Produce Exhibit, Fairbanks, Alaska, circa 1920
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-npcc-00256.

Alaska Soil and Water Conservation Districts' FY12 Annual Reports

Prepared by the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board

The soil and water conservation districts in Alaska are created under the Department of Natural Resources and are governed locally by boards of volunteer supervisors. These pages contain the annual report of activities for the state's soil and water conservation districts for the fiscal year 2012.

THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources
Office of the Commissioner

Natural Resource Conservation & Development Board
Shana Joy, Executive Director
701 W. 8th Avenue, Suite 400
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3577
Main: 907.269.5007
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December 14, 2012

Daniel S. Sullivan, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
550 W. 7th Avenue, Ste. 1400
Anchorage, AK, 99501

Dear Commissioner Sullivan:

Please find in the following pages a compilation of annual reports for fiscal year 2012 as prepared by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Alaska. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are authorized under AS 41.10 to assist private land users with natural resource management matters. The Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board is authorized under AS 41.10 to inform and advise the DNR Commissioner of soil and water conservation district activities, programs, and project accomplishments.

The reports enclosed herein are provided for your information and offer a summary of the projects and accomplishments of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts over the past year.

Please take a moment to turn these pages and uncover some of the great work happening in communities across Alaska. Highlights include:

- Conservation planning
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Natural resource education programs
- Forest management & wildfire mitigation
- Invasive plants inventory & management
- Trail restoration and improvement
- Water quality monitoring and assessments
- Flood prevention and watershed restoration

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Shana Joy, Executive Director, at (907) 269-5007 or by e-mail at Shana.Joy@alaska.gov. Additional information about the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board may also be found on the internet at: http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/nrcdb/index.html.

Sincerely,

George Woodbury, Chair

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WHAT IS A SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT?

Districts are state-authorized entities with authority to exercise the powers delegated by the Commissioner as provided in AS 41.10.110. Each district is governed by a five-member board of volunteer supervisors. The districts are assisted by the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board.

As provided by AS 41.10.130, the DNR Commissioner is authorized to create districts in the state upon petition and delegate to the district supervisors of each district such powers as the Commissioner considers necessary to accomplish the purposes of soil and water conservation. The following powers have been delegated by the Commissioner to the district supervisors of each district:

- conduct land capability surveys and investigations of potential agricultural areas and of soil conservation and erosion control, including necessary preventative and control measures, in the state; to publish the results of these surveys and investigations and to disseminate information concerning the results of the surveys and investigations to prospective settlers and the general public;
- make technical guidance and other assistance available to settlers of new land to assure the development of the land in a manner that will permit it to be used in accordance with its capabilities and treated in accordance with its needs;
- carry out measures for soil conservation and erosion control within the state, including engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, and changes in use of land, with the consent and cooperation of the land user or agency having jurisdiction of the land;
- cooperate with, furnish assistance to, and enter into agreements with, a user of land or agency within the state;
- construct, improve and maintain soil erosion control and conservation structures as are necessary and practical for carrying out the purpose of this chapter;
- develop comprehensive plans for the conservation of soil and control of soil erosion within the state, cropping programs, tillage practices and changes in land use, and publish plans and information and bring them to the attention of users of land within the state;
- accept contributions in money, services, materials or equipment from the U.S. or its agencies, from an agency of the state and from any other sources for use in carrying out the purposes set forth in this chapter.

HISTORY

The state of the nation's soil resources during the 1930's, a decade known as the Dust Bowl, inspired the establishment of soil and water conservation districts across the nation. When farm families arrived in the Great Plains states, such as Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Colorado, they altered the landscape to suit their needs. These changes included replacing native grasses with agricultural crops and allowing cattle to graze on grounds less suitable for cultivation. When the U.S. entered World War I, the great demand for wheat to feed U.S. troops increased the conversion of even less appropriate land to agricultural use. In addition, the introduction of modern farm equipment allowed farmers to plow more land.

Such intensive manipulation of the land without conservation practices amplified the effects of the natural drought cycle on the Great Plains states. Crop vegetation, unlike indigenous plants, was not well suited for drought conditions. During the late 1920's and early 1930's widespread crop failure decreased ground cover. In addition, many farmers converted unsuccessful cropland to grazing land, where cattle trampled the already poor quality soil and thwarted ground cover renewal. The strong plains winds blew away unprotected topsoil.

By the mid 1930's, large dust storms were a common event across the Great Plains area that became known as The Dust Bowl. Displaced farming families migrated west to California in search of work and land. The once highly productive Great Plains reached a state of economic and ecological devastation.

In 1935, Congress made soil and water conservation a national priority by passing the Soil Conservation Act. This act established the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), referred to as the Soil Conservation Service at the time.

In 1937, President Roosevelt drafted a special recommendation to each state governor for the formation of local soil conservation programs. He suggested that the programs work on the local level directly with land owners. In 1937, North Carolina established the first soil conservation district, a precursor to soil and water conservation districts, in the Brown Creek Watershed.

The tone of the legislation is that of a volunteer, grass-roots organization which could function only with the permission of the land user. The original Territorial statutes and organization remained essentially unchanged when Alaska became a state in 1959. It was not until 1983 that many changes to the statutes were made. In 1983, the state was investing significant funds in agriculture. The changes established a statewide board (Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board) with regional representation and

changed the land occupier to land user (an individual who produces renewable resources and signs a cooperator agreement).

The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) was organized in 1965 to help the Alaska districts do cooperatively what they could not do independently. In 1998, AACD incorporated with 501(c)(3) status.

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS

Today, there are approximately 3,000 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) nationwide, whose boundaries encompass 98 percent of the privately-owned land in the 50 states. Considering that 70 percent of land in the U.S. is in private ownership, the role of local SWCDs in natural resource management is quite significant.

In Alaska, there are currently 12 organized districts as listed below. Each district is governed by five land users from the district that serve three-year, uncompensated terms of office. The Alaska District encompasses the area outside of the 12 locally organized districts and is governed by the NRCDB. District boards, with area-wide input from landowners and resource user groups, establish annual and long-term conservation priorities for their districts. It is through these locally led planning efforts that state and federal programs are directed.

SWCD	Acreage	SWCD	Acreage
Anchorage	1,106,889	Mid-Yukon Kuskokwim	9,793,685
Fairbanks	3,218,807	Palmer	1,564,283
Homer	1,020,129	Salcha Delta	2,493,606
Kenai	295,742	Southeast	156,919,821
Kenny Lake	206,530	Upper Susitna	1,707,780
Kodiak	43,044	Wasilla	802,636

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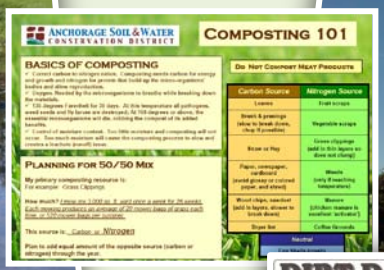

Separate Title 21 chapter applauded by local residents

PNZ decision earns positive response

BY MIKE NESPER
Alaska Star

Those in favor of creating a separate chapter for Chugiak-Eagle River to Title 21, which regulates municipal land use, had reason to celebrate Monday night.

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ANCHORAGE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FY2012 Annual Report

The ASWCD Mission:

Supporting self-governance and private property rights, to assist landowners and managers with conservation and development through technical, financial and educational programs

Board of Supervisors & Team

Bret Burroughs, Chair
Jon Nauman, Vice-Chair
Linda Boggs, Treasurer/Secretary
Fred Wolfley, Supervisor
Denise Chythlook, Supervisor

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The ASWCD's boundaries are the same boundaries as the Municipality of Anchorage: from Portage to the Knik River, including the communities of Portage, Girdwood, the Turnagain Arm, Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugiak, and Eklutna

Letter From The Chair

To look back on fiscal year 2012 brings a list of accomplishments to be proud of for the team of the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District. The ASWCD is truly making a difference in the community with our assistance in many areas, including agency and non-agency issues, on-the-ground assistance to property owners and developers. the District is showing that our qualified and confidential support and back-to-basics business plan works. We treat our business like you treat your business; that is why we accomplish projects and assistance directly to the community with limited overhead, and why the District operates through the utilization and support of the private sector rather than having employees and building a bureaucracy.

Our recipe for success creates a winning formula in our community that produces results. We fill needs property owners require, confidential on-the-ground assistance, with limited funds requires a dedicated volunteer board, and dedicated contractors. Holding overhead and administration costs under 10% (standard is between 20-50%) is critical. We are accountable for every dollar spent, and integrity, transparency, protection of private property rights, and respect are the tenets we live by.

The upcoming year is already setting up to be exciting. This is your District and we're here to help, but if you're expecting a bureaucracy, you're not going to find it here. Your Anchorage Conservation District is here to help our neighbors develop and take care of the natural resources in their control.

Anchorage Woodlot, Biomass Utilization & Composting

In 2012, the ASWCD's Anchorage Woodlot began its fifth season under a self-sustaining business model that was implemented in the 2008 season.

The ASWCD has been involved with the Anchorage Woodlot since its inception in 2000, transitioning from the Anchorage Fire Department to ASWCD management beginning in 2005. In 2008 we completed our transition from being supported with federal funds to this self-sustaining model that secures the woodlot's operations as long as the community needs it.

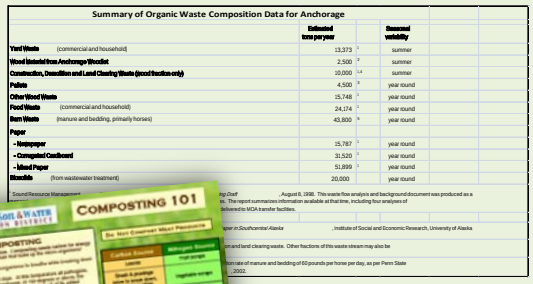
With property owners being supported in their active management of their property and being wildfire-aware and active stewards of their land, the woodlot has become a cornerstone program of the community.

The ASWCD Anchorage Woodlot processes all brush, limbs, and other material dropped off, into a ground material (more than 2,500 tons a season), that is available to the community free of charge. All firewood and firewood-suitable logs are also picked up by the members of the community at no charge.

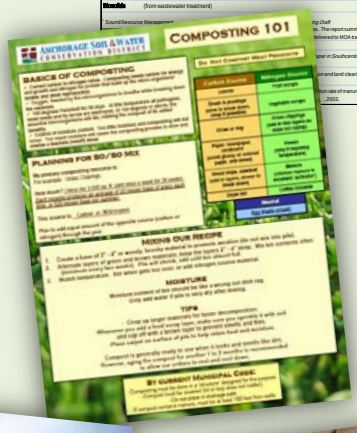
This year's Anchorage Woodlot was made possible in partnership with Alaska Land Clearing, LLC and Mayor Sullivan's Administration, who allowed us to use a temporary site as our regular location, a Municipal snow disposal site was full of snow thanks to a record snow year. Thank you from the ASWCD and the community we serve!

Whether it be firewood and groundcover from the woodlot, composting, biomass to energy or heat, or biomass to value added product, the District has been supporting utilization in any form. Anchorage has tremendous biomass and compost feedstock resources, that are greatly untapped.

The ASWCD has assisted several potential start-ups with business plans, providing technical expertise, supplying data, and/or support through their respective processes, testing, permitting, or exploration of the possibilities. The ASWCD also teaches composting classes and is providing support to the community in their, and our, quest to become more self-sufficient and less wasteful of our resources.


Summary of Organic Waste Composition Data for Anchorage

	Estimated tons per year		Seasonal variability
Yard Waste (commercial and household)	13,373	7	summer
Wood Material from Anchorage Woodlot	2,500	2	summer
Construction, Demolition and Land Clearing Waste (wood fraction only)	10,000	14	summer
Pulvia	4,500	8	year round
Other Wood Waste	15,748	8	year round
Food Waste (commercial and household)	24,174	9	year round
Barn Waste (manure and bedding, primarily horses)	43,800	16	year round
Paper			
- Newspaper	15,787	7	year round
- Corrugated Cardboard	31,520	7	year round
- Mixed Paper	51,899	7	year round
Biosolids (from wastewater treatment)	20,000		year round



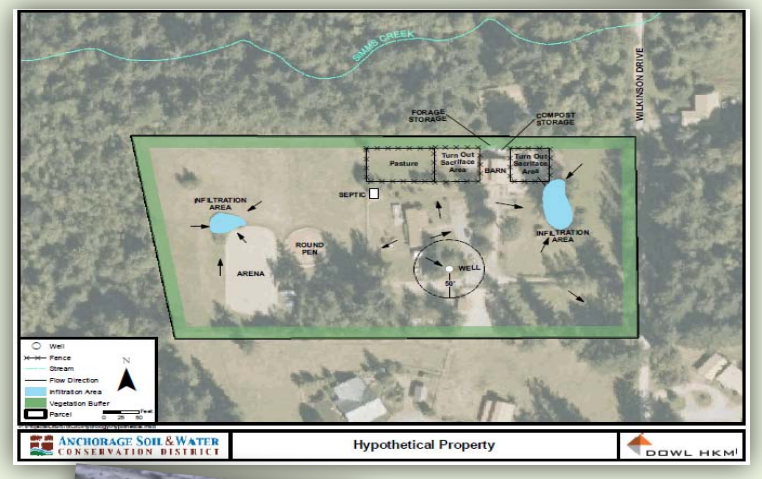
Active Property management & Conservation Planning

The District is always available to the residents of our District to assist in become active managers and stewards of the natural resources in their control. Whether it be a Conservation Plan for an agricultural or non-agricultural facility or property, assistance with permitting, or technical support, we are helping property owners use and develop their land.

Conservation Plans provide several benefits for property owners, including making properties more chore-friendly and easier to manage, bringing them into compliance with Municipal Code, particularly the provisions of 'The Large Animal Ordinance," and helping to provide protection under State law for agricultural properties within the Municipality.

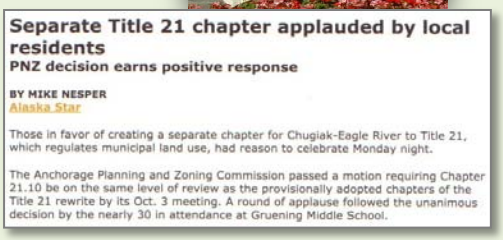
The District team works one-on-one with property owners, in the strictest of confidentiality, to design and implement site-specific Best Management Practices as wanted by the property owner, such as creating vegetation and buffering strategy, manure and mud management plans, and to address drainage, erosion, or other natural resource concerns, as well as assist property owners in many other aspects.

Highlights during FY12 include: the District began working to address a serious drainage issue off of Homestead Trail Road; began working to address a flooding issue for a property owner in Valdez; began the planning for upgrades and maintenance to the trails and facilities of Ruth Arcand Park and the William Chamberlin Equestrian Center; our support for a project to protect the water resources of Potter Marsh continued; and the ASWCD assisted several property owners in issues with agencies, acting in an advocacy and/or mediation capacity.



Assistance to Consortium of Chugiak-Eagle River Community Councils, AMC 21.10

The rewriting of Title 21, the Municipality's Land Use Code, has taken more than a decade, but is now in its final process and will be adopted by the end of FY13. Recognizing the need to preserve community values in Land Use Code, the property owners, residents, and business owners in the Chugiak-Eagle River (C-ER) area requested, and the Assembly granted, a separate chapter specific to the C-ER area. This allows the Chugiak-Eagle River community to write its own chapter -- the absolute essence of self-governance and self-determination. By Statute the District is charged with assisting in the settling of land, so how could the District say no when the Consortium asked for assistance.



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The Consortium has worked more than five years in research, community input, and hundreds upon hundreds of hours in the collection and documentation of input and in the preparation of their separate chapter by the ASWCD.

Wildlife Natural Resources: Anchorage and Rural Alaska Working Together

The District continued its support of programs and projects that benefit both Alaska's wildlife and Alaska's people. In supporting the Wood Bison Reintroduction project, which will bring back a species that used to help sustain Alaskans and has only been extinct in Alaska for less than 100 years, and the programs of the Alaska Moose Federation which support better management of our moose natural resources.

In the reintroduction of Wood Bison, many people have worked together to make this happen for rural Alaska: The AWCC, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, ASWCD, Canada's National Recovery Team for Wood Bison, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission- Bison Specialist Group, Alaska Outdoor Council, Safari Club International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Eastern Regional Subsistence Advisory Council, and Fish and Game Advisory Committees representing the three regions being considered for wood bison restoration. For more information see www.alaskawildlife.org.

The ASWCD has also been a supporter of the Alaska Moose Federation (AMF) since the beginning. The AMF is working to improve our management of moose resources, a resource that in the past has been taken for granted, or sometimes just plain wasted. Supporters of this effort include the ASWCD, Sampson Steel, Pruhs Corporation, NC Machinery, Alaska Mill and Feed, Native Village of Eyak, Tyonek Native Corporation, Sportsman's Warehouse, Surveyor's Exchange, Wendy's of Alaska, Great Northern Engineering, Granite Construction, Alaska Air Taxi, Alaska Highway Safety Office, Evert's Air Service, all of their outstanding volunteers, and many others. For more information go to www.growmoremoose.org.

Peters Creek Flooding & Erosion Control

The District continues its monitoring of our constructed portion of Peters Creek, in addition to looking at a couple additional sections of possible concern.

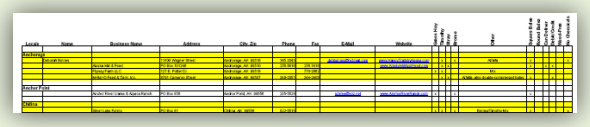
The continued monitoring of the section of creek that we altered has shown an end to the massive flooding that plagued that section for many decades, including the catastrophic flooding in 2006 when the District was asked to help. The District stopped the flooding and prevented the local access bridge from demolition, then followed with construction the following year.

Non-Native Plants

The ASWCD has continued its work with policy issues regarding the continued expansion of the Non-Native Plants Industry (an ASWCD term). Awareness and education regarding the need to contain this movement to species of actual harm or impact to our lands, species which can be reasonably addressed, species that have the possibility of being controlled/eradicated versus those species that are so widespread control or eradication is impossible, and the ASWCD continues to support open discussions with affected industries and a rational approach.

Buy Local: Forage Directory

The District continues its publication and distribution of its Forage Directory, a statewide comprehensive list of forage producers, with detailed production data, to aid in the linking of producers and buyers, promoting the use of locally grown product. The Forage Directory is an invaluable source for its users and many of the producers listed have commented that their business has significantly increased since their listing in the directory, some selling out. Some have also commented that the Forage Directory has also been a catalyst for an improvement in quality through better management of the crop.



Assistance

The ASWCD was asked to assist in several issues to assist/represent property owners in interactions with agencies and other issues, including:

- The ASWCD assisted the Kodiak District in selling raffle tickets to support Future Farmers of America;
- Assisted a property owner with a serious soil erosion and permitting issue;
- Assisted a property owner with a flooding issue on Campbell Creek, in coordination with the Municipality and other agencies;
- Assisted a property owners with impacts from an adjacent road construction project and mediated the situation to a favorable outcome for the property owner and the project.

Canada Thistle: justified listing - a species clearly causing harm, and spread is such that it can be eradicated, is on the SOA Prohibited List, eradication efforts are effective

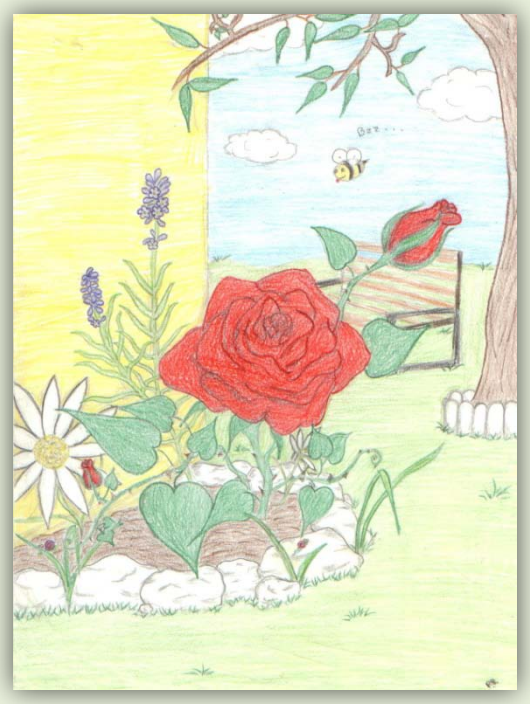
Timothy Grass: should not be listed - arguably the most common livestock forage, crucial to agricultural interests, no harm to wildlife or habitat has been shown; however, benefits to wildlife and habitat *have* been shown

2012 Annual Poster Contest

The ASWCD's annual poster contest concluded in June. This year's contest asked entrants to draw what they would grow in their garden - big enough to feed a community, a garden to feed your family year-round, or an herb garden on a window sill. What would your garden grow?

This year's grand prize winner was Tabitha Silver (above left), 13 years old in the 8th grade at Central Middle School. Tabitha also placed first in her grade category, 6th to 8th grade. The grand prize runner-up and first place in the 2nd to 5th grade category was Gwendolyn Mueller (above right). Gwendolyn is 10 years old and in the 5th grade at Chugiak Elementary.

The other first place winners were Norah Fredenhagen in the Preschool to 1st grade category, 7 years old and 1st grade at Northern Lights ABC (below left); and in the 9th to 12th grade category, Rachel Blakeman, 17 years old in the 11th grade at West High (below right).



What They're Saying This Year

I wanted to thank you for the work you do, and especially for the advice and support offered to me by Ryan Stencel, your Operations Manager.

In the spring of 2011, I began the process of learning how to complete erosion control around my new home, located on a steep (and beautiful) lot way up in Bear Valley. I was required by the Municipality to do this, I wanted to ensure that my home remained safely where it was built, and I wanted to be a good neighbor. I called around trying to figure out how best - and cheapest, of course - to accomplish this. After many calls where I was given another number to call, I finally connected with Ryan. Talking with Ryan, I finally began to make progress with my education and to accumulate something more than a list of phone numbers of people who were nice but unable to help.

