

# ALASKA SOLID WASTE NEWS

## Early Fall Issue

*Like Fall's quickening rhythm, Winter's preparations take on urgency*



A late season Barge visits Ruby on the Yukon.

Happy Fall Everyone. With the warm (rainy) weather we've had in Anchorage, the last geese are straying and oddly, there are still flower gardens. But the air changed to Fall this week. The theme for this newsletter is Community. It takes the community to prepare for winter, to celebrate in the proper way a child's first catch, or to mark the passing of loved ones. And it takes the community to make a good solid waste program. Community involvement means more toxics and recyclables out of the wastestream, safer waste disposal for all residents, scheduled burning hours, and higher user fee revenues to sustain a program. Community is both residents and Council. Community involvement means the Council supports these efforts through ordinances, prioritizing activities, and signing off on ideas. At our August training, folks shared what they do to get Council and residents on board. Scammon Bay has an Environmental Committee that consists of IGAP staff, the Corp, the Council, a Traditional Council member, and a community member. They meet every month except June & July because of subsistence, and make decisions on Scammon's waste concerns. The Committee was created to help the staff plan what to work on. Not only has that been a success, the staff receive support now from key Community representatives. New Stuyahok has a committee that meets quarterly. They split the work of their solid waste between

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City and Tribe, so critical to its success is including representatives of all entities. Once the Committee prioritizes solid waste needs, they present the issues to their community. Community will be even more important to waste programs soon. Starting October 2016, GAP funds likely can't be used for operational costs - waste collectors & operators, backhaul transportation, etc. The full community will be needed to prepare for and overcome the fund deficit. Council will need to make proactive decisions, and residents will need to shoulder the financial burden of their waste generation and disposal, as well as potentially share the burden for Elders and the poorest families. Koliganek, the featured village for this issue, has taken steps using both Council and resident involvement. Like nearly every village, they are not there yet, but with full community involvement and a step-by-step approach, they are getting close.



*Fall Funding Or Assistance Opportunities: If you need help to improve your waste situation, think about applying to one, or (what the heck) all of these..*



***RACEJT Due November 3rd : Need trained workers for your summer project? Planning to start a collection program? Read on for free training!***

If you have unemployed or underemployed community members that are interested in working in the environmental field – *Don't miss this opportunity to train them for your planned project or new waste program.* The Rural Alaska Community Environmental Job Training Program provides 4 weeks of comprehensive training as a solid waste management and spill response technician. Trainees take HAZWOPER 40 hr, Construction Safety, Freon Recovery, Landfill Operation, Forklift Operation, Confined Space, CPR/First Aid, Community Spill Response, Water and Soil Sampling, and Home Fuel Tank Inspection. They are then qualified to work as site cleanup workers, landfill operators and waste collectors, Environmental Program staff, etc. Past graduates have also found jobs as Bulk Tank Inspectors, Backhaul workers, Site samplers, VPSO's, and Environmental Coordinators. Trainees are also taught skills that can help them in finding a job and holding onto it. They will complete 10 course units for the University of Alaska, and qualify for the college's proposed Occupational Endorsement. Training is FREE, thanks to grants and partnering from the Alaska Department of Labor, the University of Alaska, the University of Washington, and the



***Yukon Kuskokwim Coastal Association/RuralCAP Solid Waste Grants Due November 20<sup>th</sup>: If You Are in the Coastal AVCP Region, Do Not Miss This Grant Deadline!!***

This amazing grant will fund up to \$80,000 for a large variety of solid waste management needs. Even if you are new to grant writing – you can put in a competitive proposal. Last year, most villages that applied were awarded. The staff at RuralCAP can help you decide if your project fits, and help you with many aspects of your proposal. If you need additional help – call us. We can assist you in writing or editing the application if you need help in learning how to write a proposal. **This is the last year this grant will be offered.** There is no easier way to get funded, so if your village (city or tribe) has SWM needs-- definitely apply. This grant is only open to the 43 communities that were part of the Cenaliulriit Coastal Management Zone. See whether your community is eligible by going to the list on page 3 of the RFP, located at this link: <http://ruralcap.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/RFP-and-Assurances-.pdf> . On page 2 of the RFP, a number of example projects are listed. Past awards include heavy equipment, collection equipment, site cleanup & backhaul, fencing, etc. The application form is at <http://ruralcap.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Application-for-Federal-Assistance-YKCA-Sub-Awards.doc> . For more information and assistance, Call Eric Miliken at (907) 865-7358, [emiliken@ruralcap.com](mailto:emiliken@ruralcap.com) .



