



2023

# Forum

Gabriola Island  
April 25-27

**PROGRAM GUIDE**



2023 RIEP Forum  
Presenting Sponsor

# Vancity

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*Message from the Chair*

## Onward, with Gratitude

On behalf of the Rural Islands Economic Partnership Society and our committed sponsors, welcome to the 2023 RIEP Forum!

It's exciting and humbling to be with you to re-embrace our mission—to further the economic resilience of BC's rural islands by connecting as a community, sharing ideas, and working together to achieve local socio-economic goals sustainably.

We began this mission in 2019 with our inaugural Forum, and since becoming RIEP we have been able to continue to demonstrate that our collective strengths can deliver enduring economic benefits for all of BC's rural island communities. Today, RIEP is the recognized vehicle for supporting regenerative rural island economies, and for facilitating connections with island settler and Indigenous communities across the province towards effective socio-economic action.

Most conferences offer connection and reflection; this week, we join together as a community to focus on action. The 'unconference' concept extends beyond the relaxed venue and surrounding nature, to the idea that we can resolve together to actualize the change we want to see on each island and in our network as a whole—to help put the pieces together for healthy, rural island communities.

For their unparalleled collective passion, dedication, and efforts in support of this cause, I give thanks to the RIEP staff team: Kya Dalton, Beth Dunlop, Amber Leeb, Rose Mosse, Lewis Muirhead, Shereese Johnson, Mitch Miyagawa, Lori Seay Potter, Colin Stein, and Myriam Verzat. My appreciation to photographer Carla Duffey, videographer Holly Hoffmann, and graphic illustrator Jenni Ottilie Keppler for their expertise this week.

I want to recognize the leadership and support provided by Planning Committee members and RIEP champions across our islands network the last six months: Doug Fenton, Mike Hoebel, Mamie Hutt Temoana, Kate Maddigan, Sheila McDonnell, Melody Pender, Susan Swift, and Thandi Williams.

Lastly, thank you to the RIEP Board of Directors—Colin Funk, Marjorie Giroux, Keena Hicken-Gabberria, Mike Hoebel, Vaune Kolber, Mark Lasby, and Maria Malmgren—for your guidance and belief in RIEP! Read more about RIEP and our leadership at [ruralislandspartnership.ca/about](https://ruralislandspartnership.ca/about)

Enjoy your time at the 2023 RIEP Forum—your comments, feedback, and ideas are always welcome.

With Gratitude for the Islands,

*Francine Z. Carlin*  
Chair & Interim Executive Director  
[chair@ruralislandspartnership.ca](mailto:chair@ruralislandspartnership.ca)





Malcolm

Broughton

Cormorant

Quadra

Cortes

Denman

Texada

Hornby

Lasqueti

Gambier

Gabriola

Bowen

Thetis

Galiano

Penelakut

Salt Spring

Mayne

Pender

Saturna



*“Putting the pieces together  
for healthy, rural island communities.”*

# Connect + Reflect + ACT!

*Just like placing puzzle pieces together to transform chaos into order, we all aspire to make positive change.*

It's not a puzzle nor is it exactly chaotic, but BC's rural island network doesn't yet possess the economic, environmental, or social order that we believe is needed for our communities to thrive.

Due to the pandemic, we experienced an almost four-year gap since our last in-person gathering; as RIEP, our Board and staff felt it was important to both illustrate the opportunity in front of us, and also to challenge ourselves to think of this year's Forum as something other than 'just another conference'. Hence, this year's RIEP Forum theme.

## Connect

This week, we're hoping you will deepen existing connections and build new relationships in this unique, in-person setting. Meet and exchange ideas with other island residents and allies through our varied and interactive session formats, networking and social opportunities.

**Connect** is all about being together, sharing the lived experience, and coming away from the 2023 Forum with a personal and professional network of people who want to keep BC's rural islands economically resilient and vibrant.

## Reflect

Sharing outcomes from the 2022 Virtual Forum, we'll engage productively around shared successes stories, common challenges, and the unique experience of living on a rural island. We hope to learn best practices across BC's rural communities and beyond.

**Reflect** upon how this information and learning can be applied locally or regionally by applying the RIEP collaborative lens to opportunities that we'll all identify for sharing resources and perspectives.

## ACT!

Turning intention into action will be guided by the Rural Islands Values Framework, developed during the 2022 Virtual Forum. By acting together, we will construct a road map for true transformative collaboration.

**ACT!** is all about translating our connections and reflections into Action Labs – working together to dig into lessons learned and solutions required for realizing enduring and resilient rural island communities.

*The RIEP Forum is an opportunity for island residents and allies to engage in conversation, experiential learning, intentional planning, creative advocacy, and strategic action...to keep our communities healthy and thriving.*



*2023 Forum promotions focused on the 'puzzle' analogy, as well as the 'unconference' nature of this year's venue and program.*

# The Program



*The Haven is a not-for-profit centre for transformational learning.*

Established in 1983, The Haven's facilities are located on seven acres of oceanfront and forested land on Gabriola Island.

[haven.ca](https://haven.ca)

*Gabriola Island is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.*

BC's third-largest Gulf Island by size (57.6 km<sup>2</sup>), second-largest by resident population (4,500 people), and #1 by population density (78/km<sup>2</sup>), Gabriola is known as the 'Isle of the Arts'. Supported by a thriving community of working artists and cultural events, Gabriola also boasts an elementary school, a library, a museum, public beaches & parks, cafes & restaurants, and shopping centres.

[hellogabriola.ca](https://hellogabriola.ca)



TO DAVIS RD,  
TAYLOR BAY RD,  
& FERRY TO NANAIMO  
➔



Forum Registration **SATIR**  
Accommodations Check-in **LODGE**  
Dining • Refreshments • Social



Shuttle  
PICK-UP/DROP-OFF



Keynote/Plenary Sessions **AUDITORIUM**  
Showcases, Panels & Action Labs  
Evening Concerts **AUDITORIUM**

ACCOMMODATIONS



## Program Formats

Much of your time at the 2023 Forum will be spent in-session—see pages 6-7 to read more about the Program & plan your days.

### Keynotes

Expert-led presentations with facilitated discussion on key issues, needs, directions and opportunities related to the socio-economic well-being of the islands and the coast.

