United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Solid Waste And
Emergency Response
(5305)

EPA 530-N-94-002
Issue #5
Spring/Summer 1994

EPA

Native American Network

A RCRA Information Exchange

AROUND THE REGIONS

EPA/VISTA Alaska Project:

A Novel Approach to Solid Waste Management

EPA and ACTION joined recently in an innovative, two-year pilot project that focuses on solid waste management issues in Native Alaska. The idea for the project grew out of the Office of Solid Waste's (OSW) participation in a meeting of the Rural Alaska Sanitation Task Force, held in Washington, DC in June, 1993. At the meeting, representatives of federal and state agencies offered a variety of suggestions for concerted governmental approaches to the broad scope of environmental issues among the Native Alaskan villages.

ACTION, like EPA, is no stranger to Alaska. Currently, there are nearly 40 VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) serving in the state, providing a wide range of services to both Native and non-Native communities. "Environmental VISTAs" were a new concept for ACTION and a challenge the agency readily accepted.

In developing the project, several factors were key to ensuring its success. First, project objectives had to be reasonable and achievable. No one project could possibly address all the villagers' environmental concerns. "Small steps, large victories" became the project's anthem. Secondly, community acceptance of and participation in the project was vital; without it, the project could easily–and probably would–fail. And finally, project activities had to be sustainable; i.e., they would continue after the project was over. Few can argue that there are an abundance of "federal monuments" in the Native villages; programs that failed and buildings that fell to disuse or disrepair once federal dollars and attention ceased.

The project workplan developed by EPA includes activities that culminate in a village-wide, comprehensive solid waste management plan. These activities include assessing village waste streams, developing waste reduction and recycling programs, exploring and initiating, where possible, alternative waste disposal methods, and promoting environmental education. The workplan also includes several water-related activities, designed to engage the community in discussions on setting priorities for addressing water issues. The workplan is envisioned as a dynamic ▶

HIGHLIGHTS

- EPA/Vista Alaska Project Offers New Approach
- Omaha Dump Sites Get Dumped
- Meet Our New Office Director
- Information Sources
- Household Hazardous Waste
- FY 1993 Statistics
- Upcoming Events
- Bulletin Board

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CLARIT Web Print: 530N94002 Native American Network: A RCRA Information Exchange, Issue Number 5, Spring/Summer 1994

EPA/VISTA Alaska Project: A Novel Approach to Solid Waste Management

document; one that can be–and is expected to be–revised as the project proceeds.

Project leaders from both EPA and ACTION recognized early on the need to assemble a support team to assist the volunteers in their work. Staff from EPA Headquarters, EPA's Alaska Operations Office in Anchorage, ACTION in Seattle and various departments within the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation are available to provide a wide variety of assistance (e.g., resource materials and technical assistance) to the volunteers on an as-requested/needed basis.

But, perhaps, the most important members of the support team are the three regional non-profit corporations that act as "host" to the volunteers. These corporations are among the 15 in the state that provide a variety of services to the villages under their "umbrella". Currently, VISTA are supported by Kawerak (Nome), the Association of Village Council Presidents (Bethel) and Chugachmuit (Anchorage). To the VISTA, the corporations are their link to the villages – an important link no one else could provide.

The VISTA were recruited nationally and locally by ACTION, with final selections made by EPA. Knowledge of EPA programs and a college degree were not required. What was required was a commitment to the environment and to the communities they would serve, a willingness to work and live in often cold, remote areas, the ability to live "simply" (volunteers receive a $750 monthly stipend for housing, food and personal expenses) and . . .a sense of humor! Chosen were Mardell Gunn (an ex-Peace Corps Californian), Christine Moran (who recently received a Masters in Natural Resource Economics from Colorado State University), Amelie Redman (previously involved with recycling programs in Oregon) and George Seal (a Yupik Eskimo from Bethel).

After their selection, the volunteers received VISTA orientation in Seattle and then travelled to Anchorage for an extensive, week-long EPA training program. EPA/HQ and Region 4, 6 and 10 staff presented the training; state agency staff also participated. And then...off to their respective duty stations, armed with boxloads of resource materials, office supplies and a fair amount of trepidation.

