

# Floating Island International

## Company Background

California's increasing population growth is dependent upon clean, healthy water, yet the state's large rivers, lakes, and coastal waters have become degraded by pollution and runoff. A need to reduce excess nutrients and increase oxygen levels in California's waterways is critical. Floating Island International (FII) developed a new product (BioHaven® Floating Island), relying upon plastics recycling to restore, enhance, and improve water quality in any aquatic environment.

The grant awarded by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (Department) allowed FII to develop Floating Islands West (FIW), located outside Mokelumne Hills (Chili Gulch), south of Jackson, California.

FII projects the use of recycled plastics for the production of floating islands will increase the demand for recycled materials within the state.



## Goals

- Create a manufacturing facility for Floating Islands in California;
- Create and develop a new market for Floating Island stewardship technology within the state;
- Have an impact on the environment in California, by reducing landfill waste (PET bottles, primarily) and making water stewardship more accessible; and
- Advance research of floating island efficacy in general, with a view to entering specific markets in California (such as the Salton Sea).

## Accomplishments

- Created a manufacturing and production facility for Floating Islands in California;
- Created new California jobs;
- Created and developed a new market for Floating Islands within the state;
- Advanced Research of Floating Island efficacy in general. Significant advances were made in four of the five areas identified:
  - Salt Extraction
  - Nutrient Uptake
  - Heavy Metal Removal
  - Wind and Wave Hydraulics
  - Wildlife Enhancement

## **Challenges**

Selecting a suitable property for siting the manufacturing and production facility took a considerable amount of time. Sites were evaluated in terms of the suitability for multiple uses. Mokelumne Hill (Chili Gulch) property was selected. Marketing strategy was an issue as it is with most startup companies. Strategy changed multiple times, but through lessons learned, a successful model was developed. Develop community involvement and environmental interest emerged as primary component for success. The FII and FIW had high energy levels. Initiative and ideas were a common trend, but because of that energy and initiative, are somewhat lacking in focus and structure. Efficacy data and research analysis set the focus. Increased recyclable materials to manufacturers means more availability to developing products made from recycled materials. The new state-of-the-art technology ensures better recovery to maintain quality, to stimulate and sustain recycling. This includes reductions in operating costs, use of virgin materials, and reduction in energy consumption.

### **Grant Type**

Manufacturing (new product)

### **Year Awarded**

2007

### **Funding**

\$1,295,000 Grant Funds  
\$1,114,484.21 Matching Funds  
\$650,000 Private Investors

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\$3,226,267 Total Project

### **Project Length**

Three years

### **Contact**

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### **Grant Manager**

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## **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

- Attention must be made to identify budgets and funding available prior developing marketing and sales strategies.
- Follow through and remain connected with agencies, departments and staff after Island presentations.
- Develop sales tools to shorten the process.
- Develop strategies having the greatest return on investment: water and wildlife enhancement and protection projects should be a primary target. Research other applications such as landfills, mine waste farm effluent, paper mills applications.
- Marketing efforts building on introductions made at presentations, directed to water and wildlife stewards.
- Construct and launch high-visibility demonstration projects which further prove the efficacy and lead to awareness and sales.
- Floating islands have a tremendous potential as an educational tool, both real and virtual; showcase the capabilities and the appeal; concept use for educating potential purchasers (website or through actual launches).
- Provide incentives to businesses creating new products using recycled materials, thus increasing the demand for quality feedstock.
- Continue research into alternative material types – in particular, recycled carpet. The research already carried out shows great potential for carpet fibers as a material for microbial biofilm growth.