

## 2024 GIRR Chair Report

Welcome, everyone, to the Galiano Island Recycling Resources (GIRR) Annual General Meeting. This meeting offers us a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the past year while preparing for the future of GIRR.

I first joined this board because I've long admired GIRR as a vital and impressive part of the island community. I volunteered many years ago when GIRR operated in Bobby Bambrick's yard, and I rejoined in 2021 to get involved in a more meaningful way. Now here I am, honoured to serve as Chair.

I'd like to start by recognizing our dedicated board members, who bring a rich mix of perspectives and skills that help guide our organization:

- Richard Blair
- Avi Bryant (Phoenix)
- Art Moses (Secretary)
- Amos Hertzman (Past Chair)
- Elizabeth Latta (SGIRC)
- Aslan Mackay (Treasurer)
- Lori McHattie
- Shelley Okepnak
- And myself, Donna Usher (Chair)

It is an honour and a privilege to work with these thoughtful people. Sadly, this year we are saying goodbye to Amos, who is not seeking re-election. We deeply thank him for his years of dedicated service. Thank you, Amos, you will be greatly missed!

A huge thank-you also goes out to our long-time staff: John New, Maryann Fitzgerald, Margaret Howell, and Rhys Hutton. Your experience and skills are essential and so appreciated. Also, thank you to Ken Stauffer for keeping GIRR books up to date. We also welcome new staff Barton Hewett and others who have recently joined the team. To our many volunteers, donors, and members—your support keeps GIRR strong. Thank you so much!

A very special thanks to Renée Macdonald, our operations manager. Renée's professionalism, attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to environmental and social justice are exceptional. She consistently goes above and beyond to keep GIRR running smoothly. It's a pleasure to work with Renée.

Of course, GIRR is not just about collecting recyclables and managing facilities—it's about the people behind the scenes who work hard every day to divert materials from the landfill and do what's right for the planet and our community. Because we value GIRR employees, we continue to adjust salaries to provide a living wage to the people who keep GIRR operating smoothly.

That said, we're very pleased with our new building! It's a more efficient, pleasant, and functional space—for both staff and community members. Thank you to everyone who

made it possible. We recently hosted a visit from the South Gulf Islands Recycling Coalition (SGIRC), and our colleagues from other islands were impressed with the new facility.

GIRR and SGIRC continue to collaborate on renewing the service agreement with the CRD. While the process has taken time, we're optimistic about reaching a strong, forward-looking agreement that supports recycling across the Gulf Islands.

This year, we were thrilled to receive a grant to purchase an electric forklift. With help from Esri, our local mechanic, we've sourced a pre-owned model that we hope will arrive soon. This electric forklift will reduce emissions and create a safer, healthier environment for staff and depot visitors.

On the Phoenix front- the initiative to recycle and refabricate hard plastics has made real progress, despite significant technical challenges. Plastic specialist/engineers Oliver Pirquet and David Gaylor have worked hard to address equipment issues, defects, and shipping damage. We're now starting to see exciting developments, including new product prototypes. The detailed reports are inspiring—it's clear this project has real potential.

Thanks to generous funding from the CleanBC Plastic Action Fund, infrastructure is being put in place to support Phoenix. We now have a septic field and new washing facilities, which will enhance GIRR operations even further.

The board has remained active in supporting community outreach as well. This past year, we initiated Operation Beach Cleanup, in partnership with the Galiano Conservancy Association, Galiano Parks & Rec, and the Yellowhouse Arts Centre. While the idea—to encourage beachgoers to help clean up ocean debris—was strong, the campaign didn't work as intended. Unfortunately, the bins were used for picnic trash and recyclables, and the initiative was paused until further notice.

We also continue to host free community events that help extend the life of everyday items:

- Tool, small appliance, textile, and bike workshop repairs
- Blade sharpening
- Our second annual ReDirectory Tool Sale Fundraiser

These efforts help reduce waste and build community resilience.

As we look to the future, we are actively recruiting new board members—we are looking for a new treasurer for the next term. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting GIRR in a deeper way, please reach out.

Thank you all for being part of this community. Together, we're building a stronger, more sustainable future for Galiano Island.