

Gustavus Disposal & Recycling Center (DRC) Quarterly Staff Report
Ian Barrier, DRC Manager/ Operator
Wednesday, August 8th, 2025

General Operations and Management

Labor

This quarter the DRC has been operated by two employees, myself as manager/operator and Syd Glasmann as our lead assistant operator. We have also had Artemis Bona Dea volunteering fairly consistently during the last two hours on Saturdays which is a nice relief. Artemis will empty and sort bins in addition to helping us clean up at the end of the day. It is greatly appreciated. Syd and I have been spending more of our dead moments on processing some of our recycling to improve its value. This is mainly copper, brass, and stainless. With the DRC having tools such as a plasma cutter it is easier to cut screws and other ferrous metals out of stainless steel and aluminum scrap to get a better grade than “dirty”. It doesn’t take a lot of time as long as you move fast and have a system for sorting. We also recently purchased a wire stripper which will significantly improve the value of the wire we do receive.

Equipment

Above I already covered our recent acquisition of the wire stripper, and my reinforcement project for the Cram-A-Lot is on hold until summer season dies down; but I did make some structural repairs on the platen since it have some cracks where it mounts to the hydraulic ram. I suspect these cracks have been present for quite a long time. We also had some electrical issues with the baler. The main power connections inside the junction box were loose and appear to have been generating a fair amount of heat melting the switch they connected to. They were loose enough they came right out with a fairly week tug. I was able to splice the connections together and get the baler operating again. Considering the baler was manufactured in 09-16-1998 the connections likely loosened up over time due to vibration. In addition I want to inform my readers our A770 skid steer has reached 2,000 hours and our older 763 skid steer has reached 5,965 hours. Both machines are still going strong but I see these as important milestones to be reported.

Thoughts on New Baler

I have been thinking more about the new building and what kind of baler would fit our operation best, or if that project gets delayed too long what would be a good option to replace our existing Cram-A-Lot. Originally the plan was to purchase a large, robust horizontal baler. A horizontal balers create heavy, dense bales and would be efficient when baling most materials but they can’t handle everything, like ferrous scrap metal. Solid waste in a horizontal baler would be efficient but could be problematic when it comes to cleaning and tying off bales since trash can easily get into the channels that the baling twine gets ran through. Currently we use cardboard headers and footers to keep debris from clogging the grooves of the Cram-A-Lot but this wouldn’t be possible with a horizontal baler. If the horizontal baler had an auto-tie feature it might not be a concern, but I have never seen one in action to really know. Therefor I have been moving more towards the thought of multiple vertical balers in addition to the Cram-A-Lot. Vertical balers typically have reduced cost and a much smaller footprint that horizontal balers, its possible we could get two vertical balers for the price of a single large horizontal baler. If we purchased two matching vertical balers we would have the ability to bale multiple kinds of materials at the same time and it would increase our efficiency substantially. The Cram-A-Lot would remain in service and its main purpose for the rest of its life would be to bale scrap metal.

Shipping

This quarter I made two back to back scrap metal shipments to Skookum in Juneau, totaling a net weight of 48,594 pounds. This brought our total scrap metal shipped to Skookum in FY25 to a total of 90,060 pounds. I want to thank Frontier Freight for providing a speedy service when I request containers. The amount of material we ship per year is certainly been increasing and having a reliable service is a must for the DRC. This quarter we also shipped our first south bound shipment of the fiscal year to Seattle Iron & Metals and I am excited to see the return of the shipment since I included some valuables. I was informed the shipment looked good and the extra effort was noticed.

Landfill Expansion

I have been in the process of finding somebody to install the fence at the DRC this quarter since it would be unfathomable for me to think we would be able to accomplish that task along side all of our other duties; which was my original plan when I scoped out the project. In June I reached out to former employee Paul Dzuby about installing the fence, and he was interested but he had a family member pass and has decided to stay down south and might not be returning. In mid July I reached out and receive a quote from South East Fence Specialist for \$38,540 and I also contacted another local contractor about the work and their price was roughly half the quote of South East Fence Specialist, price was slightly variable. With \$46,454.19 dollars left in my original \$110,000 estimate and no need for any kind engineering I am hopefully the city can pull the trigger on hiring one of our options and get this project underway. I would like to be able to dig out the cells for next years bale fill this fall and have it ready for bales by next year.

Community Chest

Nothing too exciting at the Community Chest. We have our typical round table of volunteers sorting through donations and dealing with customers the days they are open. I did get the environmental coordinator out at Glacier Bay Lodge in contact with Annie about donations and Annie has able to help the environmental coordinator ship out used items to those in need. She has been doing a good job of having things reused rather than just trashed.

The End, thank you.

Report compiled by ian.barrier@gustavus-ak.gov

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