

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2015 Recipient Profile

Island Futures Society, Gabriola Island

Category:	Group
Project:	Gabriola Environmentally Responsible Trans-Isle Express (GERTIE)
Nominator(s):	Linnet Kartar

Project Description:

The Gabriola Environmentally Responsible Trans-Isle Express (GERTIE) is a volunteer-run bus service dedicated to providing transportation options for Gabriola Island's residents and visitors, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and collecting data regarding the feasibility of public transit on the island.

After many years of studies, surveys and meetings, the Island Futures Society launched GERTIE in June 2013 by buying a bus with funding from the Regional District of Nanaimo and community donations. Since then, GERTIE has provided more than 22,348 rides, resulting in a reduction of at least 16 tonnes of greenhouse gases in the first year. In addition to regularly scheduled routes, GERTIE provides transportation to community events and is available for private events.

The Island Futures Society has operated the bus on 50% waste vegetable oil, a non-hierarchical group of volunteers and one part-time paid coordinator. Other Gabriola Islanders have contributed to GERTIE's success by buying bus tickets, volunteering to drive, collecting waste vegetable oil, building bus shelters, attending meetings and generally helping out as required.

GERTIE is an effective way of reducing greenhouse gases as it encourages car owners to leave their vehicle at home and enables car free tourism. Through this project, Gabriola Island residents have learned that it is possible to reduce carbon emissions while building a sense of community and having some fun.