Since their arrival in November, the volunteers have been busy acclimating themselves to their new surroundings and the corporation staff they will be working with over the course of the next year. They have discussed the workplan with staff and suggested revisions to it based on these discussions. Visits have been made to villages. Several have taken an "Arctic Survival" course to prepare them for the extreme weather conditions they most certainly will face. One has already instituted a series of radio spots about solid waste that is broadcast by satellite across the polar north. Yes, EPA and VISTA are in Alaska!

The volunteers are only a fax or phone call away from the project co-leaders at EPA headquarters and ACTION. In addition, each volunteer submits monthly reports and participates in monthly conference calls with the project co-leaders. The conference calls provide the entire team with an up-to-date assessment of the project and an opportunity to get ideas for resolving problems they might be having.

Undoubtedly, the distances among the team members are great. We at EPA feel far removed from the Alaska volunteers. But as one volunteer remarked recently, "You are always with us in spirit". And indeed we are....

(For more information, contact project co-leaders Judi Kane (703-308-8644) and Lillian Bagus (202-260-4058) at EPA headquarters and Billy Caldwell (206-553-1558) at ACTION in Seattle.) ■

22 Illegal Dump Sites Get Dumped

Hamilton and Crew Post "No Dumping Signs"

Illegal dump sites are rapidly becoming a sight of the past on the Omaha Indian Reservation thanks to the efforts of Jim Hamilton and his crew.

Jerry Henscheid, Omaha Tribal Planner, and Jim had identified 22 illegal dumpsites when the work began in early October.

"We have currently finished 12 of the major sites and will have the remaining smaller sites done by the spring of 1994," said Jim.

Thurston County Roads Department is cooperating in the clean up effort by donating "No Dumping Signs" which are being posted at the cleaned up sites. The 3'x5' signs were painted by Jim and his crew and posted at each site. ▶

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22 Illegal Dump Sites Get Dumped: Hamilton and Crew Post "No Dumping Signs"

Before: An illegal dumpsite three miles west of Macy, close to the Tribal farm.

"We have had some vandalism of these signs and some illegal dumping is still occurring," said Jim. "Anyone caught dumping at the cleaned up sites will be prosecuted. We are serious about keeping these sites clean."

Tribal residents are allowed to dump until April 1, 1994, at the Omaha Tribal dump site. This site will close on April 1 and must be properly covered by October of 1994 according to Jerry Henscheid.

"We are in the process of putting together a solid waste management study to develop a plan for waste management on the reservation," said Tom Rice.

This project is being financed by $25,000 worth of profits from CasinOmaha according to Henscheid.

The ASCS of Walthill also helped by contributing $350 worth of switch and bromegrass to be planted at the sites for erosion and wildlife cover.

[Reprinted from Omaha Signals, Page 5, December 1993 Edition, with permission of Carl Hardy, Editor.] ■

After: The dumpsite after Jim Hamilton and his crew cleaned it up.

INSIDE OSW

Meet Our New Office Director:

Mike Shapiro

Before joining OSW, Mike Shapiro most recently served as Deputy Assistant Administrator and then as Acting Assistant Administrator in EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, where he directed the implementation of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. From 1980 to 1989, Mike held a variety of positions in the Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances, where one of his responsibilities was developing EPA's Toxic Release Inventory.

Mike has a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from Lehigh and a Ph.D. in environmental engineering from Harvard. He has taught in the public policy program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in Boston. ■

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FY 93 Stats

WHAT WERE THE TOP THREE SUBJECT AREAS INQUIRING MINDS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT?

Number Three WAS **Hazardous Waste Identification** WITH **24,860** REQUESTS. APPLAUSE

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Number Two WAS **General RCRA** WITH **25,851** REQUESTS. APPLAUSE AND THE

• • •

Number One SUBJECT AREA IN 1993 WAS: (DRUMROLL) **Solid Waste Recycling** WITH AN AMAZING **107,500** REQUESTS! APPLAUSE

• • •

AND WHO WERE THOSE INQUIRING MINDS ?

7.3% CAME FROM THE **Regulated Community, 15.1%** WERE **Citizens,** AND **65.1%** WERE EMPLOYEES OF **Local and State Government.**

• • •

AND WHAT TYPES OF INQUIRIES DID THEY MAKE?

572 Controls

1,809 FOIAs

103,839 Hotline

72,699 RIC

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Household Hazardous Waste

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Toxic Trash?

