

Notes from ATCEM General Q&A Session - Solid Waste, Air Quality, Water Quality, Backhauling held on Tuesday, October 12, 2010

Contact information for panel:

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If you need further help on any of the topics covered in this sessions, contact Zender Environmental for free technical assistance at 277 2111 lzender@zendergroup.org
www.zendergroup.org

Questions in bold, answers non-bold

- 1. We have a mining project in our region that is in the exploration phase. As a “newcomer” to environmental issues related to mining, what can our tribe do to become more educated about mining and become a “watchdog” for our traditional lands and watershed?**

Talk to Tami Fordham, EPA (271 1484) if you’ve got a mining project. Find out what kind of mine it is. Tour a similar mining project so you can see how they will manage it. UAF coop extension took tribal reps to fort knox. Some mining companies will take you on tour. State of AK does mining training. Talk to Tami about getting your council updated.

- 2. Is it known what percentage of plastic is recycled in Alaska? Has there been a study of the success of plastic recycling in Alaska?**

Zender Environmental did a recycling study for aluminum cans 5-6 years ago and found that only about 4% of cans were actually recycled from AK Villages.

AJ from Ruralcap mentioned that the Eyak Tribe in Cordova received an anthc grant, and carried out a plastics recycling program with a baler and separation in homes. They worked with AML to do shipping. We can learn from them – they're a good model for getting a program started and consolidating to backhaul it out.

ALPAR has a pilot plastics recycling program (contact Mary at ALPAR 274-3266)

Total Reclaim also recycles plastics – call for more information (907) 561-0544

3. There are undocumented abandoned mines. What resources are available to find where the abandoned mines are? We contacted BLM but received minimal information.

EPA and the State are working on an abandoned mine inventory project, so the State and EPA are resources. You can also get on the inventory list. Call Tami Fordham, EPA (271 1484) and Patty McGrath Regional Mining Coordinator EPA at (206) 553-0979 mcgrath.patricia@epa.gov for more information and assistance. Also see the EPA region 10 mining page at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/ECOCOMM.NSF/Programs/mining>

4. What is the answer for non-coastal, non-road communities in getting rid of the big items, such as cranes, front-end loaders, graders, or even items such as vehicles, washers and dryers, freezers, refrigerators, etc.?

No set answers yet. On Yukon River some communities are served by yritwc. On the Kukso nothing is set up yet. It's up to the communities to contact air and barge companies. There is a backhaul summit on thurs oct 14th from 8-3 and there will be 15 service providers at the summit discussing backhaul across the state. Also the IGAP announcement is out and unmet needs proposals are welcomed for backhaul projects, particularly those projects that will benefit a group of tribes in a region. Note that scrap metal prices are starting to rise so you may have to hang on to your material for awhile before sending it out so you can get a good price. For more information about backhaul and for the notes from the Summit on Oct 14th see <http://www.zendergroup.org/backhaul.html>

5. Who is the best non-competitive funding source to fund backhaul efforts or buying big-ticket items, such as a shredder for metal to help address removal of unwanted waste? Do we need to smash and recycle the white goods?

IGAP funding, IGAP unmet needs, (contact your EPA project officer for more information)
BIA funding (contact Kristin Keit 271 4030)

AK forum grants for supplies/materials (under \$5000) (contact Peter Melde at 907-351-1536)

USDA grants are also a possibility.

Shredding refrigerators – there's styrofoam etc in them. Even though you reduce the size of the appliance there's non-recyclable debris in them that you can't deal with in AK, but if you can ship it out to Seattle etc. they may be able to take it. So a shredder might not be the most appropriate equip – maybe a baler.

Smashing white goods – in pilot station had a connex without walls and stacked refrigerators and washer/dryers and then shipped out the white goods. With small appliances, consolidate them and get them to hub.

6. Does the Freon have to be removed from the freezers and fridges before shipping out? We have no one that is able to do that in our village.

You can ship the appliances out to hubs and then get it removed before the final destination. Usually Freon needs to be removed before end destination. You can also send in (or train) a Freon tech to remove the Freon on-site. There is Freon training at this conference. Contact Larry Zirkle at Total Reclaim for more information about Freon removal and training 561-0544

7. It would be helpful for GAP to clarify the expected roles and responsibilities of various tribal staff, including the council (i.e. approving/directing the work plan), the tribal administrator (sign timesheets, oversee expenses), and environmental coordinators (day to day, work plan development), and what each does not do (i.e. administrators are not the environmental program director).

Have a meeting and inform your council. EPA can be another voice on the phone if needed, but should be clarified on the local level. There is a board training on Friday morning at this conference – how to effectively work with your council and work on issues there. Would be helpful to attend. There will also be more information on this topic at the IGAP conference in December.

