



The Division of Agriculture Activities

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<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

Director of Agriculture

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Director's Note

Thank you for your continued dedication to agriculture and for the products produced and made available to Alaskans. As a consumer myself, I feel fortunate to have the choice of Alaska Grown.

I know this is a busy time of year, but please take the time to visit our [website](#) and read through the newsletter to stay informed about the upcoming conferences, grant opportunities and general information. Many conferences are being held this January through March, so be sure to mark your calendars.

DNR will be welcoming new Commissioner Daniel S. Sullivan on December 6th and saying goodbye to Commissioner Tom Irwin. I would like to thank Tom for his assistance and support over the last few years and I wish him and his family the best.

May you have a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year!
Franci

Marketing Section

The 2010 [Alaska Grown Source Book](#) is now available both online and in print format! Stop by our office to pick up the latest version or check it out on our marketing website. The Source Book is widely considered to be the most comprehensive listing of Alaska farmers and ranchers in the State. Although we only print the directory every two years, the online version is frequently updated – so contact Patricia if you would like to be included.

Do you utilize Facebook either for personal or business related communication? According to a study published in Harvard Business Review: "Companies that use the popular social-media site Facebook and its fan page module to market themselves to customers can increase sales, word-of-mouth marketing and customer loyalty significantly among a subset of their customers, according to new research from Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business." The Division of Agriculture's Alaska Grown program launched a Facebook page a few months ago. Over 1000 people have requested to 'friend' the Division and therefore receive the periodic status updates posted by staff. The Division sees this as a valuable tool for communicating to a new and different audience about Alaska Grown. Back on the 19th of November the Division posted the following update: It's Friday - buy something Alaska Grown today...potatoes, carrots, milk, meat. Remember that you're supporting your neighbors and that is a powerful thing! The posting immediately got 17 'likes' and six comments regarding peoples' experiences with Alaska Grown. Shortly thereafter the Spenard Roadhouse Bar & Grill, a popular Anchorage restaurant (and Alaska Grown friend) updated their status to read: Happy Friday Pizza Day! We have an awesome AK Yukon Gold roasted potato, roasted garlic, provolone, mozzarella, white cheddar, bacon, rosemary garlic oil & chive sour cream pizza for our lunch special. Spenard Roadhouse has over 2000 'friends' following their page.

You can follow the Division on [Facebook](#). If you are in the business of selling an Alaska Grown product, we encourage you to create a Facebook page of your own and start connecting with your customers.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm)

[htm](#)

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Plant Materials Center

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Land Sales & Grazing Leases

Future Land Sales - If you would like to be notified via Email when the Division of Mining Land and Water determines the release date of one of our land sale brochures. Please follow this [link](#) and add yourself to the notification list.

Note: If you subscribed last year, you will need to re-subscribe to be on the 2011 email list.

Port MacKenzie Railroad Extension update – Division staff were able to ask several question of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) regarding proposed routes across portions of the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Project.

When asked how a rail line could be constructed on lands sold under AS 38.05.321 (lands protected from non-agricultural development), the STB clarified that they are not involved in any land acquisitions and all agricultural land acquisitions and issues will be the responsibility of the Alaska Railroad Corporation. The Matanuska Susitna Borough will look at needed Right of Ways after the STB releases the Final Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

When asked about the Mac Central route, which was not included in the Draft EIS, the STB stated it would be included in the Final EIS. It was determined that a supplemental EIS is necessary only if significant or new circumstances occur and the Mac Central route was considered a modification of the Mac East route, and was not considered new or significant. No public comment period is scheduled after the release of the Final EIS.

The STB noted that no comments were received, during the scoping period, concerning the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Project.

Plant Materials Center

Mat-Su Riparian Revegetation Project

One of the projects the Plant Materials Center (PMC) is currently working on is the Mat-Su Riparian Revegetation Project. This is in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). USFWS is working on replacing culverts on some of the creeks in the Mat-Su Valley. Their main goal is to improve salmon habitat by replacing narrow culverts, which can be an obstacle for fish, with wide culverts, which allow fish to go through them easily. This is a four year project. PMC comes into the picture when native plant material to revegetate a disturbed area is needed. PMC has the knowledge and experience and trained staff to complete this project. The PMC part of the project is to collect the initial seed material from native species (see list below). This was done during the first year of the project (2010). If needed more wild seed collections will be conducted in the future. Once the wild collections were obtained seed material was conditioned and cleaned. Next step is seed increases. This will take place next spring when germination tests of the seed collected will be conducted. Then plant plugs will be grown and transplanted into planting boxes which were installed earlier this year.

By using native plant material, disturbed sites can be brought back to a condition as close as possible to what was there before the disturbance. This also ensures that there are fewer invasive species that would compete with native vegetation.

Besides seed material, vegetative material is also desired. In early spring of 2010 dormant whips of two species of willows (*Salix lasiandra* and *Salix alaxensis*) and cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*) were collected. Whips were cut to desired length, rooted, and then transplanted in a fenced area. This planting will be used for a cutting collection site in the future. The advantage is that material from identified species that perform well in stream bank revegetation efforts will be available.



Fig. 1. Seed collection site

Revegetation Species List

Bluejoint reedgrass- *Calamagrostis canadensis*

Tufted Hairgrass- *Deschampsia cespitosa*

Wood fern- *Dryopteris dilatata*

Lady fern- *Athyrium filix-femina*

Dwarf fireweed- *Chamerion latifolium*
Tall fireweed- *Chamerion angustifolium*
Lupine- *Lupinus nootkatensis*
Geranium- *Geranium erianthum*
Larkspur- *Delphinium glaucum*
Monkshood- *Aconitum delphinifolium*
Columbine- *Aquilegia formosa*
Bluebells- *Mertensia paniculata*
Alder- *Alnus crispa*
Felt-leaf willow- *Salix alaxensis*
Pacific willow- *Salix lasiandra*
Cottonwood- *Populus balsamifera*



Fig. 2. Cleaned seed



Fig. 3. Willow and cottonwood planting

Fig. 4. Planting boxes

Calendar

► We have implemented a new tool here at the Division – an online [calendar](#). As we learn about upcoming agriculture-related events, we will add them. Check back for more information and let us know if we're missing something.