section or section segment openings. Promotional events for the official opening are already in the planning stages.

As the most important focus of the BC Marine Trails Network Association's work is to identify access points and sites of interest and continue to present trails sections proposals to Government, the Association is continuing to design further proposals and submit them. The priority for future proposals is to complete the rest of the Vancouver Island areas such as:

- The eastern sections of Vancouver Island (Nanaimo to Port Hardy) including
 - The Discovery Islands
 - Johnstone St and the Broughton Archipelago
- Vancouver Island South (Tofino to Victoria)
- Desolation Sound

Groundproofing will be conducted as necessary as these proposals are designed.

THANKYOU, AND PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR INTEREST AND SUPPORT OF THIS INITIATIVE

Through the BCMTNA, paddling clubs are heavily involved in the creation of a marine trails network along the BC coastline. The paddling community of British Columbia has embarked upon a great and far seeing initiative. We are working together to secure paddlers' access to our beautiful coastline for ourselves,

our visitors, and our future generations. The BCMTNA appreciates these clubs' continued support and assistance!

We also appreciate our growing relationship with the commercial sector of the paddling community. Consulting and working together, we will create a Trails Network which addresses our common concerns. First and foremost of these is to preserve access to the BC coastline for all ability levels of paddlers. We can also look forward to working together to promote the importance of stewardship and leave no trace principles.

Last but certainly not least, we recognize and greatly appreciate the growing support from other members of the public, whether paddlers, conservationists, or other interested citizens. This support has been demonstrated verbally, through discussion and correspondence, physically through assistance with groundproofing and donating information on sites, issues, etc, and also financially, by individual donation.

Thanks to you all,

Stephanie Meinke, President