Ryan immediately offered to come out and look at the site. She arrived with Brad Melocik, a DOWL HKM Engineer, and the two of them were very honest and helpful. First, they told me that the plan to hydroseed my steep slopes might work for one year, but would likely all slough away soon thereafter. (Certainly not what I was hoping to hear.) They suggested I needed to explore more intense erosion control options with a better chance of long-term success. Ryan gave me the names of some people who would offer better options for my site.

Once I had determined what to do, she communicated with the Municipality on my behalf to explain what was planned.

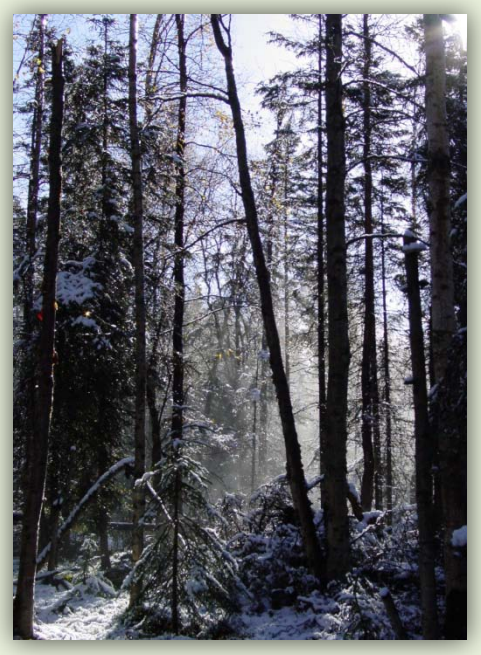
Under the guidance of [the erosion control company I chose], last year (2011) we put in composting blankets/bags, netting and mulch. Once again, Ryan was so helpful in getting the mulch we needed - and a lot of it - from the wood lot to cover all the slopes. This year, we are repairing a few spots that did not make it through the winter and have planted 750 willow stakes so they can root and hold the slopes in place. We also needed more mulch, which of course, we got from you.

I realize this is probably more information than you need, but I wanted you to know that Ryan was so helpful on so many levels:

- Without the visit by Ryan and Brad, the suggestions they offered, and the contact info for [contractors], I would likely have gone through with the hydroseeding and be facing the same problems again right now - with my money down the drain. I would never have found a good erosion control person on my own.

- While I might have gotten Municipality approval without her help in explaining what was planned, I doubt that it would have gone as smoothly or as timely had I been trying to explain the project myself to them.

- Without the mulch your organization offers from the wood lot, I would probably not have been able to afford to complete this project.

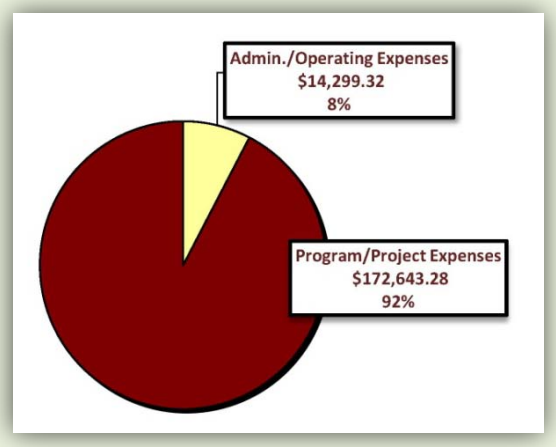


I understand that you are a volunteer Board and I want to thank you very much for your work and to let you know how much I appreciate the benefits I have enjoyed because of the work you do, and your great representative, Ryan Stencel. Hopefully, this reminds you that your work is having a positive impact on our community.

S.W.

Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District
Fiscal Year 2012 Financial Report

Program / Project / Funding Source	Admin. / Operating Expense	Program or Project Expense	Total FY2012 Expenses	FY2012 Revenue & Proceeds
Admin	$ (12.50)	$ 12.50	$ -	$ -
Anchorage Woodlot, 2011 Season	$ 21.40	$ 21,344.78	$ 21,366.18	$ 13,799.45
Anchorage Woodlot, 2012 Season	$ 14.00	$ 20,227.76	$ 20,241.76	$ 29,558.65
Biomass Utilization, MOA Solid Waste Services Grant	$ -	$ 963.75	$ 963.75	$ -
Composting, MOA Partnership	$ -	$ 2,607.50	$ 2,607.50	$ 720.00
Consortium of Chugiak-Eagle River Community Councils	$ -	$ 34,738.29	$ 34,738.29	$ 19,937.99
DNR / SOA Annual Cooperative Agreement	$ 200.00	$ 775.00	$ 975.00	$ 2,500.00
Homestead Trail Drainage, SOA	$ -	$ 2,778.07	$ 2,778.07	$ 15,000.00
Operating Account	$ 14,076.42	$ 84,594.29	$ 98,670.71	$ 54,541.50
Peters Creek Completion, FY11 SOA	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 2,619.92
Peters Creek, FY12 SOA	$ -	$ 2,640.06	$ 2,640.06	$ 25,000.00
Potter Marsh Project	$ -	$ 225.00	$ 225.00	$ -
Ruth Arcand Park Trails, FY13 SOA	$ -	$ 967.41	$ 967.41	$ -
SOA / AACD FY11 Operating Grant	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 8,777.64
Valdez Flooding Project, SOA	$ -	$ 768.87	$ 768.87	$ 25,000.00
TOTALS	**$ 14,299.32**	**$ 172,643.28**	**$ 186,942.60**	**$ 197,455.15**



Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District

P.O. Box 110309 - Anchorage, AK 99511-0309
Phone: 907.677.SOIL (7645)
E-Mail: aswcd@aswcd.org
www.ASWCD.org

FAIRBANKS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Memorandum to: ***State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources***

From: ***Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District***

Subject: ***Annual Report of Accomplishments: July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012***

Date: ***October 26, 2012***

Chairman's Report

The Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District thanks all of our partners this year who helped us to accomplish goals related to land development and natural resource conservation. Special thanks go to AACD officers and staff for offering us extra assistance this year. FSWCD worked on the NRCS09 contract and an NRCS agreement which included agricultural, soil, and water technical assistance to landowners. FSWCD also worked with USFWS to continue the development of eight schoolyard habitat restoration projects, two youth corps groups, upland restoration projects, invasive weed pulls in outlying areas (Stevens village, Ft. Yukon, Eagle), riparian bioengineering projects, green infrastructure cost share projects with land owners and outreach and education about the importance of the Chena River. Other major partnerships included the Cooperative Weed Management Area work on invasive species, Division of Agriculture Farm to School grant and a forestry products handbook, National Project WET workshops with Alaska Tribal Environmental groups and Rural water technicians, City of Nenana uplands restoration and promotion of opening Nenana-Tochaket agricultural area, City of Fairbanks Storm Water Committee, Fairbanks Storm Water Group, Pike's Waterfront Lodge & Landing, Chena Slough Technical and Neighborhood Committee , Tanana Valley Watershed Association, Fairbanks Chamber of commerce committees, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District after school lessons, Fairbanks Visitors Bureau Charity Walk, JP Jones community center, educational and outreach projects with the Society of American Foresters and the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences.

FSWCD worked closely with other soil and water districts across the state on relevant issues such as funding, statute changes, and statewide programs. Of course, our greatest thanks goes to our cooperators and other private landowners whose expertise and requests for project assistance and technical advice help us to accomplish all of the conservation practices on the ground.

<u>Highlights included:</u>

1. Over 85 participants at a high tunnel workshop
2. Aquatic invasive Elodea research and trials
3. Schoolyard Habitat projects
4. Landowner's riparian areas and green infrastructure cost share projects and guides
5. Continued Chena Slough and Chena River restoration

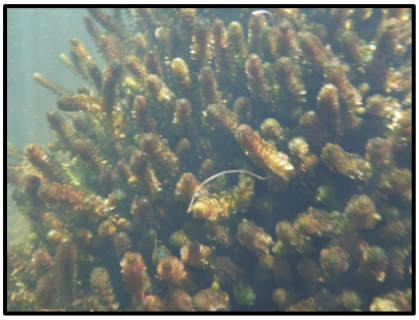
FSWCD survey crew at work in Chena Slough

FAIRBANKS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Goal 1: Prevention and Eradication of Noxious and Invasive Species

Highlight: Elodea control trials and management

Elodea nuttallii is an invasive aquatic plant that was recently found growing in the Chena Slough near Fairbanks. This plant has the potential to impact fish rearing and spawning habitat, as well as impair recreation and property values. It was likely an accidental introduction to the slough from a dumped aquarium. The Fairbanks SWCD has worked with agency and private partners to map the extent of the infestation, document impacts, and design of a management plan. Currently the Fairbanks SWCD is designing a suction dredge system to put into production in Chena Slough in 2013.



Dense infestation of Elodea in Chena Lake

Suction dredge control trials in Chena Slough

Survey of local float ponds with youth crew

General:

- Coordination of Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) meetings. Cooperating agencies include: Cooperative Extension Service, US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Tanana Valley Farmer's Market, Department of Transportation, USKH, Inc, and concerned citizens.
- Participation in Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plant Management (CNIPM): Monthly teleconferences, listerv, and annual conference. Staff member, Darcy Etcheverry, was the CNIPM board chair for 2011-2012 and participated in the Weed-free Forage subcommittee.
- Coordination of the Elodea Steering Committee, which is working to manage the newly discovered Elodea sp. Infestation in the Chena Slough.
- Continued support of the Weed Cost Share program. Revised the program this year to create a priority ranking system.
- Youth for Habitat Restoration Corps:
    - 10 Fairbanks students between the ages of 12-16 were selected for the program and received education about ecology and the conservation of natural resources as well as getting hands-on experience
    - Over 400lbs of invasive weeds were removed from project sites

- Over 21 miles of the Chena River bank were surveyed for invasive plants
- Approximately 2 acres were restored with native plants at Tanana Lakes and almost 200m of trail was constructed
- Stream crossings and area wetlands were surveyed for Elodea
- Native plant species establishment and invasive control was done at the Watershed Charter School Schoolyard Habitat

Technical Assistance:

- Equipment lending program
- Provided direct invasive plant control information to 25 landowners

Inventory & Control:

- Surveyed Taylor Highway material sites in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and Department of Natural Resources.
- Continued partnership with the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and Gwitchyaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal Government in Fort Yukon to manage white sweetclover (*Melilotus alba*) on tribal lands.
- Utilized herbicides to control the farthest north known infestation of creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) in Alaska at Stevens Village through a partnership with the Division of Agriculture, Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, and Stevens Village Tribal Council.
- Survey for Elodea and other aquatic invasive plants at 29 waterbodies in interior Alaska, including high priority locations such as float ponds and boat launches. Documented Elodea infestations in Chena Slough, Chena Lake, and Chena River.
- Conducted Elodea control trials using a suction dredge, hand pulling, and hand clipping in Chena Slough and Chena Lake to assess appropriate control methods in still and moving water.
- Initiated Chena Slough hydraulic assessment with a local hydrologist to design ways to increase flow in Chena Slough to inhibit the growth of Elodea.
- Installment and monitoring of tarping sites for perennial sowthistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) and reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
- Weed-free Forage subcommittee of CNIPM revised the Alaska Weeds of Concern List and provided certification for new field certifiers.

Education:

- Invasive plant information reached thousands of people through outreach at various community events, including: Tanana Valley State Fair (1,000), Natural Resource Showcase (50), Delta Farm Forum (100), Sustainable Agriculture Conference (150), Northern Living Home Show (1,200), Outdoor Days at UAF (240), Dept of Fish and Game Kid's Fun Day (200), Chena Riverwalk (100), Midnight Sun Festival (500).
- Invasive plant lessons, utilizing the Weed Wackers curriculum set, were provided to various

classrooms throughout the school year, including classes at: Hunter Elementary, Hutchison High School, Denali Elementary School, and Effie Kokrine Charter School

- Provided invasive plant identification training to the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML) wetlands crew based in Fairbanks.
- Created a website for the Fairbanks CWMA at www.FairbanksWeeds.org which provides information and a reporting portal.
- Finalized outreach cards for invasive species of importance within the Fairbanks CWMA

Elodea removed in 15 minutes in Chena Lake

Mechanical control of white sweetclover in Fort Yukon

USFWS youth crew helps maintain perennial sowthistle tarps

Goal 2: Conservation of Plant and Soil Resources

Highlight: The number of peony farmers in Interior Alaska has been growing rapidly and the FSWCD office has received many requests for technical assistance. FSWCD staff helps with planning, soil testing, and providing fertilizer recommendations to new peony growers. The farming community is very excited about the potential of this crop for Alaska! FSWCD will be staying in contact with new peony growers to see how their crops are doing and help with any problems encountered.

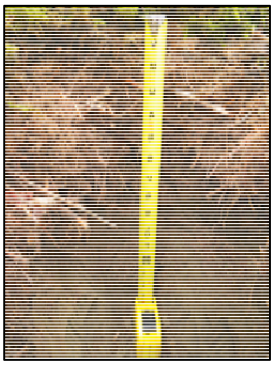
**also see Goal 7 (Assistance to NRCS through contracts) for more conservation of plant and soil resources work, and Goal 7 for habitat restoration work*

- Soil testing and recommendations- 49 soil samples
- 4 Compost analyses
- Assisting with 2 Salcha-Delta SWCD wetland delineations

- Technical assistance for 2 cooperators
- Beginning work on soil testing for lawns program
- Illingsworth Farm Tour soil lessons for elementary classes

Education:

- 3 Soils lessons – U-park 3rd grade (28 students per lesson)
- JP Jones Restoration Project: Presentation to local girl scout troop (12 girls and 2 leaders) at JP Jones Community Center on ideas for their restoration project
- Denali After School Program – 16 lessons – Approximately 10 students per lesson
- North Pole Elem After School Program – 7 lessons – Approximately 5 students per lesson
- *Getting Down and Dirty Symposium* at the Denali Center - 16 childcare providers attended
- 100 pounds of worms were ordered and distributed through the vermi-composting in Alaska promotion
- Worm Composting lessons – 8 classes, approximately 200 students
- Worm composting workshop at 2012 Home Show – approximately 30 participants
- 4H Clover Bud camp –3 days of lessons. Approximately 25 students per lesson



Soil pit for wetland delineation

Soil Symposium for Childcare Providers

Goal 3: Sustainable Agricultural Resources and Economy

Highlight: Fairbanks SWCD held a High Tunnel Workshop, in partnership with NRCS, that had over 85 people in attendance! The workshop resulted in many new high tunnel applications for NRCS and was also a great venue for information exchange and networking. FSWCD received great positive feedback from cooperators about this event.

**also see Goal 7 (Assistance to NRCS through contracts) for more agriculture work*

- 4+ Site Visits

- Technical assistance for 1 cooperator
- Sponsoring and organizing the Bucks for Bales contest
- Agriculture displays and outreach at Tanana Valley State Fair
- Taste of Alaska Grown at the Charity Walk
- Assisting with 4H Petting Zoo and Livestock Auction at the TVSF
- Taste of Alaska Grown at JP Jones
- Educational booth at Food Day, UAF
- Attending Sustainable Agriculture Conference
- Attending Peony Growers Workshop and Produce Growers Conference
- Reviewing 3 Farm Conservation Plans for the State of Alaska
- Helping interview Cooperative Extension Service Agent applicants
- Judging entries at Fort Yukon agricultural fair
- Chamber of Commerce Alaska Ag. Day – Approximately (10) 4H members assisted in the event and presented on local projects with the assistance of staff.
- 2nd annual Garden Fair at Randy Smith Middle School.
- Farm and Garden Display Sponsorship and Promotion– Jr. and Sr. divisions at the Tanana Valley State Fair
- In conjunction with J.P. Jones Community Center (Farm to School Grant), engaging 20 after school low-income kids in hands on agricultural lessons, visiting Farmer's Market, and sponsorship/organization of Taste of Alaska Grown Meal at J.P. Jones Community Center

Education:

- 65 classrooms participated in Alaska Agriculture Day. Alaska Agriculture Day included germination and plant science lessons which concluded with kids making their own carrot tape, composting, plants and pollination and a special "where does it grow in Alaska." Grades K – 3 received a complimentary book.
- Anne Wien After School Program – 46 lessons on Agriculture in the Classroom and Gardening - Approximately 10 students per lesson
- North Pole Elem. After School Program – 13 lessons on Agriculture in the Classroom and Gardening– Approximately 6 students per lesson
- Ryan Middle School After School Program – 24 lessons on Agriculture in the Classroom and Gardening–Approximately 12 students per lesson
- Food Day at the UAF Student Center – Provided short presentations on Alaska Agriculture. Approximately 60 people visited the booth
- Fairbanks Daycare Food Program at the Fairbanks Food Bank on *Gardening with Young Children* for 22 daycare providers

4H members at the Chamber of Commerce Luncheon

FSWCD display at the Tanana Valley State Fair

FSWCD booth serving AK Grown food at the Charity Walk

Goal 4: Conservation/Maintenance of Water Resources

Highlight: FSWCD developed a "Riparian Revegetation for Interior Alaska" guide, as well as updating a green infrastructure manual for the Interior and developing handouts and a rack card on green infrastructure. 5 green infrastructure projects were completed as part of the Homeowner Reimbursement Program. FSWCD partnered with the City of Fairbanks, USFWS, the Fairbanks Storm water Committee, CCHRC, NRCS, and the Tanana Valley Watershed Association on this work.

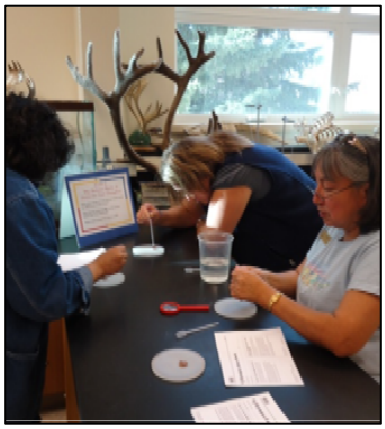
- Water analysis for 1 cooperator
- Participating in the development of a green infrastructure community-wide grant application
- Beginning work on Farmer's Market rain garden
- Attending presentations at Watersheds Conference
- Developing "Living Streamside: A Landowner's Guide to Riparian Areas" brochure in partnership with Tanana Valley Watershed Association
- Participation in Green Infrastructure Working Group (a group including local organizations, federal agencies, the FNSB, and the city of Fairbanks working toward improved green infrastructure and water protection in Interior Alaska)
- Updated green infrastructure project manual, handouts, and rack card (printed and distributed by USFWS and the City of Fairbanks)
- Development of the Riparian Revegetation for Interior Alaska Guide for distribution to homeowners who live along water bodies in the area
- 5 green infrastructure projects were completed as part of the Homeowner Reimbursement program
- Partnered with Tanana Valley Watershed Association to organize the 'Chena River Walk' an educational event for youth where families walked along the Chena River and stopped at booths with different natural resource education activities (about 100 people attended)
- Engineering, design, and contract work done on Persinger Crossing at Chena Slough for culvert replacement
- Planning, design, outreach, and education work on Chena Slough restoration projects
- Continued work on riparian habitat, outreach, and information for maintaining and restoration of Chena River
- Partnered with USFWS on 3 private landowner wetland projects and 3 riparian habitat bioengineering projects
- Sponsored riparian habitat workshop
- Research and outreach on mining restoration projects
- Project WET workshop for 20 Alaska Rural Water Technicians
- Member of National Project WET Council
- Alaska Project WET coordinator
- Participated in River Management and Submerged Lands conference

Education:

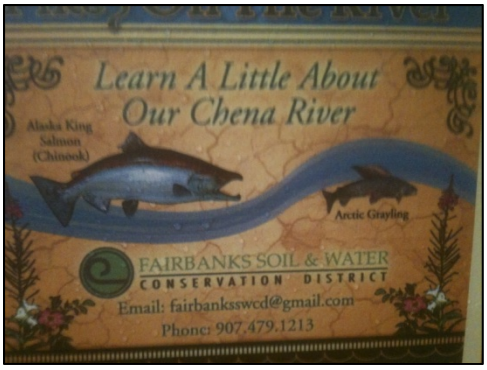
- Water quality testing - Ben Eielson 7th grade - 15 students participated
- STEM Conference – Project WET workshop – 10 adult participants
- Storm water runoff diversion via rain barrels – 2012 Home Show – approximately 30 participants
- Watershed, Water Quality and Slough Education at NPMS – 3 classes, 112 students
- Denali After School Program – 16 lessons on water, water use, and conservation of water resources –approximately 10 students per lesson
- North Pole Elem After School Program – 7 lessons on water, water use, and conservation of water resources – Approximately 5 students per lesson

- Earth Day Classes: at Joy Elementary School to two classes. 45 students and 2 teachers participated.
- Nenana Youth Corps training: water testing and watershed education. 10 students and staff participated in the activities.
- Woodriver Elementary School restoration project - Meetings with the teachers, students and PTA were held on many different dates throughout the year.
- Woodriver Elementary School Rain garden lesson and design: 4 lessons given to 4 different classes (approximately 55 students per lesson)
- Chena Slough Water Tree Outreach – FNSB library
- Project WET workshop at Alaska Tribal Environmental Management Conference (ATEMC) – approximately 30 adults attended
- Outdoor Days approximately 120 students and 12 adults
- Work with USFWS youth corps over 2 weeks. Instruction on rain gardens, storm water management, design and installation of rain gardens in two locations.

ATEMC Project WET Workshop



Project WET workshop at STEM conference



Water Education Sign at Pike's along the Chena River

Goal 5: Conservation of Forest Resources

Highlight: FSWCD staff helped plan and organize the 2012 Alaska Society of American Foresters Conference in Fairbanks. The event was a success and foresters were in attendance from all across Alaska. Two field trips were offered, one of which was to Risse Greenhouse to see their new tree seedling growing operation (featured picture).

