



New Partnership a Huge Step Towards Reducing Plastic Footprint in Gros Morne Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Norris Point, NL, May 25, 2021 - Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative (AHOI) is pleased to announce a new partnership with Parks Canada – Gros Morne National Park and the Gros Morne Cooperating Association (GMCA), to move the region towards zero plastic waste. The 3-year agreement, “Becoming Plastic Waste Free in Gros Morne” aims to lessen the impact of plastic waste in the region, in and around the national park and in adjacent communities.

“This is the first time AHOI has partnered with a national park and its cooperating association. We’re very excited to tackle plastic pollution, while also developing strategies to move *with* the region to create a more circular economy! We want to take a multifaceted approach to this complex problem; and this partnership starts that process. Collectively, we will develop ways to help Gros Morne become more sustainable and show other remote areas across Canada what’s possible when you work together!”, says Rebecca Brushett, Executive Director for AHOI.

The partnership involves education and outreach initiatives, beach cleanups and audit research, and a regional circular economy strategy.

“Parks Canada places are gateways to discovering nature. In Gros Morne National Park, we are excited to work with partners and nearby communities to protect and present Canada’s natural treasures. This new partnership with Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative and the Gros Morne Cooperating Association is an opportunity to work with the broader region to address waste management issues, clean up some of Gros Morne’s coastal areas, and educate the public on reducing the use of plastics,” explains Gudie Hutchings, Member of Parliament for Long Range Mountains.

The partnership also promotes sustainable tourism and focuses on reducing waste associated with the tourism industry, to ensure the long-term benefits to the region.

“Gros Morne Cooperating Association is pleased to work with these partners to reduce single-use plastics in our region. Living in a region with a protected natural area

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encourages us as citizens to do our part in looking after our environment and demonstrating it in our behavior. Our association, communities and Parks Canada are working together to ensure we move forward sustainably for the protection of this place we are proud to call home." remarks Colleen Kennedy, Executive Director for GMCA.

The partners are kicking off their partnership with a community beach cleanup and audit during the popular *Trails, Tales and Tunes Festival*, which attracts locals and tourists alike. The cleanup will take place at Wild Cove Beach in Norris Point, NL from 10am-12pm on Saturday, May 29, 2021, and is registered with the *Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup*.

Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative is a registered non-profit organization formed in 2019, to raise awareness of our changing oceans, and facilitate actions to protect them and communities that depend on them most. AHOI works with local businesses, universities, government agencies and others, to create programs that support the health of our oceans, while working towards a more resilient and sustainable blue economy. To date, AHOI has collected more than 3,000 pounds of plastic waste.

The partnership agreement focuses on the Gros Morne region in and around the national park, and adjacent communities. The area encompasses a national park – also a UNESCO World Heritage Site - and 8 enclave communities with a combined population of approximately 3000 people. The region hosts roughly 250,000 visitors in a typical tourism season – a more than 8 thousand percent increase in people, from May to September.

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