***DEC Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup (DBAC) Assistance Due January 30.***

DBAC's provide free assessment and cleanup services for contaminated properties. We like this opportunity because the application is easy. Do you have an abandoned building you're thinking of tearing down and putting the wastes in the landfill or letting folks salvage them? Or do you have land that you'd like to use to set up a recycling center (or any other use), but you are concerned there is soil contamination? This is an opportunity to start doing something about it. DBAC's can include some cleanup now and cleanup assistance is very hard to find. Visit the DBAC home page at <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/brownfields.htm> - *assess*. Want to know whether your land or building is eligible? Look at the Threshold Criteria on the first page of the application: [http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/docs/DBAC\\_Request\\_Form\\_FY2016\\_Final.doc](http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/docs/DBAC_Request_Form_FY2016_Final.doc) . Once you know you're eligible, this is a good program to apply for. Contact Melinda Brunner, ADEC Brownfields, at [melinda.brunner@alaska.gov](mailto:melinda.brunner@alaska.gov). 451-5174.

# Village Spotlight: Koliganek Moves Towards a Sustainable Solid Waste Program

In this issue we focus on the Southwestern Alaskan village of Koliganek, located on the left bank of the



Nushagak River, approximately 65 miles northeast of Dillingham. A Yup'ik Eskimo village with Russian Orthodox practices, Koliganek is the uppermost community on the Nushagak River and is home to approximately 209 residents.

The New Koliganek Village Council (NKVC) is responsible for the landfill and the collection program; employing two part-time solid waste operators through a mixture of collection service fees and IGAP funding. Koliganek has a budding environmental program that is working hard to:

- Create and implement a sustainable solid waste collection program
- Increase Village outreach and education
- Manage construction and demolition (C&D) waste
- Find potential avenues of funding for much needed equipment and supplies
- Backhaul recyclables such as lead-acid batteries and e-waste



Delores Larson, the Environmental and IGAP Coordinator for the NKVC, and her colleague Mary Apokedak are in charge of these efforts and they took

the time to provide some insight on getting a successful environmental program off the ground.

## **Creation of a Sustainable Collection Program**

When she was hired as Environmental Coordinator with the NKVC, Delores made it her priority to create a landfill that would not be mistaken for a "dump". A big concern for her was that the outside funding they had previously relied on to pay their operators would not be available in the near future. So she knew she needed to

take steps to develop a fully sustainable collection program-- or risk their landfill turning back into a "dump".

Delores began laying the groundwork for her sustainable program in 2011. She presented the information to the Village Council that Koliganek in the future could not rely on IGAP monies to operate their landfill and collection program. Delores was initially met with resistance from the Council members. She says that while she was frustrated with the push-back she understood the Council's hesitance. Delores really stressed the local job benefit of the solid waste management program to the



*A Koliganek Elder teaches the importance of a clean community.*

Council members. A collection fee would provide for a sustainable collection program to continue to employ their two landfill operators. Additionally, a fee could

ensure that a decent wage could be paid, so that they could avoid the problem of a high job turnover rate and the inexperienced and inefficient landfill operation that can occur as a result.

After convincing the Council of the importance of the collection service, it was decided that a fee would be established to help cover the costs associated with a collection program (labor, gasoline, equipment, etc.). However, the Council determined that the fee would not be mandatory. Instead, households that chose not to participate were directed to dispose of their waste "responsibly".

