

## **Annual Recycling Committee Report - March 2012 HIRRA Meeting**

The past 12 months have been BIG! Much has been learned! And much has been accomplished.

Early in 2011, HAZCO removed a 10 year backlog of hazardous waste left at the Depot, at a cost of \$29,000 dollars, 3 times the original estimate given by HAZCO.. The staff and the committee were very relieved to see these potentially very dangerous substances leave the island.

CVRD has applied for us to have a Product Care Plus Program here on Hornby Island and will build a 30x30 well ventilated building for the acceptance and storage of waste substances and items covered by the program. This Program will also cover the cost of removing these items off island.

Scott Hardy was sent to Victoria for the CFC Removal Course, and all fridges brought to the Depot now have the Freon safely removed and logged.

Stani, our Depot Manager, is a member of the Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee, which has been working on the new 10 year Solid Waste Management Plan. He is happy to report that his efforts have resulted in "Free Stores in rural areas" being included into the Plan. This means that Free Stores in rural areas can be officially encouraged and financially supported by tax dollars.

At this time last spring, the new Recycling Building was in the process of being built through a Design/Build Contract between the CVRD and Alan Fletcher Contracting. Our new building opened in mid June of 2011.

The new Recycling Building and it's location was a big adjustment for staff, volunteers and community members. The Recycling Committee and our Manager were kept busy answering community and staff questions and concerns, and working to establish new systems and traffic flows. It was difficult, but this work was, and continues to be, productive and creative. Our beloved Depot is a "work in progress" and we continue to learn from past mistakes and to find ways to smooth out the rough edges.

Our Depot Manager and his staff have regular Staff Meetings and are working together to establish more current job descriptions, and a job evaluation system for each position.

Eva Wass was commissioned to do a series of hand-painted signs for the new Recycling Building and they have brought color and warmth to the new building.

In December, a two-day work party was held to remove as much of the old recycling area roof and supports as possible. Material taken down were sorted and stacked for future reuse.

The Free Store was winterized with more plastic, and new door frames, doors and door handles were installed to create a warmer, less draughty space inside.

The current Free Store has been deemed a liability risk by the CVRD's insurance company. We have asked for and received estimates as to the comparative costs of bringing the current structure up to building code, and building a new Free Store building. Because of the extensive improvements needed to reach current building code standards, we have chosen to work toward

the building of a new Free Store building, sometime in the next 2-3 years. Until then, our Free Store is posted with a sign that it is closed to all at any time that there is snow load on the roof.

In the larger world outside of Hornby Island, landfills are filling up and recycling and reuse are becoming more mainstream practices. The materials that our Depot handles are being recognized as “resources”, packaging, paper and printing regulations will come into effect in 2014, and food waste and other organic materials are now being removed from the waste stream in many cities and communities. Stani and the Recycling Committee continue to investigate better systems and better markets for the surplus products we collect.

Stani has applied for stewardship programs for small appliances and electronics, which would pay for the collection and removal of any of these items not “recycled” at our Depot. Currently, we have been told there are no plans to set up collection centers in areas other than the Comox Valley.

The cost of tipping fees charged to us for material sent to the Pidgeon Lake Landfill have risen sharply and we had to raise our own tipping fees on the garbage and construction wood waste received at our Depot to prevent being in a deficit position.

Clean wood waste like tree branches are now chipped onsite at the Depot and chip mulch is available for sale.

Following the summer of adjustment to the new Recycling Building, and with many new projects coming in the near future, we recognized the need to develop a long range site plan for our Depot. In early January we formed a Design Group with interested members of the community, Free Store volunteers, Depot staff and Recycling Committee members, and through a very enjoyable and productive series of meetings came up with a plan. This plan has been given to CVRD, and they will be meeting with the Recycling Committee next week with their feedback. The plan has also been shared with the Depot staff and meets with their unanimous approval.

Once our Plan receives it’s “official” approval from CVRD, we hope to begin the next stages of it’s implementation. It is our hope that the new road behind the dumpsters and the new Product Care building can be completed before the summer season.

Last week, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, CVRD came to hold a presentation of their Draft 10-year Long Range Plan for Waste Management, in order to provide a forum for local input to this plan. No one from this community, other than our Depot Manager, one Free Store volunteer, and 2 Recycling Committee members attended. The plan is available for review online until April 27th @ [cswm@comoxvalleyrd.ca](mailto:cswm@comoxvalleyrd.ca). It is an exciting plan with a lofty goal of zero waste, that recognizes the value of “Free stores” in rural communities.

The input survey for the new Plan also asks for comment on the idea of “waste to energy”, which means burning garbage in a tightly controlled incinerator. For Vancouver Island, there is the possibility of such a facility at Gold River. It is important to know that such a facility requires HUGE quantities of garbage material to run, and one in Gold River would have to be “fed” by very large quantities of garbage barged in from the mainland.

We do hope people will take this opportunity to become informed about these future plans and to give their comments.