



**SYNERGY**  
FOUNDATION

**2025  
IMPACT  
REPORT**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

2025 was a landmark year for Synergy Foundation, reflecting both the maturity of our programs and the urgency of the times we are navigating. Across the organization, our initiatives continued to grow in depth and reach, strengthening our support for local businesses, communities, and individuals working toward a more regenerative future. Through collaborative partnerships, innovative programming, and community-driven engagement, Synergy continued to demonstrate how meaningful global change can begin at the local level.

These achievements reflect the dedication, creativity, and leadership of the Synergy Foundation team. As momentum builds across regions, the Board is proud to steward this work and energized by the growing commitment to a more sustainable, resilient future. At a time when bold, practical solutions are needed more than ever, Synergy Foundation is showing what is possible — and helping shape a regenerative path forward for the communities we serve.

- Monica Pohlmann , Board Chair, Synergy Foundation



# SYNERGY FOUNDATION

Synergy Foundation is a nationally recognized organization with a reputation for executing scalable, hands-on projects that drive sustainable economic development. We are committed to supporting communities and small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in adopting circular economy practices and advancing green business operations.

Grounded in the belief that mobilizing changemakers accelerates the transition needed for a sustainable future, we act as an ecosystem enabler—fostering innovation, partnerships, knowledge-sharing, policy advocacy, and funding opportunities. Through these efforts, we help guide communities and local economies toward a regenerative and equitable future.

Core programs include [BC Green Business](#), [Project Zero](#), and the [Ecostar Awards](#).



# OUR MISSION

To catalyze change and guide our communities and local economies toward a more regenerative future.

# OUR TEAM



**Jill  
Doucette**

Executive  
Director



**Georgia  
Lavender**

Managing  
Director



**Yasmeenah  
El-Zein**

Operations  
Director



**Jarret  
Klim**

Green Business  
Senior Program  
Manager



**Tai  
Uhlmann**

Circular Economy  
Senior Project  
Manager

# OUR TEAM



**Emily  
Shields**

Circular Economy  
Program Manager



**Deep  
Chahal**

Green Business  
Associate &  
Project Manager



**Maddy  
Best**

Circular Economy  
Project Manager



**Luiz Alberto  
de Souza**

Circular  
Economy Advisor



**Samantha  
Wright**

Circular Economy  
Project  
Coordinator

# OUR TEAM



**Shannon  
Hamilton**

Accountant



**Mariana  
Correia**

Marketing and  
Communications  
Manager



**Jess  
McKeen**

Operations  
Manager



**Kear  
Porttris**

Indigenous  
Relations &  
Partnerships

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Pohlmann**

Chair



**Paul  
Shorthouse**

Vice Chair



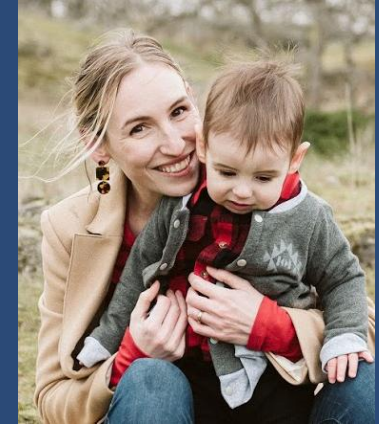
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Day**

Secretary



**Kira  
Rochefort**

Treasurer



**Tessa  
Stewart**

Director at Large

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Ord**

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Beall**

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Director at Large

# OUR PRIORITIES

Our work is rooted in the belief that mobilizing changemakers drives the transition we need.

## Regenerative Communities

Support diverse communities (including rural, remote, Indigenous, and marginalized) to **adapt to and thrive** in a circular and regenerative economy.

## Thriving Small Businesses

Provide SMEs with practical and actionable advice and resources **reducing barriers** to take environmental and social action in their business.