- Completed 3 forest land conservation plans (NRCS)
- Annual Tree and Shrub Sale
- 5 Woodlot Walks (forest resources assessments)
- Tree planting with students at JP Jones
- Booth-sitting at Society of American Foresters TVSF booth (50+ contacts)
- Developing brochure "Forest Product Vendors in Interior Alaska"
- Planning and attending AK Society of American Foresters conference
- Vice chair of Yukon River Chapter of SAF
- Organizing Firewood Workshop
- Attending 3 SAF technical presentations
- Teaching several forestry lessons to Effie Kokrine Envirothon team
- Technical assistance to 3+ cooperators
- Tree Care presentation at Garden Fair
- Joining Alaska Northern Forest Cooperative and attending their annual meeting
- Teaching lessons to Watershed School students at Twin Bears educational camp
- Outdoor Days forestry lessons
- Participating in 3 Arbor Day plantings

Education:

- Denali After School Program – 20 classes – Approximately 12 students per lesson
- Tree planting at Two Rivers Elementary School - with approximately 15 students
- Provided on-site training for teachers at Two Rivers Elementary School in forestry activities in spring of 2012
- Tree planting in the schoolyard restoration area at Two Rivers Elementary School.
- Tree/plant identification and insect collecting techniques to Nenana Youth Conservation Corps- approximately 10 students participated.
- JP Jones Community Center: 1 forestry lesson. Approximately 10 students

- Interpretive forestry hikes to adults and children during Chena Hot Springs Energy Fair
- Forestry for the People – Speech and poster contest local area contest
- Forestry for the People, state coordinator for speech and poster contest for AACD resulting in a national poster winner and an honorable mention.
- Pre-service PLT/WET workshop – 30 UAF students
- School District Science Fair Judging – interviewing, judging and educating students

Poster Contest Winner

Melissa & Tami taking tree orders at the 2012 Tree & Shrub Sale

FAIRBANKS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Arbor Day tree planting at Two Rivers Elementary School- Jessica & Melissa teaching

Goal 6: Relevant Education and Information for all clientele, personnel, and partners

- Participation in the writing of a draft Alaska Environmental Literacy Plan (AKELP), a document that will encourage, support, and fund more integration of natural resource education into the State Education Standards
- Attending Strategic Mining Summit and Alaska Miners Convention
- 2 staff attended the AACD conference in Anchorage
- Local and state Farm Bureau Meetings
- Member of Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Natural Resource Committee
- Member Chair of Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Education Committee
- Member of Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Urban/Rural Development Committee
- Envirothon support
- Participation in Denali Chamber of Commerce 2012 Economic Forecast at Clear Air Force Base

Training:

- Pest Management Training (Delta)
- Conservation Planning Training for 2 employees
- Wetland Delineation Training for 2 employees
- 3 employees attended the Engaging Our School Ground Conference, which focused on schoolyard habitat development and featured several successful schoolyard habitats in San Francisco

Public outreach and education:

- Homeshow booth- reached hundreds of Alaskans
- Summer, fall, and spring Newsletters sent to 300+ cooperators

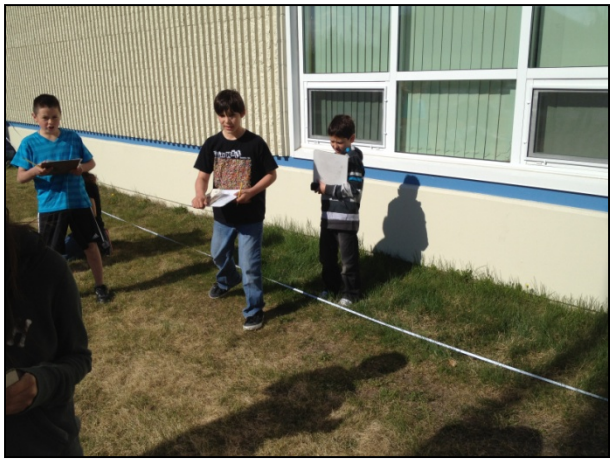
Educational programs and events for students and cooperators are listed under their respective topics. In addition to those items listed, the following lessons and programs were provided by FSWCD staff:

- JP Jones community Outreach: lessons on conservation habits, approximately 16 kids, 4 adults participated.
- Woodriver Schoolyard Habitat: Outreach, parent and staff committee formation and design plans.
- Two Rivers Schoolyard Habitat: Outreach, parent and staff committee formation and design plans.
- Minto Schoolyard Habitat: Developed plan, mapped trail restoration area, and met with school and tribal members.

- Tri-Valley Schoolyard Habitat: Restored ¼ acre of upland area, removed 200 black spruce trees for habitat restoration and fire mitigation.
- Nenana Schoolyard Habitat: Recruited 40 community volunteers, constructed ¼ mile trail and restored 2 acres of uplands, constructed outdoor learning and wildlife observation area with picnic tables/benches, restored and cleaned up Youth Education and Recreation Center playground area.
- Nenana Youth for Habitat Restoration Corps: Restored 100ft of the Chena stream bank, restored ¼ mile of trail in Nenana, restored 1 acre of upland in Cantwell, removed 30 forty gallon bags of invasive species in Cantwell, removed 3 full dump truck loads of large debris in Cantwell
- Nenana Upland Youth Restoration: Restored 2 acres of uplands, removed 3 pickup loads and 3 trailer loads of debris, and planted 100 native species of trees

While Fairbanks and Nenana Youth Corps activities were mentioned throughout the FSWCD goals, many hours were spent on outdoor education and instruction (including stream bank restoration, project WET, invasive species, trail construction, plant and wildlife identification, conservation techniques and environmental sciences.

Tri-Valley Restoration Work



A Woodriver Class learning about the Schoolyard Habitat

Nenana Schoolyard Habitat Restoration Work

Nenana Youth for Habitat Restoration Corps

Goal 7: Assistance to NRCS through contracts

FSWCD assisted NRCS through one contract and one contribution agreement this year:

NRCS 09 Contract:

Del.1- Completed the forage renovation alternative demonstration and evaluation including a final report and brochure
Del.2- Completed 3 forestry plans. Attended Canadian Institute of Forestry Conference
Del.3- Outreach and education including many lessons, speech and poster contest, several workshops, technical assistance to landowners and outreach at the Homeshow
Del.4- Completing 5 Nutrient Management Plans and teaching a soils workshop
Del.5- Soil analyses and recommendations
Del.6- Work on 6 pest management plans and 10 weed identification visits
Del.7- Completed conservation plans for 2 cooperators. Streambank restoration workshop and natural resource showcase
Del.8- Completion of 11 natural resource inventories

NRCS-FSWCD Contribution Agreement:

- 8 soil analysis and recommendations
- Soil sampling in 4 high tunnels
- Hosting the Natural Resources Showcase
- High Tunnel Workshop
- Various technical work as assigned
- Assistance with 5 High Tunnel applications and conservation plans
- Beginning conservation planning for two comprehensive conservation plans

Budget

Due to ongoing financial review, we are unable to provide actual budget numbers at this time.

FAIRBANKS SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Signatures

Jessica Guritz	Jessica Guritz	10/26/12
Report Prepared by (Print)	Signature	Date

RANDOLF SCHARFENBERG	Randolf Scharfenberg	10/26/12
District Chair (Print)	Signature	Date

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Memorandum to: Department of Natural Resources

From: Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

Subject: Annual Report

Date: September 30, 2012

This document represents the annual report of the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) for fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012). This report fulfills a component of the cooperative agreement between the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District, as specified in cooperative agreements with the Department of Natural Resources and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts.

Table of Contents

PROGRAMS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND TASKS

LAND USE PLANNING

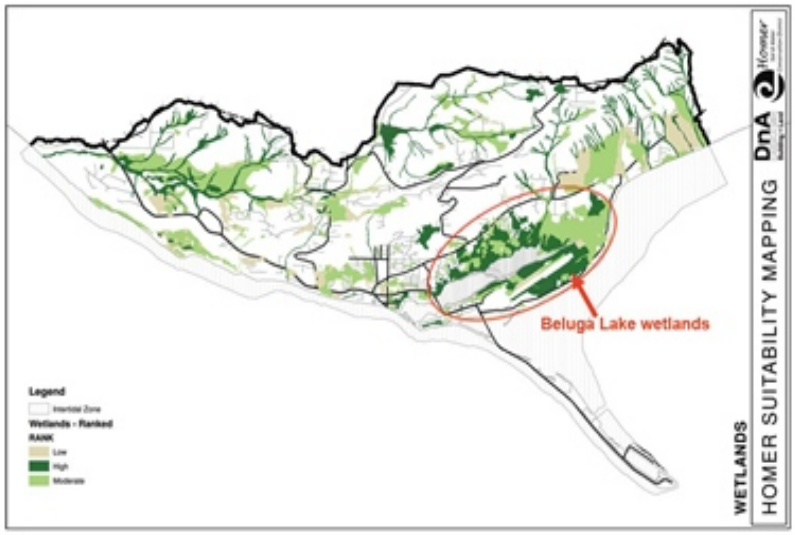
Working collaboratively with peninsula entities, including state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local groups and organizations, the Homer District supports in many ways programs and activities designed to address resource concerns and priorities identified at the local level. This year the District partnered with a variety of organizations on projects focused on regional planning activities balancing science-based conservation efforts with sustainable resource development.

GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE INCORPORATION OF LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS INTO THE PLANNING PROCESS AT MULTIPLE SCALES.

Objective 1: Provide an environmentally oriented review of lands with high conservation values that are at risk.

Task 1: Develop a planning reference for the Beluga planning area, including the Beluga Lake wetlands complex.

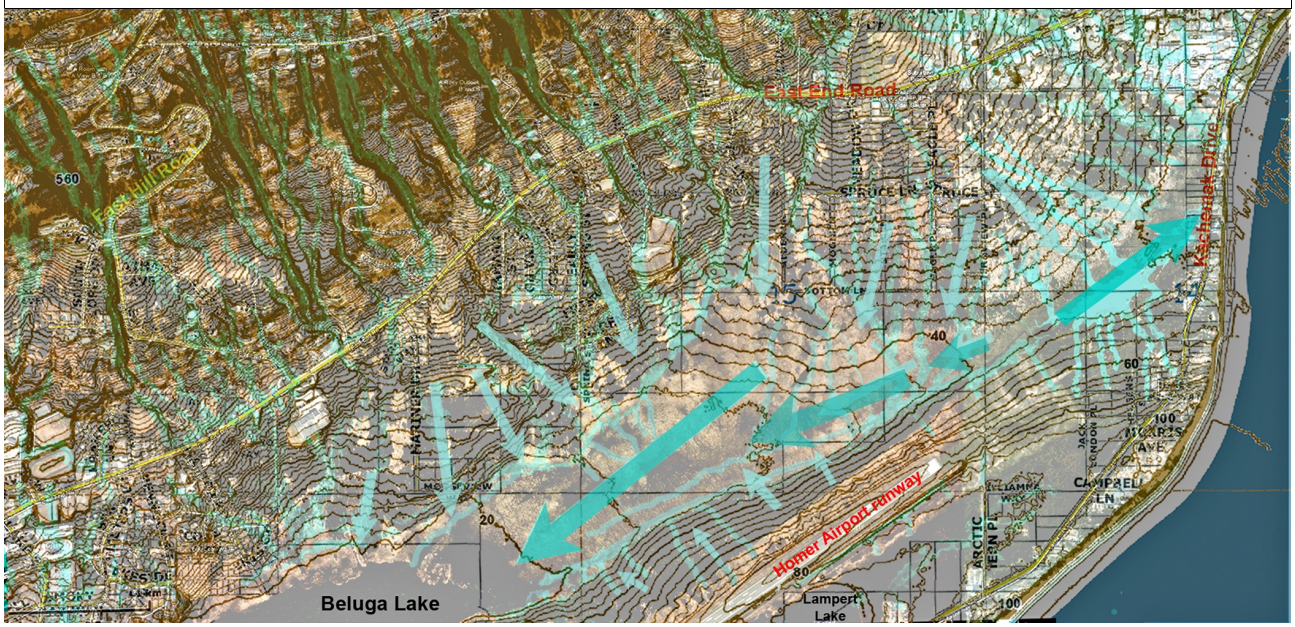
A community group of interested landowners and citizens identified the need for a coordinated, comprehensive, and collaborative planning process addressing the Beluga planning area, including Beluga Lake wetlands. Land ownership in this area includes private, borough, and state land, all within Homer city limits.



Beluga wetlands provide the City of Homer and the larger community with important floodwater storage, erosion control, filtration of surface runoff, habitats for wildlife, connectivity for recreation and wildlife corridors, and other significant kinds of "green infrastructure." The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has identified the Beluga Lake wetlands complex as critical wintering habitat for area moose populations. At the same time, soils and drainage in the area present significant development challenges.

Compiling relevant and useful information about this area into one "atlas-type" document, including soil suitabilities and limitations, management recommendations, and information about Low Impact Development and Best Management Practices, will assist landowners and other resource managers to make informed decisions as this area continues to develop.

The map below provides an example of information being compiled in the Beluga planning area reference. It shows contour lines and the direction that surface runoff flows as it enters and moves through the area. A drainage divide can be seen near the right side of the image, where surface flows travel eastwards rather than westwards into the Beluga wetlands.



Task 2: Work with the City of Homer, DNR, and USFS to develop a management plan for the 270-acre Diamond Creek Recreation Area (DCRA), acquired through the Forest Legacy Program.

District staff Todd Schroeder (middle), and Homer Parks and Recreation Commissioners Dave Brann (left), and Robert Archibald (right) at the boundary between the Diamond Creek Recreation Area (DCRA) and the Homer Demonstration Forest. After completing a resource inventory of the DCRA, the Homer District is developing a DCRA management plan for the City of Homer.

In July of 2007, the City of Homer accepted ownership from Kachemak Heritage Land Trust of a 273-acre parcel of forests and wetlands located just west of the Homer Demonstration Forest (HDF) and east of Diamond Creek State Park. The city placed a conservation easement on the parcel restricting its use to recreation, and the parcel was designated the Diamond Creek Recreation Area (DCRA). Due to the parcel's proximity to the HDF (established by the District in cooperation with the state), the District was asked by the city to help develop a management plan protecting important DCRA ecological, forest, scenic, cultural, fish and wildlife, educational, and recreational values, including wetlands and riparian areas. The District, working with the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, completed site descriptions, a resource inventory, and a draft management plan defining goals and objectives. Once this plan is completed, the District will host stakeholder and public meetings to solicit additional community input. The completed plan will be presented to the city for adoption.

Objective 2: Recreational planning – Assist both private and public landowners to plan and develop sustainable multi-use recreational opportunities.

Task 1: Work with ADFG to identify and design a viable trail re-route to address trespass issues along the Watermelon Trail within the Anchor River-Fritz Creek Critical Habitat Area.

In an on-going process, the Homer District continues to coordinate planning efforts to address identified trail degradation along ATV trail routes through riparian lowlands and stream crossings throughout the District. The District works with local trail groups to provide technical assistance and support in obtaining funding to install sustainable trails. District staff have developed plans for some trail re-routes—for example on sections of the Watermelon Trail in the Anchor River – Fritz Creek Critical Habitat Area that now cross private and Native lands. Funding has been identified through District partnerships to implement re-routing next fiscal year.

Task 2: Work in partnership with the Pratt Museum to design and install community trails that meet standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For the Pratt Museum, the District helped to design new trails to upgrade and expand an existing trail network behind the museum. New trails will connect to nearby schools, residential neighborhoods, and central Homer. Sections of the newly constructed trails will meet standards consistent with the Americans with Disability Act, providing some of the only wheelchair accessible trails in Homer. The groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled to coincide with National Trails Days, with the bulk of work to be completed during the summer of 2012

Volunteers celebrate National Trails Day by beginning a trail project at the Pratt Museum.

Objective 3: Promote Low Impact Development techniques on private and public lands to enhance benefits of natural systems that can provide green infrastructure.

Task 1: Work with the City of Homer to complete a demonstration rain garden at City Hall to promote onsite stormwater management within the City of Homer.

The Homer District, with funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service and assistance from the City of Homer, installed a rain garden at City Hall. Rain gardens are landscaped areas, planted with native vegetation, that help store and filter rainwater and snowmelt. The project demonstrates how rain gardens can be incorporated into stormwater management to mitigate increased surface runoff caused by buildings, roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and other impervious surfaces, which reduce the amount of water soaking into the ground. Because impervious surfaces increase rainfall and snowmelt runoff, they also increase runoff-related erosion and transport of pollutants—including hydrocarbons washed off roads and sediments washed from cleared and disturbed areas. Increased runoff can also cause flooding in local streams and stormwater systems. Rain gardens increase the amount of water soaking into the ground, thus reducing erosion, pollution, and local flooding, while increasing groundwater recharge and instream flows.

Residential rain garden installed in Homer during the summer of 2011. The Homer District has a goal of installing 10 more residential rain gardens this coming year.

Newly planted rain garden at Homer City Hall. Homer District installed this ran garden to demonstrate a Low Impact Development technique to treat stormwater onsite.

Task 2: Establish a cost-share program for the southern Kenai Peninsula to assist with installation of rain gardens on private property.

Through a cooperative agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Homer District has initiated a cost-share program to encourage residential rain gardens in the Homer area. Rain gardens capture, store, and infiltrate stormwater runoff, reducing runoff flowing downslope, while also filtering out pollutants that stormwater runoff can carry. Many small rain gardens can add up to big savings to the city and its taxpayers by leading to long-term reductions in costs associated with developing and maintaining the city's stormwater system. Plus rain gardens offer improved aesthetics through creation of attractive landscaped areas that benefit property owners and the community. Because rain gardens use native plants and perennials that, once established, outcompete weeds, they require little maintenance and can be very cost effective in reducing stormwater runoff and improving water quality.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality projects continue to be a large part of the District's annual work plan—indeed water quality is a component of all our program objectives. This year the District has provided technical assistance on trail designs affecting streams and water quality and has completed projects to improve fish habitat.

GOAL 2: ENHANCE SALMON HABITAT.

On-the-ground projects to improve salmon habitat continued to be a focus of District activities this past year. Conservation projects targeting critical salmon habitat were completed with the assistance of several partners, among them the Kenai Watershed Forum, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Alaska Department of Fish & Game. The District worked with

these and other partners to replace poorly designed culverts at road/stream crossings (which negatively impact local stream ecology, hydraulics, and fish passage) and restore related sections of streambank. District staff participated in meetings, site visits, and work sessions to provide technical support and to identify and prioritize HSWCD culvert projects.

Objective 1: Develop and implement streambank restoration plans. Identify anadromous streams Districtwide that need to be stabilized or restored to protect aquatic life and habitat, water quality, and to reduce flood damage.

Task 1: Stabilize a section of streambank along Beaver Creek, off Hutler Road, northeast of Homer (in the Anchor River Watershed).

During the summer of 2010 the Homer District worked with several partners to install a bridge to replace an undersized culvert that was impeding fish passage. After installation of the clear-span bridge, banks that had sustained long-term damage needed stabilization and restoration. These banks had been undercut and eroded—leading to partial bank collapse—by stream dynamics created by the original culvert. During the summer of 2011, the District implemented a restoration plan to stabilize and revegetate damaged streambanks at this site. The plan incoorporated a variety of restoration techniques, including, for example, brush layering to create overhanging vegetation that would improve salmon habitat, as well as live willow staking to help revegetate and stabilize slopes.

2010, after the bridge was installed. The slope has been covered with geotextile and seeded for the winter.

June 2011, the slope was stabilized with a combination of techniques, including brush layering and use of C-125 BN biodegradable fabric with live staking.

Summer 2012, the same slope as at left, but willows in the brush layers are sending out new growth.

Objective 2: At road/stream crossings, identify, assess, and replace poorly designed or installed culverts that have negative impacts on local stream ecology and hydraulics.

Task 1: Prioritize local culverts to identify potential HSWCD culvert-replacement projects. District staff and Board members participated in local meetings and work sessions to help identify and prioritize projects to improve salmon habitats along peninsula road/stream crossings.

Task 2: Initiate a culvert replacement project on an unnamed tributary of Stariski Creek .

Stariski Creek drains approximately 52 sq miles, contributing significantly to salmon populations on the lower Kenai Peninsula. Stariski Creek supports runs of chinook and coho salmon, as well as steelhead trout. Due to increased logging operations in this watershed during the 1990s, many secondary and logging roads were built, damaging stream habitats, particularly at stream/road crossings. Poorly designed crossings have created numerous barriers to fish passage, including stream channel constrictions that increase local flow velocities, and "perched" culverts that create both height and velocity barriers to fish trying to move upstream. With funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and in partnership with Kenai Watershed Forum, the District completed a project to replace a culvert along Tall Tree Avenue near Happy Valley. After culvert replacement, the District restored affected streambanks. This project made available to juvenile and adult salmon, as well as to other aquatic organisms, approximately 2 miles of upstream habitat.

Above: The original culvert is perched 18 inches above the water surface. The increased streamflow velocity and turbulence that results has scoured out a pool..

Below: After culvert replacement, natural stream hydrology has been restored; height and velocity barriers to fish passage have been eliminated.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE AND SUPPORT SOUND MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF WETLANDS ON NON-FEDERAL LANDS ON THE KENAI PENINSULA.

Wetlands play many roles in maintaining watershed health and in providing green infrastructure to nearby communities (e.g., floodwater storage, water filtration, habitats for moose and salmon). The District continued working on a collaborative 2-year project to assess functions and values of peninsula wetlands.

Objective 1: Collaborate with state and federal agencies, local governments, Native groups, nonprofits, and educational organizations to develop a Kenai Peninsula Wetlands Program.

Task 1: Use recently acquired LiDAR data to develop updated maps of peninsula watershed boundaries and stream networks on non-federal lands on the peninsula; develop a GIS data layer of surface hydrology.

With funding from a US Environmental Protection Agency Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG), the District has continued to work on updating GIS layers for watershed boundaries and stream networks on non-federal lands on the Peninsula. These layers are being developed using recent LiDAR data. The Homer District, in collaboration with partners, is working to create improved surface hydrology datasets through this project.

This map shows wetlands on the lower peninsula scored for their value as winter moose habitat.

Task 2: Complete an assessment of Kenai Peninsula wetland functions and values.

With the same EPA grant mentioned above, the District is conducting a 2-year project to assess functions and values of wetlands on non-federal lands on the Kenai Peninsula. Functions and values are being assessed in terms of three general categories: biology, hydrology, and social/community/cultural. Maps like the one at right are being developed (this map shows in blue, the wetlands that received high scores for winter moose habitat). The project report is now being developed. The write-up will outline methods and results, as well as summarizing some of the extensive information compiled during a previous project to map and classify peninsula wetlands on non-federal lands (see

Below is an excerpt from a table included in the report of the District's project to assess functions and values of peninsula wetlands. This table shows a variety of wetland "map units" that represent examples of the relict glacial "Drainageway" wetland ecosystem.