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Because the fee was not mandatory, Delores knew that outreach and education on the importance of a sustainable collection program was vital to participation. Many communities with voluntary collection services are not able to get enough revenue to pay for their programs. To educate the community on the issue, Delores published articles in their monthly newsletter, presented to



*Our kids care about others and our environment. With the Cleanup involvement, their sense of Community responsibility is encouraged.*

community members during an annual meeting, and enlisted the aid of the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC) to get her point across. Delores noted that after her presentation at the annual meeting she received no objections from the attendees and that the majority of the village appeared to be onboard with the collection fee. Koliganek's commitment to its solid waste program was confirmed when **41 of the 52 households in Koliganek chose to participate in the collection service, an astounding 86 percent participation rate!** Delores emphasized that *all 7 of the elder households participated and are the first to pay each month.* If the elders in the community understand the importance of a collection program, shouldn't we all be onboard?

Delores looked at the cost of their program. They use a caged collection cart and ATV in summer and an open cart and snowmachine in winter to collect house-to-house. They employ two operators for collection and landfill management that share the job. They both work two weeks on, and two weeks off, so there is always one of them on the job. They both then have time to conduct subsistence and when one is unable to do the work, Koliganek has a trained operator right there to step in. When the operators work, they work 20 hours per week, 4 hours a day, for \$17/hr. They both get 2 weeks off without pay. The total program costs are:

**Labor:** 2 operators x 20 hr/week x 24 weeks x \$17/hr = \$16,320

**Fringe** = \$2,611

**Parts** = \$1,000

**Fuel** = \$1,680

**Total** = \$21,611

Note, breaking these costs down, household monthly fees from the 41 households who want collection would need to be about \$31 per month, with another \$500 coming from businesses. But Delores knew that households would not want to pay that much and she would lose a lot of participation. *Delores began with an \$11 a month fee for households, a discounted rate of \$5 a month for elders, and \$50 a month for local businesses.* She has since raised the fee by \$1 and plans on slowly raising the fee over the next couple of years until the program is fully self-sustainable and no longer requires outside funding. Amazingly, none of the participating households dropped out of the collection program despite the fee being raised, and Delores is hopeful that by slowly raising the fee over a period of time she will maintain her excellent participation rate.

She knows that many households will not want to, or



*Residents enjoy the village potluck after a Community Cleanup.*

will not be able to, pay the full solid waste operation cost. So in the meantime she is also taking steps to reduce the final estimated household fee needed. *She*

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has already worked with the Council to implement a construction waste fee that will help the program sustainability and reduce the fee (see below). She'll continue to conduct outreach to encourage the remaining 11 households to sign on. That is because the more households that pay in, the lower the fee for everyone. In Koliganek's example, with full participation by businesses and homes, the final household fee needed to cover their current operation



*Presenting to kids about the role and importance of proper waste disposal helps set the stage for parents to pay fees.*

would drop from the \$31 per month to \$25 per month, and that is without the construction waste revenue that can lower fees even more. Not only does full participation bring lower costs for everyone, it keeps the full

community away from the dumpsite risks and allows for a better managed and cleaner site.

### Village outreach and education

The success Koliganek has enjoyed in terms of public participation in their collection program stems from their ongoing outreach and education efforts. Delores and Mary organize an annual village cleanup where community members volunteer their time to pick up litter and come together for a worthy cause. The village cleanup has become a yearly event that everyone looks forward to, especially the children in the community. Prior to the cleanup, Delores and Mary send out donation request letters to a number of local agencies to allocate funding for the many door prizes that are used to increase participation. The cleanup occurs over a three-day period and culminates in a large potluck that coincides with the School picnic every year. Delores and Mary use this annual opportunity to not only cleanup litter around the village but to also educate village residents, especially children, on the importance of solid waste management. Additionally, several times a year Mary and Delores work with the children at Koliganek School presenting on not only solid waste management, but on a variety of environmental topics. It is this type of continuous outreach and education

that is needed to sustain enthusiasm for proper solid waste management.