### Showcase

Opportunities to learn about programs, services, success stories that benefit the rural islands and coastal communities.

### Interactive Panel

Moderated discussions featuring panelists with particular knowledge of and/or expertise related to a timely topic or theme.

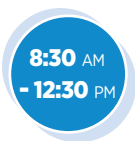
### Action Lab

Working sessions on interactive panel topics, with participants able to propose recommendations for transformative action on Day 3.



## The Essentials

### Registration & Check-in Tuesday, April 25



#### Forum Registration

All Forum registrants, including guests, facilitators, moderators, speakers, and sponsors, are invited to register at **Satir West**.

#### Check-in to Accommodations

Whether you are staying at The Haven or elsewhere on Gabriola Island, **please check-in by 11:00 am** to leave time for lunch at The Haven dining room and the 1:00pm program start.

If needed, The Haven can store your belongings securely until the end of the day's program.

### On-Island Transfers

#### Shuttle Service

A dedicated shuttle will be available to take guests between the Haven and the following locations:

- Ferry Terminal - APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIME **3 mins**
- Decanso Bay Regional Park Campground - **2 mins**
- Surf Lodge - **5 mins**
- Pages Inn, Silva Bay - **15 mins**
- Pages Resort, Marina & Campground - **17 mins**

The daily schedule of shuttle availability and pick-up/drop-off times will be posted on the bulletin board outside the Lodge.

### Evening Entertainment

#### Sarah Osborne

**Day 1 Tuesday, April 25** 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm  
Phoenix Auditorium

Based on Gabriola Island, singer-songwriter Sarah Osborne believes art is a powerful tool for encouraging people to make positive personal changes—for our ecosystem and each other, for generations to come.

#### Fall in Love Dance Band

**Day 2 Wednesday, April 26** 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm  
Phoenix Auditorium

The newly-formed Fall in Love Dance Band features experienced local musicians who played their first gig at the most recent Gabriola Fall Fair. They promise ska and surf classics to get you moving!

### Meals & Refreshments

#### Coffee/Tea

**Available every day** During program hours  
Lodge - Dining Self-Service area

#### Breakfast

**Day 2 Wednesday, April 26** 7:00 am - 9:00 am

**Day 3 Thursday, April 27** 7:00 am - 9:30 am  
Lodge - Dining Room

#### Lunch

**Day 1 Tuesday, April 25** 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Day 2 Wednesday, April 26** 11:45 am - 1:30 pm  
Lodge - Dining Room

#### Dinner

**Day 1 Tuesday, April 25** 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

**Day 2 Wednesday, April 26** 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm  
Lodge - Dining Room

### Social Gatherings

#### Meet & Greet: Rural Islands Economic Partnership Board

**Day 2 Wednesday, April 25** 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
The Lodge - Dining Room

#### After Hours Social Lounges

**Day 1 Tuesday, April 25** 9:00 pm - 11:00 pm  
The Lodge - Sun Room, Gomori Room

**Day 2 Wednesday, April 26** 9:00 pm - 11:00 pm  
The Lodge - Dining Room

### Forum Info Hub

#### Have Questions? Need Assistance?

**Visit us every day** During program hours - Satir West

**Room Use Policy** The Forum has access to The Haven on all three days. If you would like to use an unallocated room during regular Forum Program hours, please feel free to do so—simply mention it to RIEP staff or a Facilitator.

Day 1	PHOENIX AUDITORIUM	PHOENIX ROOM 1	PHOENIX ROOM 2	HERON SESSION ROOM	SWALLOW SESSION ROOM	SUN ROOM <small>LOCATED IN THE LODGE</small>
1:00	<b>WELCOME</b>					
1:30	<b>OPENING SESSION</b>					
2:00	Bringing the Rural Islands Values Framework to Life Through Doughnut Economics					
2:30						
3:00	<b>KEYNOTE PANEL</b>					
3:30	Housing Lessons Learned from a Rural Islands Perspective					
4:00						
4:30		<b>4:45-5:30 SHOWCASE</b>		<b>4:45-5:30 SHOWCASE</b>		
5:00		ICET Case Study Highlights		Circular Economy Success Stories		
5:30		<b>5:45-6:30 SHOWCASE</b>		<b>5:45-6:30 SHOWCASE</b>		
6:00		High-Speed Internet to the Islands		Social Enterprise Considerations		

Day 2	PHOENIX AUDITORIUM	PHOENIX ROOM 1	PHOENIX ROOM 2	HERON SESSION ROOM	SWALLOW SESSION ROOM	SUN ROOM <small>LOCATED IN THE LODGE</small>
8:30	Doors open					
9:00	<b>KEYNOTE PANEL</b>					
9:30	Economic Solutions For Mitigating & Adapting To Climate Change					
10:00	<b>KEYNOTE PANEL</b>					
10:30	Working with Indigenous Businesses Through the Lens of Reconciliation					
11:00						
11:30		<b>11:45-12:30 SHOWCASE</b>	<b>12:00-12:45 SHOWCASE</b>	<b>12:15-1:00 SHOWCASE</b>		
12:00		Working with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Dev & Innov.	Blue Economy - Sea Harvesting The Sustainable Way	Islands Food Resilience - Grow Local!		
12:30						
1:00						
1:30		<b>INTERACTIVE PANEL</b>	<b>INTERACTIVE PANEL</b>	<b>INTERACTIVE PANEL</b>		
2:00		Future of Island Business: Trends, Needs, & Opportunities	Rural Island Arts: Fostering Cultural & Economic Vitality	The Path Towards Regenerative Tourism		
2:30						
3:00						
3:30		<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>
4:00		Shared Services: Building Local Economic Capacity	Travel As A Force for Good	Rural Housing Policy - Now!	Climate Adaptation & Mitigation Practices	Circular Economy 'How To's'
4:30						

Day 3	PHOENIX AUDITORIUM	PHOENIX ROOM 1	PHOENIX ROOM 2	HERON SESSION ROOM	SWALLOW SESSION ROOM	SUN ROOM <small>LOCATED IN THE LODGE</small>
8:00						
8:30		<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>	<b>ACTION LAB</b>	
9:00		Resolutions	Resolutions	Resolutions	Resolutions	
9:30	<b>KEYNOTE: BC FERRIES ACCOUNTABILITY</b>					
10:00	BC Ferries Commissioner Eva Hage					
10:30	<b>ACTION LABS: RECAP</b>					
11:00	<b>FORUM CLOSING</b>					