DW: Relict Glacial Drainageway wetlands are peatlands formed in relict, sometimes abandoned, drainageway features. These are linear features which once drained more extensive glaciers. Some may have formed along glacier margins. Some support modern streams but these streams are underfit. These peatlands are fens, with a stable high water table supported by ample groundwater throughflow that has had recent contact with mineral substrates. http://cookinletwetlands.info/Ecosystems/Drainageway.html ¶

A segregated DW1-3 wetland southeast of Kenai (polygon 901). www.kenaiwetlands.net/MapUnitDescriptions/DW1-3.htm ¶

A segregated DW21 wetland north of Kenai, near Salamatof Lake (polygon 1941). http://www.kenaiwetlands.net/MapUnitDescriptions/DW12.htm ¶

Polygon 8137, a DW23 wetland northeast of Kenai. www.kenaiwetlands.net/ Map UnitDescriptions/DW23.htm ¶

Segregated DW35A wetland in Soldotna Creek watershed (polygon 555). A central shrubby band is flanked by bands of wet spruce forest. www.kenaiwetlands.net/MapUnitDescriptions/DW35A.htm ¶

example below). The District is also working with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to develop a tool for looking up wetland functions and values using the borough's online interactive parcel viewer.

GOAL 4: ASSIST THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE WITH THE COLLECTION OF DATA RELATED TO WATER SUPPLIES.

Objective 1: Complete scheduled snows surveys and provide data to the NRCS.

Task 1: Assist with snow surveys

The Homer District continued its longstanding cooperative agreement with the NRCS to assist in collecting data on snow depth and snow water equivalent (SWE). Two District employees completed a week-long snow survey course in February 2012. This past winter produced record snowfall in many parts of the state; data was recorded December through May at sites across the lower Kenai Peninsula. Measurements are used for streamflow forecasting and other purposes.

AGRICULTURE

GOAL 5: PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

Support of agricultural activities and the "ag community" remain at the forefront of District core priorities. As part of our cooperative agreement with the NRCS, the District provides technical assistance to land-owners in the conservation and management of agricultural resources.

NRCS Range Specialist and the District's Earth Team Volunteer perform a hayland assessment for a District cooperator.

The District supports agricultural activities in many other ways. Among these are the many hours that the District Board of Supervisors spends reviewing conservation plans and NRCS programs, as well as District efforts to sponsor work sessions, organize and offer educational programs, host public meetings, and provide other outreach to cooperators, conservation partners and the public

Objective 1: Work with NRCS to develop conservation plans for private property owners interested in installing conservation practices.

Task 1: Provide soil and forage testing services for use in developing nutrient management systems for agricultural producers.

As an ongoing service, the District provides soil testing for our cooperators. The District accepts soil samples from the public, sends them to the soils lab, forwards lab results to the Cooperative Extension Service, and sends CES recommendations back to those who brought in the samples, as well as archiving results for them. With assistance from the University of Alaska, Cooperative Extension Service, the District also provides nutrient management plans to cooperators based on cooperator objectives. Homer District works with the NRCS to develop pest/nutrient management plans as required by EQIP contracts.

The NRCS Homer Field Office has now funded 198 high tunnels within the District. District staff assist in processing soil samples and developing pest and nutrient management plans for program participants.

In the fall of 2011, the Homer District sponsored a round-table discussion with Senator Lisa Murkowski and several individuals involved in a variety of agricultural activities on the lower peninsula.

Task 2: Compile and disseminate control recommendations for eradicating invasive and noxious weeds on agricultural lands. Continue demonstration sites of weed control efforts.

The Homer District Invasive Plant Coordinator (IPC) continued to work with hay producers through the summer of 2011 to manage fall dandelion (*Leontodon autumnalis),* an increasingly common species on the southern peninsula. The IPC developed several integrated pest management plans for effective eradication/control of this species and provided assistance to cooperators with plan implementation and follow up.

Task 3: Work with the Alaska Division of Agriculture to promote production of certified weed-free hay; qualify at least one staff member to certify weed-free crops.

The District IPC completed certification training and certified two hayfields in the Homer District in the fall of 2011. Outreach material familiarizing both producers and consumers with the value of weed-free products was developed and made available in our office. The Homer District will continue to work with Cooperative Extension Service to ensure that weed-free certification is available throughout our region.

INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive plants are a significant threat to natural ecosystems on the Kenai Peninsula. Controlling invasive plants remains a priority for the District, and our staff continued to work with landowners to improve existing management plans for invasive species. The Homer District received funding through the US Fish and Wildlife Service to employ a summer crew to work with our partners on high priority projects. We benefited from funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed through the US Forest Service that aided in funding an Invasive Plant Coordinator position in our office. This funding allowed our staff to perform additional surveys of invasive species on non-federal lands in the District, increase our public outreach efforts, and provide one-on-one time with individuals seeking technical advice to on how to eradicate or manage their invasive plants.

GOAL 6: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP HOMER DISTRICT'S INVASIVE PLANT PROGRAMS.

Objective 1: Collaboratively work with partners in the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area (KP-CWMA).

The Homer District has continued to participate as a member of the technical advisory committee of the KP-CWMA and has provided both administrative and technical support for addressing CWMA priorities. The District believes that successful control of invasive plants can only be achieved by working with many private and public partners, and that the CWMA provides the best tool to achieve this goal.

Task 1: Provide staff time to coordinate Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area, hold annual workshops and maintain district website with up-to-date management techniques.

Speaker for the Alaska Railroad Corporation makes a presentation on invasive plant management along railroad lines.

This year the KP-CWMA hosted the 9th Annual Weed Workshop, which was held in Seward. Primary organizers this year included Alaska Association of Conservation Districts and Cooperative Extension Service. This workshop provided a day of expert speakers presenting on a range of topics, from efforts to survey invasive species across the peninsula to how to read herbicide labels correctly. The Homer District also represented the CWMA at local farmers markets and the Kenai Peninsula fair to provide educational material. The District continues to host the CWMA website.

Task 2: Promote District cost-share programs that encourage private landowners to implement integrated pest management for the protection of natural ecosystems and associated resources, including plants and wildlife.

The Homer District continued to promote a peninsula-wide IPM cost-share program. We had several cooperators take part in this program, targeting white sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and bird vetch (*Vicia cracca*), species of high priority due to their limited occurrence—and hence high probability of eradiction—in the District.

Task 3: Employ a mobile field crew to implement on-the-ground weed control, monitoring, and mapping of new infestations. This crew will work with Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area partners who request assistance in managing non-native plant infestations.

The Homer District employed a youth crew of three college students whose mission was early detection and rapid response (EDRR) of invasive weeds. The EDRR crew controlled over 104 invasive sites in Homer, Seward, Kenai, Soldotna, Anchor Point, Ninilchik, Nikiski, Portage, Cooper Landing, and many points in between. In addition, 114 surveys were made of invasive infestations, and the data from these surveys was entered into AKEPIC. AKEPIC is an online database that compiles geographic locations of invasive plant infestations.

Members of the District weed crew remove creeping buttercup at a site near downtown Homer. Approximately 25 bags were collected from this location.

EDUCATION

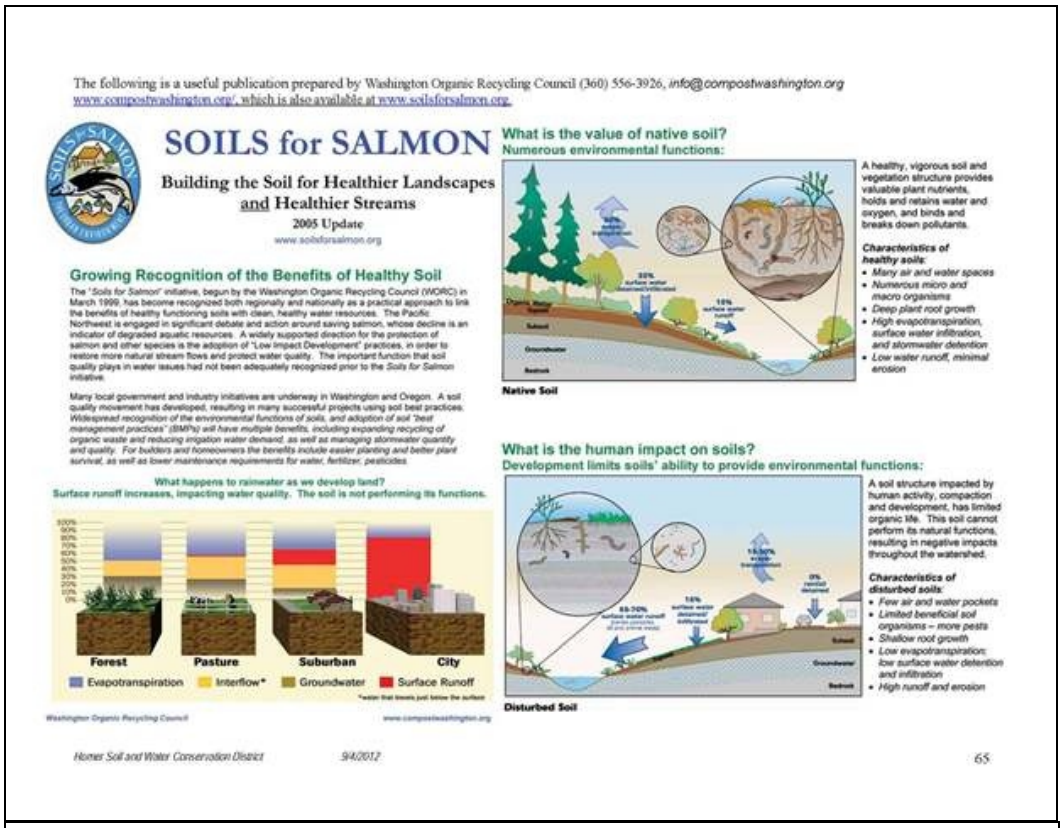
GOAL 7: PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MATERIALS TO ASSIST THE PUBLIC IN MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS REGARDING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

For those who live, work, or recreate on the Kenai Peninsula, natural resources are important and often essential to local livelihoods—such as commercial fisheries—or in providing wild areas for recreation, education, or subsistence. The future health of peninsula resources depends to a large degree on the choices made by individuals and local governments as they develop and manage lands and waters on the peninsula. The Homer District strives to make available the information needed to help inform these choices, as well as to support educational opportunities for peninsula youth to learn about careers in natural resource management.

Objective 1: Promote increased awareness among landowners of how peninsula land uses can affect salmon and their habitats.

Task 1: Develop a Landowner's Guide for Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and Stariski Creek watersheds to raise awareness and educate landowners on ways to protect salmon and their habitats during land use activities.

With funding from a Sustainable Salmon Fund Outreach and Education Grant, the Homer District completed an online and printable landowner's guide focused on Anchor River, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, and Stariski Creek watersheds. The guide includes four introductory articles providing useful information about salmon species and their life cycles and how to manage lands and waters in salmon-friendly ways. The heart of the guide is an alphabetical "watershedpedia" covering over 200 topics useful to peninsula landowners seeking to understand their lands and waters and manage them in salmon-friendly ways. Many watershedipedia entries are linked to additional information on the Web.



A page from the Landowners Guide, highlighting the benefits of healthy soils to salmon habitat.

Objective 2: Provide support for natural resource education on the Kenai Peninsula.

Task 1: Provide the Homer High School with support for a Natural Resources Technologies Class. Sponsor local HSWCD Speech and Poster Contests in the public schools.

The Homer District continues to look for ways to work with local schools. Some of the highlights for this year include sponsoring the Homer High School team that participated in the annual Alaska Envirothon, providing staff to organize and lead field trips in the Homer Demonstration Forest, and working with four peninsula schools to create People's Gardens on their school grounds to provide opportunities to learn about nutrition and how to grow healthy foods.

Objective 3: Enhance community awareness of and access to healthy, sustainable foods; increase local knowledge, skills, and capacity for increasing access to fresh vegetables and fruits.

Task 1: With MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships), the NRCS, Sustainable Homer, and other partners, implement on the southern peninsula the USDA People's Garden Initiative. This initiative promotes the establishment of community gardens to increase local food production and provide opportunities for science-based education.

The Homer District was awarded a People's Garden grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The grant allowed the District—with collaboration from an oversight committee of community partners—to award almost two dozen micro-grants to schools, nonprofits, Native organizations, churches, and other groups and organizations on the southern peninsula to help them establish People's Gardens. People's Gardens are characterized by providing community benefits, being collaborative, and incorporating sustainable practices. The gardens also serve as a resource for science-based education.

Representatives of groups and organizations awarded People's Garden micro-grants gather to learn more about the program and about assistance available from the District, the Cooperative Extension Service, and each other.

Students at West Homer Elementary School install raised beds to grow vegetables. The goal is to have harvestable produce by the fall, to be used in school lessons ranging from biology to nutrition.

ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT

Soil and Water Conservation Districts, like the Homer SWCD, are organized under Alaska Statute 41.10. Each district is governed by a board of supervisors who are elected by qualified landowners as defined in AS 41.10.140. Homer SWCD is a member of both the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The AACD assists the Homer District by providing administrative and personnel services.

GOAL 8: MAINTAIN A DISTRICT OFFICE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, PROVIDE OVERSIGHT AND GUIDANCE TO ALL DISTRICT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, DEVELOP CONSERVATION-BASED PROJECTS, AND SEEK NECESSARY FUNDING.

Task 1: Provide office personnel to run the day-to-day operations of the HSWCD. Schedule and

organize monthly meetings of the District Board of Supervisors. Encourage the participation of local landowners and resource managers in District activities and programs.

The Homer District maintained a fully staffed office, with five fulltime, three seasonal employees, and two college interns. The District Board of Supervisors held monthly meetings, open to the public, many of which were attended by landowners and land managers interested in learning more about or providing feedback on our programs, or in asking for assistance. The District website (http://www.homerswcd.org/) and newsletters continue to reach a wide audience, promoting and explaining our activities and programs.

Task 2: Maintain financial records, document expenditures and receivables, maintain program budgets, and make available financial reports to the HSWCD Board of Supervisors and the AACD.

The Homer District, working closely with the Alaska Association of Conservations Districts, administered all District programs and projects. This included managing project budgets from multiple sources (including state and federal grants) and documenting expenditures. Financial reports were submitted on a monthly basis for Board review, and have been provided to the State Natural Resources and Conservation and Development Board.

Task 3: Research, apply for, and administer grants for conservation-related projects. Allocate and coordinate available educational, financial, and technical resources to better meet the needs of land users and managers interested in protecting and conserving soil, water, and related resources.

The Homer District—like other soil and water conservation districts—is uniquely constituted to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs of local cooperators and other conservation partners. During the past year, we worked collaboratively with a wide range of entities—from local municipalities and federal and state agencies, to non-profit organizations, schools, and individuals—to take advantage of funding opportunities and other resources that became available. With our ability to respond quickly, flexibly, and in ways that engage multiple partners in a coordinated way, the District can effectively address a wide array of resource concerns—from erosion or stormwater runoff or perched culverts to invasive plants, water quality issues, or needs for outreach and education. Through its many partnerships, the District can consolidate and coordinate efforts and thus design and implement projects efficiently. The District has had notable success in securing funding for many of our efforts, in part because funding entities recognize the power and credibility of our partnerships.

Last fall, residents along Tall Tree Avenue, north of Anchor Point were caught in a dilemma-–the bridge providing access to their homes was condemned but no governmental agency would claim ownership, thus responsibility, to see that it was repaired. Complicating the situation was that debris and increased sedimentation due to issues surrounding this bridge were threatening salmon habitat.

The Homer District was able to work collaboratively with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Road Service Area Board and Kenai Watershed Forum to develop and implement an erosion plan and then to secure funding for bridge repairs.

Task 4: Provide administrative assistance to the UDSA Natural Resources Conservation Service with Farm Bill programs.

The Homer District through a cooperative agreement with the NRCS has employed a full-time administrative assistant to help with increased Farm Bill program participation in the Homer field office. The District has also provided services to help participants in NRCS programs, as well as others in the area, obtain soil sample results and recommendations.

SOURCES OF INCOME

US Environmental Protection Agency	$105,324.40
US Fish & Wildlife Service	$50,004.68
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service	$77,049.89
USDA – National Institute of Food and Agriculture	$39,752.53
State of Alaska – Dept. of Commerce (DCRA) SSF	$26,665.37
Kenai Watershed Forum	$8,811.34
Pratt Museum	$6,628.92
AACD – IPP Funds	$8,694.04
Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance	$2,100.00
Homer Soil and Water Reserve Account	$5,311. 00
Natural Resources Conservation and Development Board	$2,500.00
State Funding allocated FY11	$10,160.90
State Funding allocated FY12	$9,144.14
TOTAL	**$351.656.59**

EXPENSES:

Personnel	$236,362.12
Fringe	$29,870.48
Supplies	$6484.63
Travel	$5,791.48
Contractual	$70,523.53
Other	$2,561.00
TOTAL	**$351,656.59**

Signatures

Tara Schmidt	Tara Schmidt	9/24/12
Report Prepared by	**Signature**	**Date**
Chris Rainwater		9/12/12
District Chair	**Signature**	**Date**
PETE ROBERTS		9/12/12
District Board Member	**Signature**	**Date**

Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District

2011 - 2012 Annual Report

September, 2012

110 Trading Bay, Suite 160
Kenai, Alaska 99611
(907) 283-8732 x108

GROWING FOOD SECURITY

Partnering to promote agriculture, conserve farmland and increase food security

Assisting High Tunnel Growers With at least 60 new high tunnels since 2010, high tunnels are the fastest growing agricultural sector in the District. This year we created a web page (see www.kenaisoilandwater.org) to answer the most frequently asked questions from new high tunnel growers, circulated high tunnel news to 112 e-subscribers, surveyed growers, published *Recommended Seed Varieties for High Tunnels*, and hosted five educational events, including a high tunnel tour and Harvest Potluck Symposium.

First year high tunnel growers Craig and Suzanne Phillips of Kenai.

Experimental workplace farmers market at Central Peninsula Hospital.

Cultivating the Local Food System
The District recruited four farms and a dozen consumers to test an on-line food hub concept using LocalDirt.com, and helped start an experimental "workplace farmers market" in Soldotna. We partnered with members of the People Promoting Wellness coalition and Kenai Resilience to expand and distribute the Central Peninsula Local Foods Directory. In addition, we co-sponsored the 2nd Annual Kenai Peninsula Ag Forum.

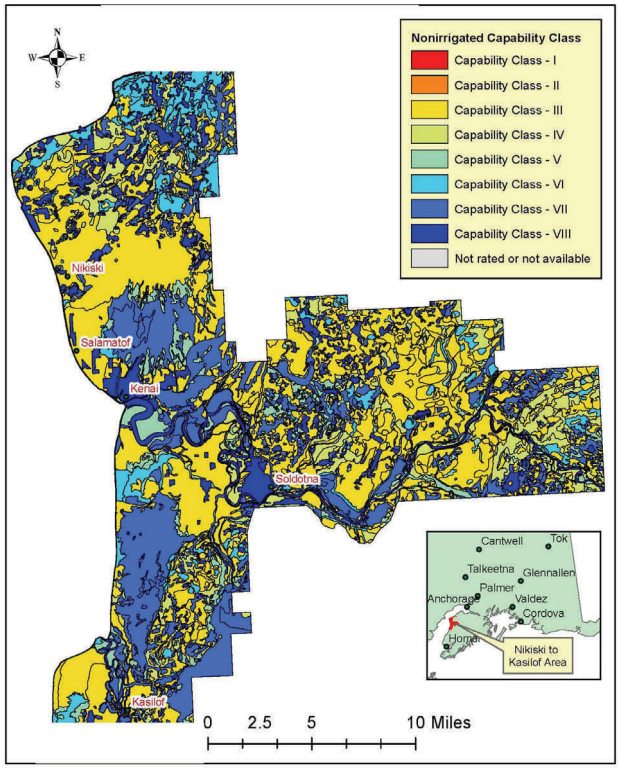
High tunnels...

- Raise soil temperature and extend the growing season in an environmentally-friendly manner
- Improve soil and water quality from reduced fertilizer and pesticide use
- Reduce energy consumed for food transport
- Protect crops from damaging weather and pests
- Improve yields and crop diversity

Putting Farmland on the Map

In 2012, the District formally adopted Soils of Local Importance criteria, which is the first step toward recognizing and protecting potential farmland.

Mitch Michaud and Pam Voeller of the Natural Resources Conservation Service take a soil sample during Soil Quality Test Kit training in June, 2012.



A map of the District by soil capability classes. Yellow indicates soils with the best agricultural potential.

Soil Quality is the foundation of sustainable agriculture. This year, District staff and supervisors along with NRCS colleagues took training in the use of Soil Quality Test Kit. We shared information about no-till and minimum-tillage practices at the District's spring field demonstration of small farm equipment and tracked local experiments with compost extract, fish fertilizer and cover cropping to improve soil quality.