### Management of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste

One of the more recent pressing issues for Delores and Koliganek is the anticipated C&D waste that will be generated during the construction of the new school building and demolition of the old one. Through her trainings, Delores recognized that a big project like this had the potential to flood their landfill with unwanted wastes and no way to manage it. And the used-up space would mean they would have to find new landfill funding more quickly – a very difficult task. To make sure that Koliganek receives compensation for the use of their landfill, **Delores worked with her Council to create a construction waste disposal fee.** The money generated from the disposal fee will be added to the solid waste program and will be used to continue the transition from outside funding to full sustainability!

In addition, Delores has been working with her



*Solid waste staff stage batteries onto a pallet after collecting them with the trash cart.*

Council and the local contractor to come up with some potential in-kind services that would benefit the community. The old Koliganek school building is not

scheduled to be demolished until next year, but her proactive approach has set the path for a better landfill and successful community improvements!

### Searching for funding

As Koliganek continues to grow and evolve, Delores is always on the lookout for additional funding sources. She speaks with her EPA Project Officer on a regular basis to stay abreast of

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potential opportunities, while also using the personnel at Zender to find funding sources.



*The new school under construction*

Delores has learned that while obtaining funding can be difficult, *perseverance is important*. After several submissions, **her most recent proposal for a new Tok burn box was funded through the IGAP “unmet needs” program!** Never give up!

### **Successful Backhaul Through Collaboration**

Backhaul opportunities have become limited over the last few years, requiring rural Environmental Coordinators to look for new and inventive ways to remove recyclable materials from their communities. Delores and her environmental staff used their connections with other Environmental Coordinators in the Region to join New Stuyahok’s backhaul program. New Stuyahok received an unmet needs grant to conduct a collaborative backhaul project with several villages. This strategy worked really well! Koliganek was still able to apply for and get their much needed burnbox while New Stuyahok was able to apply for backhaul money that covered Ekwok as well. For many grant opportunities, *working with other regional villages gives you a leg up in funding priority*. During the first backhaul event they shipped out 9 pallets of e-waste and lead-acid batteries, totaling about 3,600 pounds. During the second backhaul event they shipped out a connex full of lead-acid batteries (weighing 8,686 lbs) and 6 additional pallets of e-waste, totaling another 1,200 pounds. In all, **they shipped out about 13,500 pounds of wastes** that would otherwise have deteriorated or have been unintentionally burned at their landfill, potentially contaminating their water and land to a point where the health of the community, or the health of subsistence, was at risk.

### **Lessons Learned**

According to Delores, support from her assistant is a vital component of implementing and running a successful environmental program. Having a colleague who can share the workload can prevent “burnout” and, with two of you, the environmental

department can tackle several issues at once.

Delores also notes that during the establishment of her collection program she tried to keep things simple. For example, Koliganek uses a flat fee system, charging each household the same amount to increase transparency and allow for ease of use.

Note, the time you spend in billing households and businesses is important. While this activity will still be allowable under the new IGAP rules, it can take up a lot of time. Delores recommends the accounting software QuickBooks to all communities looking to create a collection program. Delores initially created invoices by hand, which took 2 to 3 days to complete each month. After she switched to QuickBooks, Delores said she can complete all of her invoices and monthly paperwork in less than a day. A similar experience has been shared by other communities. Switching to computer-based billing



*Bye-Bye E-Wastes!!*

can cut your invoice time from 3 to 5 days to less than 1. There is other software you can use, but if you have Quickbooks, a pretty simple

step by step guide to setting up an automatic billing system, written by RUBA (Alaska’s Rural Utility Business Advisory), is at:

[http://commerce.alaska.gov/dnn/Portals/4/pub/Intro\\_to\\_QB\\_for\\_Sanitation\\_Uilities\\_2007.pdf](http://commerce.alaska.gov/dnn/Portals/4/pub/Intro_to_QB_for_Sanitation_Uilities_2007.pdf)

Finally, perhaps Delores’s most important piece of advice was “*don’t give up*”. The process of making your solid waste situation sustainable and safe for your community can be extremely time-consuming and frustrating but if you stay the course, you can provide essential environmental *and economic* services to your community! A sustainable program can lead to job creation and job stability – and with more folks employed in our close-knit communities, the benefits go well beyond a nice landfill!

