

Environmental and public health gains through landfill improvements and education in Tetlin, AK



Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Success Story

Tetlin, AK



Map data ©2015 Google, INEGI

In 2014, the Native Village of Tetlin began tackling several solid waste challenges. Theresa Christiansen, Environmental Coordinator said, “Without a trash pickup service, residents would haul their own trash to the landfill. Some people were dumping it along the roadside to the landfill.” Improper dumping is both an unsightly and unhealthy practice. For a few families and elders who lack access to a vehicle, trash was building up in their homes.



Photo: courtesy of Theresa Christiansen

A new landfill was built in 2015 after the old dump reached capacity and closed. The tribe’s Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) installed a burn unit and placed 15 trash cages around the village to eliminate improper dumping.

The tribe is now recycling used electronic wastes and has a staging area for white goods (worn out large electrical appliances like refrigerators and freezers).

Freon, a refrigerant that’s harmful to public health and the Earth’s ozone layer, was removed from the old freezers in the staging area to prepare them for disposal.

The GAP funding supports community outreach to help change behaviors. Observing that youth often dump their families’ garbage at the landfill, environmental staff provided an education event at the school on landfill safety and proper disposal.

The tribe also hosts a cultural, environmental and wellness summer camp — and distributes an environmental newsletter, filled with information on environmental and public health issues and relevant community events.

Newsletter distribution has grown from hand-delivery, to mailing it the first week of each month to all post office boxes and via an email list.

TETLIN ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

Po Box 797, Tok, AK 99780
 Tetlin Office—Phone (907)324-2306
 Fax (907)324-2131

Tetlin Village Clean—Up Was A Success.

June 2015

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Thank You to the Staff and Students of Tetlin High School for Volunteering in the Clean—Up of Tetlin Village. You make us Proud, keep up the Good Work.

More pictures on page 6

Partners & Support

Alaskans for Litter Prevention and Recycling

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

Recycling bottles and cans

Tanana Chiefs Conference

<https://www.tananachiefs.org>

Freon removal training and technical assistance

Community Profile: Tetlin

Population: 127

Culture: Traditional Athabascan culture and lifestyle.

Location: Tetlin lies in the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge located 20 miles southeast of Tok, 220 miles southeast of Fairbanks. The village is connected by road to the Alaska Highway.

Climate: Tetlin falls within the continental climate zone, characterized by extreme temperature differences. Temperatures have been measured from -71 to 99 °F.

Transportation: Tetlin has a state-maintained public airport with a gravel runway. The village also owns a turf airstrip. Scheduled and charter flights are available from Tok. Many residents own cars, trucks, skiffs, and snow machines for hunting, fishing, and hauling wood.

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://www2.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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