

AHOI and Lush are bringing “sustainable parties” and waste management solutions to the Gros Morne region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Norris Point, NL, July 26, 2022 – Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative (AHOI) is redefining the way people party in the Gros Morne region! With new funding, AHOI can now team up with communities, festivals and venues to ditch the single-use plastic (SUP) cups typically used at large gatherings and events, and replace them with reusable and infinitely recyclable options. It is one of several new AHOI initiatives made possible with the support from [Lush Handmade Cosmetics Ltd. \(Lush\) Charity Pot](#). The charitable grant allows AHOI to do three important activities: offer plastic-free community events or “sustainable parties;” install rinse stations for reusables and recyclables at high-traffic areas; and support the installation of new signage for public waste and recycling bins in all seven communities making up the Gros Morne region.

The goal is to reduce the use of SUP products, improve waste diversion, and increase the recyclability of plastic waste, which were significant issues identified through AHOI's research as presented in its recent [Waste Management Report for Western NL](#).

“We are thrilled to bring these innovative ideas to the region, advance the research we have done to reduce plastic pollution and expand our efforts to make it a truly circular economic region.” says AHOI founder, Rebecca Brushett. “This coastal region is a global destination for various activities that connect with our environment so we have a great opportunity to make an impact on reducing our plastic use and show that we *can* accommodate events, tourism activity and visitation in sustainable ways.”

AHOI is now equipped with 800 beverage containers, most of which are [Ball Aluminum Cups](#) that are both reusable and infinitely recyclable. Event goers can “rent a cup” and get their money back upon return; ensuring the metal cups stay in the closed loop system AHOI has designed. AHOI also has two mobile wash stations where cups can be washed and reused at any site - with or without access to water.

The first local event to give “sustainable parties” a try is the [Harbour Lights Festival](#) in Rocky Harbour slated to start on July 28.

“We support AHOI and the initiative to help reduce the use of plastic in our community. We are pleased to jump on board and offer the reusable cups to individuals visiting our festival.” says Beverly Snow of the Harbour Lights Festival committee. “We understand the effect plastic is having on our environment and feel that everything we do, no

matter how small, is a step in the right direction. Also, this will help educate and raise awareness regarding the amount of plastic we bring into our communities that will end up in the landfill site.”

AHOI is also supporting sustainable events at a popular venue in Woody Point. With AHOI’s support, the Heritage Theatre, where [Writers at Woody Point](#) and other festivals take place, will get a commercial dishwasher and various types of reusable drinkware.

“Writers at Woody Point is a celebration of stories that brings audiences from across the world together, to share in both the pristine beauty of this land and the artistic culture it sustains.” says Pilvi Keto-LeBlanc, Executive Director of Writers at Woody Point. “We strive to be responsible stewards, to ensure that stories continue to be shared here for future generations. To make our story greener, we are excited to receive the support of AHOI. Such an asset will allow us to move toward a plastic-free venue where quality and sustainability align. We are committed to doing our part to positively contribute to both arts & culture and the environment here in Bonne Bay.”

In a region that welcomes up to 250,000 visitors annually, it is also important that fail-safes are included in the recycling systems and that people are aware of the local waste sorting guidelines when they drop their waste into a bin. Considering that visitors may not speak English or be familiar with local sorting, AHOI is bringing new informative, bilingual signage to bins in high-traffic sites for all seven communities. The signs will match those AHOI worked on with Gros Morne National Park and Gros Morne Cooperating Association in 2021. The towns of Norris Point and Rocky Harbour are already on board with using the signs in their communities.

“Norris Point is excited to see new signage installed throughout the community to help assist people on the proper disposal of their waste at designated sites.” says Norris Point Town Clerk-Manager, Jennifer Samms. “We are happy to partner with AHOI on this initiative.”

Lastly, AHOI will focus on installing rinse stations to ensure public and national park recyclables get effectively recycled. With the Town of Rocky Harbour’s approval, AHOI will set up a rinse station pilot program at the Green Depot in August of 2022. This program will take hundreds of pounds of contaminated public recyclables - usually destined for the landfill - and rinse them to improve their recyclability before they are sent to the transfer station and on for further processing.

AHOI has been leading the change in Gros Morne and with this funding from Lush, is able to keep the momentum going and introduce these new products and models for sustainable communities.

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BACKGROUND

[Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative](#) (AHOI) is a registered non-profit organization that raises awareness of our changing ocean and facilitates actions to protect it and communities that depend on it most. Studies show that approximately 80% of plastic waste that ends up in our ocean comes from land-based sources. AHOI works closely with businesses, town councils, other NGOs, and community members to transition away from single-use plastics and in 2020, these efforts were significantly amplified through AHOI's two-year [Zero Plastic Waste Gros Morne Initiative](#). The work being done with Lush funding stems from the culmination of three years of research and activities in the Gros Morne region, and focuses on some of the recommendations put forward in the report titled, [Assessing the Waste Management System in the Gros Morne region](#).