

# Recycling Fishing Nets



Alaskans use about 800,000 to one million pounds of fishing web in their nets per year. Most old web gets dumped in community landfills, shortening a landfill's useful life and adding expense to municipal operations. Salmon gillnets and seines are made from nylon, which can be re-processed to manufacture new products like wheels for chairs, tool handles, auto parts, telephones, computer parts, toothbrushes, upholstery, and carpeting.<sup>1</sup>

## Preparing Web/Net for Recycling

Net recycling programs have worked best when labor is minimized - ideally you don't want to handle the nets more than once in the collection recycling process. Have fisherman bring nets directly to where garbage or recycling is hauled. Some communities get youth core or volunteers to help clean the netting of debris.



Photo courtesy of [www.psmfc.org](http://www.psmfc.org)



All non-nylon materials such as the lead lines, cork or float lines, and weed-line must be removed. Nets must be clean and can't have organic materials such as fish or animal bones in it. The net can be pushed into a container as-is, pursed (drawn up like purse), or baled. Baled net gets the highest price and typically the cleaner the net, the higher the price you'll get.

## Companies that Accept Fishing Net

### Skagit River Steel and Recycling

Location: Burlington, WA

Contact: Aaron Coulter Tel: (360) 757-6096 xt 246

<http://www.skagitriversteel.com/>

In 2012 Skagit paid \$0.15 to \$0.25 cents per pound for nylon gillnet. The cleaner the netting is, the higher the rate they pay. For baled netting, they pay \$0.24 to \$0.34 cents per pound. If the netting has a lot of debris in it, they won't pay anything and will need to charge \$0.03-\$0.04 cents per pound. They will accept clean stripped poly nets for free (but won't pay for those). Skagit will pick up all netting at the Seattle dock. They suggest that if the netting you're sending doesn't fill a connex, to fill the remaining space in with other materials that they recycle such as scrap metal, cardboard, etc. (this will likely get



<sup>1</sup> From [www.copperriver.org](http://www.copperriver.org)

you a higher rate for the netting and you can get paid for the metal etc.). Contact Skagit before you ship to them to ensure they recycle the materials you're sending.

### **International Paper**

Location: Kent, WA

Contact: Doug Metz

Tel: (253) 372-1360 Cell: (253) 381-5735

<http://www.internationalpaper.com>

This company accepts a variety of netting for recycling, however they require that you call them first to let them know what you have, how much, and how contaminated it is, and then they will let you know if they can accept it or not and how much they will be able to pay. They may also ask for a photo of the netting you have so they can see what you have.



Photo courtesy of [www.psmfc.org](http://www.psmfc.org)

## **Communities that have Fish Net Recycling Programs**

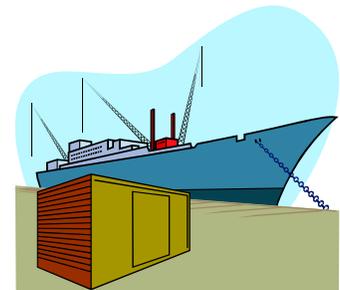
### **Cordova**



In 2010, the Copper River Watershed Project worked with several community partners to create a self-sustaining program for recycling discarded fishing web. Funding to start the recycling project was provided by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

They now have three dedicated shipping containers so that fishermen can drop off their old web. They placed posters and banners around town to let people know about the program. The nets have to be stripped (no lead lines) and bundled. They reach out to net menders and coordinate with the harbor master and fishing gear supply stores. Some staff time is needed to check the container vans, and make sure the banners are up around town. After a big education effort, fishermen are pretty good about preparing their web for recycling.

Alaska Marine Lines (AML) has donated the shipping. When the containers are full, they are shipped to Skagit River Recycling in Seattle. Because the shipping is donated, they get some money back from Skagit otherwise they wouldn't make any. AML brings back the empty containers. For a couple of years they used AMLs containers, but now they have their own so AML tracks them to



make sure the empty containers come back. They ship out the containers twice a year and have sent out 100,000 lbs.

For more information about Cordova's program contact Kristen Carpenter at 444-3334 or [kristin@copperriver.org](mailto:kristin@copperriver.org)

### Soldotna

The Kenai Peninsula Borough has been collecting fish nets for recycling for several years. They collect it in a fish tote or gaylord box. There's not a huge need for net recycling in the area so they don't get a lot dropped off by people. They allow the community to salvage the fishing net collection area so a lot of it gets reused. When they get a full tote, they will run it through the baler and ship it out. Previously they shipped out 9 bales that were 1000 pounds each to Tacoma, WA. They paid \$2,779 for shipping and received \$1800 for the baled nets. They received funding through Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. To learn more about Kenai Borough's program contact Brian Conrad at 262-2007.