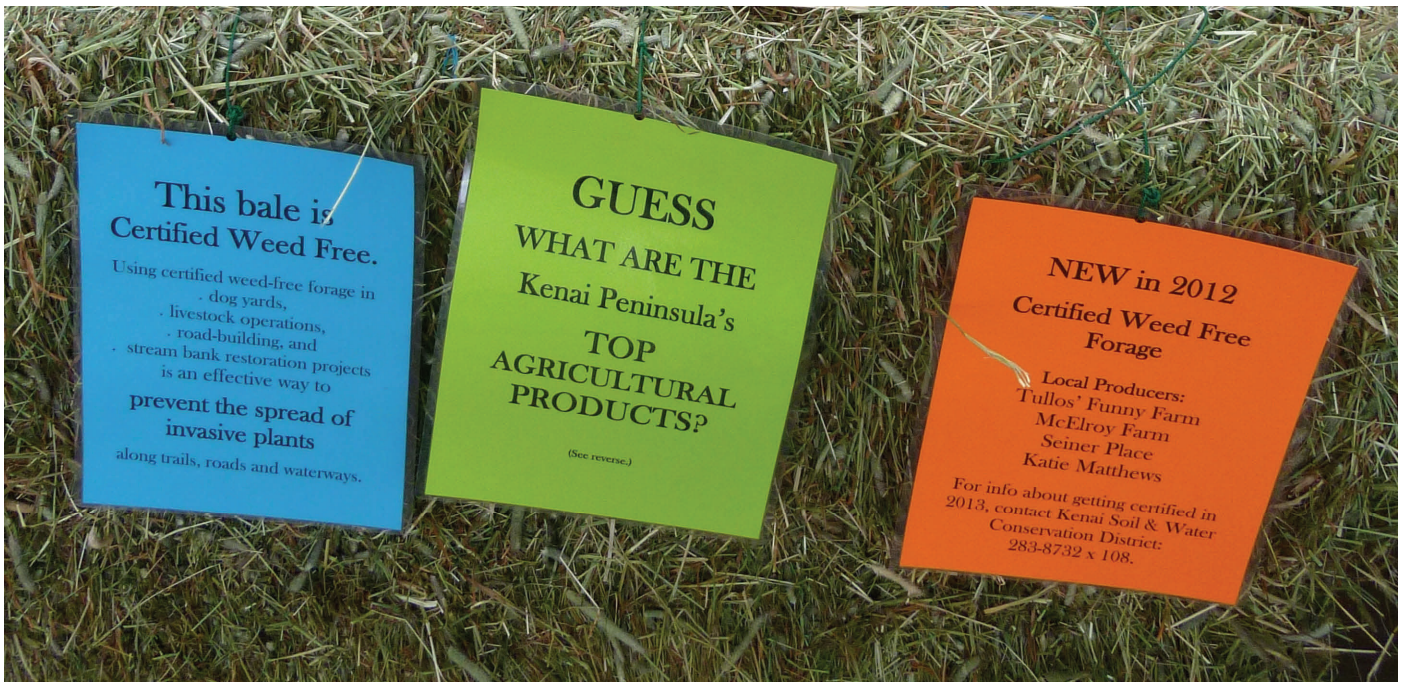
Laying the Groundwork The District partnered with Kenai Feed to improve access to its specialized rental equipment, which is highly valued by small-scale intensive farms whether they are growing hay, experimental berry varieties, vegetables for local consumers, or peonies for a rapidly-growing export market.

Chisel plow at work during a field demonstration, June, 2012.

Hay, hay, hay! Hay has long been one of the Borough's top agricultural products. In support of local hay growers, the District organized its second annual cooperative fertilizer order and featured an eye-catching "Buy Local" display at the 2012 fair in Ninilchik emphasizing that local hay is high quality, economical, and supports the local economy.

FIGHTING ALIENS

Working with willing landowners to prevent the spread of invasive plants



Certified Weed Free Forage is beginning to take hold on the Kenai Peninsula. With help from Janice Chumley of UAF Cooperative Extension, the District provided free WFF certification to four growers in 2012, up from one in 2011. The Alaska Plant Materials Center serves as the statewide headquarters for the weed free forage program. Using weed free products in livestock operations (as feed) and in road-building and streambank restoration projects (as mulch) is an effective way to prevent the spread of invasive plants along trails, roads and waterways. Mushers can help prevent the spread of invasives by using weed free straw for dog bedding at home and on the trail.

Collaborative efforts are key to containing and eradicating invasive plants. Thanks to funding from NRCS, the District has been an active partner of the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area, which in 2012 sponsored a second successful Weed Smackdown and an annual conference organized by our Integrated Pest Management specialist, Jen Kain. In addition to helping landowners develop and implement pest management plans, Jen completed a spray trial which eradicated orange hawkweed at the test site. Additional areas were tarped through a cost-share agreement with Homer Soil & Water Conservation District and the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

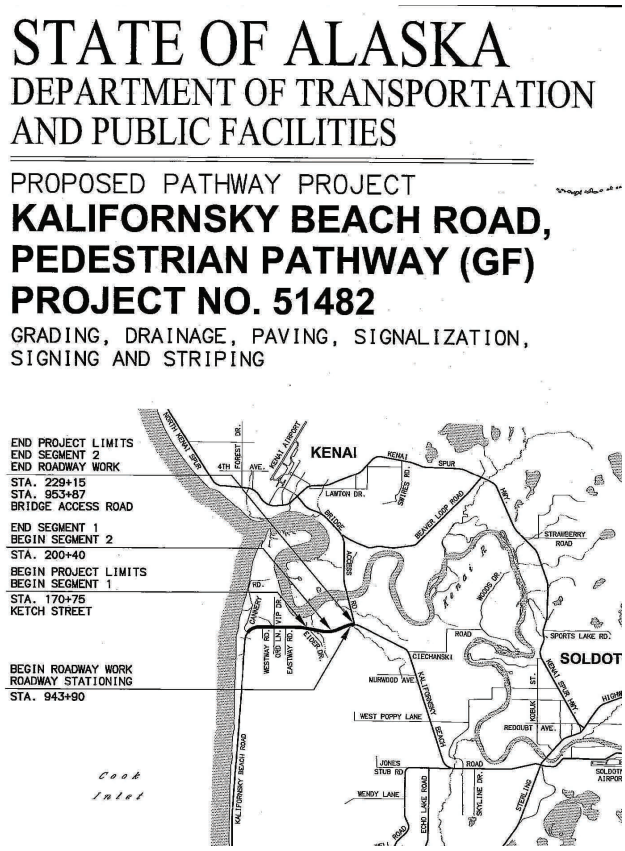
This year's Weed Smackdown targeted bird vetch (*Vicia cracca*), a tenacious weed that blankets and chokes out everything in its path.

What is an invasive plant? Invasive plants are non-native species that spread rapidly and have negative impacts on fish, wildlife, agriculture or human health.

An ounce of prevention…

Weed seeds can spread via mobile equipment, so the District developed a "Best Management Practices for Shared Farming Equipment" brochure, which is distributed with every equipment rental.

Road contractors and landscapers can inadvertently spread invasive plants if they are not careful to use weed-free seed and mulch. Student summer hire, Olivia Pfeiffer, monitored and removed invasives from about 14 miles of recently reseeded roadsides in Kenai, Soldotna and Kasilof under a $1300 grant from the AACD Invasive Plant Program funded by the USDA Forest Service. In the year ahead, the District will continue to help raise awareness about the importance of preventing weed problems before they start.



One of four road projects included in the Central Kenai Peninsula Road Projects Follow-Up study.


Jen Kain (back row, 3rd from right) and Seward summer program students and teachers after a successful weed pull targeting bird vetch.

Assisting individual landowners

The Kenai SWCD provides Pest Management Plans to cooperators and other willing land owners upon request. These plans give specific guidance for controlling invasive plants using the least toxic, most effective means possible. The District also helps its cooperators develop Conservation Plans, which are tailored to the land user's changing needs over time. Conservation Plans provide clear guidance based on best practices for goals such as land clearing, erosion control, wetlands and habitat preservation, agricultural development, and pasture management.

PLANTING THE SEED

Good stewardship of natural resources starts with inspiring young people

Alaska's Amazing Soil Tunnel was a great educational tool at the Kenai River Festival this year. Kids and their parents had fun identifying the vegetable roots overhead ("Is that a *tomato*, Dad??") while learning how soil is made and why people need healthy soil. The District partnered with NRCS to bring the soil tunnel to the peninsula.

Schoolyard Habitats Connecting kids with nature lays the foundation for long-term soil and water stewardship. Thanks to a $25,000 grant, the District was able to hire Dan Funk to spearhead the development of Schoolyard Habitats starting fall, 2012. Schoolyard Habitat is a nationwide program developed and funded by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that involves students and community at every phase of visioning, designing, constructing, use and maintenance of projects on school grounds that create habitat for birds, fish, and native plants and gets kids learning outdoors.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Higher Profile

From left to right, Kerry Nelson, Steve Albers, Michelle Martin, Bill Johnson, Heidi Chay and Judy Queen. New website on the screen.

The District dramatically increased its ability to connect with the public and share information by launching its first ever **website** in April, 2012. The site features beautiful photography by District Supervisor Bill Johnson, news updates, current project descriptions, an extensive high tunnel resources page, and an equipment reservations calendar. We've been on the **radio** to talk about high tunnels and building a local food system. We've visited **schools** to introduce the Schoolyard Habitat program. And we've been a more visible presence than in recent years at events like the **River Festival** and the **Kenai Peninsula State Fair**.

Expanded Membership

Eleven new cooperators joined the District in the past year, including high tunnel growers, peony growers, people just beginning to develop land for agricultural purposes, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The District expanded communication with cooperators to include a new e-newsletter.

Engaged Board

The District is fortunate to have five dedicated volunteers who serve on the elected Board of Supervisors, each of whom have contributed their unique talents and interests. Among other things, District Chair **Kerry Nelson** organizes the fertilizer co-op, handles equipment needs and attends every statewide meeting. Vice Chair **Steve Albers** marshalls other volunteers for projects at the Food Bank's Demonstration High Tunnel whenever needed. Steve and Kerry have both provided test sites for experiments with locally made fish fertilizer and compost extract. District Treasurer **Michelle Martin** lends her expertise in invasive plants and mentored our summer student worker. Her soon-to-be-toddler, Dexter, provides excellent entertainment at meetings. In addition to serving as the District photographer and Secretary, **Bill Johnson** personally contacted every co-operator to update our email and mailing lists. And **Judy Queen,** who took office in January of 2012, is a great ambassador for the District at public outreach events and is leading the way to explore ways the District can encourage the better use of fish waste in this fish-centered community.

Effective Leadership

District Manager, Heidi Chay, has been with us a full year and energized this District to new heights. She keeps the Board informed and prepared for action with her ability to capture relevant information from a wide variety of resources and then eloquently articulate it in a concise, manageable form. Her fresh ideas and approach to problem solving are both effective and appreciated. As a master of time management, she gets the job done on time and in great order, as evidenced by the activities outlined in this annual report. The Board looks forward to working with and through Heidi in times to come and gives her highest praise for the progress made this year. As many have put it, "She makes our job easy!"

Photo Credits Thanks to Bill Johnson, Jen Kain, Janice Chumley, Heidi Chay, and Alaska DOT
Cover Photo Barley field at Ionia, Inc., by Bill Johnson

The Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District

About Us

Area homesteaders founded the Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District soon after Alaska statehood in 1959. Originally known as the Kenai-Kasilof Soil Conservation District, the District is a locally-controlled, state-authorized entity with responsibilities delegated by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Commissioner under Alaska Statute 41.10. A five-member volunteer Board of Supervisors elected from among the District's cooperators oversees District staff and establishes goals and projects to meet cooperators' needs. The District is funded in part by the State of Alaska. Other sources of funding include private and federal grants, donations, and fees-for-service.

District Chair Kerry Nelson with her mother, Mary Jo McElroy, taking a break from harvesting certified weed-free hay in July, 2012. Mary Jo and her husband, Patrick, were founding coooperators of the Kenai-Kasilof Soil Conservation District. They operated a dairy in Kasilof in the 1970's and early 1980's.

In the wake of the 1930's Dust Bowl disaster, the initial focus of soil and water conservation districts in Alaska and nationwide was to promote environmentally-sound methods of farming to prevent soil erosion. Today, Alaska's 12 districts carry out projects not only to promote sustainable agriculture and conserve farmland, but also to protect wetlands and watersheds, promote forest health, fight the spread of invasive plants, and engage youth in learning about resource conservation.

2012 logo for the annual Conservation Poster Contest sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Looking Ahead — Goals for 2012-13

In the year ahead, our goals include getting to know District cooperators, new and old, and involving them in shaping long-range plans for the District.

To strengthen the local food system, we will work with multiple partners to help producers develop sustainable farming methods and new markets, build on initial steps to map and protect potential farmland, and make a DEC-approved test kitchen available for value-added processing. We look forward to opening a new lending library of sustainable agriculture publications.

To help contain the spread of invasive plants, we will focus on educating producers and consumers about the value of Weed Free Forage. A new on-line directory of hay growers will help farmers and customers connect.

And we'll expand our work with youth by facilitating development of the first Schoolyard Habitat projects on the Kenai Peninsula. We hope that this year's poster contest theme, "Soil to Spoon," will get kids of all ages thinking about the value of soil, on which all human life depends.

For the latest District news, visit us on the web at www.kenaisoilandwater.org.

Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District

July 1st, 2011 to June 30th, 2012

Annual Report

Budget Summary

Goal/Project	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Supplies	Contractual	Other	TOTAL
1. Agriculture	2000.00	208.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2208.00
2. Agricultural Equipment	2000.00	208.00	0.00	70.00	0.00	1425	3703.00
3. HT Project/Conservation Plans	16267.25	1669.42	1799.66	114.13	1127.00	85.00	21062.46
4. Integrated Pest Management	6985.75	921.59	2174.24	88.68	0.00	0.00	10170.26
5. Education and Outreach	2000.00	208.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2208.00
6. District Expansion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7. Administration (Other = dues, insurance, postage)	14395.25	1497.28	975.00	477.02	2168.30	2725.64	22238.49
TOTAL	43648.25	4712.29	4948.9	749.83	3295.3	4235.64	61590.21

Sources of Income

Equipment Rentals/Lease	3,798.00
Ag Forum Ticket Sales	345.00
State FY12 Grant	33,300.00
DNR Cooperative Agreement	2,500.00
NRCS FY09 Contract	47,408.00
Bank Interest	6.50
Total Income:	87,357.50

Reviewed and approved by
District Board of Supervisors,
Sept. 20, 2012

District Chair

Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District

Board of Supervisors

Chair – Kerry Nelson

Vice Chair – Steve Albers

Secretary – Bill Johnson

Treasurer – Michelle Martin

Member– Judy Queen

Staff

District Manager – Heidi Chay

IPM Tech – Jen Kain

Schoolyard Habitats – Dan Funk

Partners

Natural Resources Conservation Service
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Alaska Division of Agriculture
UAF Cooperative Extension Service
Kenai Peninsula 4-H
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula
Kenai Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development Inc.
Kenai Peninsula Food Bank
Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area
Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership
Kenai Feed
Kenai Resilience
Kenai Watershed Forum
Central Peninsula Garden Club
People Promoting Wellness, Local Foods Group
Homer Soil & Water Conservation District
Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance

Contact Us

110 Trading Bay Rd., Suite 160
Kenai, AK 99611
(907) 283-8732 x 108
Email: kenaiswcd@gmail.com
Website: www.kenaisoilandwater.org

Rental Equipment

Meri Crusher, for soil preparation

Truax No-Till Drill, for re-seeding

John Deere 660 Roto Tiller

McHale Square Bale Wrapper

John Deere 45-gal. Tow-behind Sprayer

Solo Backpack Sprayers (2)

Buckeye Vegetable & Flower Planting Tools:

- Chisel plow
- Spring tooth harrow
- Disc pre-bedder/hiller
- Raised bed shaper
- Plastic mulch/drip tape layer
- 2-row vegetable & flower planter
- Mulch row remover

Broadcast Spreader (hand-cranked)

Earthway Precision Seeder

Thomas Hart Broadfork

For more information, visit the Equipment Rental page at www.kenaisoilandwater.org.

Please join us! By becoming a cooperator of the Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District, you join a community of local landowners who have pledged to follow a conservation ethic when developing natural resources on their land. For information on membership, visit our website.

Memorandum to:	AACD/ DNR
From:	Kenny Lake Soil & Water Conservation District
Subject:	FY 12 Annual Report
Date:	September 25, 2012

This represents the FY 12 Annual Report for the Kenny Lake Soil & Water Conservation District as required by DNR, and as specified in cooperative agreements with DNR and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts.

Program

Goal 1: Provide general office support for Conservation District activities

Objective: Set up local office files and equipment. Provide office coordination, management and suppor/ assistance to the Board.

Assessment: Goal accomplished. District was served by an Interim District Manager for all but three months.

Goal 2: Implement outreach activities to raise awareness of the Conservation District's services and achievements to encourage new cooperators and to strengthen relationships with existing Cooperators

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Board continued contact and interaction with Cooperators, essential partners, and community; Cooperator list was updated in 2012; ideas and concerns regarding natural resources and the district were shared during public board meetings.

Goal 3: Plan for continued operations and projects

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Board arranged for Interim Managers recruited from the Wasilla District to maintain an office presence and conduct general operations; Board determined project priorities and plans for desired projects to accomplish District goals.

Goal 4: Pay dues and subscriptions

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Dues identified in the Annual Plan were paid to support NACD; newspaper subscription is free.

Goal 5: Attend Conservation District and Agency Conferences to disseminate information and to gather valuable input and expertise

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Chairman participated in the Fall AACD Conference.

Budget Summary – FY 12

Expenses

	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Supplies	Other	TOTAL
General Office/Water Quality	4,968.49	1,742.26	6.22	12.40	24.84	6,754.21
Board Meetings			460.71		40.00	500.71
Dues					50.00	50.00
Conferences			442.18			442.18
TOTAL	4,968.49	1,742.26	909.11	12.40	114.84	7,747.10

Income

State FY 12	33,300
DNR	2,000
TOTAL	**$35,300**

Kodiak Soil & Water Conservation District
518 West Marine Way, Suite 206, Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: (907) 486-5574 Fax (907) 486-5586

To: Shana Joy
Executive Director, NRCDB
Dept. of Natural Resources

From: Joe Dinnocenzo
Manager, KSWCD

Subject: Annual Report of Accomplishments **Date:** September 28, 2012

This document is the annual report of accomplishments of the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District (KSWCD) for fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012). This report is intended to fulfill the requirement of the cooperative agreement between the Department of Natural Resources and the KSWCD.

The KSWCD assists land managers and cooperators by coordinating and implementing programs for the conservation, use, and sustainable development of soil, water and related resources throughout the Kodiak Archipelago.

Overall operations were impacted by a break-in and vandalism of the KSWCD offices on February 27, 2012. Although the damages were covered under an insurance policy and the vandal promised to pay for damages, no funds to cover damages were received by KSWCD by the end of the reporting period. In July 2012, the insurance company paid our claim and in August 2012, under court supervision, the vandal paid restitution and the insurance funds were returned.

Highlights of this year included hiring of a District Manager (in January) to assist with administration of programs and write new grants for continued operations. KSWCD continued the partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conducting outreach and technical assistance for ranchers and growers. In that effort, a Project Coordinator underwent extensive training to eventually be able to develop conservation plans as needed for the agricultural industry. The continuation of past programs included an effort to control invasive plants, assess culverts for adequate fish passage and collect rain samples to measure mercury in the atmosphere. New programs in FY 12 included efforts to establish a framework plan to manage wetlands and a farm to schools program to educate children about agricultural production.

KSWCD funding and expenses are depicted in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Expenditures totaled $136,604.80 and included personnel, equipment, travel, supplies, contract payments and operations. KSWCD has a small reserve of savings which it draws upon, when necessary, to maintain operations during administrative delays in the transfer of funds and to fund unforeseen expenses. Table 3 depicts KSWCD staff hours expended by funding source.

Table 1. Funding sources for KSWCD operations during fiscal year 2012

Active Grant	Explanation	Original grant amount[1]
AK State #118261	Alaska Association of Conservation Districts Legislative Appropriation	**$21,250**
AK State #119208	Alaska Association of Conservation Districts Legislative Appropriation	**$33,300**
AK DNR #238	Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Agreement AS 41.10 Dues and District Operations	**$2,500**
AK DEC #237	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Mercury Monitoring Reimbursement for Services	**$8,900**
NRCS #9	USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service work contract	**$32,273**
AACD IPP #22261	Alaska Association of Conservation Districts Invasive Plants Program, Cooperative Weed Management Area	**$3,350**
ACCD IPP #22261-11	Alaska Association of Conservation Districts Invasive Plants Program, summer weeds crew	**$14,000**
USFWS Weeds #244	USDI Fish & Wildlife Service Partners Program, summer weeds crew	**$25,000**
USFWS Fish Passage #233	USDI Fish and Wildlife Coastal Programs, Fish Passages and Culvert Assessments	**$45,404**
Kodiak Borough 2011	Kodiak Island Borough non-profit grant	**$3,685**
Walmart	Private donation for agricultural outreach	**$2,000**
UAF CES	University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H office and storage space	**$3,600**
Alaskan Leader	Alaskan Leader Fisheries foundation Grant for State Envirothon sweatshirts	**$1,500**
AK Farm to Schools #112	Alaska State Capitol Projects funding	**$15,000**
EPA Wetlands #143	Environmental Protection Agency, Wetland Management Plan Development	**$24,688**
KSWCD Savings	Covered unreimbursed and non-project specific expenditures until other funds become available	**N/A**

[1]Original grant amount is not always what was available or used in this fiscal year. Many grants are used over multiple fiscal years.

Table 2. Total FY 12 Expenditures in dollars by source and category.

Funding Source	Personnel	Equipment	Travel	Supplies	Contract	Operations	All Expenses
Alaska State/AACD	27,113						**$27,113**
AK DNR	426					1,599	**$2,025**
AK DEC	4,040		51	66			**$4,157**
NRCS #9	15,154		2,062			35	**$17,251**
Farm to School	1,227	33		2,057	5,125		**$8,441**
Kodiak Borough		1,670		5		2,010	**$3,685**
USFWS/fish passage	7,553	691	117	205	6,000		**$14,565**
UAF/4H							**$0**
EPA/wetlands	10,522		921			510	**$11,953**
Reimbursement/break in				93			**$93**
USFWS/weeds	18,977		1,504	79			**$20,560**
USFS/IPP/weeds	13,361	6	405	8			**$13,780**
Walmart	183						**$183**
Alaska Leader Fisheries						1,500	**$1,500**
Total expenses	**$98,556**	**$2,399**	**$5,059**	**$2,513**	**$11,125**	**$5,654**	**$125,307**

Other sources of funds or services that support the Kodiak District

MASST	Alaska work training program provided part-time administrative assistant (not District employee)	**$11,298**
Grand Total Benefit to District		**$136,604.80**

Table 3. Kodiak Soil and Water District staff hours expended by funding source.

