



Backhaul Alaska Bulletin – Spring 2018

Your source for news on the collaborative project to create a backhaul service program for rural Alaska

Hello Backhaul Alaska Interested Stakeholders,

You are receiving this Backhaul Alaska Bulletin because you have expressed interest in receiving updates on the project to create the Backhaul Alaska program. Read on for news and information about the program and feel free to contact us at Info@BackhaulAlaska.org if you have any comments or questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Pilot Program Kickoff!

The Backhaul Alaska Pilot Program kicked off in February 2018 at the Alaska Forum on the Environment with an orientation meeting for the 15 pilot communities (Thanks Alaska Forum)!

Overview



The purpose of the pilot is to assess the cost of operating the full backhaul service program and also to develop strategies to overcome program challenges at the village, regional, and statewide levels. The pilot program is two-phased, with the first group of 15 villages backhauling in Summer 2019 and a second group of 20 villages, to be selected in Fall 2018, backhauling in summer 2020. Pilot communities will be trained, work with their regional coordinator to develop adequate infrastructure, and conduct a material inventory.

The pilot will examine all aspects of backhaul program operations, such as: internal communication and legal protocols; regional coordinator and village backhaul team workload; material volume and composition; specific village assistance needs; obstacles in backhaul implementation; supply chain bottlenecks for bulk purchasing; effectiveness of training; reimbursement protocols for villages; donor appreciation plan; and payment agreements for vendors and transporters.

Pilot Communities

Fifteen pilot communities were selected to best represent a range of several parameters that we need to examine: population size, plane vs barge supply needs, backhaul experience, region, and logistics-specific issues. The Selection Committee included members of SWAT, Green Star, EPA Project Officers, ADEC Solid Waste Program, and the Regional Tribal Operations Committee.

Selected communities include:

1. Alakanuk
2. Arctic Village
3. Chalkyitsik
4. Chefornek/Nelson Island Consortium
5. Ekwok
6. Golovin
7. Koliganek
8. Kotlik
9. New Stuyahok
10. Pilot Station
11. Russian Mission
12. Ugashik
13. Unalakleet
14. Unalaska
15. Venetie

The pilot operations will be administered by either the local tribe or city, mainly dependent on the primary party now that carries out the community's backhaul program.

Funding

To date, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) remain our biggest funders, with BIA financing a total of \$400,000 - nearly the full 1st year of the pilot, and EPA continuing to finance nearly all aspects of the program planning, training curriculum development, stakeholder engagement, legal review, and much more. Thank you so much EPA and BIA!

Training

Much of a new training course on uniform packaging of waste for backhaul was delivered at the April 2018 Rural Alaska Community Environmental Job Training (RACEJT) Program. RACEJT is an in-residence 5-week program that trains unemployed residents from rural Alaska in solid waste operator skills, including backhaul. Zender Environmental was able to leverage USEPA Brownfield

funds and Dept. of Labor funds to develop and pilot much of the uniform training curriculum modules that were developed for Backhaul Alaska. The result? A big thumbs up! The 15 Backhaul Alaska pilot communities will be trained with the new curriculum the week of June 25-29, 2018 in Anchorage.

Parallel Efforts

Getting Feedback and Keeping Villages Informed



On December 8, the Solid Waste Alaska Taskforce (SWAT) facilitated an extended session at the 2017 BIA Providers conference to inform people of the project status, solicit pilot applications from villages, find out concerns that people had about the program, and lead a discussion on how villages could raise funding to pay for part of Backhaul Alaska.

Similarly, on February 14, 2018, SWAT facilitated a Backhaul Alaska information sharing session at the Alaska Forum on the Environment where SWAT asked for feedback on selecting regional coordinators, the difficulties foreseen in implementing the program at the local level, and what a successful program would look like to people. All of the feedback SWAT received has been considered and integrated into the pilot program design.

Working with HUD to Achieve Safe Solid Waste Disposal for Housing Projects

In February, SWAT members and USEPA met with HUD officials to discuss Backhaul Alaska and opportunities to work with the housing authorities to further the program. On March 8, SWAT presented at the Association of Alaska Housing Authority's Environmental Review Training to describe the need for hazardous waste backhaul in order to provide the new homes a safe sanitation facility. Thanks to HUD for facilitating this and future opportunities!



Collaborating with Green Star's Kuskokwim Backhaul Project



Great news from one of our partners concerning a major backhaul effort planned for this summer. Green Star is organizing five on-site backhaul events that will serve seven villages in the middle Kuskokwim region. Each backhaul event will focus on collecting, packaging and removing common household hazardous materials from the village, as well as serve to inform residents on the risk of not managing this material appropriately. Central Recycling Services and NRC have teamed up with Green Star to implement on-site efforts, as well as management of material in Anchorage, through safe and efficient

operations. The Green Star middle Kuskokwim backhaul project is made possible through a substantial financial contribution from Nova Gold and Donlin Gold. Villages participating in the backhaul project are enrolled in, or have completed the Green Star Community program. The Green Star Community program is funded through USDA Rural Development and provides technical assistance and recognition to rural communities that wish to implement waste reduction, energy

conservation, pollution prevention and to promote a healthier environment. This summer's project will serve as a pilot project for future backhaul efforts planned for the region.

Using USEPA's Environmental Finance Advisory Board to Examine Financing Options

The Environmental Finance Advisory Board (EFAB) is a group of highly experienced environmental finance professionals that volunteer their time to develop financing plans and recommendations for select environmental projects holding promise for the public good. Backhaul Alaska was selected as one of those projects. Over the course of a year, EFAB will be developing analyses that will inform Backhaul Alaska's business plan. More in future updates!

Evaluating the Feasibility of a Product Stewardship Program in Alaska



A parallel effort to begin exploring whether a product stewardship could work in Alaska has begun. What is product stewardship? It is any one of many methods by which the cost of disposal is worked into the product. In many states, the producer, manufacturer, or retailer decides how to best get the products returned for recycling, enabling the free market to determine the most efficient method of recovery.

SWAT hosted several product stewardship experts at the Alaska Forum in February 2018. SWAT facilitated an informational presentation as well as an afternoon workshop attended by a subset of interested stakeholders, such as representatives from industry, transportation, regional tribal consortia, and the City of Anchorage. The workshop collected valuable advice and opinions to begin to formulate a plan. Overall, attendees encouraged pursuit of a product stewardship program and is taking the initial steps to identify the best model for Alaska.

IGAP Funding for Solid Waste

The 2018 federal budget has a provision allowing solid waste management activities, such as the transportation costs associated with backhaul and landfill operations, under the Indian General Assistance Program (IGAP) to continue. This is good news for many communities in rural Alaska that were concerned their landfills were in danger of becoming open dumps without IGAP funds. With this budget provision, villages will be able to continue to use IGAP funds to help subsidize their share of backhaul costs. While IGAP funds can cover some of the backhaul costs, it doesn't provide enough funding for all villages to backhaul, nor does it cover all of their hazardous wastes management costs. Backhaul Alaska continues to work on streamlining backhaul operations and identifying funding sources so all villages can remove all their hazardous wastes.

Help Wanted

Building up Backhaul Alaska is a big undertaking and help is welcome.

- Would you like to help us compile a **business and marketing strategy**?
- Do you have access to **professional filmmakers** to create a PSA?
- Do you have **logistics expertise**?
- Do you have any **funding** that could be leveraged with this program?
- Do you have other **skills or resources** that could help?



Please contact info@BackhaulAlaska.org if you are interested in helping out.

For more information about Backhaul Alaska go to www.BackhaulAlaska.org