Most of us have products around that we use to clean, repair, or improve our homes. Such products may include certain paints, cleaners, stains and varnishes, batteries, motor oil, and pesticides. The used or leftover portion of these products are often referred to as "household hazardous waste" (HHW) and may pose a danger if improperly used, stored, or disposed.

Under federal law, we do not have to treat the hazardous portion of our household trash any differently than the rest of the trash. Household waste is exempt from federal regulation as a hazardous waste. Some landfills and incinerator operators, however, have special requirements for certain materials. Check with your local landfill or incinerator operator to learn about any restrictions they may have.

The best way to reduce HHW is to use a less hazardous product to do the desired job. For example, using less toxic batteries or avoiding the use of batteries altogether can reduce the amount of HHW in your trash can. Some hazardous products (motor oil, for example) simply can not be avoided. For these products, buy and use only the amount of product needed. Leftover materials can be shared with neighbors or donated to a program. For example, excess pesticides might be offered to a greenhouse or garden center. Some communities have organized waste exchanges to swap or give away usable household products.

Recycling is another option for handling some types of HHW. Automobile batteries, used oil, antifreeze, household batteries, latex paint, and florescent bulbs are examples of HHW that can be recycled. The Portable Rechargeable Battery Association has offered to accept all household nickel cadmium and small lead acid batteries for recycling; these batteries are collected through municipal programs. Salvage businesses, auto parts stores and service stations often accept automobile lead acid batteries and used oil for recycling. Hundreds of local governments working with civic organizations and private firms have implemented successful used oil recycling programs.

It is important to remember that HHW is potentially toxic; HHW must always be carefully used, stored, and disposed. Always read and follow label instructions for use, storage, and disposal. Keep products in their original containers and never remove the labels.

Containers that are weakened or corroding, however, should be wrapped or repackaged and labeled as to the contents. Never mix leftover HHW with other products. Incompatible chemicals may react, ignite, or explode; contaminated HHW may be made unrecyclable. If available, take HHW to a household hazardous waste collection program.

During the 1980s, many communities

household hazardous waste. On collection days, qualified professionals collect hazardous wastes at a central location to ensure safe waste disposal. Over 3,000 collection programs have been undertaken in the United States. Check with the local chamber of commerce, county, or state environmental or solid waste agency to see if there is a household hazardous waste collection program in your area.

For more information call the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Hotline, (800) 424-9346. ■

INFORMATION SOURCES

Three Videos Available on MSW

Down in the Dumps: America's Garbage Crisis shows viewers what types of items are commonly thrown away, where they go, and options for future management of these materials. This documentary was produced by Maryland Public Television with funding from EPA. Topics covered include landfill siting and closing, combustion, and recycling. Additional subjects range from the history of solid waste management in the United States to garbage museums. The documentary has been licensed for airing by over 100 public television stations across the country. It is also available on videocassette for $19.95 (plus $4 for shipping and handling) by calling 800-858-8678

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needed. Leftover materials can be shared with neighbors or donated to a charity or business or taken to a household hazardous waste collection hazardous waste collection program.

During the 1980s, many communities started special collection days or permanent collection sites for handling

cassette for $19.95 (plus $4 for shipping and handling) by calling 800-858-8678 or writing FP Videos, 4415 Sanjuaro Trail, Indianapolis, IN 46268. ▶

Three Videos Available on MSW

Deadline on D: A Landfill Update informs local decision-makers about successful strategies for meeting the new Subtitle D landfill regulations. This video was produced by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by EPA. It provides a concise 25-minute overview of the Subtitle D regulations. Shot on location in Arizona, Texas, and Virginia, the video shows how two counties and one small city already have met the technical and financial requirements of Subtitle D. Options explored include privatizing a landfill, going to a regional facility, or going it alone. To order copies of the video for $15.95 plus shipping and handling, contact ICMA at 800-745-8780. For more information, contact June Beittel of ICMA at 202-962-3615.