Funding source	Staff Hours
AK State #s 118261/119208	1,068.6
AK DNR #238	17.5
AK DEC #237	182.5
NRCS #9	648.5
AACD IPP #22261	18.0
AACD IPP #2226-11	656.5
USFWS Weeds #244	781.0
USFWS Fish Passage #233	386.5
Kodiak Borough	0.0
Walmart	7.5
UAF CES	0.0
Alaskan Leader	0.0
AK Farm to Schools #112	56.5
EPA Wetlands #143	425.0
Total District Staff Hours	**4,248.1**
MASST Administrative Assistant (not a district employee)	1,021.0
Total staff hours in support of KSWCD operations	**5,269.1**

Following is a summary of accomplishments during the reporting period by subject:

Invasive Plant Management

The Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District's Invasive Plants Program was supported by grants from the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts Invasive Plants Project (IPP) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (FWS). This partnership allowed for the expansion of KSWCD activities more effectively amongst the variety of land ownerships throughout the community.

KSWCD employed a summer field crew of two people. Grant funding also provided for a Project Coordinator's time to supervise and assist as needed and a computer technician to process and submit records. The crew surveyed areas for new infestations and checked current status of old infestations. They documented sites with photos and GPS locations and recorded data for submission to the Alaska Exotic Plants Information Clearinghouse (AKEPIC). KSWCD obtained permission from landowners and performed control when possible. Landowners were encouraged to take responsibility for their infestations but provided assistance when requested.

KSWCD received a report of a Bohemian knotweed infestation on land owned by the City of Kodiak. The KSWCD crew was able to use best management practices and implement Early Detection – Rapid Response (EDRR) to apply glyphosate herbicide to the infestation shortly after it was discovered. The use of IPP funds enabled a rapid response while using FWS funds would have required treatment delay while the Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) process was completed.

The PUP procedure is a new requirement for use of FWS funds on private property. KSWCD provided information to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) for approval of a PUP for chemical control of invasive plants at the Alitak and Akalura canneries. These are both remote locations with small isolated infestations at the south end of the Kodiak Island. The PUPs were approved by the USFWS Regional office and the control activities were carried out in September 2011 and June 2012.

Grant funds were utilized for manual removal of many small infestations, including a few isolated plants of annual sow thistle at the Kodiak Fairgrounds. This was only the second report of this species on Kodiak. EDRR was also implemented when one very small patch (four plants) of orange hawkweed was discovered and manually removed from along Chiniak Highway. These plants were more than a mile from any previously known infestation locations.

The District continues to be the designated "lead" for the Kodiak Archipelago Cooperative Weed Management Area. Weed control was coordinated through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). There are 17 MOU signatories with several other active partners that have not yet signed the document. Periodic meetings were held throughout the winter to coordinate efforts but were suspended during the busy field season.

The 2011 Kodiak summer crew members were both college students which resulted in their need to leave the island before the end of weed control season. Two field crew members were then "borrowed" from Homer SWCD while weather and growing conditions were favorable to complete several control projects during September.

Kodiak submitted a total of 199 records into the AKEPIC. These points include survey locations and control sites. Chemical control was implemented on 22 infestations while manual control was applied at 69 locations.

Species controlled included: orange hawkweed, oxeye daisy, Canada thistle, bull thistle, common tansy, bohemian knotweed, creeping buttercup, hempnettle and annual sowthistle.


Brian Maupin of Homer KSWCD applies Milestone herbicide to orange hawkweed and creeping buttercup at the Alitak cannery. Photos by Ben Blue, September 2011.


Lauren Cooney and Zack Watkins visit Karluk village. They collected data on a Canada thistle infestation (left) to prepare for chemical control in 2012. They also visited with local residents and discussed invasive versus native plant issues (right). Photos by Watkins and Cooney 7/12/2011.

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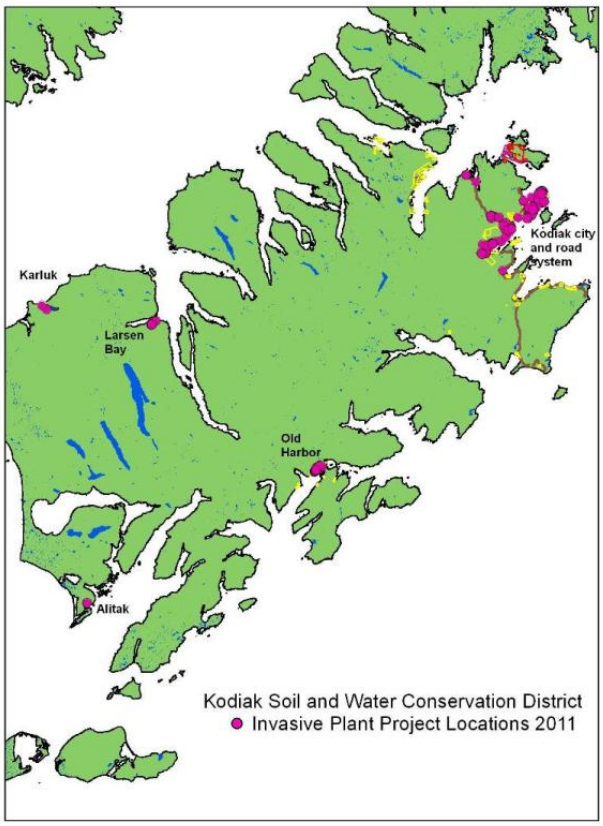


This map shows those sites where new data was collected during summer 2011. Invasive plant locations are concentrated along the Kodiak road system area but also occur in villages and at other human footprint sites around the archipelago. Three villages were visited during 2011 for surveys, outreach, education and control activities. Data collected in the spring of 2012 is still being compiled.

Wetlands Management Plan Development

Project Title: Monitoring and Assessment of Urban and Rural Community Wetlands on Kodiak Island.

KSWCD began work on this project on 09/15/2011. KSWCD designed a collaborative effort with the Kodiak Island Borough (KIB) and the rural villages in the Kodiak Archipelago to develop a wetlands monitoring and assessment program and to promote and support wetlands management by constructing a framework plan for the Kodiak Island area. The district has worked with the KIB to compile ortho-imagery, current Kodiak management plans, and other core elements to ultimately develop a final management plan and an informational vehicle to promote wetlands conservation on Kodiak.


(upper left) Island Lake Pond. (upper right) KIB Community Director Bud Cassidy reviewing orthographic maps of wetlands. Photos by Dave Kaplan.

Anton Larsen trail wetland marker. Photo by Dave Kaplan.

Mercury Monitoring

This project was funded through a reimbursable services agreement with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

As site operators, KSWCD was responsible for maintaining the State's Mercury Deposition Network (MDN) site at the Kodiak Fairgrounds. Once per week, the glassware is changed, rain gauge data is downloaded onto a PDA and the rain gauge bucket is emptied. The samples were shipped to a lab in Washington State and the rain gauge data was emailed to the University of Illinois. After the Japanese tsunami caused nuclear plant meltdown, KSWCD also collected a second sample bottle for radiation testing. The second sample was discontinued in October 2011 after negligible amounts of radiation were detected.


Mercury monitoring station at the Kodiak Fairgrounds, photo by Blythe Brown 2/7/2012

Outreach and Education

Outreach and Education activities were incorporated into several KSWCD projects. Funding constraints did not allow KSWCD to participate in the celebration of Alaska Ag Day this year.

KSWCD coordinated and administered the Kodiak Farm to School project. This project is a community-based effort to connect schools, the community and local farms with the goal of serving healthy meals in

school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities. Funding was provided by the State of Alaska for planning, coordination and acquisition of materials for the project.

During the past year, four Kodiak schools have installed and planted raised garden beds. Produce grown from these beds will be used for education and a supplement for the school cafeterias. KSWCD has hired a project coordinator, monitored the progress of these raised garden beds, and procured necessary materials.

(upper left) Project Coordinator Dave Kaplan inspecting East Elementary School garden. (upper right) KSWCD Manager, Joe Dinnocenzo and Project Coordinator Lucy Murdock inspecting Main Elementary School gardens. (lower left) Lucy Murdock at North Star Elementary School gardens. (lower right) High school students at Envirothon Forestry Station, April 2012. Photos by KSWCD staff.

KSWCD routinely conducted outreach at public events such as the Kodiak Garden Club's annual plant sale and garden tours and staffed an invasive species information display at the annual commercial fisheries trade show, ComFish, the U.S. Coast Guard's Welcome Aboard event and the Kodiak State Fair. KSWCD provided "weed" brochures and handouts at many sites around town such as air charter waiting rooms, garden centers and bulletin boards.

In addition to invasive species information, the KSWCD display at the Kodiak State Fair offered information about other programs and services such as UAF Cooperative Extension Service bulletins, Grown in Alaska items and Natural Resources Conservation Service program information. A small High

Tunnel was installed to attract people with displayed photos of local grown vegetables and examples of several Kodiak area high tunnels.

KSWCD published a quarterly newsletter which is distributed to more than 400 addresses by e-mail. Additional paper copies are mailed and provided to the public at several sites around town such as the public library and post offices.

On August 2 2011, KSWCD hosted a Kodiak Growers potluck in conjunction with the KSWCD monthly board meeting. The event showcased the variety of locally produced agricultural products including vegetables, fruits and beef. Keynote speakers included NRCS staff who shared details of the very popular and exciting high tunnel program.

The district received many local entries for the annual National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) poster contest. This year's topic "Forests for People" inspired a sister and brother to create posters that won first place in Kodiak and at the AACD State Conference then they went on to win prizes at the NACD competition! Deborah Bitanga placed 2nd in the grade 7-9 category and her brother Rafael Bitanga earned honorable mention in the grade 4-6 category.

KSWCD supported the annual Kodiak Envirothon competition by planning and hosting the Forestry station. This year, KSWCD partnered with Peter Olsen, of Private Lands Resource Consulting on the day of the competition. We also submitted a successful grant application to the Alaskan Leader Fisheries Foundation to provide sweatshirts to all of the Kodiak Envirothon participants.

(left) Kodiak State Fair Exhibition Hall with our display and brochures along the wall to the left (next to the Kodiak Arts Council) and hoop house with photos in the middle, photo by Blythe Brown 9/3/2011. (right) NACD poster contest winners Deborah and Rafael Bitanga with KSWCD Board members Charles Dorman, Bill Burton, Marie Rice and Chris Flickinger, Photo by Blythe Brown 5/9/2012

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance was provided to KSWCD cooperators and partners through a contract with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A District employee began training to become a certified conservation planner; this included on-the-job training and a week of classroom instruction in Fairbanks. The district provided assistance to new and existing customers at their sites, in the office, at Garden Club meetings and at the Kodiak Farmers Market. Assistance provided included: soil testing instructions, nutrient management, high tunnel applications, pest management, trails and other agricultural related

information. KSWCD inspected 16,385 feet of fence and 10,493 feet of trails to determine whether or not they followed NRCS standards and specifications.

(left) NRCS District Conservationist, Mark Kinney, enjoys the harvest in cooperator Todd Dorman's high tunnel, also in photo, NRCS Agronomist Craig Smith and Charles Dorman, photo by Dave Kaplan 8/3/2011. (right) Inspecting cooperators fence line, photo by Dave Kaplan 8/4/2011.

(left) District Project Coordinator, Dave Kaplan, explains our programs to potential partners, photo by Blythe Brown 9/4/2011 (right) Anton – Sharatin trail hardened with geoblock, photo by Dave Kaplan 10/17/2011.

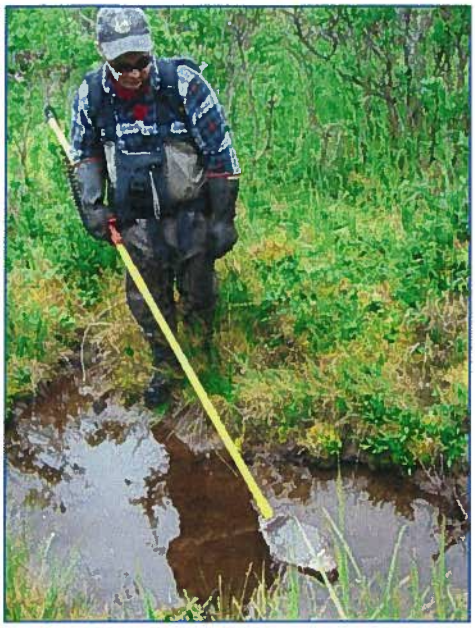
(left) NRCS Conservationist Mark Kinney and State Agronomist Craig Smith inspect Charlie Dorman's high tunnel, photo by Dave Kaplan. (right) NRCS engineers inspect bridge and geoblock on Summit Lake Trail, photo by Dave Kaplan.

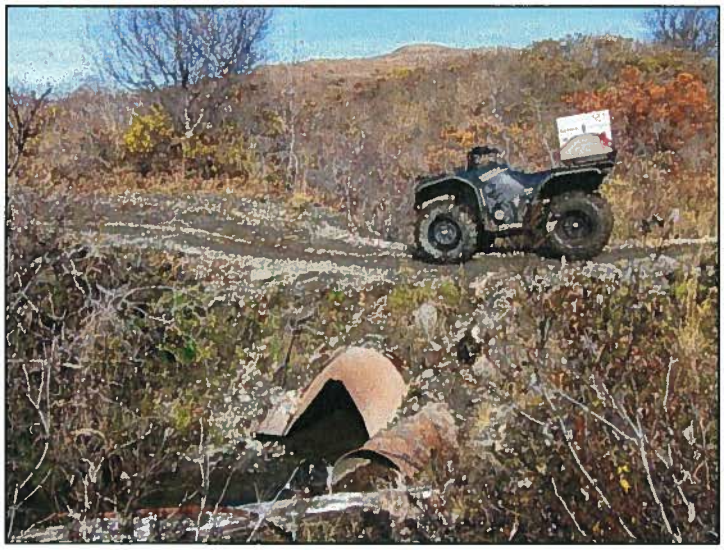
Fish Passage Assessment

The KSWCD Fish Passage Project was supported by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Coastal Programs (FWS).

KSWCD partnered with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) to assess culverts on Kodiak trails and roads for their ability to adequately pass juvenile salmon. A total of 46 culverts were assessed in this project with 25 of these assessed in phase II (during this fiscal year). Fifteen of the assessed culverts have been recommended by the ADFG Habitat Biologist for removal or replacement. Additional culverts were observed during this time period but were not measured due to initial assessment of no fish habitat present at those locations. A final report for this project was written in June 2012.

The U.S. Coast Guard is consulting with KSWCD and proceeding with plans for removal of three culverts at the head of Buskin Lake. Completion of that project will take place next fiscal year (July, 2012).





(left) ADFG Habitat Biologist, Will Frost, sampling for presence of juvenile salmon on a tributary of Salonie creek, photo by Blythe Brown 7/22/2011. (right) KSWCD ATV and culverts under the Saltery Cove road. Falls below this site created a barrier to fish passage so this culvert was categorized as no fish habitat present, photo by Blythe Brown 10/11/2011.

Signatures

Joe Dinnocenzo		9-18-12
District Manager	Signature	Date
Chris Flickinger		9/20/12
District Chair	Signature	Date
Charles Dorman		
District Vice-Chair	Signature	Date
Craig Stratman		10-10-12
District Supervisor	Signature	Date
Marie Rice		10/10/12
District Supervisor	Signature	Date
Bill Burton		
District Supervisor	Signature	Date

Memorandum to: Dept. of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Development Board

From: Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District
P.O. Box: 88, Aniak, AK. 99557

Date: 09/15/12

This represents the annual report of the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District for the fiscal year FY11, as required by the Dept. of Natural Resources, as specified in the cooperative agreement with the Dept. of Natural Resources and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts.

Highlights:

I. Provide Capacity Building for the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District
II. Provide Conservation Technical Assistance to MYK landowners
III. Develop Stream Bank Erosion Survey in the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District
IV. Continue High Tunnel Demonstration Project
V. Complete Water Quality / Aquatic Species Habitat Study

Programs & Projects

The Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District conducted its annual assessment of progress toward completion of the FY12 Plan of Work.

Goal I: *Provide Capacity Building for the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District.*

Assessment: Monthly meetings by the Board of Supervisors of MYK SWCD have been held, including elections and swearing in of new board members. Meeting minutes provided to NRCDB.

Goal II: *Provide Conservation Technical Assistance to MYK landowners*

Assessment: . MYK SWCD continues to work with gardeners in the application of accepted conservation practices in gardening such as crop rotation, nutrition management, pest management, etc. MYK SWCD has also provided plan maps to document areas of invasive weed infestations and worked with landowners in the process of invasive weed eradication

In our efforts to conduct Forest Stand Assessments for landowners to determine age of forest stand, species composition, seedling count, condition of tree stand, and timber stand evaluation, it has been determined that most of the harvestable forest products in the MYK region, such as white spruce in this area is over one hundred years old and is ripe for harvest. One local community is now the process of harvesting timber products and is expanding its operation to other areas in the MYK region. Forest Stand Assessments provide data for landowners who are not only interested in the condition of the forest stands, but suggested treatment and optimum products that can be harvested from the stands such as saw logs, pulp or firewood,

MYK SWCD is also in the process of a study to determine if there are any detrimental effects of untreated sewage on aquatic species such as salmon fry and other species in the area of the sewage being discharged. MYK SWCD is incorporating the assistance of appropriate state agencies in the completion of this study.
We are also actively supporting the State of Alaska Division of Wildlife Conservation's efforts to reintroduce of Wood Bison in the MYK Region.

Goal III*:. Develop Stream Bank Erosion Survey in the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District*
Assessment: MYK SWCD is in the final stages of completing a River Bank Erosion Survey in the community of Aniak. The Study is being presented to NRCS Engineers for analysis and guidance on final process of utilizing the study, to preserve the integrity of levee and protect the community. (see attached draft of Aniak Slough Riverbank Erosion Survey). Completed copies of River Bank Erosion Surveys will be provided to affected landowners and appropriate agencies and municipal governments. Lathe markers were placed to determine rate of erosion, and GPS coordinates were documented to record areas of concentrated flow erosion.
MYK SWCD also worked with landowners during the Kuskokwim River ice breakup by provide the GPS coordinates of sites of concentrated flow erosion sites for placement of sandbags, to prevent potential catastrophic levee failure.

Goal IV; *Continue High Tunnel Demonstration Project*
Assessment; MYK SWCD is continuing to operate a High Tunnel Demonstration Project in Aniak, to demonstrate the advantages of the season extending properties of a high tunnel. Crops such as corn, wheat, barley, cucumbers etc are being grown in this region that normally could not be grown locally. The project is cooperatively being implemented by MYK SWCD, Aniak Traditional Council, Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA) and NRCS. Produce from the project is distributed locally to elders and to the KNA Elder Meals Program. Currently there are now four high tunnels in operation in the MYK region with three more being contemplated. MYK is actively promoting the High Tunnel concept of gardening to MYK villagers and also expanding the program to other nearby villages not in our District. MYK is also working with local School Districts to demonstrate to students on advantages of high tunnel.

A 20X40 ft. high tunnel was erected at the ATC farm site in 2009 to demonstrate the advantages of using such a structure to grow more diverse vegetable crops such as corn and also as a season extender for crops in this region. Mini greenhouses were provided from the Interior Rivers Resource Development Council to seven local gardeners to assist in starting crops for the high tunnel project. The mini greenhouses are also being used by gardeners as mini high tunnels to take advantage of a high tunnels season extending properties.
Comparison data is being collected to compare crops grown inside and outside of high tunnel, as well as temperature and humidity data, rate of growth and yield of crops. Data will be available on MYK SWCD's website.

Financial Report: see attached

Signatures:

Report prepared by	Signature	Date
DISTRICT MANAGER/COORDINATOR HERMAN W. MORGAN	Herman Morgan	9/26/12
District Vice Chair	**Signature**	**Date**
Jerry Peterson	Jerry Peterson	9/26/12
District Board Member	**Signature**	**Date**
Cheryl Jerabek	Cheryl Jerabek	9/27/12

11:36 AM
09/27/12
Accrual Basis

Alaska Association of Conservation Districts
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual GRANT 119209 STATE MID-YUKON
July 1 through June 30,2012

	119209 Mid Yukon (Grant 1192 State of Alaska FY12)				Total Grant 1192 State of Alaska FY12				TOTAL		
	Jul '11 - J...	Budget	$ Over B...	% of Bud...	Jul '11 - J...	Budget	$ Over B...	% of Bud...	Jul '11 - J...	Budget	$ Over B...
Expense											
6000 · Personnel	18,068.50	33,300.00	-15,231.50	54.3%	18,068.50	33,300.00	-15,231.50	54.3%	18,068.50	33,300.00	-15,231.50
6100 · Fringe Benefits	3,090.16				3,090.16				3,090.16	0.00	3,090.16
6200 · Travel	3,396.68				3,396.68				3,396.68	0.00	3,396.68
6400 · Supplies	345.97				345.97				345.97	0.00	345.97
6500 · Contractual	215.00				215.00				215.00	0.00	215.00
6600 · Operations	1,940.57				1,940.57				1,940.57	0.00	1,940.57
Total Expense	27,056.88	33,300.00	-6,243.12	81.3%	27,056.88	33,300.00	-6,243.12	81.3%	27,056.88	33,300.00	-6,243.12
Net Income	**-27,056.88**	**-33,300.00**	**6,243.12**	**81.3%**	**-27,056.88**	**-33,300.00**	**6,243.12**	**81.3%**	**-27,056.88**	**-33,300.00**	**6,243.12**

2012 Projects

Envirothon
AKSSF Outreach
AKSSF Invasives
USDA Veris
NRCS TSP
NRCS CIG Bees
AK DEC ACWA

The Palmer SWCD office moved to 101 W. Arctic Avenue, #4, Palmer, Alaska 99645

With Help from the Community

Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District is on year two of three with the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund (AKSSF) grant. This field season, two youth intern crews from the Matanuska valley were hired to assist in the surveying, monitoring and control of invasive weeds, specifically targeting Reed Canary Grass (P. *arundinacea*) and White Sweetclover (M. *alba*) which are known to be harmful to salmon habitat. A community weed pull event ("Weed Smackdown") was organized to target M. *alba* from the Matanuska River bed, with 37 volunteers from the community attending and 340 pounds of plant matter removed from the river bed. P. *arundinacea* continued to be tarped and managed at the Matanuska River Park. New and previously monitored anadromous stream habitats have been documented and recorded with GPS units and will be submitted to the Alaska Exotic Plants Information Clearinghouse database. —Louisa Branchflower

Soil Science

New technology through the joint efforts of USDA Rural Development and PSWCD

The Veris unit was delivered in early August and Eric Lund, from the Veris Company, took a day off his Alaska vacation and spent a day showing us how to use the unit. He was impressed with our rugged Alaska modifications and shot photos of them to bring back to his engineers.

