Assembly holds solid waste workshop, discusses refuse

By RYAN LONG
Sentinel writer

The City and Borough of Wrangell has a trash problem. With the landfill closing the Wrangell Assembly held a workshop Tuesday evening to discuss Wrangell's refuse removal options, and its potential role as a regional solid waste disposal site.

Currently, the recommended proposal is to install equipment for thermal destruction of solid waste and coordinate an island-wide recycling effort at the current dumpster.

The incinerator would run on a six hour feeding cycle with a one hour warm up cycle, according to Borough Manager Tim Rooney.

"Based on the amount of waste we create per year, about 5.5 tons of waste per day, a thermal destruction system would operate on a six hour feeding cycle with a one hour warm up cycle and a three hour cool down cycle," said Rooney.

The system that was discussed at the workshop would be large enough to meet all of Wrangell's solid waste needs, and be capable of expanding with the community or potentially serving one other similarly sized community. It would not be capable, nor would the current site be large enough, to handle southern Southeast Alaska's refuse.

One potential move would be to locate the solid waste facilities elsewhere on the island, and the mill site was sited as an early favorite for development of a regional waste facility.

Assembly Member Jeremy Maxand urged caution, pointing out that other options may be more practical.

"All of this does seem to be gravitating toward the mill site, so we need to be thinking if that is the best use of that site," said Maxand.

The Assembly plans to hold a public hearing on the issue of solid waste in the fall and further discuss its options.

Josh Ream studies reptiles, amphibians and their cultural impacts

By RYAN LONG
Sentinel writer

Josh Ream has been traipsing through the wet lowlands of Wrangell, hunting newts, toads, salamanders and various species of local reptiles and amphibians as a part of his doctoral dissertation research.

Unlike many traditional PhD programs in similar biological fields, Ream’s research takes on a two-fold approach, which blends both ecological and anthropological research.

“I’m pursuing an interdisciplinary degree, so that means I’m working both ecologically and with people. My earlier training is primarily in biology and herpetology. I’m in Wrangell because I’m particularly interested in the role reptiles and amphibians play in culture, for instance the Kiks.áan clan,” said Ream.

When Ream first arrived in Wrangell, he had planned to stay for just a short while before heading to the next destination on a comprehensive survey of Southeast Alaska’s reptiles and Amphibians.

After just two weeks of working in Wrangell, Ream decided to refocus his research goals and pursue an unrivaled depth of knowledge here in Wrangell, particularly as it relates to herpetology. I’m in Wrangell because I’m particularly interested in the role reptiles and amphibians play in culture, Ream.

Aside from studying amphibian populations, Ream is also gathering traditional stories and data and researching the impact of amphibian populations on culture.

“One of the chapters I’m working on is the importance of reptiles to native cultures, and I’m interviewing people here about what they know. I also want to know what people know about the culture and how we can use that knowledge to learn about amphibians and reptiles,” said Ream.

“Part of my fellowship requires me to have community input on how my research progresses. I’ve given four presentations already since I’ve been in town so far as well as conducting interviews with people. In the past a lot of anthropologists have been seen as taking more than they’re giving so I’m hoping to counter that. I’ve given four presentations already since I’ve been in town so far as well as conducting interviews with people. In the past a lot of anthropologists have been seen as taking more than they’re giving so I’m hoping to counter that.”

“Another goal is to advance the traditional ecological knowledge as a tool for co-management of species in Alaska, which is used occasionally to manage game species,” said Ream.

Ream does hope to receive his Doctoral degree by the end of his research, but he also said that he hopes that the research itself will lead to improvements in wildlife management systems locally.

“Ultimately, to obtain my doctor’s degree I will have to have four or five chapters of my dissertation complete. Another goal is to advance the traditional ecological knowledge as a tool for co-management of species in Alaska, which is used occasionally to manage game species,” said Ream.