## Supportive Capital

**Raise supportive capital** that can go towards regenerative economy programming and development across Canada.

Our work directly aligns with the following SDGs:



# 2025 SNAPSHOT

2025 marked the first year of our 2025–2027 Strategic Plan, and this snapshot captures our early progress toward our goals.



**34**

Communities  
impacted



**2230+**

Workshop & Event  
attendees



**256**

Businesses  
directly supported



**\$ 9,981,735**

Capital invested in the  
green economy

# SYNERGY'S CORE PROGRAMS



A certification program that provides practical and affordable solutions to reduce business' environmental impact.



A program focused on advancing Canada's circular economy through incubation, innovation, and education.

# BC GREEN BUSINESS





# BC GREEN BUSINESS

The BC Green Business certification program offers one-on-one support, combining sustainability assessments with customized recommendations aligned to each business's operations, budget, and stage in its sustainability journey.

To ensure all small businesses can adopt and thrive in a regenerative economy, the program prioritizes practical, affordable solutions that can lead to cost savings while reducing environmental impact and enhancing social responsibility, with a focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, low-carbon transportation, and waste reduction practices.

[bcgreenbusiness.ca](http://bcgreenbusiness.ca)

# BC GREEN BUSINESS IMPACT



**10**  
Sector-specific  
checklists



**300+**  
Active  
members



**150**  
Businesses  
committed to T&R

To advance reconciliation in alignment with Action 92 of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action](#), BC Green Businesses:

- Incorporates action toward reconciliation into its certification criteria.
- Offers an Indigenous Bursary Fund that enables Indigenous-owned businesses to join the program free of charge, with support from BC Hydro, Vancity Credit Union, and other certified members.

Each sector-specific checklist includes up to 50 best practices, reviewed biannually and aligned with industry standards.

Spas & Salons

Offices

General Goods

Trades & Construction

Fleets

General Services

Grocery Stores

Restaurants & Cafes

Food & Beverage

Retail

# ENVIRONMENTAL METRICS



**Water  
Saved**

1,109,150 m<sup>3</sup>



**Electricity  
Conserved**

13,460 MWh



**Emissions  
Reduced**

30,208 tCO<sub>2</sub><sub>e</sub>



**Waste  
Diverted**

10,601 tonnes



**Volunteer  
Time Paid**

22,831 hours



**Single Used  
Plastic Avoided**

3,272,660 items



**Trees  
Protected**

3,733

*This represents the collective impact of BC Green Business members, calculated by verifiers during certification assessments, covering the period from the start of data collection in 2013 through the end of 2025.*

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Green Island Builders

📍 Victoria, BC

Green Island Builders is a renovation-focused construction company committed to responsible building practices that minimize waste, reduce emissions and strengthen local community connections.

- **Material Reuse & Waste Diversion:** Prioritize restoration of existing buildings, set up clearly labelled waste-diversion stations on all job sites, and use local redistribution platforms to ensure reusable appliances, fixtures, and materials are donated or resold rather than sent to landfill.
- **Low-Carbon Operations:** Reduce commuting time, fuel use, and associated emissions by implementing 4×10-hour work weeks when job sites are a significant distance from home base.
- **Industry Leadership:** Support sector-wide sustainability by providing industry insight, contractor connections, and feedback during the development and pilot of the Trades and Construction Checklist.



Practical, consistent actions create positive habits, and when those are reinforced through a certification program like this, they can ultimately shift the industry as a whole.

- Martin Scaia  
Founder, Green Island Builders



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Holocene Distilling Project

📍 Cobble Hill

Holocene Distilling Project is a craft distillery committed to responsible production practices and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, working closely with local partners to support community-driven sustainability efforts.

- **Geothermal Cooling:** They have fully eliminated refrigerants by implementing a closed-loop geothermal cooling system, which also significantly reduces water use compared to conventional open-loop systems.
- **Upcycled Products:** They produce a line of spirits made using byproduct materials sourced from partner cideries and wineries, diverting waste into new value-added products.
- **Onsite Waste Treatment:** They process distilling waste using a Trax Developments treatment system. After pH balancing in underground tanks, the material is spread over bark chips, where micro-organisms break it down and naturally enrich the soil.