For the unit to do proper organic matter analysis the soil has to be at a uniform moisture level so the protocol is to wait for the rains (or irrigation) to create a uniform moisture level across the field.

We demonstrated the machine at both the Peony Conference (Palmer Train Depot) and at Agriculture Day at the State Fair. Both events generated interest in having client's land sampled.

To date, we are still collaborating with the VanderWeele Farm (Palmer) in learning how to use the instrument. We have successfully mapped their DePriest, Golf Course and Home fields along with the harvested portions of their Center Pivot field. I have also mapped their Brooks field, but the Veris Company data technician said that the machine's output data was too inconsistent to make the field map useful for the farmer. I attribute that difficulty to running the machine through the harvested potato hills, so I am working with both the farmer and the Veris technical staff to determine how to overcome this sampling challenge. It looks like the potato data sets is significantly improved by lightly roto-tilling followed by a tire packer to lightly pack the soil. Potatoes are a high-value crop and the farmer is very interested in mapping the potato fields. —Jeff Smeenk

Conservation Innovation Grant Project

The Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District offered a cost-share beekeeping program to our local agricultural producers. Funds for this project, provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, were utilized to provide 50% of the startup cost of beekeeping, including the over-wintering fee, and 10 hours of training for 20 participants.

The purpose of this project is to enhance the amount of pollinators in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. Beekeeping has become a vital effort in reestablishing colonies of bees and offsetting the natural decrease of pollination from wild bees that have been lost. In addition to providing pollination services to local farmers, the bees will supply honey, pollen, beeswax, and royal jelly for the beekeeper. The agricultural producers involved in this project will receive training that can be used to expand their farming operations. —Kelly Strawn

Getting after the Weeds

Thank you Conoco Phillips!

Conoco Phillips awarded PSWCD $40,000 to battle invasive plants and build youth education programs and community involvement .

More Salmon Habitat Projects

Knik River Public Use Area

The Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District offers restoration, maintenance, and conservation education of anadromous fish habitat. This year, Palmer SWCD worked with AKSSF to restore significantly degraded salmon habitat, including spawning grounds, in the Knik River Public Use Area and to promote the wise use of Alaska's fisheries through the following objectives:

Objective One: Host a Salmon Camp for Students
Objective Two: Implement a Jim Lake Stewardship Project
Objective Three: Create and Distribute Pacific Salmon Outreach Pamphlets
Objective Four: Create and Distribute Salmon Conservation Materials.

Water Quality

The lower Little Susitna River is at risk of water quality impairment from petroleum hydrocarbon pollution. The primary concerns are water quality and aquatic habitat. This year, Palmer SWCD and the Alaska DEC combined efforts to develop and implement a six month-long educational campaign on the impacts of petroleum and turbidity pollution to aquatic species through the following objectives:

1) Create 500 educational pamphlets detailing the impacts of petroleum and turbidity pollution to aquatic species and ways to reduce this pollution.

2) Distribute 500 pamphlets to outdoor stores, boating stores, fishing stores, and kiosks at Burma Landing. These locations have been selected to target the recreational users of the Little Susitna River.

3) Spend three outreach weekends at the Little Susitna River public use facilities during the height of the Coho fishery. —Kelly Strawn

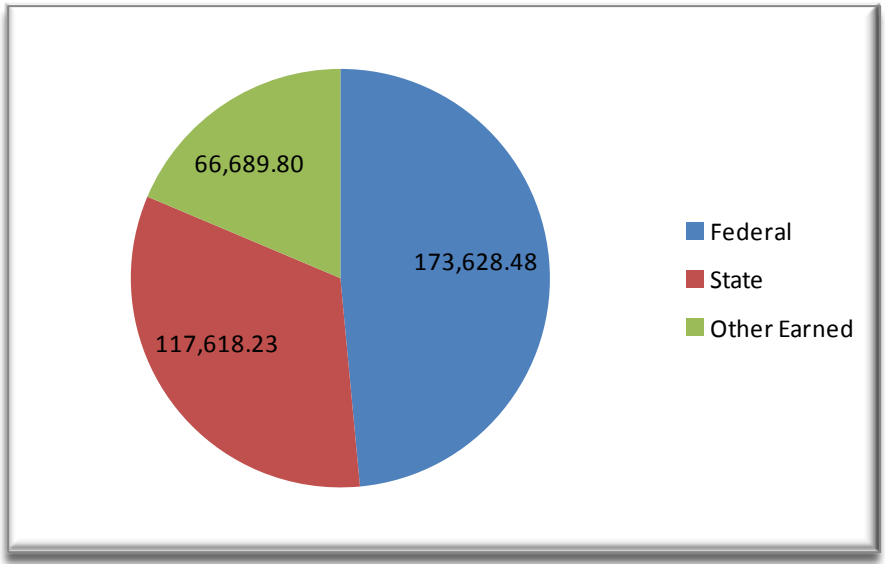
Envirothon

The Alaska Envirothon is a year-long environmental education program where teams of high school students study natural science topics over the school year to prepare them for an outdoor competition. The program provides young people an opportunity to meet professionals in the environmental field and to apply the scientific concepts they are learning about. The competition, which was held at the Spring Creek Farm in Palmer, brought together over 80 students and teachers from around the state as well as natural resource specialists from NRCS, Fish and Game, Bureau of Land Management, Division of Forestry, and the University of Alaska. The winning team from Homer represented Alaska in the North American Envirothon competition in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania.
—Sierra Doherty

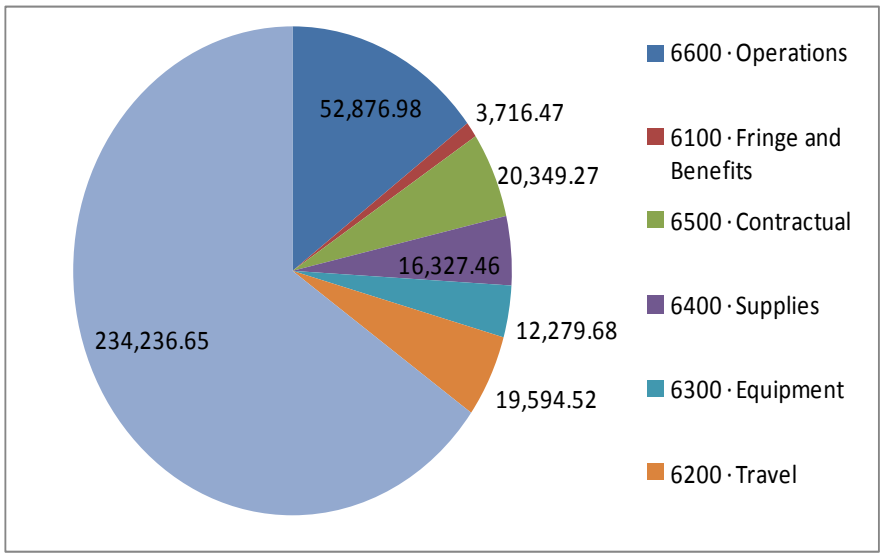
NRCS Technical Service Provider Projects

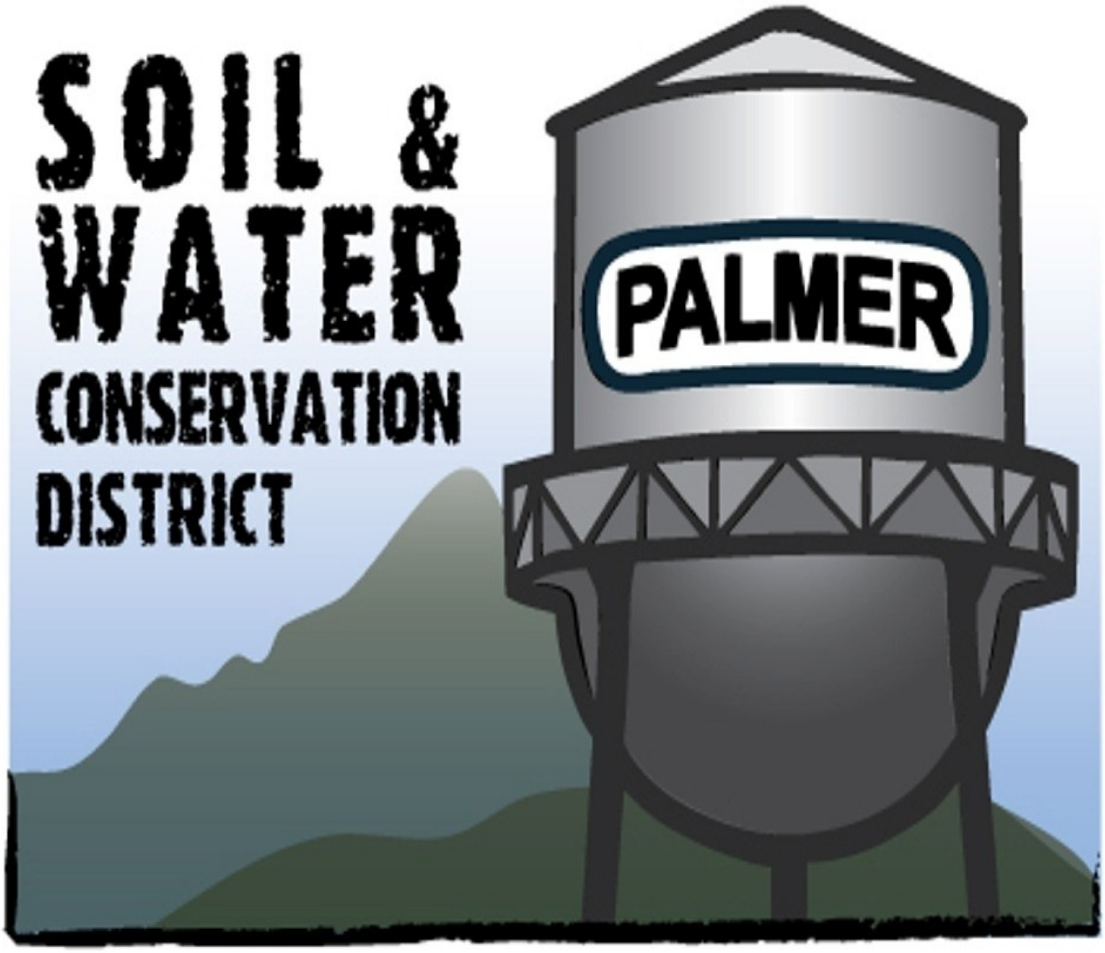
Conservation plans, conservation plans, conservation plans and more conservation plans — that's a big part of the NRCS project, but there's more. Nutrient management, pest management, water management, soil mapping, soil testing, plant vigor, invasive plants, weed free forage, mycorrhizal symbiosis, lecturing, teaching—yep, lots of projects.

Revenue $357,936.51



Expenses $359,381.03





101 W. Arctic Avenue, #4, Palmer, Alaska 99645

FY12 Annual Report

Salcha-Delta Soil & Water Conservation District

Salcha-Delta Soil & Water Conservation District
P.O. Box 547, Delta Junction, AK 99737 ● Phone: (907) 895-6279 Fax: (907) 895-6278

Memorandum to: Department of Natural Resources

From: Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District

Subject: Annual Report of Accomplishments

Date: September 28, 2012

Note from the Chair:

The following report discusses some of the activities, projects, and programs conducted by the Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District (SDSWCD) from July 2011 to June 2012. Highlight of the year are included in each section. This includes projects that have been completed for fiscal year 2012, as well as those which are still ongoing.

District programs include conservation assistance, water quality, noxious and invasive weed control, conservation education and information, watershed planning, research projects, and land rehabilitation and maintenance (LRAM). Many other worthwhile efforts could not be included in this report due to space limitations. The District supports agriculture development, science-based resource management, and responsible conservation efforts by land managers. SDSWCD meets the conservation needs of many businesses and individuals locally and throughout the state.

Rex Wrigley

Programs and Projects

Goal 1: Conservation Assistance

The District also supports the local agricultural community. Nutrient and pest management plans are developed for cooperators and assistance is provided to cooperators in put those plans in action. Field visits provide assistance in improving soil sampling accuracy, calibration of equipment, appropriate application of fertilizer and herbicide, scouting and identification of pests, record keeping, and identifying resource concerns and other practices to improve efficiency and productivity of farms.

The Alternative Fuel Program promotes the use of renewable fuels including bio-mass, barley fuel, and bio-diesel production. SDSWCD supports local food production and processing efforts to improve food security in Alaska and reduce the carbon footprint of what we eat. The District is also working with landowners to see what can be done to mitigate the damage to crops caused by bison, and by developing a cost-share bison fencing program.

The District is also a co-sponsor of the Farm Forum, an annual farmer-oriented symposium, and conducts numerous outreach efforts throughout the year inside and outside the local community.

Farm Forum 2012 – District Manager Bryce Wrigley, Ag Specialist Meghan Lene, and Board Treasurer Phil Kaspari presented the 2011 Cooperator of the Year award to Frank Borman of Bormans Farm. The Farm Forum attracted a crowd of about 135 people this year. There were plenty of presentations, local vendors, and potluck food to enjoy.

Deltana Fair 2011 – Young fairgoers try milking the SDSWCD "milking cow" as a volunteer FFA student looks on. The wooden cow was a main attraction of the District fair barn (seen in the background from left).

Cost-share Farmstead Fencing Program – This is an example of the type of fence that is part of the cost-share program. The fence shown belongs to Schultz Farms. This program provides an opportunity to District cooperators to receive assistance in funding fences to keep roaming bison from damaging crop storage areas.

Goal 2: Water Quality

The water quality program is one of several that focuses on conservation and wise development of our natural resources. The purpose of the water quality testing is to provide baseline information for tracking changes in the water quality of the Clearwater River and Harding Lake. Our aim is to provide science-based information about point source and non-point source pollution.

Gary Cooper, Water Quality Program Coordinator, conducts water quality tests on the samples he collected from the Clearwater River, as well as water locations. Water samples are collected at set areas during specific times throughout the year and results are compiled into a report at the end of each year. A courtesy copy is sent to DEC for their records. Results from the study have shown thus far that the water quality of the Clearwater River is quite clean.

Goal 3: Noxious and Invasive Weed Control

The District continues to be committed in eradicating noxious weeds in the local area, operating several programs to support that goal. This includes weed pulls, certified hay and straw, pest management planning, noxious weed inventory, and a responsive spraying program.

Early detection is crucial for identifying new invasive weed threats while they can still be controlled. We have a rapid response capability in the District for private land. This has been partially expanded to include public land. Early detection, along with timely treatment, is the best option for eliminating noxious and invasive weeds.

Noxious Weed Pulls – District staff member Meghan Lene (far left) with student volunteers participate in an emergency weed pull in August 2011. Approximately 420 pounds of toadflax and white sweet clover were pulled along the Richardson Highway. SWCD Education Coordinator, Tammie Kovalenko (not pictured), organized the weed pulls that summer.

Goal 4: Conservation Education and Information

The District continues raising awareness of conservation practices that everyone can participate in, which will help conserve our resources. Classroom activities, forums, newsletters, and several programs and projects that encourage families to participate together help accomplish this. Other activities geared for students educate them, from using a hands-on approach to teaching in the great outdoors.

Future Farmers of America (FFA) – SDSWCD continues to sponsor the local FFA chapter with Tammie Kovalenko as the chapter advisor. This year, the students were able to participate in the 2012 Envirothon in Palmer, and placed first place in several divisions. This included placing first overall in Ag Mechanics. The three students placing first, second, and third in this division will be attending the National FFA Convention in October.

Sullivan Roadhouse Gardens – For FY12, the District assisted with student activities taking place at the Sullivan Roadhouse Museum. In August of 2011, Delta/Greely Middle School students harvested produce from the garden beds. The following spring, the students cleaned up and prepared the vegetable and flower beds for the new planting season. These activities encourage students to develop skills and an interest in gardening. Tammie Kovalenko (Education Coordinator), Meghan Lene (Ag Specialist), and Violeta Vorobyov (Administrative Assistant) are SDSWCD staff who assisted with the activities.

Above right: August 2011 Garden Harvest

Left: May 2012 Spring Clean-up

Lost Lake Conservation Outdoor School (LLCOS) – This year, the outdoor conservation school was a four-day overnight camp open to sixth grade students, which takes place each year at the Lost Lake Boy Scout Camp. Thirty-eight students learned about skills such as Orientation, Wildlife Management, Leave No Trace, and bushcraft skills. The main goal for the outdoor school is to expose children to the Alaskan environment and introduce them to the natural resources field.

At right, Colin Barnard teaches the outdoor survival and bushcraft classes at the Lost Lake Outdoor Conservation School in September 2011. Middle school students learned various ways to make a fire and build a shelter using available resources.

2012 Poster Contest

The SDSCWD poster contest ended in April. This year's theme "Soil to Spoon" brought many creative entries illustrating how crops are produced into marketable foods. First place winners (by grade level) were Levi Merrymon (K-1), Josiah Merrymon (2-3), Daniel Sidorenko (4-6) and Amanda Terry (high school). Second place winners were Zion Lester (K-1) and Christina Newman (4-6). Third place winner was Rosa Sidorenko (4-6).

Below are three of the winning posters chosen out of the many submissions from 4-6th grade category – *(from left)*1st place poster by Daniel S.; 2nd place by Christina N.; 3rd place by Rosa S.

Goal 5: Watershed Planning

The Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District partners with local, state, and federal agencies to deal with watershed concerns. The Clearwater and the Harding Lake watersheds impact fish and wildlife habitat, agriculture, recreation and public safety. Both watershed projects need significant investment in time and resources to solve the existing problems.

Jarvis Glacier is part of the impact on the District watersheds. For two years now the District has partnered with the Cold Regions Research Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) and researchers from the UAF Water and Environmental Research Center (WERC) to gather data for the Jarvis watershed study. Snow samples from the glacier are collected as part of the data analysis (*left*).

GIS Program Coordinator, Colin Barnard (*far right*), operates survey equipment on the Jarvis Glacier in April, while Joanna Young of the Glacier Group Geophysical Institute from UAF uses a steam drill to prepare for the installation of a semi-permanent marker that measures glacial melt and movement. Surveying the glacier and collecting snow samples, as well as water samples from Jarvis Creek for isotope studies, are all part of the process in assisting researchers in determining the water sources in the District watersheds.

Goal 6: Research Projects

SDSWCD invests in research as well as collaborates with UAF and USDA/ARS researchers to support Alaskan agriculture. The following is a list of ongoing research projects:

- Irrigation Trials for barley, canola, field peas
- Nitrate leaching under irrigation
- Variety trials
- Foxtail control in bluegrass pastures and grass hay
- Comparison of yield and soil temperatures in tillage vs. no-till
- No-till seeding of barley and peas into CRP
- Winter wheat no-till seeded into stubble
- Develop a fertilizer matrix for barley, potatoes, and brome hay
- Black grass bugs phenology and management options

Fertilizer Matrix – The ongoing research on developing a fertilizer matrix had entered the third year of the soil fertility study conducted in collaboration with researchers from UAF at the UAF research farm. The study involves taking numerous plant and soil samples from plots fertilized with different phosphate and potassium rates. Meghan Lene, District Ag Specialist, works with the UAF researchers to determine crop needs for these nutrients. This information, in combination with the existing data for nitrogen, will be used to create a fertilizer matrix that will assist in making nutrient recommendations in Alaska.

Left, potato plants show results from various fertilizer applications, with barley plots in the background. Both are part of the fertilizer matrix research ongoing at the UAF Research Farm.

Below right, Conducting a second brome cutting. Tissue samples are sent to a lab for evaluation.

Left, Barley harvest at the research farm. Barley tissue samples were sent to a laboratory for analyzing fertilizer results in the fertilizer matrix study.

Land Rehabilitation and Maintenance (LRAM)

SDSWCD works closely with the US Department of Defense to maintain their training lands, providing wildlife benefits, erosion control, water quality, and wetlands protection. Projects include hardening and stabilizing trails, creating and maintaining wildlife and plant habitats, providing technical support for future planning, and assisting with Environmental Impact Surveys and environmental assessments.

The following photos are some of the projects that the District worked on in the past year for the LRAM program.

Bison Range Management – Field crews used brush mowers as part of the bison range management project near Big Lake. To reduce the interference from bison herds on training grounds during military training exercises, the project provides alternative areas where the bison can graze. This includes applying aerial fertilizer over the bison range, *left.*

US Forest Service Beetle Project – SDSWCD field crews thinned trees and chipped them to use as ground cover in the forest along Meadows Road as part of the Beetle Project. Much of the District's funding for the year has been from a U.S. Forest Service grant for controlling white spruce damage from a variety of factors, including the high levels of the northern spruce engraver beetles. One objective of this project is to reduce beetle activity and tree mortality with the forest stands along the Jarvis Creek Floodplain. Reduction of tree mortality and ensuing fuel loading within the forest, wildfire danger to the area and community is significantly lessoned after the thinning work has been completed.

Left – This is an example of the degradation of the trees in the Beetle Project area.

River Road Streambank Erosion Repair – The first photo shows the extent of bank erosion in that area. Construction crews building up the bank (middle). The last photo shows the repaired bank in the fall of 2011.



Personnel Involved in District Activities

Board of Supervisors
Rex Wrigley, *Chair*
Scott Schultz, *Vice Chair*
Phil Kaspari, *Treasurer*
Gary Sonnichsen, *Supervisor*
Shelly Tappen, *Supervisor*

SWCD Staff
Bryce Wrigley, *District Manager*
Jeff Durham, *Program Administrator*
Colin Barnard, *GIS Program Administrator*
Gary Cooper, *Water Quality Program Coordinator*
Tammie Kovalenko, *Conservation Education Coordinator*
Meghan Lene, *Agricultural Specialist*
Chuck Mancuso, *Agriculture Program Coordinator*
Earl McNabb, *Projects Manager*
Violeta Vorobyov, *Administrative Assistant*
Will Wright, *GIS Specialist*

Clockwise, from left – Chuck, Bryce, Earl, Will, Jeff, Violeta, Colin, Tammie, and Meghan (center).

