

## St. John's Island Green Living Marks Recycling Milestones

Tradewinds staff - August 27, 2023



Surveying bales of recycled cans are Island Green Living President Harith Wickrema; Acting District Director LuAnne Hodge, Delegate Stacey Plaskett's office; St. John Administrator Shikima Jones-Sprauve; recycling team member Akeino Williams; Nakira Yanick Nesbitt-Daniel, Tropical Shipping; Island Green Board Treasurer Curtis Penn; staff member John Baker; Executive Director Kelly McKinney; staff member Jesse Crosby; and Board Member Rob Crane. (Photo courtesy Island Green Living)

Operating almost exclusively on donations, nonprofit **Island Green Living** has succeeded in keeping nearly three million cans and 30 tons of ocean-bound plastics out of the landfill, waterways and off the streets since inception of their recycling programs, the organization announced Friday.

This week marks the seventh shipment to recycling partner, **PADNOS**, and the third transported through the generosity of **Tropical Shipping**, with a heavily discounted rate on a deadheaded cargo ship headed for the mainland, according to Island Green Living.

"Included in this shipment are 233,046 aluminum cans and 11,240 pounds of plastics, amounting to nearly one million cans and 45,000 pounds of plastics so far in 2023. PADNOS processes the material and sells it to end-users, giving it a new lease on life while reducing the mining of virgin materials," the nonprofit stated in a press release.

"We thank Island Green for inviting Tropical Shipping to join efforts in protecting our beautiful Virgin Islands," said Jennifer Nugent-Hill, Tropical's director, Governmental and Community Affairs. "Let's all continue to do our part in maintaining our oceans, beaches and our land for ourselves, our children and those who come to visit."

"We are grateful to Tropical Shipping for agreeing to transport our recyclables at a tiny fraction of the cost, which enables us to ship increased volume away from our over-capacity landfills. We salute the governor, legislators, Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett, Tropical, other partners and donors since without collaborative efforts and the support of all, we would not be able to deliver these positive results for the territory," said Island Green Living President Harith Wickrema.

"Still, the nearly 3 million cans and 59,000 pounds of ocean-bound plastics we have collected are only a small portion of what the territory generates. Nearly 60 percent of our waste is compostable and 19 percent is recyclable — it is a valuable resource. It is challenging financially and operationally for nonprofits to handle sustainable waste management and fill that gap," he said.

"Many people don't realize that St John's recycling programs are a charity operation, not a municipal one. As a nonprofit, we depend heavily on donations," added Executive Director Kelly McKinney. "So, if you are a resident or a visitor to St. John, please give as generously as you can."

As Island Green Living enters its second full season with expanded recycling programs in place, the goal is to grow resident and visitor participation and funding to keep even more valuable resources out of the waste stream, the nonprofit said.

Island Green Living picks up recyclables at three popular trash collection sites on St. John with their dedicated truck. The public can conveniently deposit their rinsed, recyclable #1, 2 & 5 plastics and aluminum cans in Island Green's specially marked receptacles. The locations are as follows:

Cruz Bay: Main VIWMA site across from EC Gas Station and Alfredo's Landscaping

Giffit Hill Road: VIWMA site just past Giffit Hill School

Coral Bay: Main VIWMA site across from Love City Mini Mart

Additionally, the community can drop off at Island Green Living's ReSource Depot located behind VITEMA on Giffit Hill Road just off Centerline, and at the bin at the Caneel Bay Fuel Dock in Cruz Bay.

Most commonly used plastics have a resin code listed somewhere on the material, typically on the bottom. Island Green Living can accept #1, 2 and 5 plastics, which include items such as water and soda bottles, some food containers, peanut butter jars, milk jugs, shampoo and detergent bottles, yogurt containers, etc. Caps can be recycled but should be removed from containers. Styrofoam and items like plastic utensils, bags, etc. cannot be accepted.

Island Green Living has a 19-year history of sustainable programming and conservation on St. John. The organization's ReSource Depot thrift shop has kept approximately 900,000 pounds of building and other materials out of landfills. The nonprofit has worked closely on banning plastic bags, straws and toxic sunscreen and other environmental legislation as well as issues such as food security.

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