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## Calendar of Events and Deadlines

DATE	EVENT/TRAINING	LOCATION	MORE INFO
October 21-23	Rural Alaska Landfill Operator Training	Anchorage	<a href="http://www.akforum.com/">http://www.akforum.com/</a>
Oct 14-15 Oct 21-22 Oct 28-29	Community Development Block Grant Training <i>How to compile CDBG grants</i>	Fairbanks/ Anchorage/ Kotzebue	Call Pauletta Bourne 451-2721
Oct 23 - 25	Alaska Federation of Natives	Anchorage	<a href="http://www.nativefederation.org/annual-convention/">www.nativefederation.org/annual-convention/</a>
Oct 28-31	Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management	Anchorage	<a href="http://atcemak.com/">http://atcemak.com/</a>
October 30	8 Hour HAZWOPER Refresher	Anchorage	ARWA Kelly Comerford 357-1155, <a href="http://www.arwa.org/">www.arwa.org/</a>
November 3 - 7	Financial Management for Rural Utilities Training <i>Just a FEW spots left and MUST register by Oct. 3!</i>	Anchorage	451-2716 or <a href="mailto:jeffrey.congdon@alaska.gov">jeffrey.congdon@alaska.gov</a> Jeffrey Congdon, Rural Utility Business Advisory
December 1-5	BIA Provider's Conference <i>Agenda &amp; registration info available soon.</i>	Anchorage	1-800-645-8465
December 3-5	Solid Waste Management – Current Topics Training	Anchorage	Simone Sebalo, 341-3279, <a href="mailto:ssebaloz@zendergroup.org">ssebaloz@zendergroup.org</a>
For more details of the events/trainings listed here, and for additional trainings, events, and funding announcements, go to: <a href="http://www.zendergroup.org/calendar.html">http://www.zendergroup.org/calendar.html</a>			

### FUNDING, TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENTS & DEADLINES

#### State of Alaska DEC Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup (DBAC)

Deadline: January 30, 2015

<http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php>

#### Rural Alaska Community Environmental Job Training Program

Deadline: November 3, 2014

<http://zendergroup.org/racejt.html>

#### Yukon Kuskokwim Coastal Association/RuralCAP Solid Waste Grants

Deadline: November 20, 2014

Check Eligibility—open to most AVCP region villages only.

#### FY2015 Community-based Marine Debris Removal

Deadline: November 17, 2014

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=265368>

#### Rasmuson Foundation

Deadline: Accepted throughout the year.

<http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php>

#### Community Development Block Grants

Deadline: December 5, 2014

<http://commerce.alaska.gov/dnn/dcra/GrantsSection/CommunityDevelopmentBlockGrants.aspx>

Note: See Training Workshop dates to the left.

For more information, you may contact Delores at :

Delores Larson, Environmental Director  
Phone: 907-596-3316

Email: [delarson08@yahoo.com](mailto:delarson08@yahoo.com)

If you are struggling with startup of user fees, visit our collection resource page at <http://zendergroup.org/collection.html>. You'll find educational materials to use to convince your community to pay, and in-depth articles on different ways villages have implemented successful collection and user fee programs. See especially the first four links listed, and the 7<sup>th</sup> link. In our research we've found an average of \$15/month household fee whether it is the less costly shared bin system or the more costly but more convenient house-to-house system. And \$20 to \$30 per month is paid by several communities for house-to-

house collection. At [http://zendergroup.org/docs/user\\_fees.xlsx](http://zendergroup.org/docs/user_fees.xlsx), you can access a user fee spreadsheet that can help you play around with different fees and decide the right structure for your community. If you are ready to start a fee system -- you might want to send whoever will be managing the billing to the Financial Utility Management Training on our Calendar above. Finally, you can call us with any questions! *We are funded to help you step-by-step with any*



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*The mission of Zender Environmental Health and Research Group, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, is to assist underserved communities in developing programmatic capacity and community resiliency in environmental health issues. Visit us on the web at [www.zendergroup.org](http://www.zendergroup.org)*

## ZENDER ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND RESEARCH GROUP