*Photo : Holocene Distilling Project*

# PROGRAM WINS

2025 marked a year of significant growth for BC Green Business, with a strong focus on education, engagement, and business support.

Launched a new [Trades Certification Program](#), engaging a key sector often overlooked in traditional sustainability spaces to provide practical, sector-specific recommendations and resources supporting day-to-day operational improvements.

Welcomed [73 new members](#) and completed a record-breaking of [199 site assessments](#), expanding reach and on-the-ground impact.

Developed and delivered a record number of [industry-specific resources and educational webinars](#), covering topics such as sustainable procurement, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and more.

Hosted a three-part [event series](#) that fostered connection, showcased leadership, and facilitated idea-sharing across businesses, academia, government, community organizations, and other non-profits.



[Check out BCGB Trades Promo Video](#)



# SMALL BUSINESS, BIG IMPACT

BC Green Business successfully hosted three zero-waste events as part of the Small Business, Big Impact event series, bringing together businesses and organizations from across British Columbia, including Vancouver, Kelowna, and Victoria.

The series was designed to bring together leaders in the green and circular economy to share ideas, foster meaningful relationships, and showcase initiatives advancing sustainability in communities across the province.



**20+**  
Industry  
Experts

The ReUse People of Canada, Green Island Builders, MakeSpace Society, The Good Food Box, Barn Owl Brewing, Lakeside Eco-Sports, The Okanagan Xeriscape Association, Knappett Projects, Calmura Natural Walls, Zippy Logistics, Athiana Acres, Locality Brewing, Circular Rubber Technologies, UBC Okanagan, and others.

**127**  
Community  
Members

Bringing together:

- Local businesses
- Academia
- Local government
- Community organizations
- Non-profits

Thank you to our funders and partners:



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

BC Green Business work is made possible by the generosity of our 2025 Strategic Partners.



BC Hydro's strategic support is accelerating program expansion and deepening engagement in underserved regions and sectors across B.C.'s small business community, driving measurable energy savings and sustainability outcomes throughout the province.



Vancity has demonstrated leadership in environmental sustainability through both its operations and community investments. Through its financial support and collaboration, we have supported hundreds of small and medium-sized enterprises.

# THANK YOU TO OUR REGIONAL PARTNERS

BC Green Business work is strengthened by the support of our 2025 Regional Partners, whose collaboration enables us to effectively reach and serve targeted communities across the province.



# PROJECT ZERO

Want to join?  
Ask for an invite!

Want to try something new?  
Want to try a piece of gear?  
Have a friend visiting?  
Don't buy it, borrow it!

**meerkat**  
A members-only platform for borrowing and lending gear.

- Lend items, earn credits.
- Borrow items, use credits.
- Bookings backed by credit card holds and reviews.

Follow us!



FREE

**meerkat**  
Need gear? Borrow

# meerkat



# PROJECT ZERO

Since 2019, Project Zero has been catalyzing the transition to a circular economy through business incubation, acceleration, innovation, and education.

Project Zero engages the private sector, local governments, post-secondary institutions, and non-profits to move toward a regenerative future for British Columbia and beyond.

In 2025, Project Zero launched its 7<sup>th</sup> BC Incubator cohort, expanded its Circular Economy Accelerator program, and ran a regional program in Newfoundland and Labrador in partnership with [econext](#).

# PROJECT ZERO IMPACT



**57**  
Businesses  
supported



**20+**  
Green jobs  
created



**77%**  
Founders from  
equity-deserving  
groups\*



**174**  
Recommended  
actions  
implemented

*\*Equity-deserving groups as defined by the federal Employment Equity Act. Includes women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. Synergy Foundation also includes LGBTQIA+ in this calculation.*

# 2025 INCUBATOR PROGRAM

The Project Zero Incubator is Canada's first Incubator program dedicated to supporting founders with a business in the circular economy.