Municipal Solid Waste Composting: Is It Right for Your Community? introduces municipal solid waste (MSW) composting to interested communities. Created by the Minnesota Extension Service, the 22-minute video is a detailed overview of mixed MSW composting and services as a valuable educational tool on how to develop a composting facility appropriate to a municipality's needs, what technologies are available for mixed MSW facilities, and how composting compares with other waste management options. A guidebook also is available to accompany the video. The video costs $22 and the guidebook is $3.95. For ordering information, contact the Minnnesota Extension Service Distribution Center at 612-625-8173. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

1994 International Hazardous Materials Spills Conference

Buffalo, New York is hosting the 1994 International Hazardous Material Spills Conference from October 31 - November 3, 1994. The Hyatt Regency Hotel and the Convention Center in Buffalo is the site for this bi-annual conference. Communities, State and local governments, industry, and international guests will have the opportunity to learn more about how to prevent, prepare for, and respond to hazardous materials accidents.

In the 10 years since the Bophal tragedy, significant strides have been made in hazardous materials safety. These positive changes resulted from proactive partnerships formed by all the vested interest groups in the private, public and international

The conference offers the opportunity for groups with common, as well as disparate, concerns to exchange and develop ideas. In addition, state-of-the-art training on various aspects of hazardous materials safety will be provided throughout the conference. Conference attendees can influence future directions of these issues through their participation in both the large presentations and small group discussions scheduled to take place.

Considerable resources and energy are being committed to ensure the overall success of the meeting. The conference sponsors include The National Governors' Association, The Chemical Manufacturers Association and the

and the New York State Emergency Response Commission.

If your work requires your knowledge of hazardous materials safety, this is one conference you won't want to miss! Firefighters, government officials, plant or transportation managers and other interested parties are encouraged to attend.

Registration materials will be available in the near future. To ensure that you are on the mailing list, contact Angela Moody (703) 442-9824. If you have questions regarding the conference, contact Sarah Bauer (202) 260-8247. ■

the vested interest groups in the private, public and international arenas. The theme for this year's conference is Partnerships for Hazardous Materials Safety.

Manufacturers Association and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, in cooperation with the Canadian Chemical Producers Association

BULLETIN BOARD

Conference Update

The scheduled 1994 environmental conference is off to an exciting start. The conference will address multi-media issues throughout Indian country. All indications are that it will be even better than the 1992 conference. Currently, there are 27, 1-1/2 hour sessions planned around tribally-submitted topics. Many of the sessions have tribal monitors and participants. An environmental vendor exhibit is also planned. If you would like more information regarding the conference, please call Ed Almond, Director, Tribal Environmental Office, Cherokee, North Carolina on 1-800-451-2764.

Compensation for Native Americans

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), announced December 29, 1993 (58 Fed. Reg. 69106 (1993)) the availability of funding for mitigating environmental impacts to Indian lands due to Department of Defense activities. Indian lands is defined as all lands of American Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages.

Recognizing that certain health and safety activities may have caused environmental hazards on Indian lands and negatively impacted the social and economic welfare of the Native Americans that live on the land, Congress took steps to assist Native Americans in planning, developing and implementing programs designed to mitigate these impacts.

The closing date for submission of applications is August 26, 1994.

For more information, please contact Sharon McCully at (202) 690-5780 or Rita LeBeau, (202) 690-5790, Administration for Native Americans, DHHS.

Badlands

The highest court in South Dakota denied the appeals of two men convicted of illegally dumping medical waste, sending them to prison and ordering them to pay $20,000 in restitution. South Dakota officials found two dumps filled with scalpels, syringes, blood products, rubber gloves, needles and robes. The Rosebud Sioux had requested an investigation following rumors about body parts dumped on Indian lands. The dumps were found to be on non-Indian lands, but Telford Toffelmire and Willard Hurst were sentenced to four and two years in prison, respectively, for theft by deception, conspiracy, and illegal dumping. They had buried 36 trailers full of the waste and pocketed $130,000 from generators in Minneapolis and Denver.

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Money Matters

EPA's Office of General Counsel and the Bureau of Indian Affairs confirmed that Indian grantees can use 638 funds, Indian Self Determination Education Assistance Act (PL93638 as amended), as a match for ***all EPA grants***. This is meant to clarify an earlier misunderstanding that these funds could only be used to match the multi-media grants.

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Native American Network is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Solid Waste.

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The views expressed in *Native American Network* are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect or represent EPA policy. The intent of *Native American Network* is to provide a diverse array of information for those interested in environmental issues in Indian country, and to provide a forum for information exchange among tribal governments, EPA, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.

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