**Day 1** Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

- 1:00 PM Welcome**  
Mitch Miyagawa MASTER OF CEREMONY  
Dave Bodaly INDIGENOUS BLESSING  
Francine Carlin, Graham Bradley OPENING REMARKS
- 1:20 PM Opening Session**  
**Bringing the Rural Islands Values Framework to Life Through Doughnut Economics**  
Kim Smythe LIAISON STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS  
Lewis Muirhead, Rose Mosse, Myriam Verzat FACILITATORS
- 3:45 PM Keynote Panel**  
**Housing Lessons Learned From a Rural Islands Perspective**  
Laura Patrick, Islands Trust MODERATOR  
Nancy Hetherington Peirce, Gabriola Housing Society  
Simon Palmer, Denman Housing Association  
Justine Starke, SGI-CRD  
Dion Whyte, New Commons Development
- 4:45 PM Showcases - Afternoon & Evening**  
Island Coastal Economic Trust: Case Study Highlights  
Brodie Guy, ICET  
Circular Economy Success Stories  
Michelle Kresnyak, C2C
- 5:45 PM**  
Bringing High-Speed Internet to the Islands  
Dave Leitch, Strathcona Regional District  
Scott Simpson, City West Communications  
Social Enterprise Considerations  
Kristi Fairholm Mader, Thrive Impact Fund

**Day 2** Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>

- 9:00 AM Keynote Panel**  
**Economic Solutions For Mitigating & Adapting To Climate Change**  
Julie Sperber, VIEA MODERATOR  
David Adams, Thrive Bowen  
Michelle Bonner, Vancity  
Ann Eriksson, Author  
Ben Geselbracht, City of Nanaimo  
Fay Weller, Island Futures  
Bryan Young, Transition Salt Spring
- 10:30 AM Keynote Panel**  
**Working with Indigenous Businesses Through the Lens of Reconciliation**  
Michelle Laviolette, Vancity MODERATOR  
Alison Evans, Gulf Island SeaPlanes  
Adam Lewis, Artist Entrepreneur  
Ivy Peers, Umista Cultural Centre  
Chris Tait, Klahoose Wilderness Resort
- 11:45 AM Showcases**  
Working with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development & Innovation  
Bridget Horel, Cheryl McLay, Government of BC

**Showcases** cont'd

- 12:00 PM** Blue Economy – Sea Harvesting The Sustainable Way  
Ed Andrusiak, SGI-Community Resource Centre  
Mark Smith, Pacific Seaweed Association
- 12:15 PM** Islands Food Resilience – Grow Local!  
Marc Doll, Food Forward Farm  
Robin Jenkinson, SSI Grow Local  
Nick Jones, SSI Grow Local  
Polly Orr, SSI Grow Local
- 1:30 PM Interactive Panels**  
Future of Island Business: Trends, Needs, & Opportunities  
Shereese Johnson, RIEP Rising Tide Business Services  
MODERATOR  
Graham Bradley, Gabriola Chamber  
Jolynn Green, Community Futures Central Island  
Vaune Kolber, Bowen Island CED Committee  
Scott Simpson, City West Communications  
Thandi Williams, Pender Chamber  
Rural Island Arts: Fostering Cultural & Economic Vitality  
Myriam Verzat MODERATOR  
Carol Fergusson, Gabriola Arts Council  
Lisa Fleming, Ptarmigan Arts  
Jami Scheffer, The Hearth—Arts On Bowen  
Emma Walter, Hornby Arts Council  
Yael Wand, Salt Spring Arts Council  
The Path Towards Regenerative Tourism  
Calum Matthews, 4VI MODERATOR  
Jason Griffin, Tour Salt Spring  
Jody Lorenz, Bowen Island Tourism  
Jamie Sterling, Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership  
Chris Tait, Klahoose Wilderness Resort
- 3:00 PM Action Labs**  
Shared Services: Building Local Economic Capacity  
Shereese Johnson, Rising Tide Business Services  
Travel As A Force for Good  
Calum Matthews, 4VI  
Rural Housing Policy – Now!  
Laura Patrick, Islands Trust  
Climate Adaptation & Mitigation Practices  
David Adams, Thrive Bowen  
Fay Weller, Island Futures  
Circular Economy 'How To's  
Michelle Kresnyak, C2C

**Day 3** Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup>

- 8:00 AM Action Labs - Resolutions**
- 9:45 AM Keynote: BC Ferries Accountability**  
**BC Ferries Commissioner Eva Hage**  
Mitch Miyagawa MODERATOR
- 10:40 AM Action Lab Reflections**  
Recap & Resolutions
- 11:15 AM Closing**

# 2023 Forum Resolutions

*Following Day 2 Action Labs, the program will close with group development of 2023 Forum Resolutions—our ‘unconference conference’ outcomes.*

## Why Resolutions?

In their documentation and endorsement by all participants, these resolutions will formalize the ‘action’ envisioned by the organizers comprising the outcomes of the idea exchange and information-sharing from the entire Forum program, including also our keynotes, interactive panels, showcases, and networking activities.

Resolutions are expected to flow from Action Lab topics:

- Building Local Economic Capacity
- Travel as a Force for Good
- Rural Housing Policy
- Climate Mitigation Practices
- Circular Island Economies

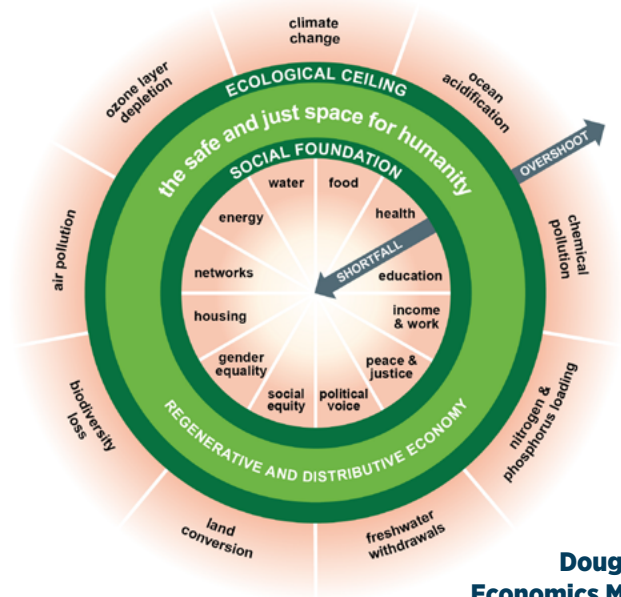
2023 RIEP Forum Resolutions support the Rural Islands Values Framework, identified during the 2022 Virtual RIEP Forum: Resilient Local Economies; Ensuring Basic Needs & Services; Fostering Connections To Build Community; and Taking Collaborative Action.

