

Operations Manager Annual Report for 2023 – Presented at 2024 AGM

We began 2023 in our old depot and by year's end were operating from the new building. Thanks to the efficiency and good planning of Dave Koster and the Hunterston Homes crew, and the creativity of our depot staff with Maryann in the lead, we maintained full services throughout the entirety of the build.

The rapidly rising cost of materials during the pandemic, combined with an 18 month wait for our building permit, meant that when the time came to begin the project we were facing a significant shortfall in funding. GIRR's building committee worked with project manager Keith Erickson, Dave Koster and architect Gerald Longson to find suitable adjustments to the plan. In the end we completed the project on budget, spending a total of \$387,851.93. This was in large part covered by the \$383,352 grant from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – COVID 19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream, with the remainder coming from member donations to our building fund.

Amidst the construction, staffing changes, and weather of all kinds, in 2023 we received, processed, and removed more than 72.92 Metric Tonnes (MT) of recyclable materials from households on this island we call Galiano. We also removed another 9.97 MT of recyclables from our business community, for a total of 82.89 MT of weighable materials. Beyond the weigh scales, we received an array of materials counted by units that will be outlined below.

It can be noted that of the tonnages stated above, the lions share at 65.88 MT was Packaging and Printed Paper 'PPP' from island households. The dollar value that Recycle BC assigns to this volume of material is \$27,521.56 which they paid to the CRD. The CRD, in turn, pays GIRR an operating grant to cover the actual costs of residential recycling services on Galiano.

In accordance with our 5-year service agreement with the CRD, we have been receiving an annual CPI increase of 1.5%. Given the dramatic raise in the cost of living since the beginning of the pandemic, in 2023 the Southern Gulf Islands Recycling Coalition (SGIRC) of which GIRR is a member, approached the CRD to discuss a contract extension that would address the true increased cost of operations. In response to this, in October 2023 all SGIRC depots were offered a contract extension that would see a 43% increase to our operating grants in 2024. This was very good news, resulting in a jump from \$104,355.72 received from the CRD in 2023 to \$149,228.68 in 2024.

With the security of this increase, the decision by GIRR's board of directors to make GIRR a Living Wage employer was upheld. The staff at GIRR were grateful to receive the higher rate of pay and the recognition of their contributions to community recycling here on Galiano.

On the matter of other income in 2023, GIRR was paid \$22,610 by GFL Environmental for costs involved with hauling PPP from Galiano to Cascades Recovery in Victoria.

In addition to the PPP tonnage, in 2023 we handled 6.65 MT of electronics and small appliances for recycling. Through the electronics recycling program 'EOLE', GIRR was paid \$1,325.52 by Encorp Pacific (Canada); small appliances 'CESA' brought in \$2,667.73 from Product Care. Of the total amount of \$3,993.25 we were paid for these two programs, \$1,176 was paid out in freight fees to remove the materials off Galiano, leaving a balance income of \$2817.25.

In 2023, refundable beverage containers added \$48,205.10 to our income in exchange for approximately 482,000 units returned. The Bottle Depot in Victoria picked up from our depot, with no transport fees.

There are other recycling services we offer at GIRR, alongside the larger programs named above. While these are not big money-makers, they are important services to offer to our community.

In 2023 we received and arranged transport of:

9 tubs of paint cans and 1 tub of paint aerosols, for which we were paid \$862.31 by Product Care (this includes a newly negotiated credit of \$300 per pick-up);

.39 MT of batteries for which we are not paid, nor incur any expenses for transporting; and

we continue to accept lightbulbs, smoke alarms, and medical masks.

As stated above, in 2023 GIRR removed approximately 9.97 MT of packaging materials from our Industrial Commercial Institutional 'ICI' clients (Galiano businesses). As ICI materials are not included in the Recycle BC mandate nor our CRD service agreement, we are obligated to charge for this service. This is by no means an income stream for GIRR; we strive to break even in costs and expenditures. Despite ICI rate increases that we implemented early in 2023 to address escalating recycling fees and transport costs, we fell approximately \$500 short this year. The shortfall was paid for through GIRR's other (non-CRD) revenue streams. I will continue to monitor this program with the aim to equalize costs vs income.

GIRR's community sharing and re-purposing store, the ReDirectory, is going strong, playing an integral part in Galiano's local circular economy. This is another break-even venture that runs on the generosity of the community who donate goods and time to keep the store open and vibrant. It also serves a large role in keeping useful items circulating and diverting things from the landfill.

After launching GIRR's Repair Workshop Series in 2022, the program expanded from 3 to 8 events in 2023. The program is still gaining traction offering free repairs and introducing local repairers to community members. The Repair Series operates with support from the CRD's Rethink Waste Community grant, aligning with its mandate to reduce items entering the waste management stream.

The biggest and most notable new addition in GIRR's list of programs is Phoenix Plastics. In 2023, with new board member Avi Bryant at the helm, we secured a \$50,000 grant from Vancity Foundation to develop a pilot program to retain and recycle post-consumer rigid plastics into new product. This grant allowed us to purchase a trailer (for use as a workstation) and the necessary equipment to shred and press plastic into sheets. At the end of 2023 we brought David and Oliver on board to develop the systems and designs that will make this program a success. Phoenix is in its early stages still, and it will be exciting to see where this program will go. Primary goals of Phoenix are the reduction of transport emissions, landfill diversion, and creating useful recycled product for resale within our community.

Between the building expansion, delving into Phoenix Plastics, and all the while maintaining regular operations, 2023 was a big year at GIRR. I'd like to give sincere thanks to our staff for rising to the occasion, our board members for their vision and support, our volunteers for showing up with heart, and our community for caring about what happens here on the ground with community recycling.