

Green Okanogan Annual Report 2021

Organizational Growth

- All board seats are filled at this time, with 9 members, pending the membership election to renew some positions.
- We are still a “working board” (no manager), with faithful member-volunteers, and day labor to help us get caught up on some projects. But we do have a half-time position that remains unfilled as the volume and complexity of operations continues to grow.
- The current standing committees are Education (community outreach), Finance (budgeting for growth of the facility), and Membership (growing our organization).
- Our membership is currently 161. We have a number of new members, and want to welcome them for joining us in our efforts to keep the planet healthy. We also have a heart full of thanks for those that have hung in there with us for all these years.

Recycling Center Operations

- At the Recycling Center the **Covid 19 pandemic continues to shape how we interact** with each other and our customers. The board worked hard to keep on top of the changing regulations. We provided masks and handwashing stations for staff and customers. As of this writing, there is still a mask requirement for indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status.
- We will have **two less service days this year**; 153 instead of 155 last year. We had to close during the heat dome, as outdoor working conditions were too extreme for safety. Yet we are on track to end the year with **almost 9000 customer visits; a rise of an estimated 30%**. Yet **volunteer hours are estimated to be a little over 6000 hrs., a rise of only 10%**. Our nine board members are contributing 80% of that (except, of course, for Sandy Tooker and a handful of faithful volunteers; that contribution often gets us across the finish line when we are flagging). Due to the lack of volunteers, we hired a part-time helper to get caught up; it took a couple months. Please consider just a few hours of your time and talents to come and help.
- We had signed up with AARP Foundation to be eligible for a half time position, that is paid by the Foundation. But we wanted someone who was fully vaccinated. Almost all of the people that applied were not vaccinated. And AARP staff fell behind in processing applicants. We are still working on filling that position.
- We had new gravel laid down in the parking and driveway areas in back of the store. Semi-trucks have had trouble getting out the back door in muddy conditions, and in order to move the Harvest Node, it needed to be done. It also eliminated the puddles for staff and customers.
- We had two work parties to help clean up the property. We rented commercial dumpsters both times, and got a lot done. We also decided to start small dumpster service, instead of relying on the generosity of Doug and customers to volunteer dump runs. We always had an unsightly pile. Now we don't.
- We were able to **find an appropriate placement for the Harvest Node**. The organization that owned it folded, and left it to Green Okanogan. We found a farm that suffered the loss of their cold storage during the 25 Mile Creek Fire this summer. They now have a place for their fresh produce. We were happy to find a good home.
- **Cardboard** continues to be the largest volume of product received and sold. (See the financial report for volume and sales details.) We have a broker who helps to market the product for the best price. Other paper products are sold within North Central Washington. This is also the item that comes from local businesses in large quantities. It was recommended that we update the business survey to get a current picture of the needs of our local business community. Cardboard was the top of the list for them last time, but they wanted free pickup, and no membership requirement. That may need to change to make it feasible for us to do that. Additionally, one business who had been storing small bales in the snow over the winter delivered product that was

rejected, but cost us a lot of time and effort to assess and the haul most to the dump. Customer education is essential for both individuals and businesses.

