



Photos Allan Forest

Gibsons Recycling Depot Celebrates Earth Day

People from all across the Sunshine Coast attended last Friday's Earth Day celebrations at Gibsons Recycling Depot to show their support for the environment and learn more about zero waste.

The Earth Day event also featured the launch of Revolution, a permanent new educational outreach centre developed in partnership with Sea to Sky Outdoor School for Sustainability Education.

"We are launching an educational resource centre here at the Gibsons Recycling Depot, which is now becoming the Gibsons Resource Recovery Park. The intent of this is education around the idea of zero waste and how you get there," Sea to Sky Outdoor School educator Tim Turner (seen above) said. "If people are going to shift [their attitudes and behaviour] in meaningful ways, they're going to need to come to a place like this and actually see the impact of their consumption and new ways

of imagining how to live their lives. That's what this education is all about."

Gibsons Recycling Depot staff are enthusiastic about the launch of the new education centre.

"Today is international Earth Day, so every year we try to up our game in what we're doing for our community and for the planet earth. [This year] we've partnered with Sea to Sky Outdoor School for Sustainability Education to create a permanent education centre here at the yard," Barb Hetherington of Gibsons Recycling Depot told The Local. "We do a lot of



education on sustainability issues, particularly how waste is a resource that we're not benefiting from and it's causing our planet a lot of harm. So today we're opening up the education centre and we've also invited our great friends at Gibsons Wildlife to be here for a plant sale because this is about community and certainly all the issues, wildlife and education, are the avenues that are going to keep us surviving on this planet.

We're trying to support people and education and offer tools on how we can be more effective on what we do," Hetherington said.

In addition to typical recyclables, Gibsons Recycling also accepts Styrofoam, paint, meat trays, egg cartons, batteries, florescent tubes and CFL bulbs.

"We do a lot of research and our mandate is to take as much as we can out of the waste stream. We don't want it going to the landfill. We don't want it to be incinerated. Our Earth Day project several years ago was we mortgaged our house for a Styrofoam recycling machine and we've started recycling Styrofoam on the Coast here. We were actually the first recycling depot in Western Canada doing that. Now other depots and other regional districts are following suit."

Hetherington says all household recycling at their depot is offered free of charge. She says they also have many small business clients who visit on a daily basis to drop off their recycling.

Money earned from selling recycled paper and cardboard is what allows Gibsons Recycling Depot to offer many of their services free of charge.

School trustee Greg Russell attended the Earth Day event to promote an environmental initiative he hopes to help introduce into the school district.

"At our last public board meeting Buddy and Barb [of Gibsons Recycling Depot] came and did a presentation to





our board and they made an offer to do a waste audit for our schools. At the moment we're awaiting response from the principals as to which schools would be interested in taking them up on their offer and I will follow up to hopefully ensure that this offer is accepted," Russell told The Local. "I think it would be a great opportunity for the kids and of course, right over there is an example of how you do a waste audit on a tarp [it's so simple] that it can be set up at a school. It would be great to get the kids to learn more about reusable products."

Liberal candidate Dan Veniez and his family came to the Earth Day event to join in the celebrations and learn more about what local businesses are doing to help the environment.

"It's Earth Day and Buddy Boyd is an example to all of us on real environmental sustainability," Veniez told The Local. "I learned that every piece of garbage - and I didn't know this until I met Buddy - has a potential other use. That's what the zero waste concept is all about. This guy is a trailblazer in Canada. We're years behind other countries in adopting this concept and we all have to embrace it because literally, the idea that we put our blue boxes on our curbside and that it's taken care of is absolutely false because we've got carbon footprints from transportation. We cannot take our waste for granted in that everything that we put in the garbage has a potential reuse. That's what this is all about."

Veniez also argued that the economics of the zero waste concept make sense.

"You can actually make money in a business like this if you're smart enough to do it. It puts the lie to the notion you have to choose between environmental protection and sustainability and a robust economy. This guy is living proof that that's wrong. You can make money by being smart, by being environmentally conscious, and by saving the planet," Veniez said.

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