



## NEWS RELEASE

### **'Diving In: The Art of Cleaning Lakes and Oceans' launches in the Lower Mainland on World Cleanup Day**

*Through an environmental art campaign, local diving and artist volunteers partner with schools and community groups to raise awareness about waste*

**North Vancouver, B.C. – September 18, 2021** – We know that 71 per cent of the Earth's surface is ocean, meaning that the majority of our planet isn't seen by most people – so, who is keeping it clean? This World Cleanup Day, the Sea to Sky Arts Council Alliance has partnered with Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans, Return-It and local environmental partners to launch the Lower Mainland's first-ever travelling environmental art campaign, [Diving In: The Art of Cleaning Lakes and Oceans](#).

"Our mission is to clean up the lakes and oceans in the Lower Mainland and to work with local artists to turn the objects into beautiful pieces of art – giving the waste a second life," said **Amy Liebenberg, Project Manager, Diving In: The Art of Cleaning Lakes and Oceans**. "We hope that the artwork made through this project educates and gives us all an impactful reminder about the importance of recycling responsibly and reducing waste."

The inaugural clean-up event occurred on September 18<sup>th</sup>, on [World Cleanup Day](#). For the next several months, artists, environmentalists, and divers will be volunteering hundreds of hours to remove trash from local waters.

"The climate emergency is upon us. We need to change our collective behaviours so that we are reducing emissions and ensuring unwanted material is no longer polluting our waters in North Vancouver and beyond," said the **Honourable Bowinn Ma, B.C. Minister of State for Infrastructure and MLA for North Vancouver-Lonsdale**. "I applaud the Sea to Sky Arts Council Alliance, Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans, Return-It, and all the other partners and volunteers who have brought this solution-oriented, creative environmental art campaign to life."

Diving In has partnered with [Return-It](#), an organization that recycles more than 1 billion beverage containers each year. Return-It shares the goal of educating communities on the importance of responsible recycling and diverting material from our oceans, lakes and waterways.

"In B.C., we are fortunate to have many ways to properly recycle and there is no reason for material to end up in our ocean and waterways," said **Allen Langdon, President and CEO of Return-It**. "We are very excited about this partnership with Diving In, which supports our social purpose of fostering a world where nothing is waste and creating a better future for people, communities and the planet. Programs like Diving In are part of the solution."

The artwork created from reimagined trash will tour galleries all the way from North Vancouver to Pemberton. The art pieces will serve not only as a creative way to upcycle trash that would have otherwise been left in our waters, but also be used as a form of communication. The hope is that the art will reach British Columbians through storytelling – creating awareness and ultimately, changing consumer behaviour to responsibly manage their waste.

“Our waterways are precious, and every pollutant that goes into our water has the potential to cause problems,” said **Henry Wang, Founder of Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans**. “Since 2013, we have completed over 150 cleanup dives, removing nearly 40,000 pounds of trash from our oceans and lakes.”

If you would like to join us at a cleanup, visit an art show, or find out how you can support Diving In: The Art of Cleaning Lakes and Oceans, check out @DivingInBC on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#), or visit [DivingInBC.com](#).

**Photos of clean-ups and a video explaining the Diving In campaign can be found [here](#).**

### **About Diving In: the Art of Cleaning Oceans & Lakes**

Diving In: The Art of Cleaning Lakes and Oceans is an environmental art campaign that aims to raise awareness of the waste in our lakes and oceans by transforming collected trash into beautiful art. The campaign will be run in collaboration by the Sea to Sky Arts Council Alliance (Pemberton Arts Council, Arts Whistler, the Squamish Arts Council, Lions Bay Arts, The Hearth Arts on Bowen), West Vancouver Arts Council, and North Van Arts. The art council collective will be working with volunteer divers from Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans (DCLO), Return-It, local artists, and school groups.

### **About Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans (DCLO)**

To date, [Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans](#) has conducted over 150 cleanup dives and has collected nearly 40,000 pounds of trash. Shoreline cleanups have brought together groups of volunteers to help keep our waters clean. The most recent cleanup, held in Ambleside, West Vancouver on July 21, 2021, had 18 volunteers in addition to Arts Council teams and Divers for Cleaner Lakes and Oceans. Shoreline volunteers collected over 20 bags of trash, while the divers' major finds included cellphones, several discarded crab traps, and three shopping carts.

### **About Return-It**

Return-It is an industry owned, not-for-profit, product stewardship agency with beverage container management as its core business. Its mandate is to develop, manage and improve systems to recover used beverage packaging and end-of-life products from consumers to ensure they are properly recycled and diverted from the natural environment. This work includes the development and implementation of initiatives that provide new solutions to reduce waste, such as its province-wide program to repurpose and recycle used clothing and other textiles. Return-It is also a founding member of the Canada Plastics Pact and has made a global commitment through the Ellen MacArthur Foundation to help eliminate plastic pollution at the source. As part of this commitment, Return-It has committed to eliminate single-use plastic film from its supply chain by 2025. In 2021, Return-It broadened its commitment to sustainability by announcing its social purpose, which is aimed at creating a better future for people, communities and the planet: *We exist to foster a world where nothing is waste*. Visit [Return-It.ca](#) for more information.

### **Media contact:**

Giulia Turco

[Giulia.turco@fhhighroad.com](mailto:Giulia.turco@fhhighroad.com)

604-690-2024