**13** Session delivered



**21** Ventures supported



**14** Business coaches engaged



**23** Guest experts engaged

# 2025 INCUBATOR COHORT HIGHLIGHTS

Twenty-one ventures were supported through the Project Zero Incubator Program this year.



meerkat, a members-only lend-to-borrow sharing marketplace, addresses the high cost, underuse, and carbon footprint of outdoor gear by rewarding lenders, fostering community, and giving members access to more gear options without increasing environmental impact.



SeaFoam is transforming marine biomass into high-performance, carbon-storing building insulation made from seaweed and upcycled waste. This innovation helps developers meet stricter embodied-carbon requirements with potential to reduce overall emissions.



Nimble Nest developed a modular shelter system that combines smart design, natural materials, and rapid assembly to make sustainable living accessible to all, featuring portability, zero-waste assembly, and a focus on local materials and the circular economy.

2025 Incubator was powered by





# ALUMNI SUCCESS

## ShareWares

📍 Vancouver

2021 alumnus [ShareWares](#) offers a city-wide borrowing platform across Vancouver, for reusable packaging to be used, returned, and sanitized for redistribution

Since completing the Incubator, Sharewares has:

- Awarded \$300,000 from [CleanBC Plastics Action Fund](#) to upgrade wash facility
- Co-founded [National Wash Network](#) in partnership with Muuse, Bo, and Earthware, providing commercial washing facilities and logistics services for reusable packaging programs across Canada
- Provided reusables to major events including Bass Coast, Great Outdoors Comedy Festival, Vancouver Folk Music Festival, and the Vogue Theatre.
- Launched Canada's first stadium-wide reusable cups program in partnership with BC Place

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACCELERATOR

Project Zero proceeded with Phase 2 of the Circular Economy Accelerator Program, a one-on-one program designed to help businesses on Vancouver Island find operational efficiencies, reduce waste and emissions, increase revenue, and adopt innovative technologies by incorporating circular economy principles.

In 2025, we supported **41 businesses** in the program, identifying over **1500 recommended actions** that, if adopted, will result in the following overall annual impact:



**Waste Diverted**

172,672 kg



**Emissions Reduced**

1,606 tCO<sub>2</sub>e



**Electricity Conserved**

961,466 kWh



**Cost Savings**

\$839,572

Thank you to our program partners



Canada



# PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

## Naturally Pacific Resort

📍 Campbell River

Naturally Pacific Resort is a boutique hotel situated next to the Campbell River Golf Club in Campbell River, BC. In addition to 100 guest rooms, the property hosts the Immersion Spa, two eateries, conference facilities, a pool house, a golf pro shop, an 18-hole golf course and a driving range

As a result of implementing the recommendations provided in the action plan Accelerator report, Naturally Pacific Resort:

- **Strengthened internal operations** through improved purchasing policies, elimination of water jug deliveries, and the formation of a Sustainability Committee.
- **Enhanced guest experience** by improving in-room waste sorting, removing single-use water bottles from golf carts, introducing e-bikes, and revitalizing the garden entrance.
- **Created real impact** by diverting 9,931 pounds of food waste from landfill and **achieving Biosphere Certification**.



Participating in the Accelerator Program helped us move from intention to impact. It has been instrumental in deepening our sustainability efforts across the organization.

- Sheila Lowery  
Naturally Pacific Resort

# PROGRAM WINS

2025 marked a year of significant growth for Project Zero, with a strong focus on education, engagement, and business support.

Supported 41 businesses through the Project Zero Accelerator Program, delivering a comprehensive Circular Opportunities Assessment & Implementation Roadmap to each participant and identifying more than 1,500 recommended actions in total across all businesses.

Delivered the Project Zero Incubator regional program in Newfoundland and Labrador in partnership with [econext](#).

