

Zero Waste Case Studies

from the Gitxaala Nation

<https://izwtg.com/recycling/case-studies/how-the-lilwat-nation-implemented-their-community-recycling-solution/>



Curbside Recycling (resident access to recycling)



Problem: Before 2012 recyclable materials were managed as trash and burned.

Solution: With a box truck and a driver, the tribe provides weekly curbside collection of recyclables that are sorted inside the truck.

Results: Residents have easy access to recycling; trash collection decreased from 2x per week to 1x per week; materials are sorted to increase their value as a saleable commodity.



Baling Recyclables (maximizing value of materials)



Problem: Lack of access to recycling markets for mixed recyclables— which require processing to separate after the long trip to a processing facility—is a cost to the tribe to manage.

Solution: The tribe uses a baler to aggregate recyclables—collected curbside and sorted in the truck—into marketable commodities including cardboard and mixed plastics. A simple structure houses the operation and acts as storage space until the tribe has enough bales to ship to market.

Results: Every 6 months, the community sends 10 to 15 bales of cardboard and containers and 2 mega-bags of Styrofoam.

Automotive & Appliance Recycling (hard-to-recycle materials)



Problem: Large and bulky items like cars and refrigerators are costly to dispose of as trash and can be an environmental hazard when stored on the island.

Solution: The tribe created systems to process hard-to-recycle materials to extract toxic and environmentally-

harmful materials like fluids and freon so that the components can be reused and recycled.



Results: The tribe avoided the risk of pollution during storage and allowed the items to be crushed for transport to recycling.

Curbside composting (resident access to composting)

Problem: The tribe was managing discarded food scraps as trash.

Solution: The tribe started offering food scraps collection to residents. Food scraps are composted and used to build soil in community gardens.



Results: Residents have easy access to food scraps composting; the tribe is becoming more food secure and increasing its food sovereignty while educating residents about the benefits of composting.

Avoided Disposal (cost savings)

Problem: The tribe—located on a remote isolated island—pays for monthly garbage barges to transport garbage to a faraway disposal site.

Solution: Through its diversion programs, the tribe cut garbage barge trips to every-other-month.



Results: The tribe reduced its disposal costs.