

## Gros Morne Businesses Lead the way to a Plastic-Free Future

As the region begins to welcome visitors, some businesses are saying good-bye to single-use plastics used at their operations.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Norris Point, NL, July 27 2021** – Businesses in the Gros Morne Region are turning the tide on plastic pollution and the impact it has on their coastal communities. Through a new pilot project created by [Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative](http://www.ahoi.ca) (AHOI) and funded by [Environment and Climate Change Canada](http://www.ec.gc.ca), nearly a dozen businesses that traditionally relied on disposable single-use plastic items for their food services and experiences, have switched to metal, glass, and biodegradable alternatives. This move will have a huge impact as food service is the primary source of single-use plastics that wash up on beaches in the Gros Morne region, and plays a significant role in accommodating roughly 250,000 people that visit in a typical tourism season.

Restaurants offering take-out traditionally rely heavily on single-use plastics such as straws, cutlery, containers, bags, styrofoam, and coffee paraphernalia. The AHOI pilot project encourages businesses to offer a 'Reuse-Refill' option; allowing customers to bring their own container to be filled with purchased food and beverages or providing customers with reusable containers that they can return once they are finished with them. When reusables and refillables are not feasible, companies are encouraged to use disposable containers that are truly backyard compostable; will rot without harming the environment.

[Gros Morne Outdoor Company](#) is one of three tourism companies embracing the 'Reuse' option by packing lunches in metal containers for their picnics, hiking and camping trips. Customers carry their food in reusable containers and return them to the business once they return from their excursion.

"It always feels good when you can lessen the impact on the environment, especially when you own an adventure experience company that showcases the pristine natural experiences Gros Morne National Park has to offer. Reducing our plastics will have a positive effect on our business, community, and environment and is essential as the public becomes more aware of the connections between their actions when traveling and what they support." Explains Natalie and Steve Wheeler, owners of the Gros Morne Outdoor Company.

Some businesses are implementing a hybrid model in their operations. [Gros Morne Farm and Market](#) is testing out some backyard compostable containers, and has already opted for glass mason jars that they refill for weekly veggie subscription boxes. Like the milkman, they deliver, pick up, sterilize, and refill the containers. Not only is it a closed-loop circular system; it also provides fresh, plastic-free produce.

[Shallow Bay Motel](#) is one of 10 companies that switched from plastic to 100% compostable take-out containers, through the project. "It's important for us to make the change, to help our area grow in the right way and make it a sustainable place for the future. Also, to set a great example for our kids and grandkids; we always want to try to leave the world a better place for them," says Steven House at Shallow Bay Motel. "We are very happy to be part of this great thing AHOI is doing and look forward to keeping this partnership and making Gros Morne a sustainable area now and in the future."

With Canada planning to issue proposed regulations banning or restricting certain single-use plastics this fall, AHOI aims to make this transition away from plastics simple and more convenient at the local level. It also sends the message that it is possible to transition away from unnecessary plastics, even in rural communities.

"Together, we are putting the Gros Morne region ahead of zero plastic waste targets nationally, and globally. Connecting local businesses with real alternatives to plastic shows tangible success from this pilot project! Our committed efforts are bringing people together with sustainable and local values, while making it easy for visitors to mark their destination with a sustainable trip. The changes local businesses are making sets an example for and preparing our region to become a more circular economy!" says Jackie Bauman, Senior Plastics Program Coordinator for AHOI.

The project launched in time for the tourist season and is ahead of Canada finalizing its regulations on a single-use plastics ban.

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## **BACKGROUND**

AHOI is one of 14 organizations across Canada to receive funding from ECCC through the Zero Plastic Waste Initiative. This project looks at the life cycle of plastic from the point it is made to the moment we find it discarded. Studies show that approximately 80% of plastic waste that ends up in our ocean comes from land-based sources.

In the Gros Morne Region, most business is driven by tourism, with roughly 250,000 people visiting the national park in a typical year. AHOI works closely with businesses, town councils, other NGOs, and community members to build capacity at the community level, to help them transition away from single-use plastics and make the Gros Morne Region a leader in becoming a more circular economy.

The following businesses and municipalities have signed up for the pilot project:

[Gros Morne Adventures](#)

[Gros Morne Farm and Market](#)

[Gros Morne Outdoor Company](#)

[Old Cottage Hospital](#)

[Old Store Café](#)

[Out East Adventures](#)

[The Merchant Warehouse Retro Café and Wine Bar](#)

[The Old Loft](#)

[Shallow Bay Motel](#)

[Sugar Hill Inn](#)

[Taste of Gros Morne](#)

[Town of Norris Point](#)

Many products claim to be 'compostable' or 'biodegradable' because they are made with plant-based bioplastics, known as PLA. Take-out containers lined with PLA are only compostable in an industrial composter. Since the region does not have an industrial composter, AHOI searched for compostable take-out containers that are backyard compostable. The most suitable products to date have come from [Eco2Bureau](#) based out of Quebec, CA.

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