This week’s Resolutions can provide a roadmap for realizing rural island “values in action” going forward, all within the context of ecological and social justice.

## The Resolution Process

Through team-based collaboration supported by our facilitators, participants in each Day 2 Action Lab will incorporate the framework of Doughnut Economics to developing outcomes-based 2023 Forum Resolutions.

Day 3 morning Action Lab Resolution groups will provide direction for programs, policies and advocacy for island communities to take on the topics, as well as the foundation for formal Resolutions to be formalized and endorsed by a majority of Forum participants.



**Doughnut Economics Model**

DEAL | doughnuteconomics.org

## Resolution *noun*

A formal expression or statement of feelings, opinion, will, wishes, intention or decision, often voted by an official body or assembled group

An expression or document containing authorization usually by a corporate board of directors of a particular act, transaction, agent, or representative.

The act of answering a problem, or stressing firm determination to achieve one’s ends.

## Formulating Our Resolutions

2023 Forum Resolutions may call upon any level of government –provincial, regional, local, and bodies such as Islands Trust, to respond to and address the special needs of BC’s rural island communities. Resolutions may be shared with local and regional news media, RIEP members, stakeholders, supporters, and followers.

2023 Forum Resolutions will be formal written statements presented to the 2023 Forum Plenary during the closing session, followed by a brief Q&A, and votes on next steps for each Resolution.

Participants will formulate Resolutions using the following format:

- § **Title of Resolution**
- § **Whereas clauses** The challenge or problem which sets the context of the Resolution (ie. “As the result of...”), as well as the motivation of the movers (ie: “As rural island residents...”)
- § **Resolved** The core expression of the Resolution—the desired action, solution, or outcome for the problem to be considered.



**Rural Islands Values Framework**

2022 RIEP FORUM

# Facilitators, Moderators & Speakers

**RIEP** 2023  
**Forum**  
Gabriola Island  
April 25-27

**David Adams** has been called a ‘creative catalyst’, ‘visionary strategist’, ‘alchemist at heart’, and ‘a magical connector of dots’ for his ability to turn napkin concepts and vague ideas into viable initiatives and partnerships. David co-founded **THRIVE Bowen** which looks to proactively develop and implement solutions that substantively move the needle in regard to local, community-based food resiliency and sovereignty. He helps organizations and individuals discover and live their purpose, ‘level up’, and maximize revenues and potential. A transformational agent who sees paths forward where others might not, David is an adamant believer that enthusiasm, laughter, and love can inspire prosperity and a life well-lived.



Since his retirement on Galiano Island, **Ed Andrusiak** has volunteered his time on inter-island projects such as the Experience the Gulf Islands community tourism plan. Most recently he co-authored the Southern Gulf Islands Local Area Food and Agriculture Plan that identifies priority actions to transition to regenerative farming practices including exploring with First Nations the potential for seaweed and shellfish farming in the waters of the Salish Sea. Ed currently chairs the **Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre** and is focused on food security and sustainable community tourism.



**Dave Bodaly** is a **Snuneymuxw First Nations** photographer, genealogist, and cultural tour guide on Saysutshun (Newcastle Island). He’s also a weaver, and has been teaching cedar weaving classes since 2007. A descendant of the Bodalys of Northamptonshire, England, Dave carries his great grandfather’s name Laxiya; he believes it’s important to share his views about truth and reconciliation in a cultural perspective with all who are willing to listen and learn. Dave currently lives in Nanaimo.



**Michelle Bonner** leads grant-making and work with community partners in service of **Vancity**’s climate commitments to achieve net zero across its loan portfolio and to finance an equitable climate transition. Much of her work focuses on addressing the barriers to and opportunities in retrofitting buildings to deeply reduce emissions and improve their resilience to climate impacts such as extreme heat events. Prior to joining Vancity, Michelle served as Vice President and Training Manager with Climate Smart, where she led the delivery of a training and certification program to help small and medium-sized enterprises measure and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.



**Graham Bradley** is a 1<sup>st</sup> generation farmer who grows vegetables on 3 acres of wonderful peat in a fen named Good Earth Farm in Snuneymux Territory. Alongside, he runs the **Gabriola Food Hub**, a small business which helps connect island producers with island businesses and folks. A Human Geographer by education, he is an avid volunteer and has served as the President of the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce for 5 years and



as a director on the board of the Gabriola Agricultural Co-operative for 3 years. He has lived on Gabriola Island for 8 years.

**Francine Carlin** moved to British Columbia in 1999, and with a background in business communications, organizational development, and change management, she established the Business Harmonizer Group in order to support family-owned businesses across Canada and the USA as a certified Family Business Advisor. Soon after moving to Salt Spring Island in 2008, Francine’s interest in business continuity led her to join the Salt Spring Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC), where she co-led the groundbreaking Rural Business Accelerator program and co-founded the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership. Throughout her tenure as CESC Chair, Francine championed a strategic approach to building community economic development. Expanding beyond Salt Spring, she led the successful call to include the Southern Gulf Island Region—the rural islands of Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna—into the scope of the Islands Coastal Economic Trust (ICET). In 2020, along with like-minded islanders, Francine co-founded the **Rural Island Economic Partnership Society (RIEP)** to further the economic resilience of BC’s rural islands by connecting as a community, sharing ideas, and working together to achieve local socio-economic goals sustainably.



**Jen Demler** is one of the founders and co-owners of **Ground Up Café & Catering** – a recently opened small café on Gabriola Island with a focus on sourcing from island farms and producers, a healthy and inclusive work environment, and community engagement. Ground Up recently completed the Circular Economy Accelerator Program and was named a Circular Leader. Jen will be speaking to their experience working with Synergy Foundation and VICEDA and the program, outcomes of the assessment and report, current successes, and what steps the café will be taking moving forward to further their efficiencies in the restaurant industry.