- **Plastic** markets are starting to come back as there is more demand. We still only take #1 and #2, and they go farther afield to remanufactured into other products.
- **Metals** still go to Spokane, and thankfully the aluminum still covers the cost of hauling.
- **E-Cycle** continues to be shipped about every other month, with about 10 pallets-full of product.
- **Clothes and books** were a new item that we added. They are marketed to American Textiles Services in Yakima. The books market connection didn't last, but the clothing did. Make sure it is dry, clean and in good condition. Like all donations, I ask people to consider being the recipient; if it is something they would want as an indicator of quality.
- After giving up on local **glass** recycling, we disposed of the vast majority of it by sending it to the landfill. The good news is that it wasn't plastic (that turns into microplastics that pollute the entire planet) nor was its carbon-based materials (that produce methane). It is just silicon dioxide that came from the earth, and has now been returned to the earth. We did get the barrel-top crusher repaired and it is producing some small amounts of crushed glass, but it is not part of our regular program.
- We continue to set out collection baskets in city parks and the Rodeo Grounds to make sure **recycling is available to the general public or gatherings.**
- **The GO Again Thrift Store was the saving grace again this year.** The store has been quite full, and people have wanted to shop in safe places. We are following all recommended safety measures. We have a festive holiday section that we hope will help those who are finding bare shelves elsewhere.
- We still have a list of **capital projects** that we have on our Wishlist for the recycling center's future. We work hard to continue to improve operations quality and efficiency, so that we can better serve you and the community.
- The **shelter over the receiving area.** Is installed and greatly improves ease of recycling for both customers and staff; no more duct tape and 2 by 4's. And new signage helps to direct
- **We have a new forklift.** It is a Clark, with a side-shift, which makes for easier semi-truck loading. The old Ford pickup is down from the Barter Faire site to use for community pickups of recyclables. The Dodge has had some work, but still hauls smaller loads to Wenatchee and Spokane.
- The **baler continues to press its little heart out.** A metal slide chute was built to facilitate the loading of plastics and metals. It replaced a wooden chute that was an improvement at the time, but was falling apart and ready to be replaced. The goal is to have compact bales that travel well, and we are accomplishing that. Phil is the glue that holds things together, and has someone to help most days. Due to the lack of volunteers, we hired a part-time helper to get caught up; it took a couple months. Please consider just a few hours of your time and talents to come and help.
- We are currently saving up for the **big shelter to cover baled product ready for shipping,** and have the design approved and stamped by an engineer. We expect to start construction on that next year if all goes well.





Markets

Pricing for recycled products is still variable; a moving target. (Please see the financial statement for recycling totals year to date.) Some markets are coming back as on-shore remanufacturing starts to develop. That is the best long-term solution anyway, reducing the carbon footprint of recycling. We also have some new vendors, and Carol Lanigan diligently keeps an eye on current pricing. As with all marketing, we need to stay flexible in a constantly changing world. This a good strategy for life in general.

Education

Community outreach was still severely limited by the pandemic. There is a long list of things we were not still able to do this year.

- No farmers market booth, so we sell our GO T-shirts and reusable bags at the GO Again store.
- There was a city-wide cleanup, but we were so short staffed we couldn't participate at their collection site. We did have people coming by to deliver their recyclables though.
- There were limited other large events, and the ones that were held often produced spikes in Covid 19 cases so no Barter Faire (spring or fall).
- There was no Trashion Show
- We are still waiting for an appropriate time to hold our Plastic Palooza educational fair and our Environmental Film Festival

But there were other opportunities:

- We put together a window display for the CCC during the month of April, as we couldn't have the Trashion Show for Earth Day. Lots of people were observed taking in the display and information.
- Information was distributed at the Garlic Festival, as it was a smaller, outdoor event.
- The school district and some local businesses do bring their recyclables regularly to the recycling center.
- We still collect cardboard bales and bundles from Beyers Market, North Valley Hospital and the Junction
- Like many other organizations, our main public presence other than the recycling center is on the internet for now, with our website and Facebook group. That is where we do a lot of customer education. Patrice had considered retiring, but is still faithfully serving our internet hosting needs. Thank you, Patrice.

Financial Status

We have been successful because of diverse income streams, even without the outreach and fundraising opportunities.

Budgeting: We review the budget monthly, and determine if expenses are meeting our expectations. And we continue to set aside funds for planned capital projects. The biggest one planned is a structure

over the finished bales of product so that we can quit fighting the wind and weather with tarps that last a year if we are lucky. We have a design and are getting ready to put it out to bid so that we can finalize the numbers for fundraising.

Recyclables: (See pricing and volumes in the financial report.) Though this is not a large portion of our income, it is still the core of our purpose and our activities. It's not about the money, though it helps not to lose our shirt. We will continue to shop for improving markets. We know they are coming; it is inevitable.