### Dillingham

The Curyung Tribe is in their 4th year of their fish web recycling program. The previous 3 years they shipped out 40,000 pounds of web for recycling. Billy Maines is the Environmental Coordinator and organizer of the fish web recycling.

Every spring he contacts Northland Services to secure a container van, which is used to collect and pack the fish web into. After securing the van, he contacts a local contractor to move the van from the dock to the boat harbor, where the container for collecting the web is staged. He had previously made arrangements with the City of Dillingham to utilize the boat harbor for collection of the web.



He then notifies the local net hangers and the local radio station that the van is ready for web collection. He has done numerous interviews for the radio station and the local newspaper on the recycling effort to let everyone know about the program.

The program is for web and web only; they do not collect the cork line or lead line. Fishermen drop off the web and he gathers volunteers every other week to help stack the web into the container van until the van is full. He usually has the van there for 2 months, primarily all of June and July. At the end of July, he has the van moved to the city dock and shipped out to Skagit River Steel & Recycling.

He had previously made arrangements with Northland—they supply the van at no cost for 2 months and pay half the shipping, he pays to move the van to and from the collection site and the other half of the shipping. He put it into his GAP work plan and uses the GAP funding to cover their costs. It has worked out really well so far.

For more info on Dillingham's recycling program contact Billy Maines at 842-1751 ext. 308 or [billy@curyungtribe.com](mailto:billy@curyungtribe.com)

### **Funding Opportunities to Start Web Recycling**

**EPA IGAP (and Special IGAP) Funding:** The goal of IGAP is to assist tribes in building capacity to administer tribal environmental programs according to their individual needs. IGAP funds can be used to implement solid and hazardous waste activities so you may be able to use IGAP funds for shipping out netting. Talk to your IGAP project officer about what IGAP funds can be spent on. Go to <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/TRIBAL.NSF/Grants/Tribal+Grants> for more information and the due dates for IGAP proposals.

**Community Environmental Demonstration Grants:** The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Zender Group award small demonstration projects - average awards are \$20,000. Projects must demonstrate an innovative approach for improving human health and/or the environment of Tribal communities in rural Alaska. Contact Desirae Roehl at 729-3496 or Lina Taneva at 444-1197 for more information or see <http://www.zendergroup.org/cedp.html>

**NOAA Marine Debris Grant:** Funding of up to \$2,000,000 is expected to be available for Community-based Marine Debris Removal Project Grants in FY2013. Typical awards will range from \$15,000 to \$150,000. For more information contact Erika Ammann at 907-271-5118 or email [erika.ammann@noaa.gov](mailto:erika.ammann@noaa.gov) or visit their website at: <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding/welcome.html#crp>

**Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund:** The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, together with agency and private donor partners, funds proposals to further conservation of species and habitats in Alaska and in its near coastal waters. Grant awards will range in size from \$25,000 - \$100,000. <http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=GrantPrograms>  
For more information contact Cara Rose, Assistant Director, Western Partnership Office [cara.rose@nfwf.org](mailto:cara.rose@nfwf.org)

## **Other Resources**

**The Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation (MCAF)** was formed in 2003 as the research, education, and marine debris removal arm of the Seattle and Juneau-based Marine Conservation Alliance (MCA). MCA is an industry association representing many of the harvesters, processors, and communities of Alaska. MCAF provides information about their marine debris program at: <http://www.mcafoundation.org/>.

### **DEC's Marine Debris in Alaska Factsheet**

[http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/docs/sw/Marine\\_Debris\\_in\\_AK.pdf](http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/docs/sw/Marine_Debris_in_AK.pdf)

**Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's Fish Net Recycling and Marine Debris Program** Operates a pilot nylon gillnet recycling program in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. For information contact Fran Recht, PSMFC Habitat Program, 541-765-2229, [franrecht@centurytel.net](mailto:franrecht@centurytel.net) , <http://www.psmfc.org/habitat/recycleinfo.html>

### **EPA Marine Debris Impacts**

[http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/md\\_impacts.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/md_impacts.cfm)