Ran our largest Incubator program yet, supporting 21 ventures from across BC who pitched at the first public pitch event of the program.

Launched the Circular Founders Council with 16 Incubator alumni to create engagement opportunities, build connections, gain visibility, and help inform Incubator program design and direction.



# SPECIAL PROJECTS



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

## 📍 Port Alberni

The Port Alberni Workforce Development and Training Project is bringing together community-based organizations, local government, First Nations, employers, training providers, and others to create a Circular Workforce Development Plan that supports the community and individuals impacted (directly or indirectly) by mill closures in transitioning to meaningful employment in emerging circular economy sectors, through community engagement, targeted skills training and job placements.

In 2025, we:

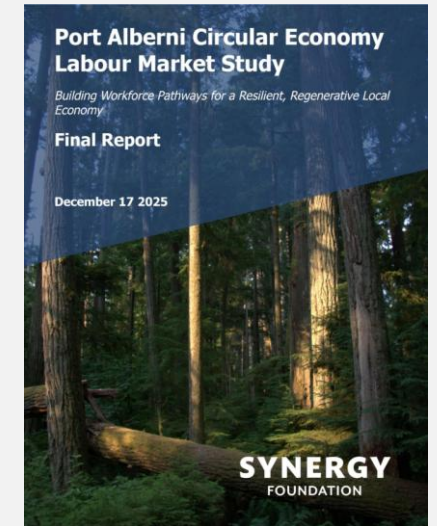
- Engaged over 60 organizations, business, and training providers across interviews, focus groups, and committee meetings to ensure the Workforce Development Plan is aligned with evolving regional priorities.
- Developed the Port Alberni Circular Economy Labour Market Study to reveal emerging circular sector opportunities, key workforce challenges, and priority training pathways to build a more resilient local economy.

Project is funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative.

Funded in part by the  
Government of Canada's Canada  
Retraining and Opportunities Initiative

**Canada**

## Published Reports



[READ FULL REPORT](#)

## Media Features

 **CBC LISTEN**

[New Port Alberni program aiming to help those impacted by mill closure](#)

[What happens when mills on the island close?](#)

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUBS PROJECT

## 📍 qathet, Cowichan Valley, and Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Districts

The Circular Economy Hub Development Project is establishing regional hubs in the Alberni-Clayoquot, Cowichan Valley, and qathet Regional Districts to support the recovery, reuse, and repurposing of construction, renovation, and demolition (C&D) materials. By turning construction waste into new economic opportunities, the project aims to drive job creation, strengthen local supply chains, and advance circular economy solutions that build long-term regional resilience.

In 2025, we:

- Hosted **3 workshops sessions**, engaging a total of **70 community members** to identify regional priorities and growth opportunities.
- Conducted **material market analysis** and **supported material match making** in each region to inform the development of collaborative circular economy hubs that enable material recovery, reuse, recycling, and value-added manufacturing.

The Circular Economy Hub Project is supported by the Province of BC's Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program.



## Published Reports



[READ FULL REPORT](#)

## Media Features



# OTHER SPECIAL PROJECTS



## Rocky Mountaineer Circular Economy Audit

Synergy Foundation completed a baseline waste audit, identifying current waste streams and volumes, generation sources, existing diversion efforts, and key barriers. The project delivered a tailored [Waste Tracking Tool](#) and a comprehensive [Waste Opportunity Assessment & Implementation Roadmap](#) outlining actionable waste reduction and diversion opportunities, best practices for diversion station set-up, behavioural change strategies, local diversion infrastructure options, and recommendations to ensure consistent staff communications across departments.



## Circular Economy Webinar Series

Synergy Foundation developed and produced a [six-part educational video webinar series](#) tailored to District of Squamish businesses. The on-demand series provided foundational knowledge on key circular economy concepts, with each module exploring common business challenges, locally available solutions for priority sectors, and real-world examples of circular models.