**Marc Doll** is a Quadra Island resident where he, his wife Jennifer and twin daughters Gaby and Charlotte live on **Foot Forward Forest Farm**—what they describe as a 40-acre, nascent regenerative farmstead. Marc is passionate about soil health, regenerative agriculture and animal-based regenerative systems. Making a farm economically viable while integrating into and improving the natural systems is a key focus of Marc and his family. From pastured poultry, sheep, goats, pigs, ducks, and geese, to a growing sausage making business, Marc works every day to improve food security on Quadra Island.



Nature is at the core of biologist and writer **Ann Eriksson**’s work. The **author** of five adult novels and three non-fiction ecological literacy books for younger readers, Ann aims to live lightly on the earth. Her most recent non-fiction book, the award-winning, **URGENT MESSAGE FROM A HOT PLANET: NAVIGATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS**, was described by Green Party co-leader,



Elizabeth May, as a ‘toolbox for hope.’ Ann is also the volunteer executive director of the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy. She lives, with gratitude, on Thetis Island, within the unceded traditional territory of the Hul’q’umi’num’-speaking Coast Salish People.

**Alison Evans** is co-founder of **Gulf Island Seaplanes**, which she co-founded on the west coast of British Columbia with her husband and co-founder, Sean, in 2014. Drawing on a combined love of adventure and travel, she’s worked hard to grow the business over the years, cultivating a strong reputation for customer service, safety, and attention to detail. As an Indigenous female business owner and mother of four, the path has been challenging and rewarding; Alison credits the key to Gulf Island Seaplanes success to surrounding the business with strong and incredibly hard working staff. She is Gitksan from the Hagwilget First Nation, living the past 17 years in Nanaimo on the beautiful lands of the Snuneymuxw people. Alison takes her role in being a strong representation of Indigenous business seriously—Gulf Island Seaplanes’ vision is to grow as a diverse and inclusive airline and, along with their First Nations partnerships, to provide an unforgettable journey.



**Kristi Fairholm-Mader** (KFM) has always worked in the social impact sector. After returning to school to complete a business degree, Kristi began exploring social enterprise and enterprising approaches to social change and founded several social enterprise initiatives, including The Cleaning Solution. In 2014, Kristi co-founded Scale Collaborative to support the growth of the social economy sector on Vancouver Island and beyond. Within Scale’s family of organizations, KFM is the Managing Director of **Thrive Impact Fund**. She also is the Project Manager for the BC Social Procurement Initiative. Kristi lives in Victoria with her husband, 2 children and a very lazy husky.



**Carol Fergusson**, Executive Director for **Gabriola Arts Council** is an innovative thinker and a creative problem solver. With a background in fashion, art, business and education, she leads arts administration with an inquisitive and holistic approach. Carol has been successful in bringing over one million dollars in funding to the Gabriola Arts Council in the first three years of her role as ED, with half of that funding marked for two special projects. Carol enjoys working with community partners and her “big” thinking has brought multiple partners together in projects benefiting the community of Gabriola.



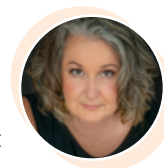
**Lisa Fleming** is a long-time resident of Pender Island, where she lives, raises her kids, and works as Executive Director of **Ptarmigan Arts**. Ptarmigan is a charitable arts organization that delivers community arts programs primarily on Pender Island, and to a limited degree on the other Southern Gulf Islands and in Greater Victoria. The society provides diverse, inclusive and accessible programs including an artist in the school program in five rural schools, Mosaic Arts Festival, Pender Island Short Film Festival, Fall Crawl Art Studio Tour, a community arts gallery, and a variety of community arts workshops, concerts and events.



**Ben Geselbracht** is a Nanaimo City Councillor, Regional District Director, environmentalist, and system change advocate focussing on building an economy where people can meet their needs within the means of the planet. Ben has worked to implement the doughnut economics sustainability framework to guide planning at the **City of Nanaimo** and to implement the Regional District’s ambitious 90% waste diversion goal. Ben works on regulatory and economic solutions to address climate change, watershed protection, economic development, and solid waste in the effort towards building the equitable, circular, low carbon economy of the future.



**Jolynn Green**’s hands-on experience assisting hundreds of small businesses from startup to expansion, combined with her rich, diverse work experience and lifelong learning, has created a business acumen steeped in business and nonprofit sector management. She is an entrepreneur at heart. Jolynn graduated from Royal Roads University in 2005 with a Masters in Leadership and Training. Jolynn joined the team of **Community Futures Central Island (CFCI)** in July 2010 as Executive Director. CFCI offers small business finance to entrepreneurs whether a startup, expansion, acquisition or succession. They also provide technical assistance and advisory services for those who are navigating the ins and outs of operating a business in today’s complex world.



**Jason Griffin** is the owner of **Tour Salt Spring**, which has achieved a ‘platinum’ certification from the globally-recognized GreenStep Sustainable Tourism Program. Now in its 10th year, Tour Salt Spring specializes in tourism products that provide longer, more experiential visits, with a strong emphasis on learning experiences that focus on themes of sustainability, conservation, and social issues. Tour Salt Spring aims to attract clients who are appreciative of the community and environment of Salt Spring. A primary goal is to operate the business in a manner that builds connection and community, and that helps support other local businesses and entrepreneurs.



**Brodie Guy** is the CEO of **Island Coastal Economic Trust**, leading a dedicated team working to empower communities and partners to build an increasingly inclusive and resilient coastal economy. He has dedicated his career to sustainable development and conservation throughout British Columbia serving in leadership roles with trusts and foundations where he has financed and placed funding into start-ups and strategic acquisitions, the construction of major infrastructure projects, the formation of joint ventures, and diverse ecosystem restoration and conservation initiatives. Brodie and his partner Jessica are grateful to be raising their children in the beautiful ancestral territories of the Pentlatch, E’ikw̓sən, and K’ómoks people, commonly known today as the Comox Valley.



