

# Removal of Eklutna River Canyon Illegal Dump

The Eklutna River Canyon Illegal dump was located west of the Eklutna River Dam and was partially on backfill behind the dam. Clean-up of this illegal dump was one of the first steps in removing the Eklutna River Dam.

NVE applied to the national Tribal Interagency Workgroup for a Tribal Open Dump Cleanup Project. Funding was conveyed through an EPA Region 10 Solid Waste Management Assistance Agreement in June 2002.

The dump pile was over 250 feet down a sheer cliff in the Eklutna River Canyon. It consisted of: 45 vehicles, from an RV with dual rear tires to a couple of motorcycles – 20 in one piece and 25 disarticulated; 50 tires and wheels; 4+ engines; 5 bicycles; ten barrels, some originally with unknown contents, some were labeled as containing hydrofluorocarbons, but none contained much more than water; 3 propane canisters; 3 paint cans; 5+ laundry machines; 2 refrigerators; 2 ovens; 2 computer CPUs and 2 CRT monitors; a record player; 2 dead moose; 3 dogs; 1 bear; 1 porcupine; 8 newspaper vending machines; lots of logs (not removed); 40 golf



*200' crane boom hoisting atop 300' Eklutna River Canyon cliff.*



*River Canyon dump before cleanup*

A crane with 200' boom was used to do the job. The drop from the top of the boom to canyon floor was 500 feet. NVE contracted for the crane removal with Johnson Construction Company. Other means, such as helicopter, ice road, and winch removal were examined and found less or infeasible. Materials were attached for hoisting using a single hook or four "shaker hooks" at the end of four 30' cables. This allowed four loads to be attached and hoisted at once. Chains or nylon webbing were often strung through groups of objects and hooked with the shaker hooks.

Two NVE dumpsters were lowered and filled with loose discards by crew in the hole, then hoisted to dump in the large dumpster up top. The crane could only safely hoist 4,000 pounds at a time without tipping the crane. The crane operator could not see the dump from the canyon cliff edge, so one of his crew observed from the edge and communicated with another below by walkie-talkies to tell him when to lift or lower. We protected the descent into the canyon with climbing ropes. Eight NVE Tribal members gathered and attached stuff on the pile in the canyon, and detached it up top.

All the waste was accepted for recycling or disposal free of charge. Grizzly Towing took the vehicles for recycling, and the Anchorage Solid Waste Services accepted the rest of the items. Johnson Construction subcontracted a dump truck operator to haul items for disposal.

The project was completed in 2004.

# Picutres from the Eklutna River Dump Site Cleanup



The clean up crew consisted of members of the Village of Eklutna. These two pictures show the crew gathering debris to be hoisted to the top for disposal. Smaller items were placed into the dumpsters, while larger items like the tires (below) were directly hoisted to the top.



*Left: the crane hoisting a load to the top*

Piles of debris at the top of the cliff waiting for disposal. Some groups involved or interested in the project visited the site to see the progress.

*Below Left: Members from the Eklutna Watershed Council viewing debris hoisted from the canyon*

*Below Right: A pile of vehiles awaiting disposal at the top of the canyon*





*Above: A view of the crane from the top.*



*Above: the Director of the project, Marc Lamoreaux, posing with Tribal Member Maria Coleman at the top of the canyon.*

*Right: People who made the project possible.*