# ECOSTAR AWARDS





# ECOSTAR AWARDS

2025 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ecostar Awards Gala, bringing together business and community leaders from across Vancouver Island to celebrate a decade of environmental and social leadership.

In a year shaped by economic uncertainty and tariff-related pressures, recognizing businesses, non-profits, governments, and individuals whose work strengthens the Island's vibrant local economy took on even greater significance.

Seventeen awards were presented across a range of sectors, from Non-Profit of the Year to Circular Champion, reflecting the diversity of sustainability efforts across the Island and underscoring the role organizations of all types play in advancing a more resilient local economy.

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



**Gustavson**  
School of Business  
University of Victoria

DESTINATION GREATER  
**VICTORIA**

**Vancity**



INTERACTIVE  
CONSTRUCTION INC.

**CRD**  
Making a difference...together

**Schneider**  
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**CleanAir**  
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IMPACT FUND



THE  
**parkSIDE**  
HOTEL & SPA



**4TV1**

**Monk**  
Office

**DOUGLAS**



**Inn at**  
Laurel Point

# 2025 AWARD WINNERS

AWARD CATEGORY	WINNER	SPONSOR
Circular Champion	<u><a href="#">BMEx – Building Materials Exchange</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Bottle Depot</a></u>
Clean Oceans	<u><a href="#">COAST Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Greater Victoria Harbour Authority</a></u>
Climate Action	<u><a href="#">Urban Thrive Developments Inc.</a></u>	<u><a href="#">District of Saanich</a></u>
Construction & Manufacturing	<u><a href="#">Ron Anderson &amp; Sons Ltd.</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Interactive Construction Inc</a></u>
Ecological Stewardship	<u><a href="#">Pauquachin First Nation Marine Department</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Capital Regional District</a></u>
Ecopreneur of the Year	Meaghan McDonald of <u><a href="#">Salt Legacy</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Schneider Electric</a></u>
Experiential Tourism	<u><a href="#">Eagle Wing Tours</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Destination Greater Victoria</a></u>
Greenest Retailer	<u><a href="#">Easy Vegan</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Cascadia Liquor</a></u>
Innovation	<u><a href="#">ALUULA Composites Inc.</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Clean Air Yard Care</a></u>

# 2025 AWARD WINNERS

AWARD CATEGORY	WINNER	SPONSOR
Inspirational New Venture	<u>Wise Hawk Environmental Ltd.</u>	<u>Thrive Impact Fund</u>
Leadership in Hospitality	<u>Black Rock Oceanfront Resort</u>	<u>Big Wheel Burger</u>
Legacy	<u>Rugged Coast Research Society</u>	<u>The Parkside Hotel &amp; Spa</u>
Local Food	<u>Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture</u>	<u>Peninsula Co-Op</u>
Non-Profit of the Year	<u>Power To Be</u>	<u>4TVI (Tourism Vancouver Island)</u>
Sustainable Workplace	<u>Harmonic Arts</u>	<u>Monk Office</u>
Waste to Resource	<u>Alberni Valley Makerspace</u>	<u>Capital Regional District</u>
Youth Leadership	Janna Wale of <u>Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions</u>	<u>Gustavson School of Business - University of Victoria</u>





# LOOKING AHEAD

Next year we look forward to building momentum as we continue to expand our geographic reach and build new partnerships under our 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

## Highlights for the year ahead include:

- Supporting over 400 SMEs and entrepreneurs through the Project Zero Incubator, BC Green Business and the final stages of the Accelerator Program.
- Launching our new learning hub, starting with a practical course for professionals and businesses on Circular Economy Essentials.
- Growing Synergy Foundation's national presence through the expansion of the Project Zero Incubator Program.
- Expanding employment opportunities by supporting economic diversification in emerging circular economy sectors in targeted regions through the development and expansion of circular hubs and strategic projects.

# SYNERGY

FOUNDATION



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