8. Are there MOA templates available for tribes to use for outside contractors coming into our communities for various projects to ensure that they assist with taking their waste/material out once they leave?

See the following sites for information:

<http://www.zendergroup.org/construction.html>

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

<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/sw/Factsheets/Docs/Handling%20&%20Disposal%20of%20Construction%20&%20Demolition%20waste.pdf>

Also call Doug Huntman, DEC 269-7642 for more info.

9. Why does it take long for Project Officers to respond to our technical assistance?

There is also an issue with some responses in an agitated manner with some of our questions and help from our Project Officer.

Are IGAP coordinators required to report to EPA possible environmental hazards going on in our community? If so, do we talk to our project officers? Is there training for coordinators to know when or what to report, etc.?

We (EPA) will figure out who you need to work with on different issues. Find out who the contact is and keep pushing to get them to come out and help. Epa isn't always the authority to help – but your project officer should be able to tell you who is the authority is (whether it's the State or whoever). You can also go to the project officer's supervisor at anytime if needed.

Sally Thomas in Seattle is the supervisor thomas.sally@epa.gov (206) 553-2102

If you can't get through to your tribal coordinator you can call the EPA front desk 271-3206 and talk to any officer and they can try to help.

10. In regards to Developing a QAPP-what can we do when there is a lot of salt water in samples taken? What steps are needed to continue developing a QAPP?

Process of developing a qapp for saltwater is the same for sampling fresh water. Call your project officer and get someone from office of water on the phone and they can try to find out someone to talk to.

EPA's tribal water program:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/WATER.NSF/webpage/Tribal+Water+Programs>

11. Who is available to facilitate and guide tribes through the process of establishing a consolidated landfill and will IGAP pay for this, if proposed? Would this project be eligible under IGAP and, if not, which program allows this?

Igap funds can be used. Ted Jacobsen has worked with villages that have consolidated and covered their landfills. Call him for assistance at 865-7363. tjacobson@ruralcap.com You can also contact Zender Environmental for free solid waste technical assistance at 277 2111 lzender@zendergroup.org

12. For Tami, EPA. Starting in November, the NPDES permitting authority is being transferred from EPA to the State of Alaska. What does this mean for government-

to-government relationships and how can tribes stay involved in the permitting process?

The State of AK has primacy of npdes and in November will take over mining. They have a commitment to involve tribes. They are developing a combination protocol with interior tribes and will send out notifications. There is a consultation process. Contact Tami Fordham, EPA (271 1484) for more information and assistance.

13. If we had broken heavy equipment and no funds for a mechanic, can we get a grant under EPA/IGAP to get that equipment fixed?

Igap can be used for this – it's a matter of working with the budget and your tribal coordinator.

14. EPA is considering the use of the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases. What about using the Clean Water Act to protect essential watersheds like the Iliamna system?

There is a section of clean water act for this - 404c . Need to talk to someone in water the office. <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/WATER.NSF/webpage/Tribal+Water+Programs>

Contact Patty McGrath Regional at EPA at (206) 553-0979 mcgrath.patricia@epa.gov

We will be doing several sessions at AFE on this topic and will have more info on 404c.

15. Can we use IGAP funds to purchase heavy equipment to maintain our landfills? In not, what resources are there for this purpose?

Technically you can, but the igap budget isn't that big. If you can buy used equipment, it's cheaper. For example a used small d4 dozer from rental outfit is around \$20-\$50k. Usda rural development funds is another source. Don't need to buy new, because you won't be using it all the time likely. We see a lot of broken equipment. Find \$ to recondition and fix equipment. Do an inventory of what you have and seek smaller funds.

For Igap – if you don't have equipment listed in your workplan, ask your project officer if you can revise your workplan since it's a large ticket item.

Anthc / ruralcap community demonstration grants is another possibility
<http://www.anthc.org/chs/ces/hve/index.cfm>

- 16. I am hoping there is funding to use for training on how to manage, including the regulations behind it. Some grants require Section 106 and NEPA clearances on any ground disturbing activities. Is there such training?**

Anytime using federal \$ you need to comply with nepa. The folks that do bia housing could be good resources. For training, we need to research. BIA puts on training, and the BIA Tribal providers conference is in December.

Contact Tami Fordham, EPA (271 1484) for more information.

- 17. Regarding IGAP, why do we have to go through the Tribal Council to spend IGAP funds? Our tribal administrator is always saying we cannot spend the money on equipment and supplies we need.**

Could be a big issue that is unique to where you are and we'd need to know about it. You have an approved workplan and budget and the tc might not understand the gap program and if that's the case, might be helpful to have the council members t be on the phone with the epa officer. Or have them come to anchorage for an igap conference so they have a better understanding.

- 18. When will any or all funding agencies give out non-competitive solid waste management grants designed specifically for Alaska?**

USDA grants are non-competitive but almost always require a 25% match

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