

## Bella Bella Compost Pilot

Contributed by Dave Whitehead, Bella Bella Solid Waste Working Group

The Bella Bella Community Composting Project was initiated in 2012 by the local Solid Waste Working Group and Heiltsuk Tribal Council representatives. The project was inspired by existing community gardens and composting at the Elders Centre and the School. Community leaders hope to reduce the volume of waste sent to landfill and to improve health by expanding composting and growing food locally.

### Collection

The most suitable collection option for kitchen waste was 5 gallon plastic buckets, fitted with spin-on style lid closures. Collection buckets are collected weekly with each filled bucket replaced by a clean, empty bucket. Filled buckets are transported to the composting facility for processing (*emptying, cleaning and prepping for following week's collection*).

### Composting Method

To fit the challenges faced in a small remote community, local volunteers re-

searched and adapted a batch style composting method. This simple approach includes the combining of collected compostable materials with coarsely chipped woody materials, the frequent turning and mixing of these materials, and the careful monitoring of each compost batch to ensure optimum composting activity.

### Facility Design

The facility was designed to suit the batch method. It consists of a covered structure located on a concrete pad with a concrete wall down the center to enable turning and mixing, along with a series of interior 1/2 walls to create a stall or bin effect. Exterior chain link gates complete the structure, providing a high degree of animal exclusion while allowing complete access and air circulation. An additional lean-to structure provides a

working space to clean and organize collection buckets.

### Progress

The compost production facility construction was completed in April 2013. A six-month/30 household pilot was begun May 1, 2013 to test our collection and composting methodologies, to help determine the capacity of the production facility, to provide real data on the volume of compostable kitchen waste generated per household and to provide some indication of the time and effort required to run a composting program in this community of 1500 people. There is a wait-list of residents wanting to participate in the composting project.



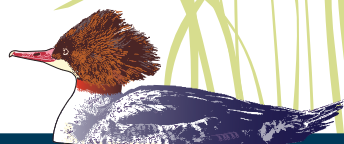
Members of the Bella Bella Solid Waste Working Group proudly celebrate the opening of the compost facility.



This custom facility was designed and built almost entirely with local resources, grant funding and volunteer labour.

## The Merganser

is a diving duck found in coastal waters and lakes all over BC.



# The Merganser

Reports on First Nations Waste Management Programs in British Columbia, Canada

Fall 2013



AANDC\* began the B.C. Remote First Nations Solid Waste Program in 2008 after an assessment showed that the communities have similar needs and challenges. A common theme is the desire for recycling, composting and waste reduction activities. Solutions are developed locally and in cooperation with many different Regional Districts and service providers.

\*Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

## Landmark Training Partnership

Earlier this year, a custom training opportunity for household hazardous waste (HHW) was made possible with the help of many enthusiastic partners. On June 26th, the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) generously hosted the on-site event at their Campbell Mountain Landfill facility. Public Works staff from nine First Nations attended. Several RDOS staff were present to

answer questions about their operations. Martin O'Connor and Clint Kilback from Newalta Corporation provided a practical hands-on instruction session on the safe operation of an HHW facility. Tim Innes from Gitxaala Nation expressed heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the group. "Thank-you for giving us information so willingly, and it was all positive information. We're going to look at what's under our kitchen sinks differently...now that we're aware

what we need to do with them and how to handle them." they observed Product Care's efforts to fully reuse and recycle the products they collect. Participants received collection buckets for used thermostats from Switch the Stat (*see more inside*).

Russell Frank from Ahousaht First Nation summed up the experience "I've learned lots in the two days about household hazardous waste. It's interesting. It's an eye-opener."



Newalta's Martin O'Connor and Clint Kilback led the onsite session and tour.



Gitxaala community garden champions Cindy Ignas and Myrna Robinson

Look for community project updates inside this issue!



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# Community Updates

Welcome to our new program communities Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, ?Esdilagh and Seton Lake.



**Gitxaala** – The Solid Waste Working Group (SWWG) has worked hard to set up the community garden and recycling system. Construction of the community's new solid waste transfer station is nearing completion.

**Metlakatla** – Since completing the transfer station, work has begun on landfill closure using local materials. Part of the former landfill area will be used as a public works yard. Monitoring of the closed landfill will take place over the next two years.

**Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)** – The City of Vancouver generously hosted a job shadowing opportunity for two public works staff. The Eco-Depot has returned 14 pallets of electronics and 6 Product Care tub skids this year. (See back page for composting news)

**Hesquiaht** – Initiated a recycling program and distributed household recycling bins.

**Gitga'at (Hartley Bay)** – Transfer station upgrades to prevent rodent entry were completed over the summer. The community will be installing recycling collection and storage bins throughout the community and at the transfer station.



## Community Developed Videos

Heiltsuk and Ahousht Nations have a series of short videos posted on YouTube

- **Recycling:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGxoaZVPT6Q>
- **Composting:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cli7B-N1SWs>
- **Free Store:** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwSfDbyT\\_0s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwSfDbyT_0s)
- **Worm Composting:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llmrPu7yOXU>

Also available for sharing is a 20 minute video featuring the recent Household Hazardous Waste training session. Contact Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council for a copy.

Kwadacha • Fort Ware

• Tsay Keh Dene

**Kwadacha** – Construction of the community's new solid waste transfer station began recently. A successful recycling pilot early in the year will be followed by a full recycling program when the transfer station is operational.

**Kitasoo** – Collection of recycling has been strong, so the community purchased and installed a baler, which will make storage and transport more efficient.

• Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)

Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw

Port Hardy

• Mount Currie

Hesquiaht • Ahousht

Tofino

Opitsaht • Penelakut

• Victoria

**Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha** – Many years' worth of stockpiled bulky metals (*appliances, automobiles, etc.*) were rounded up in each community and transported by barge down Williston Lake to Mackenzie where they were picked up by a metals recycler.



**Mount Currie** – The community landfill was closed earlier this year and recyclables and waste are now compacted and transferred to a regional facility.

**Penelakut** – The landfill closure was completed, and a storage compound for bulky waste and hazardous waste was constructed.

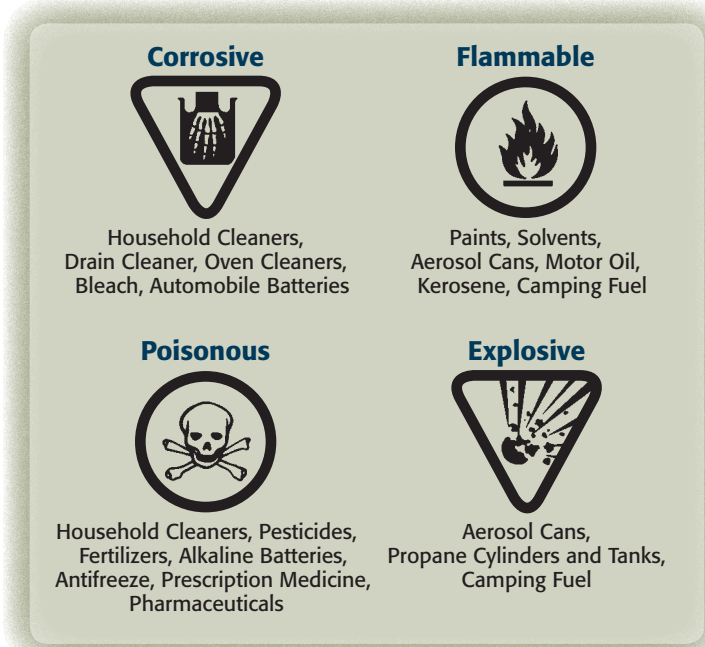
**Ahousht** – The Free Store recently opened its doors for community members to drop off used household items and browse for new-to-them treasures. Similar to Bella Bella, Ahousht is piloting batch-style composting. After 6 months, collection is up to 40 buckets a week (*10lbs of material per bucket*).



# What's Under Your Sink?

Contributed by Joanne Chang, First Nations Health Authority

Toxic substances from certain household items may contaminate the air, water and/or soil. As a result, improper disposal at landfills, open water bodies or existing sewage systems may negatively impact people and the environment. Some household hazardous waste can be easily recognized by the hazard symbols on the bottle containers e.g. "Corrosive", "Flammable", "Poisonous", or "Explosive" (see table below).

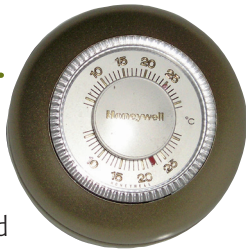


## Switch the 'Stat

Switch the 'Stat is a stewardship program that recovers and recycles thermostats. They accept mercury-containing, electronic and mechanical thermostats and ensure that all the components, especially the mercury, are kept out of the waste stream. Each thermostat can contain between 2.5-10 grams of mercury, and it only takes a single gram to contaminate an 8-hectare lake to the point where the fish are inedible for a whole year.

Participation is easy and free of charge! Even better, switching to newer and more energy-efficient programmable thermostats and responsibly disposing of older mercury-containing thermostats reduces energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and prevents mercury from contaminating our air, soil, and water.

To participate, or to find out more about the program, please visit [switchthestat.ca](http://switchthestat.ca).



In order to prevent household hazardous waste from contaminating the environment, it is important to recognize the proper storage, usage, and disposal methods. Finding "green" alternatives to the hazardous products are also highly encouraged.

## Storage

- Follow storage instructions on the labels
- Store chemicals in its original containers with proper labelling
- Never transfer any chemicals to a different container
- Store in lockable cabinets out of reach of children and pets

## Disposal

- Separate household hazardous products from your household garbage
- Consult your Band to see the type of hazardous waste disposal program that is available in your community

## Medical Waste

- For sharp objects such as needles and syringes, dispose of them in proper sharps containers that are provided by the Nursing Station
- For unused medications check with the Nursing Station for disposal



## Usage

- Use up all the products or share with other households
- Only buy the amount you need
- Use only the recommended amount (*more is not better*)
- Use in well ventilated areas
- Never mix two different products together

## Alternatives

- For paints and solvents, use water-based or latex paints as they do not require thinner or solvents
- Avoid aerosol products. Use pumps or spray bottles
- Baking soda: a non-abrasive scouring powder that cleans and deodorizes
- White vinegar and water: clean windows and smooth surfaces. It can also remove grease and grime
- Open blocked drains with metal snakes or plunger.

## Other Product Stewards Who Manage Special Waste Include:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • Product Care Association           | Recycling Association                                  |
| • Recycle My Cell                    | • Call2Recycle   |
| • BC Used Oil Management Association | • Post Consumer Pharmaceutical Stewardship Association |
| • Canadian Battery Association       | • Light Recycle  |
| • Electronic Products                |  |

For more information go to the Recycling Council of BC website: [www.rcbc.ca](http://www.rcbc.ca)



Brent Van Beusekom of Product Care leads First Nations Public Works staff on a tour of the Surrey processing facility.