

# Aniak

## COMMUNITY PROFILE



### Local Contacts:

RVSP Program Manager  
Aniak, Alaska

(907) 675-4599

### Location:

Aniak is located on the south bank of the Kuskokwim River at the head of Aniak Slough, 59 miles southeast of Russian Mission in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Aniak lies 92 air miles northeast of Bethel and 317 miles west of Anchorage, at approximately 61.578330 North Latitude and -159.522220 West Longitude. (Sec. 12, T017N, R057W, Seward Meridian.) Aniak is located in the Kuskokwim Recording District. The area encompasses 6.5 sq. miles of land and 2.3 sq. miles of water.

### Cultural Identity:

Aniak is a Yup'ik word meaning "the place where it comes out," which refers to the mouth of the Aniak River. This river played a key role in the placer gold rush of 1900-01. In 1914, Tom L. Johnson homesteaded the site and opened a store and post office. The Yup'ik village of Aniak had been abandoned long before this time. Eskimos Willie Pete and Sam Simeon brought their families from Ohagamuit to Aniak, re-establishing the Native community.

A Russian-era trader named Semyeon Lukin is credited with the discovery of gold near Aniak in 1832. A territorial school opened in 1936, followed by the construction of an airfield in 1939. The White Alice radar-relay station operated in Aniak from 1956, closing in 1978. The city was incorporated in 1972. Aniak's population is primarily Yup'ik Eskimos and Tanaina Athabascans. Subsistence foods contribute largely to villagers' diets. Many families travel to fish camps each summer.

For more information about the community of Aniak, visit their website: [www.cityofaniak.org](http://www.cityofaniak.org).

### Agricultural History:

There is an existing 12 acre farm in Aniak that is owned by the Kuskokwim Native Association. In the past, potatoes

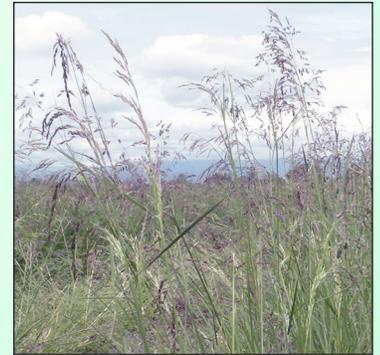
and carrots were grown as a local food source. There is a high tunnel greenhouse. Portions of the farm are currently being used to grow vegetables. Production of crops for seed is a new concept for the community, but they are moving forward and in the planning process to make the seed production project a success.

### RVSP Initiative:

The RVSP management team has high hopes for the Village Seed Project in Aniak. The existing farm and some of its equipment will be utilized to support new efforts. Aniak is in the process of preparing the fields for planting *Calamagrostis canadensis* (Bluejoint reedgrass), and *Artemisia tilesii* (Caiggluk wormwood) in the spring of 2012.



*Artemisia tilesii*



*Calamagrostis canadensis*

### Further Information:

For more details about the Rural Village Seed Production Project in Aniak, and in communities across Alaska, please visit the R.V.S.P.P. website, at: [plants.alaska.gov/rvsp](http://plants.alaska.gov/rvsp).