**Eva Hage** was appointed **BC Ferries** Deputy Commissioner in 2019 and Commissioner in 2021 for a six-year term. She is a senior transportation finance and business

advisor with 30 years of experience and has assisted major North American transportation agencies in evaluating and procuring capital infrastructure and in developing strategic plans and financial solutions that are cognizant of both client and stakeholder needs. Eva has held senior positions with Partnerships BC, Steer Davies Gleave and BC's Crown Corporation Secretariat. She was a long-time member and co-chair of the Southern Gulf Island Ferry Advisory Committee. She lives on Saturna Island, BC.



**Nancy Hetherington Peirce** has been involved in affordable housing work on Gabriola Island for over a decade. Since 2017, she has served as President of the Board of Directors of the **Gabriola Housing Society**, a registered charity that is developing a 24-home affordable rental project on the island. Through this role, Nancy has navigated the details of the Islands Trust rezoning processes and funding options for subsidized affordable rental housing projects. More broadly, Nancy has worked with nonprofit organizations in the social justice sector for several decades, focusing on governance and finance, and she holds a Master's degree in adult education.



**Bridget Horel** is a Regional Manager in the **Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development, and Innovation**.

Responsible for North Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast, Bridget brings a range of skills and an interest supporting community economic development initiatives in coastal communities. Bridget is part of a provincial team, with staff located in every region of the province, who provide on the ground assistance to communities in planning and implementing their economic development and diversification priorities. In this role, Bridget works directly with local governments, Indigenous communities, businesses, and economic development agencies to build economic development capacity, support business retention and expansion, and support communities in identifying opportunities to diversify their economies. Bridget has worked in the BC Public Service for four years and previously worked for local government, non-profit organizations, and small businesses.



**Robin Jenkinson** is an environmental educator, community organizer, and grant writer on Salt Spring Island. Robin facilitates school gardens, farm and science field trips, neighbourhood projects, and safer cycling infrastructure in partnership with the Gulf Islands School District, non-profits such as **Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust**, Transition Salt Spring and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and Island Pathways. With degrees in biology and urban design, she's raising eco-minded children and trying her best to collaboratively effect positive change in a balanced and healthy way.



**Sherese Johnson** has over 15 years as a change maker and champion at the intersection of social enterprise, program development and communications. As Rising Tide Business Services Manager for **RIEP**, she leads a small team of business, communications, marketing and



sales experis help non-profits, small businesses and corporate entrepreneurs develop products, services, and programs that create a positive impact in the communities that they serve.

**Nick Jones'** aspiration is to help lay the foundation for future generations to thrive. His core focuses at **Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust** are developing stronger local food systems with ecologically regenerative practices. Co-creating a homestead and farm, teaching permaculture design, and collaborating with others to build a regenerative society are how Nick rages against the dying of the light in the world.



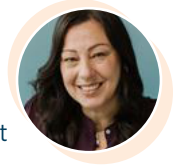
**Vaune Kolber** became an islander 8 years ago—she moved to Bowen Island after living in East Vancouver for almost 40 years, 20 of which were spent at Simon Fraser University working in Continuing Education and convening public policy conferences and symposia. Vaune is Chair of the **Bowen Island Community Economic Development Committee**, a volunteer Committee of Municipal Council. Vaune was inspired to become involved and participate in her community shortly after her arrival, inspired by Bowen's warm, connected community of just under 5,000 people: "I wanted to honour my entrepreneurial spirit while embracing the community."



**Michelle Kresnyak** is an environmental educator and the general manager of the **Gabriola Island Recycling Organization (GIRO)**. Her focus is educating and informing the island community on best practices to rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle. She created the Environmental Stewardship Program in District 68 and is the co-initiator for the textile project C2C Threads.



**Michelle Laviolette** oversees a strategy to deliver on **Vancity's** commitment to Reconciliation at an organizational level, with the goal of becoming a valued financial partner to Indigenous members, organizations, and communities. Prior to becoming Indigenous Banking Director, Michelle held several management roles with the Vancity Group including in business development, broker services and as a branch manager. One of her achievements in building strong relationships with Indigenous communities includes opening a remote community branch in Alert Bay, in partnership with the 'Namgis First Nation and the Village of Alert Bay. With some Métis-Ojibway ancestry and married to a member of the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Michelle is passionate about advancing Vancity's work to uphold Reconciliation as a core value.



**David Leitch** has been involved in the Connected Coast Project since its early planning stages. He believes improved connectivity is crucial to the future of remote First Nations and rural communities that have for too long been underserved by the telecommunications industry. As the CAO of the **Strathcona Regional District**, David held a key role in initiating and moving the project forward with funding proposals, project partnerships, and agreements. He continues to lead and navigate this complex project.



**Adam Lewis** is a **Kwakwaka'wakw Artist** and member of the We Wai Kai First Nation from Cape Mudge, British Columbia. Adam has been a lifelong artist in aerosol murals and canvas work. Adam's formline work is a deep passion for him, as it allows him to connect with his Ancestors, the Laich-kwil-tach people. His hobby grew into a business as a freelance artist supporting various ventures and non-profits with branding, digital media and murals. Adam and his wife/business partner Robin are animating the Comox and Campbell River cultural landscape with their prolific artworks in a variety of mediums, which are becoming a shared source of pride across communities.



**Jody Lorenz** has lived on Bowen Island for ten years and was one of the founding board members of **Tourism Bowen Island Association (TBI)**, established in 2015. At first, TBI's activities focused on economic development but recently, like many other DMOs, TBI is transforming into a CDMMO – community destination marketing and management organization. In response to the pandemic and increasing local pressures and concerns, TBI is developing a community-based tourism master plan that strives to balance community wellbeing and environmental stewardship with a healthy, responsible tourism ecosystem.



**Cheryl McLay** is a Regional Manager with the **Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation**. Responsible for the Southern Vancouver Island/Coast region, Cheryl provides a direct link between the provincial government and B.C.'s rural communities. As part of a team with regional locations across B.C., Cheryl finds creative solutions to community issues, and works closely with other provincial agencies at a local and regional level to support community economic development. She assists communities to identify opportunities and access funding programs, facilitates local and regional economic development initiatives, and helps communities to diversify their economies. Cheryl has enjoyed 16 years working for the BC Public Service and looks forward to making new connections at the RIEP Forum.