Go Again Thrift Store: Our shining star. The products donated are apparently what people need and want. It makes the circular economy a reality for our community. Sales appear on track to rise over 40% over last year. Many thanks to Janet for heading up the effort to start the store as a component of the recycling center. The seasonal displays never fail to put a smile in my face as I walk in the door.

Fundraising: We have a Give NCW drive through Community Foundation of North Central Washington, that will last through the end of the year. We have a listing on Amazon Smile, where GO can be designated as a recipient of a .5% rebate with every purchase. Please use the Smile website and designate GO as your preferred recipient.

Off-site Recycling Contracts: Our storage shed at the Barter Faire site got stained to preserve the wood. Paul and Sarah made shelving to hold personal items in a safe, dry place. We are still filling it with all our supplies. This was funded by a Barter Faire Grant that served them as well as us. (There's that circular economy thing.) We are ready to serve when the next Faire comes.

Grants: We have been able to obtain a few small ones, including one for our safety measures stations around the facility.

Memberships: We hold our membership drive in June. Numbers are up this year due to more financial certainty, and new members that have joined us over the course of the year. Thanks to all that responded. Every single one helps.

Cash Donations: These were also up this year by over 15%. A few dollars may seem like it doesn't do much, but that is not true. There are months where the donations make the difference to cover all the expenses. Please continue to put something in the box when you come in. Thank you.

Fiscal Accountability: We are always transparent about our finances. Year to date income and expense figures are in the financial statement. And our board meetings are always open. If you have an item to add to the agenda, call ahead so we can make sure we can give you time to present your ideas. The finances can be looked at in a variety of ways, but what we have for you is a Statement of Activities, Statement of Financial Position and Recycled Sales by Item, YTD

Help Us Dream a Green Okanogan Future

We have accomplished a literal mountain of recycling; 776 tons (1,552,000 pounds) by last count. And that is without the estimated weight of GO Again store sales. But there is still an Everest of work yet to do. Please take a moment to help us build a better mousetrap. We continue to blow the roof off of what we thought we could do in the upper Okanogan Valley to keep garbage out of the landfill, and keep the circular economy going here in our neck of the woods. We are so far from markets, and the pricing is still so low. These were the reasons given by the county for not doing more. But with a volunteer crew, and access to grants available to non-profit organizations, we have made it possible. If you have a bright idea, please share it. Thanks.

My watchwords for the coming year? Just GO and do it! "No more blah, blah, blah". (Gretta Thunberg)

-presented by Mariah Cornwoman

**Green Okanogan Financial Summary
Annual Membership Meeting
December 12, 2021**

Financially 2021 was a very good year for Green Okanogan. At the beginning of the year the Board approved a budget that showed we wanted to generate a net income of \$20,050. To date we have a net income of \$54,917. This is an increase of \$14,360 over last year.

This year income was generated primarily from:

Thrift Store, \$33,535
Individual donations, \$14,494
Sales, \$14,385
Membership dues, \$8,700
Grants, \$7,459

The most significant expenses were:

Insurance, \$4658
Facility supplies and maintenance, \$3676
Utilities, \$2637
Mortgage interest, \$2485
Equipment maintenance, \$2307

GO made some major purchases in 2021:

1. Office computer and new Quickbooks software, \$1756
2. Completed construction of the covered shelter, \$12,080
3. Baler slide chute, \$3,528
4. Clark forklift, \$9000

Long term liability is \$109,583 due on the property purchase.

In summary, the thrift store continues to be the biggest income generator. That with donations, contributions and membership dues paid by individuals maintain the viability of GO as the constantly fluctuating price of recycled product is not a reliable source of income.

Outlook: GO intends to fund a 50x50 structure to hold product bales waiting for shipment. It's estimated it may approach \$100,000 to build. The current checking account balance of over \$56,000 provides a partial portion of the project. The Board has previously approved pursuing a loan to cover the remaining funds when needed. The structure will allow a significant improvement in keeping cardboard bales dry as well as improve safety for volunteers currently involved in maintaining the tarp coverings.

-presented by Sarah Gelineau