Financial Report

See next page for attached report..

Signatures

Violeta Vorobyov — Report prepared by
Signature
9/28/2012 — Date

Financial Report – FY 2012

Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District

Income

NRCS CTA	4,522.29
Farm Forum	770.00
State Stipend	2,500.00
US Forest Service	233,417.47
Interest	35,901.00

Total Income 277,110.76

Expenses

Outreach/Conservation Education	
FFA	5,700.75
Fair	594.43
Conservation Outdoor School	5,593.35
Classroom projects	747.71
Farm Forum	540.51
Poster Contest	265.00
Scholarship Program	2,500.00
Outreach Contributions	17,189.60
Other Outreach	1,643.20
Projects	
Ag Research	17,223.30
Noxious Weed	3,165.61
Cost Share	18,604.98
Water Quality program	456.17
Repair and Maintenance	18,725.78
Fuel	5,173.81
Independent Contract Labor	2,537.47

Administrative	
Office rent	26,975.00
Insurance	241.00
Supervisor travel	920.00
Training	7,386.33
Postage	2,060.15
Advertising	175.00
Dues/registrations	3,046.00
Travel	26,816.22
Office & Field Supplies	9,779.16
Phone/Internet	7,703.21
Meeting Expenses	959.54
Miscellaneous	2,097.76
Life and Health Insurance	32,475.24

Total Expenses 221,296.28

Wild bison in farmers' grain fields.

Memorandum to:	Shana Joy, Executive Director NRCDB
From:	Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District
Subject:	Annual Report of Accomplishments
Date:	September 30, 2012

This represents the annual report of the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District for fiscal year 2012 as required by the DNR as specified in cooperative agreements with DNR and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts.

Highlights of the year.

Programs & Projects

The **Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District** conducted its annual assessment of progress toward completion of the **2012** plan of work.

Project 1: Land Suitability Reviews & Nutrient Management Plans

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Soil sampling and vegetation descriptions provide DNR with information that may enable an expansion of opportunities for agriculture in Alaska and ensure that a portion of public lands remain in agriculture production. Nine Nutrient Management Plans were written and given to producers in the Upper Susitna Valley as a means to increase crop yields.

Project 2: Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps

Assessment: Goal accomplished**.** Project funding provided work experience for eleven youth, ages 14-17, living in the Upper Susitna Valley. Work projects included a variety of conservation jobs with educational components to teach young people to become stewards of natural resources.

Project 3: Watershed Health

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Community based conservation planning was completed for Sunshine Creek, Montana Creek, and the Susitna River. Water temperature data was collected by using temperature loggers set in critical anadromous streams. Streams with a critical status are identified as hosing critical salmon spawning and rearing habitat. These efforts are provided in order to supply information about the best farming and fishing practices that will sustain high water quality and encourage future salmon sustainability.

Project 4: Nordic Ski Trail Construction & Parking Lot Improvements

Assessment: Goal accomplished. High quality ski trails were built to improve the park's accessibility for recreational users while conserving the natural features. Moreover, the parking lot within the Talkeetna Lakes Park was expanded to make parking easier for recreational users.

Project 5: Administrative Duties

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Staff maintained a functional office and working unit to support the projects and goals of the USSWCD.

PROJECT #1: Land Suitability Reviews & Nutrient Management Plans

Upland Soils Mapping:

Deliverable #1 Goals. Using the land suitability review data already collected for the Willard Cash land plot, a wetlands delineation will be conducted. This delineation will describe the soil and vegetation for each broad wetland type based on hydrology and vegetation. The delineation will be made using the GIS mapping program.

Accomplishments: Data has been entered into the GIS program and final maps including the agricultural designations component as the final step have been drawn for the Willard Cash land plot.

Vegetative Sampling, Agricultural Designation, & General Wetlands Deliniation:

Deliverable #2 Goals. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources is proposing to offer 40,000 acres of state land for public sale through the Division of Agriculture homestead program. The sale of these lands is to encourage agricultural production and require land suitability reviews to ensure the land being sold will be productive agricultural land.

Accomplishments: Land suitability reviews in the Nine Mile Creek land plot were conducted during the summer of 2012. These include soil samples and a vegetation layout for numerous plots for the remaining half of the proposed area. This data will be analyzed and entered into a database over the winter.

Nutrient Management Plans:

Deliverable #3 Goals. Nutrient Management Plans will be conducted in the Upper Susitna Valley producing a minimum of four different plans.

Accomplishments: NRCS finished training online through AgLearn.org about plant nutrients and nutrient management plans. Also, there was an in-person training session that was held at the Talkeetna Fire Station in December of 2011. The actual nutrient

management plans were conducted during the summer of 2012. A total of nine different plans were written for local farmers and producers.

PROJECT #2: Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps

Youth Conservation Corps Training:

Goals. To provide on the job training to eleven locally hired youth between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. During the training the youth will be introduced to the skills and knowledge needed to successfully undertake the projects set before them this season.

Accomplishments: The training included the history of YCC and CCC programs, YCC mission and goals, YCC member mid-season and end-season evaluations, work gear requirements, work projects, leadership roles and schedule, team building activities, safety and nutrition, physical fitness and sore muscles, camping and rafting gear, invasive plant identification, trail maintenance skills, and tool use and maintenance.

Specific Projects:

1. **Demonstration Farm Maintenance:**
    - **a.** The YCC spent an entire day at the storage shed in Trapper Creek. All brush that was encroaching around the shed was cut back and the area was clear again.
    - **b.** The gate leading to the cattle fences on the property was previously falling down. This resulted in trespassers driving around the gate and using the property as access to fish and hunt at and around the Susitna River. The YCC rebuilt the fence and installed a fence around the sides of the gate so trespassing via motor vehicles would be stopped. Passage on foot is allowed and a small gate that allows people to walk through was built and left. Signs were posted stating No Motorized Access on them.

2. **Talkeetna Village Park Beautification and Flower Planting:**
    - **a.** The Talkeetna Village Park has needed volunteers in the past to plant the flowers and water them throughout the summer. This has worked out sometimes but other times, the volunteers do not always follow through with the entire task. The YCC program received a grant to plant flowers in the village park which is visited by thousands of tourists during the summer.
    - **b.** They also removed invasive plant species from the park and beautified the entire park.
    - **c.** Throughout the entire summer season the YCC picked up trash that was at the park and watered and weeded the flowers beds. The town gave the YCC very positive feedback from this community project.

3. **Sunshine Creek Improvements and Maintenance**
    - **a.** The YCC installed two educational signs for the State of AK Department of Fish and Game.
    - **b.** They also re-vegetated parts of the willow rows that had died over the winter from last year's shoreline restoration project.
    - **c.** Additionally, trails were installed to encourage fishermen to walk around the willows that were planted rather than on and over the willows.
    - **d.** An entire hillside where fishermen had been walking was planted with woody plants to stabilize the bank and discourage people from walking straight down the hillside, which causes erosion over time.
    - **e.** Moreover, the area in front of the educational signs was previously very muddy. Gravel was brought in and spread over this muddy area to create a stable area for people to stand and walk.
    - **f.** The trails that were built to allow fishermen access to the bank to fish was maintained and gravel was brought in to further strengthen the trail tread.

4. **Talkeetna Lakes Park Trail Maintenance and Signage**
    - **a.** Signs were posted around the perimeters of the park to prevent unauthorized access from private properties that border the park.
    - **b.** Signs were made and installed for the Nordic Ski Trails that include trail distances, distances to trail heads, trail names, and trail difficulty.
    - **c.** The YCC maintained the X Lake Loop trail using sustainable trail building practices.
    - **d.** Invasive plants were removed along the trail while trail work was being done to protect the natural beauty of the park.

5. **Sustainable Salmon Invasive Plant Surveys**
    - **a.** The YCC conducted invasive plant surveys and controls in locations where the Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District had decided needed work. These areas included zones that had water ways that would affect salmon habitat and possibly salmon spawning.

6. **Wasilla Lake Shoreline Restoration**
    - **a.** Two days were spent with Catherine Inman and State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Wasilla doing shoreline restoration projects. This involved willow brush layering and vegetative mat placement to stabilize the lake shore from erosion. By preventing erosion, fish habitat is improved and water quality is protected.

7. **Montana Creek Shoreline Restoration**
    - **a.** Approximately 170 feet of shoreline along Montana Creek was determined to be denuded of native vegetation. This results in shoreline erosion, which negatively affects the many species of fish that spawn in this creek. This project was a collaborative effort between State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, US Department of Fish and Wildlife, Alaska State Parks, and the USSWCD.

b. The YCC worked for four days to installed double-layering of willows, vegetative mats, and fencing around the restored areas to protect the new willows.

c. Throughout the summer the YCC returned to the re-vegetated area to water the new willows and talk with fishermen about their feedback from the restoration site.

8. Denali National Park Trip and Denali-Susitna Exploration Camp

a. Denali National Park and Preserve is continually seeking ways to reach out to the local community. This program, called Denali – Susitna Exploration Camp, has made great strides in helping the park to build strong ties with the youth of the Talkeetna, Willow, Trapper Creek and Sunshine communities. Camp consisted of two week-long components that took place during the summer of 2012: during the first week, YCC high school students learned about natural resources relevant to Denali during a multi-night camping trip. During this week, the YCC students accrued skills and knowledge and planned activities that they used to convey these natural resource concepts to younger students during a week-long camp that took place the following week.

b. Camp objectives included:

i. To share and make relevant the unique natural environment and current research activities of Denali National Park and Preserve to camp participants and residents of the Upper Susitna Valley.

ii. To teach high school youth about park resources, and give them the skills to pass this knowledge to a younger generation.

iii. To support USSWCD in enlisting the cooperation of local land owners in the wise use of their natural resources.

9. Early Detection, Rapid Response Invasive Plant Eradication

a. USSWCD partnered with the US Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct invasive plant surveys and control work. Part of this year's work included aquatic invasive plant surveys. The US Department of Fish and Wildlife conducted a state-wide push to conduct surveys for the aquatic invasive plant known as elodea. This is in an effort to detect if this species was wide spread across the entire state or mainly existed in the urban cities of the state. The YCC found no elodea in the Upper Susitna Valley.

b. The YCC also conducted several tarping projects that will control invasive species that are not manageable by digging or pulling the plants. The tarps will remain in place for at least two years before they are removed and native grass seed will be planted in the area to prevent the invasive plant seeds that may still exist in the area from germinating.

Project Accomplishments:

Preserving and protecting the local environment through projects and education is the heart of the YCC program. Education is directed at increased awareness, understanding, appreciation, and participation through active stewardship of the natural environment and

agriculture. YCC projects are selected by the communities' identified needs in high use areas, contractual obligations of the district; assistance to the district's other projects, and needs identified by cooperators.

Daily on the job conservation practices teach participants how to become better stewards of the land and water. The YCC program strives to expose participants to new and traditional conservation ideas and practices. Educational activities include hands on restoration efforts, group and personal goal setting, plant identification, Natural Resource professional guest speakers, art projects, and community events.

PROJECT #3: Watershed Health

Goals: To partner with Cook Inlet Keeper to collect temperature data using temperature loggers in a variety of streams in the Upper Susitna Valley. Cook Inlet Keeper uses this data to monitor stream health and fish spawning habitats.

Accomplishments: The following creeks were identified by Cook Inlet Keeper and the Upper Susitna SWCD as being important to watershed health across the valley:

1. Byers Creek
2. East Fork of the Chulitna River
3. Troublesome Creek
4. Moose Creek
5. Chijuk Creek
6. Trapper Creek
7. Montana Creek
8. Alexander/Cache Creek

After each temperature logger was set, two maintenance site visits at each of the above sites during the summer season of 2012. All loggers will be left out until October 1st when they will be retrieved. All data from the loggers will be downloaded and sent to Cook Inlet Keeper in an excel format on or before December 1st, 2012.

PROJECT #4: Nordic Ski Trail Construction & Parking Lot Improvements

Goals. Build quality ski trails and improve the parking lot within the Talkeetna Lakes Park. The park is located about 1.5 miles southeast of downtown Talkeetna, east and south of the fork of Spur and Comsat Roads. The park spans approximately 1040 acres, an area roughly 1 by 2 miles. The XYZ Lakes are unique because they are easily accessible by road, yet largely undeveloped and natural. The goal is to make this park accessible to recreational users while conserving the natural features.

Accomplishments: An additional Nordic ski trail loop was built around Tigger Lake within the Talkeetna Lakes Park. This loop was called Loop and is now a 3.1 km trail. The trail has a 14 foot wide tread and a 17 foot wide trail cooridor. The trail route was designed, laid out, and marked by Bill Spencer PE (Private Contractor) and Chris Mannix of the Denali Nordic Ski Club (Trail Designers). The trail construction contractors followed this layout with minor modifications as specific terrain, soils, vegetation, or archaeological sites allowed or dictated. Under no circumstances did these minor re-routes exit the boundaries of the Talkeetna Lakes Park or interfere with archaeological sites as designated and marked during the archaeological survey that was performed on the trail corridor by the Mat-Su Borough. However, the construction contractors were allowed to differ from the marked route by as much as 50 feet before returning to the marked corridor. If a situation arose that called for a greater modification, the construction contractors consulted with the designers before proceeding.

Layout was performed according to specifications in the Talkeetna Lakes Park Recreational Trails Master Plan created by Bill Spencer PE and the construction contractors constructed the trail according to those specifications for grades, grade reversals, sideslopes, turn radii, and bench cut. The trail tread contractor pushed stumps, rocks, etc. out of the fourteen foot corridor made by the Dozer and Excavator, and pushed them further if that coulc be easily accomplished. The trail tread contractor also created a wall of stumps, rocks, branches, etc. along the section of the trail that runs along Whigmi Road. The wall will be constructed to lie between Loop J and Whigmi Road to prevent trespassing from the road onto the trail by motorized vehicles and ORVs. The contractor will compact, roll, and smooth the outslopped trail tread. All SWPPP permits needed for trail construction were obtained before construction began.

PROJECT #5: Administrative Duties

Goals. To maintain a functional office and working unit to support the projects and goals of the USSWCD. An additional goal was to continue working towards a financial sustainable office.

Accomplishments: Administrative duties included tracking finances, creating reports, seeking future funding, finding local natural resource projects, and acquiring staff to complete the district projects. Administrative duties are essential for all district projects to be successful, which in turn, supports conservation and education within the USSWCD boundaries

Financial Report: By Project

Project #1: Land Suitability Reviews & Nutrient Management Plans

Funding Source	Opening Balance	Expensed to date	Today's Balance	Status
NRCS D1 GIS	$12,907	$12,488	**419.00**	*Operating*
NRCS D2 LCC	$64,000	50,742.07	**13,257.93**	*Operating*
NRCS D3 NMP	$9,676	$9,676	**0**	*Closed*

Project #2: Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps

Funding Source	Opening Balance	Expensed to date	Today's Balance	Status
Demonstration Farm Maintenance – Trapper Creek Community Council	2730.00	$2393	**$337**	*Operating*
Talkeetna Village Park – Talkeetna Community Council	3200.00	$3200.00	**$0**	*Closed*
Sunshine Creek – State of AK Deptment of Fish and Game	6851.25	$6851.25	**$0**	*Closed*
Talkeetna Lakes Park Trail Maintenance/Signage – Mat-Su Borough	100,000	100,000	**$0.00**	*Closed*
Sustainable Salmon Invasive Plants – PSWCD/Conoco Phillips	12,000	12,000	**$0.00**	*Closed*
Wasilla Lake Shoreline Restoration – State of AK Department of Fish and Game	2934.32	2934.32	**$0.00**	*Closed*
Montana Creek Shoreline Restoration – US Department of Fish and Wildlife	21,908	12,220	**$9688.00**	*Operating*

Denali National Park Exploration Camp – National Park Service	$13,926	13,926	**$0**	*Closed*
Early Detection, Rapid Response Invasive Plants – US Department of Fish and Wildlife & US Forest Service	$50,000 (USF&W) $6000 (USFS)	26,988 (USF&W) 6000 (USFS)	**$23,012 (USF&W) $0 (USFS)**	*Operating (USF&W) Closed (USFS)*

Project #3: Watershed Health

Funding Source	Opening Balance	Expensed to date	Today's Balance	Status
Cook Inlet Keeper 2011-12	7050.00	$3785.39	**3264.61**	*Operating*

Project #4: Nordic Ski Trail Construction & Parking Lot Improvements

Funding Source	Opening Balance	Expensed to date	Today's Balance	Status
Mat-Su Borough	**$103,817**	**$79,162**	**$24,655**	*Operating*

Project #5: Administrative Duties

Funding Source	Opening Balance	Expensed to date	Today's Balance	Status
DNR 11	2,000.00	$1869.00	**$130**	*Operating*
DNR 12	2,500.00	$0	**$2500**	*Operating*
DNR 13	1,334.42	$0	**$1334.42**	*Operating*
State of Alaska FY12	33,300	27,761.55	**$5538.55**	*Operating*
State of Alaska FY 13	45,000	$0	**45,000**	*Operating*

Signatures

Laura Allen
Report prepared by

Laura Allen
Signature

9-30-12
Date

Ken Marsh
District Chair

Ken Marsh
Signature

9-30-12
Date

Rick Ernst
District Board Member

Rick Ernst
Signature

11-9-2012
Date

Memorandum to: AACD/DNR

From: Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District

Subject: Annual Report of Accomplishments

Date: September 26, 2012

This report represents the Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District (WSWCD) FY 2012 report as required by DNR, and as specified in cooperative agreements with DNR and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts.

Programs & Projects

WSWCD has conducted its annual assessment of progress toward completion of the 2012 plan of work as below:

Goal 1: Provide Nutrient Management assistance to cooperators to ensure high quality, productive soils

Assessment: Goal accomplished with satisfactory results. 44 soil samples were submitted; fertilizer and lime recommendations were provided to 22 cooperators. 2 manure samples were submitted and organic fertilizer recommendations were provided for 1 cooperator;

Goal 2: Provide Nutrient Management and Forage Management to cooperators, promoting best management practices for production of high quality crops

Assessment: Goal accomplished. 2 forage samples were submitted & fertilizer recommendations were provided to 1 cooperator.

Goal 3: Coordinate poster contest.

Assessment: Current goal is to re-schedule to Fall 2012. Promotional materials will be distributed to schools in the Fall2012. Winners will be entered in the State competition and their posters will be featured in a District newsletter. District Board members will select outstanding posters and present prizes and a certificate of honorable mention.

Goal 4: Provide general office support for Conservation District activities

Assessment: Goal accomplished. The District Manager maintains a professional efficient office that creates a pleasant atmosphere for employees and visitors. Bookkeeping activities, work plans, and reports were completed in a timely manner.

Goal 5: Implement outreach activities to raise awareness of the Conservation District's services and achievements to encourage new cooperators and to strengthen relationships with existing cooperators

Assessment: Goal accomplished. The Wasilla District recruited new Cooperators & volunteers. Newsletters were mailed &/or emailed in the Fall & Spring, and are accessible from the District's website. District Manager updated website including a calendar which lists board meeting dates. Board meetings are open to the public and public notice is given prior to each meeting. Partner agencies were invited to exchange information and share ideas with the District at their board meetings.

Goal 6: Pay dues and subscriptions

Assessment: Goal accomplished. Dues were promptly paid to NACD and subscription to the Frontiersman newspaper that provides good coverage of District projects was renewed.

Goal 7: Attend Conservation District and agency conferences to disseminate information and to gather valuable input and expertise.

Assessment: Goal accomplished. District was represented at both the Spring and Fall AACD Conferences. Information exchanged among the districts was considered to be informative and beneficial.

Goal 8: Continue Streambank Restoration & Education Projects

Assessment: Goal accomplished. WSWCD partnered with USFWS staff to start a 2 year pilot project to interview ATV/ORV users of the Swiftwater Creek trail; remained active in the Mat Su partnership; Arbor Day community tree plantings coordinated by the WSWCD in May were a new program. 29 trees were planted by 4/5th grade students at Willow Elementary as part of the Mat-Su Borough's Official Arbor Day ceremony. Other planting sites included public property in the Cities of Houston & Wasilla.

Goal 9: School Yard Habitat
Assessment: Goal accomplished. District staff completed the project.

Goal 10: Mat Su Stream Gauge

Assessment: Goals accomplished. Staff closely worked with ADF&G to continue gauging streams & taking water samples at locations on Fish Creek & Little Meadow Creek.

Additional Activities

Cook Inlet Keepers Stream Temperature Monitoring project continued. WSWCD staff performed water quality assurance/maintenance visits July-September at the following creeks: Moose, Wasilla, Little Willow, Cottonwood, Bodenburg, Deception, Willow, Fish, Meadow & Jim.

Wasilla District Board Members are active in a variety of organizations that support their interests and desire to promote conservation in Alaska, including, but not limited to, AACD Board, Mat-Su Resource Conservation & Development Council, Farm Bureau, Alaska Diversified Livestock Association, and the Board of Agriculture and Conservation.

New programs were: ATV/ORV Outreach, Arbor Day & Canada Thistle. ATV/ORV is funded via a USFWS grant. Funds were received in FY 13. Arbor Day was internally hosted by WSWCD. A Canada Thistle crew started operations the last week of FY 12; however funds were received in FY 13.

Financial Report

	Income Source	Budget	Actual	% Used
State	State of Alaska	$33,300	$ 32,445	97%
DNR	DNR	$ 2,000	$ 1,162	58%
Schoolyard Habitat		$ 7,500	$ 7,500	100%
Mat-Su Stream Gauge	AK Dept. of Fish & Game	$ 9,133	$ 10,014	110%
Stream Temperature Monitoring	Cook Inlet Keeper	$ 7,000	$ 6,129	88%
Water Quality	Grant	$ 13,675	$ 13,675	100%
ATV/ORV	USFWS	$ 224	$ 224	100%
Canada Thistle	PMC	$ 390	$ 390	100%
TOTAL		$ 73,222	$ 71,539	98%

Annual Report of Accomplishments FY 12

Signatures

Chuck Kaucic Report prepared by	Signature	9/26/2012 Date
John Schirack District Chair	Signature	9 /26/2012 Date