

Recycling makes a difference in Akiak, Alaska



Akiak, AK

Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Success Story

Akiak, AK – population 389, is a traditional subsistence-based Yup'ik Eskimo community located on the Yukon/Kuskokwim delta. Concerns over leachate from the landfill affecting water quality and subsistence in the Kuskokwim River, motivated Akiak Native Community's Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP)

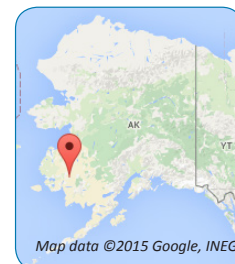
Empty bin used to transport items to landfill



to create an environmental committee and start a community recycling program to reduce the amount of trash that goes to the landfill. To encourage participation in recycling, every household received a recycling bin.

The city of Akiak and the tribe agreed through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to collaborate on landfill management, resulting in a solid waste management plan.

Additional MOU's were developed to remove old electric distribution lines and make landfill improvements. In 2013 Akiak Native Community's GAP program filled an empty storage container with old drums, computers, ballasts, fire extinguishers and other items and shipped them out of the village to Seattle for disposal. They also completed an abandoned vehicle inventory, and then organized and prepared them for backhaul. The tribe's GAP-funded environmental staff provide community outreach and education on recycling and environmental concerns.



Map data ©2015 Google, INEGI

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Preparing junk vehicles for backhaul

Akiak's IGAP Coordinator Lena Foss believes that the quantity of trash going into the landfill has decreased as a result of the recycling program.

She says they have a cleaner village, and you can see the difference as you walk down the streets.

Recyclables ready for shipment

All photos courtesy of Lena Foss



Partners & Support

Alaskans for Litter Prevention and Recycling

Recycling bottles and cans and technical assistance

<http://www.alparalaska.com/wp>

Northland Services

Shipping hazardous wastes and junk vehicles

<http://www.northlandservices.com>

City of Akiak

Collaboration for landfill improvement

<http://go.usa.gov/ckJ8S>

RuralCap

Yukon/Kuskokwim Coastal Assistance Solid Waste

Grant For Landfill Improvement and Grants

Management Technical Assistance

<https://ruralcap.com>

Sturgeon Electric

Replacing electric distribution lines

<http://sturgeonelectric.com>

Total Reclaim

Processing recyclables in Seattle

<http://www.totalreclaim.com>

WestRock Recycling

Recycling electric distribution lines

<http://www.rocktenn.com/products/recycling>

Zender Environmental

Backhaul technical assistance

<http://www.zendergroup.org/index.htm>

Community Profile: Akiak

Population: 389

Culture: Akiak is a Yup'ik Eskimo village with a reliance on subsistence and fishing activities.

Location: Akiak is located on the west bank of the Kuskokwim River, 42 air miles northeast of Bethel.

Transportation: Akiak has a state-owned airport with a gravel runway in good condition. The strip provides chartered or private air access year-round. Several air carriers offer passenger flight service. Snow machines, ATVs, and skiffs are used extensively for local transportation to nearby villages. There are no docking facilities.

Source: State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development Community Database

EPA Region 10's Commitment to Federally Recognized Tribes

EPA Region 10 is committed to helping tribes strengthen their abilities to manage environmental programs in Indian country, and to ensure that tribes have a voice in decisions that affect their land, air and water. Region 10 serves 271 federally recognized tribes in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

The goal of the EPA IGAP grant program is to assist tribes and intertribal consortia in developing the capacity to manage their own environmental protection programs, and to develop and implement solid and hazardous waste programs in accordance with individual tribal needs and applicable federal laws and regulations.

<http://www2.epa.gov/tribal/region-10-tribal-program>

<http://www.epa.gov/tribal/indian-environmental-general-assistance-program-gap>

For more information

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EPA Grant: Indian General Assistance Program (GAP)

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