**Amrit Manhas** is Economic Development Officer with the **City of Nanaimo**, and is responsible for helping build the city's diversified economy. Amrit graduated from Simon Fraser University with a degree in Economics, and completed further education and training at the University of Waterloo Ontario and the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Over her 23-year career in economic development for the City of Nanaimo, Amrit has led business retention, expansion, and attraction initiatives. She is passionate about helping the business community adopt sustainable and innovative practices, and currently chairs the Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association (VICEDA) Circular Economy Accelerator Program. Amrit has also served on the boards of Tourism Nanaimo and the British Columbia Economic Developers Association.



**Calum Matthews** is the VP of Sustainability and Strategy at **Tourism Vancouver Island (4VI)**. In his role, he leads a team responsible for the organization's sustainable development programs and supports a range of clients with strategic



planning and engagement. Calum grew up in Victoria, and holds a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree from Quest University Canada and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Toronto. Matthews joined the tourism industry more than 10 years ago in a front-line service role which quickly grew into a passion and his career. He worked for the Island Coastal Economic Trust supporting communities with a range of projects relating to corporate communications, as well as tech sector and tourism development.

**Mitch Miyagawa** is an event organizer, facilitator, community arts practitioner and writer on Gabriola Island. He is also a Certified Trainer in Compassionate Communication (NVC). His company **Maji Events** organizes soulful, artistic, and transformational community events “on land and online”, specializing in workshops and festivals.



**Rose Mosse** is fascinated by systems and making sense of them – from bodies to organisations, to the natural world, to global socio-cultural patterns. She believes that systems change begins with personal transformation, that it happens when we enter into new relationships with ourselves and with others, and that the by-product of those relationships is an agency and responsibility to work towards just, caring, and beautiful futures. Rose is a fellow in Social Innovation, having completed a Social Innovation Residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.



**Lewis Muirhead** is a systems thinker whose work consists of a variety of pursuits focused on supporting change initiatives. After completing a masters in sustainability leadership, he spent four years on the territory of the Mi'kmaq peoples in New Brunswick working for the University of New Brunswick's NouLAB program, where he programmed various social and public policy innovation labs. Since returning to BC in 2020, he has run a boutique consultancy, Alternate Future Design Group, through which he has worked on evaluation projects with TELUS Health for Good, McConnell's Climate Change initiatives, the PEI Government, and the Tsihqot'in National Government. Lewis holds a BA from UBC and an MSc from the Blekinge Technical Institute in Sweden.



**Polly Orr** is an aspiring farmer, artist, and local food advocate from Salt Spring Island. Together with their partner Nick Jones, they make up the Grow Local team with **Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust**. Polly's focus is on strengthening connections between schools and farmers and working towards establishing an in school local food lunch program.



**Simon Palmer** moved to Denman Island in 2003 after a career spanning almost four decades in the airline and ocean shipping industries. Simon soon began volunteering in a series of community organizations, including as President of the Denman WORKS! Economic Enhancement Society, then as Manager of Graham Lake Improvement District, a drinking water utility. Simon is currently President of the **Denman Housing Association**, which was incorporated in October 2012 to address the significant affordable housing needs on Denman Island.



**Laura Patrick** is Local Trustee on Salt Spring Island for the **Islands Trust**. She stepped up for this role because she is concerned about the enormity of the challenges the island community is facing. She understands that our challenges have complex interdependencies, and failure to address one issue will have knock-on effects on others. She has years of experience in environmental management and international consulting, and this is her second term as a Salt Spring Local Trustee.



**Ivy Peers**, Program Manager at the **U'mista Cultural Centre** in Alert Bay is of 'Namgis, Kwakiutl, Mamalilikulla (Kwakwaka'wakw) and Hałzaqv descent. Named Gwixsis'salas by 'Namgis Hereditary Chief Udzistalis in the 'Yalis gukwdzi (Bighouse). Peers grew up in the U'mista learning her culture. She has a BA in Criminal Justice and is an elected Council Member of the 'Namgis First Nation. Her past employment involved advocating for Harm Reduction as an Indigenous Liaison; connecting Indigenous Elders and Youth as a Youth Worker; and former Project Manager for the St. Michael's Residential School Project (Ne'nagwa'nakwala) to locate unmarked burials in 'Yalis.



**Jami Scheffer** is the new Director for **The Hearth—Arts on Bowen**, formerly the Bowen Island Arts Council. Jami recently relocated to Bowen from the East Kootenays after many years of being involved in creating a vibrant, sustainable and creative community, and helping to form, shape and educate the community on the importance of arts and culture. Jami looks forward to sharing this experience with the community on Bowen Island and throughout BC's rural island region.



**Scott Simpson** is Marketing Manager for **CityWest**, a full-service telecommunications company offering phone, optical and digital cable, and internet services to residential and business customers. CityWest has a particular focus on serving rural and Indigenous communities along the BC coast. On March 28, 2023, CityWest announced a \$1 million contribution to the City of Prince Rupert, which allowed the municipality to reduce a proposed property tax increase.



**Mark Smith** is the President and CEO and founding Board member of the **Pacific Seaweed Industry Association**. He is a past board member and Chair of VIEA, where he still chairs the Foreign Trade Zone Vancouver Island (FTZVI) initiative. In addition he currently serves on the BC Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Group on Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech. Mark also works in the technology sector and serves on the Board of Small Business BC.



**Kim Smythe's** recent history includes nearly a decade as President and CEO of the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce. One of his vital roles was in government advocacy and community service. In this capacity, he served on the Mayor's Task Force on Health & Housing, and the Task Force on Economic Prosperity. He also served as a Chair of the Mayor's



Leaders Table leading the working group on Doughnut Economics. In July of 2022, Kim presented recommendations to Nanaimo City Council on the adoption of a set of principles adhering to Doughnut Economics in future planning and budgeting. The recommendations were supported by Council in a vote that night and doughnut thinking is the way of the future in Nanaimo. Today, Kim provides communications consulting services through **Liaizon Strategic Solutions**.

A successful entrepreneur and community economic development leader, **Julie Sperber** is collaborative by nature, an innovative thinker, and can see pieces of a puzzle fitting together to foster opportunity through partnership. As CEO of the **Vancouver Island Economic Alliance**, Julie brings her passion to grow a sustainable, thriving, regional economy that supports community and environmental well-being. She is a key community connector and her leadership is sought out for initiatives and projects for the island(s) region.



