



## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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### Exciting Changes Ahead for the Raincoast Education Society.

**Tofino BC.** The Raincoast Education Society (RES) announced today a series of exciting changes for the locally-based non-profit society. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, the RES will have a new home in the Clayoquot Field Station at Tofino Botanical Gardens. The society also hired its first Executive Director, former Board member Josie Osborne, and a permanent Program Coordinator, Jen Pukonen. The society's existing staff person, Lisa Fletcher, continues to be an important part of the Raincoast Education Society team as the Lead Interpreter delivering school programs and coordinating the Tofino Mudflats Stewardship Program.

“Earlier this year, the Board of Directors committed to a comprehensive review of our budget, funding sources, staffing and core program activities,” said Board member Brenda Kuecks. “We decided to reallocate some of our overhead expenses into staffing and programs so we can increase our community presence and more effectively fundraise to support our growing programs.”

The Raincoast Education Society, incorporated in 2000, is a charitable society whose mission is to help shape an environmentally sound future for the Clayoquot and Barkley Sound region through education and community stewardship. Based in Tofino, the society is active delivering school and summer youth programs about natural and cultural history in the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth communities as well as in Tofino and Ucluelet. The RES also hosts interpretive walks and slideshows and delivers stewardship initiatives oriented toward youth and adults, such as the Tofino Mudflats Stewardship Program. Over the past several years, the RES has developed innovative new programs, including the Raincoast Host program to help train hospitality workers to answer visitors' questions about the Pacific Rim, and the Nuu-chah-nulth Raincoast Explorers Program, a summer program for Nuu-chah-nulth youth delivered in Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

The RES is looking forward to the new opportunities their changes will bring them. “Moving away from the downtown Tofino core was a hard decision to make,” said Board member Barb Beasley, “But being located in the rainforest, next to the Tofino Mudflats, and within walking distance of exposed sandy beaches means we'll have better access to a ‘living classroom.’ There's nothing comparable to showing people first-hand an enormous western red cedar or a giant green sea anemone.”

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“We’re excited about the opportunity to use the facilities at the Clayoquot Field Station and the Tofino Botanical Gardens, and to deliver our programming to school groups visiting the Field Station, but we plan to have even more community presence than ever with our school programs, stewardship initiatives, interpretive walks, slideshows, and of course special events such as the Tofino Lantern Festival,” said Kathleen Shaw, “You can look for us all the way from Ucluelet to Hot Springs Cove.”

For more information, please see the attached backgrounder or contact

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## **Backgrounder – Raincoast Education Society – November 9, 2007**

### ***What is the Raincoast Education Society?***

The Raincoast Education Society was incorporated in 2000 as a charitable non-profit society. The RES assumed the operations of the Raincoast Interpretive Centre (formerly operated as the Rainforest Interpretive Centre by the Long Beach Model Forest Society) and began delivering education programs in outlying communities. Today, the RES has grown to incorporate a diverse range of education and stewardship programs and activities delivered all over the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve region.

### ***What does the Raincoast Education Society do?***

The mission of the RES is to help shape an environmentally sound future for the Clayoquot and Barkley Sound region through education and community stewardship. The society is active delivering school and summer youth programs about natural and cultural history in the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth communities as well as in Tofino and Ucluelet. The RES also hosts interpretive walks and slideshows and delivers stewardship initiatives oriented toward youth and adults, such as the Tofino Mudflats Stewardship Program. Over the past several years, the RES has developed innovative new programs, including the Raincoast Host program to help train hospitality workers to answer visitors' questions about the Pacific Rim, and the Nuu-chah-nulth Raincoast Explorers Program, a summer program for Nuu-chah-nulth youth delivered in Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

### ***Why did you decide to move?***

The Board of Directors of the Raincoast Education Society recently completed a comprehensive review of our budget, funding sources, staffing and core program activities. We decided that reallocating some of our overhead expenses into staffing and programs was the best way to expanding the programs of the Society and increasing our presence and effectiveness in the Clayoquot and Barkley Sound region.

### ***Why did you choose the Clayoquot Field Station? When will you re-open there?***

It wasn't easy to decide to move away from the downtown core and the "Yellow Building" at 451 Main St. that has been our home for so long. But, after reviewing several options, we decided that the opportunity to be located adjacent to the "living classroom" of the forest and mudflats (as well as the access to the indoor classroom and other facilities of the Field Station) was a really good fit for us. We'll be fully moved by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 and we'll be having an Open House on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008.



***Where will your walks, talks, slideshows and other events be held?***

We'll still be conducting our programs and events at the variety of venues we use now: the Clayoquot Field Station classroom, the Clayoquot Sound Community Theatre, local resorts, schools, beaches, and the Tofino mudflats. And we'll be running more programs in Ucluelet in the coming months as well.

***Can I still come visit the RES and look at displays and use the library?***

Absolutely! Although we won't have the same kind of indoor interpretive space we had at our downtown location, many of our displays will move with us, and others will be used for "roving interpretive programs" in schools and at community events. As always, our library of books, magazines, and articles about natural and cultural history are available to the public. And, there's an extensive library already located at the Clayoquot Field Station we hope that people will come and peruse.

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***How can I talk to a RES interpreter?***

We'll still be reachable at the same contact information, [res@island.net](mailto:res@island.net) or 725-2560. But you can also just come over to the offices in the Clayoquot Field Station to talk to us!

***What's the relationship between the Raincoast Education Society and the Tofino Botanical Gardens?***

The RES is excited to have the opportunity to be so close to the Botanical Gardens and the Tofino Mudflats, but the two societies will remain independently operated. Collaboration between the two groups on education and stewardship initiatives will be a natural fit and we're looking forward to working together on some exciting programs, such as summer student internships. We hope that everyone takes advantage of all of the great natural and cultural history programs being offered by the Raincoast Education Society, the Clayoquot Field Station and the Tofino Botanical Gardens.

For more information, please contact:

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