Based between Salt Spring Island and Victoria, **Justine Starke** is a Registered Professional Planner and has worked with the Southern Gulf Islands since 2007. Before coming to work for the **Capital Regional District**, Justine spent 11 years as a planner with Islands Trust. In her current role, she manages a variety of services on Mayne, Saturna, Galiano, and Pender Islands and conducts program and policy development for transportation, housing, and economic sustainability. The lead author of the Southern Gulf Islands Housing Strategy, Justine's focus is on understanding governance and integrating service planning, land use, affordable housing, and environmental protection through strategic community planning and implementation.



**Jamie Sterling** is a strategic marketing and communications professional whose travel industry experience includes hospitality, tour operations, and destination marketing. In her current role with the **Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership**, she uses branding and storytelling to engage visitor audiences with the communities' regenerative values while communicating to local residents that travel can be a force for good. At the intersection of environmental, social, and economic responsibility, her work supports a vision to steward the vibrancy and viability of interconnected rural communities that improve experiences for both residents and visitors.



**Chris Tait** is the Tourism Manager for **Klahoose Wilderness Resort**, 100% owned by the Klahoose First Nation. Chris is responsible for developing this eco-resort into an experience and that honours the traditions, culture, and lands of the Klahoose People. Also, under the Klahoose's tourism portfolio is Klahoose Coastal Adventures, Gorge Harbour Marina Resort, and the new campground development on Cortes Island. He grew up in Yellowknife and started his career developing Aurora viewing and winter tourism. Chris moved to Vancouver to attend Capilano University's Tourism Management program and has over 20 years experience in tourism in marketing and experience development.



**Myriam Verzat** is a certified trainer in Non-Violent Communication (NVC) as well as a creative facilitator and a mediator. She offers workshops as well as coaching in the Salish Sea area to support individuals, teachers and organizations with emotional and relational intelligence tools and conflict resolution processes. She has 10 years of experience in event organizing online and in person, and enjoys creating a meaningful and playful environment for important conversations and learning to happen. Her goal is to empower organizations and individuals to build a more compassionate and sustainable world.



**Emma Walter** is an arts facilitator and editor living on Hornby Island, BC. She is the current Director of Programming and Communications for the **Hornby Island Arts Council**. Previously, Walter served as Fair Coordinator, as well as board member, of the Vancouver Art Book Fair, Canada's first independent art book fair. She was the co-founder and editorial director of Kamihikouki Mag, and Publications and Marketing Coordinator for independent art publisher Information Office. Walter holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University (2012) and a Master of Publishing from Simon Fraser University (2022).



**Yael Wand** is the Executive Director of **Salt Spring Arts**, Salt Spring Island's community arts council, and has worked in arts and culture for two decades. Previously, Yael served as Director at Large and Board President for Island Mountain Arts Society in Wells, BC, co-founded the ArtsWells Festival of All Things Art, and volunteered as a festival co-producer from 2003 to 2013. Yael worked for the Access to Media Education Society, a Vancouver-based program that utilized community-based advocacy and youth-made documentaries to explore issues of discrimination. In 2001, she was Volunteer Coordinator for the first KickstArt Festival of Disability Arts held in Vancouver. In addition to her work as an arts administrator, Yael is a musician and songwriter who has performed across Canada and produced several independent CDs. Her most recent album, Saltwater Heartwood (2021) was nominated for two Canadian Folk Music Awards.



**Fay Weller** is a **community organizer, writer and researcher** with a PhD focused on social transformation. Fay co-initiated Gabriola Island's C2C Threads, which turns textile waste into repurposed products. She co-created a community investment co-op, an energy co-op, a community bus system, and a waste vegetable oil into fuel and soap initiative. She worked in the Green Economy Secretariat, Cabinet Policy, and Community Partnerships within the BC government prior to moving to Gabriola Island. In 2018 she released her first book entitled **CHANGEMAKERS: EMBRACING HOPE, TAKING ACTION, AND TRANSFORMING THE WORLD**. She believes it is crucial to change our stories about economics in order to respond to climate change.



**Dion Whyte** leads the BC-based team of **New Commons Development**, and the organization's small communities projects across Canada. With over 15 years of experience in sustainable community development, social enterprise and affordable housing, Dion brings a unique set of skills to supporting our community partners in the preservation and development of affordable housing. Dion's breadth of experience in the public, private and non-profit sectors also means he has an understanding of potential opportunities available to communities and the strategies necessary to deliver successful developments.



**Thandi Williams** is a veteran of the Royal Canadian Navy, with more than 10 years of business development, provincial government, and nonprofit work experience. She is also an entrepreneur who started a small business in the Southern Gulf Islands during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thandi is passionate about supporting her community and is actively involved in various volunteer roles, including serving as the President of the **Pender Island Chamber of Commerce**, Vice Chair of the Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre, and Director with Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Community Service.



**Bryan Young** has 25 years of experience in electricity conservation program design and renewable energy development. He founded and managed a fund providing \$12 million annually to support the development of innovative electricity conservation programs at Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator. He is the Chair of **Transition Salt Spring** -- a catalyst for implementing the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan for which he was a lead author. Bryan is passionate about bridging divides, to build more equitable, diverse, and climate-smart island economies.





# Notes

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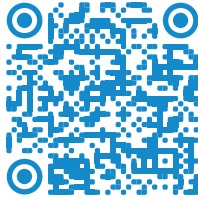
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*Thank you!*

**Your participation in the 2023 RIEP Forum has been essential for capturing the spirit of BC's rural islands resilience and supporting regenerative practices.**

We appreciate you taking the time, and making the effort to be part of it.

We would also like your feedback—use your smartphone camera to scan this QR code and get a link to our **2023 RIEP Forum Evaluation Form**:



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Stay updated on activities in the **RIEP Forum Network** and future RIEP events by subscribing to news on our website:

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✉ **SIGN-UP AT BOTTOM**

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*Members of the Board and staff  
of the Rural Islands Economic Partnership  
Society, our members, and allies respectfully  
acknowledge the Snuneymuxw First Nation of the  
Coast Salish People on whose unceded and traditional  
territory this program takes place.*



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