

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Alaska Association of Conservation****Federal Tax ID: 92-0161947****Districts****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

# Alaska Association of Conservation Districts - Statewide Soil and Water Conservation Program Development

**State Funding Requested: \$1,500,000****House District: Statewide (1-40)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

Provide the technical guidance and assistance to carry out the measures for soil and water conservation and erosion control.

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$4,500,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$3,000,000)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$1,500,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:*

FY 2008 - \$750,000

FY 2009 - \$350,000

FY 2010 - 0

Fy 2011 - \$300,000

FY 2012 - \$500,000

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) serve an important role in our state by assisting landowners with natural resource management. Thousands of personal contacts with landowners are made each year in districts around the state. SWCDs help landowners develop their land responsibly, while taking into consideration such issues as air quality, soil degradation, erosion, water quality, and forestry management.

Key programs include:

- Soil nutrient testing,
- Technical assistance for invasive plant management,
- Assistance for farmers,
- Forestry management plans,
- Promotion of Alaska Grown products,
- Youth Conservation Corps programs,
- Resource education to local schools,
- Land capability surveys,

- Investigations of potential agricultural areas,
- Soil conservation,
- Erosion control.

Local districts work with numerous agencies, organizations, local governments, and private citizens to deliver their programs. Working cooperatively with the community helps districts to stay well informed and to provide timely and useful services.

Districts provide a report on activities to the Natural Resources Conservation Development Board, which, in turn, advises the Governor, the Commissioner of DNR, and the Alaska State Legislature. All reports are distributed by the 30th day of the legislative session.

The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts has leveraged thousands of dollars for natural resource projects from federal and local sources, but cannot deliver these statewide projects unless it has funding for its base operations. The usual match is 6 to 1 on the funding for districts.

### Project Timeline:

FY 2013

Projects will start upon receipt of funding.

### Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

### Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Steve Hicks  
 Title: Executive Director/Chief Administrative Officer  
 Address: 1700 E. Bogard Road Suite 203A  
 Wasilla, Alaska 99654  
 Phone Number: (907)373-7923  
 Email: aacd@mtaonline.net

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No



November 22, 2011

Steve Hicks, Executive Director, AACD  
1700 E. Bogard Rd., Suite 203  
Wassila, AK 99654

Dear Mr. Hicks,

Please accept the support of The Kuskokwim Corporation in advocating for the continuation of funding for The Natural Resource Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

We are aware of the significant impact of the current protracted financial downturn across the nation and Alaska, and it is of grave concern to us to see the possible erosion of services from NRCS and SWCD. Both agencies have an effective record in assisting in the development, conservation and enhancement of Alaska's rich natural resources, which ultimately create employment and business opportunities for all Alaskans. There is much work still left undone, including the following projects:

- Forest stand assessments – to work with landowners to determine species type, age, composition, quality and approximate lumber yield per acres, and provide information to landowners to utilize renewable resources and create jobs in rural Alaska.
- High Tunnel Demonstration Project – utilizes a 20x40 ft. high tunnel structure to grow vegetables for local food production, and extend the growing season.
- Wood Bison Restoration Project – reintroduce bison to Yukon-Kuskokwim regions to create an alternate red meat source for rural residents.
- Riverbank Erosion Surveys – assist private and government agencies in determining the rate and potential effects of erosion along Alaska's rivers, and document erosion that affects aircraft runway operations, as well as graveyards and other historical sites.
- Assisting Gardeners in Applying Conservation Practices – ongoing process of increasing agricultural production for gardeners in mid-Yukon-Kuskokwim region to offset the high cost of importing vegetables by growing local produce.
- Invasive Plant Eradication – prevent the spread of invasive, noxious, non-indigenous weeds/plants proven to be harmful to local environments, animals, and humans.

Thank you for your continued efforts, and for supporting conservation programs of TKC villages along the middle and upper Kuskokwim River.

Sincerely,

Maver Carey  
TKC President/CEO

# KUSPUK SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 49  
Aniak, Alaska 99557  
(907) 675-4250  
Fax (907) 675-4305

**Brad Allen**  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
(907) 675-4250, Ext. # ~~100~~ 222

Steve Hicks  
Executive Director – AACD  
1700 E. Bogard Road, Suite 203  
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Mr. Hicks,

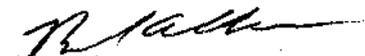
Please consider this a letter of support from the Kuspuk School District for the Mid-Yukon-Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District (MYK-SWCD).

The MYK-SWCD has worked with the school district in this region on several items to help bring relevant and experiential educational activities to the students of our district. They have worked with our students and the citizens of this region to help advocate for the responsible development of natural resources – showing how they can help create employment opportunities as well as working to ensure the environmental development is well thought out.

We know that they also have worked on other projects that have impacts outside of the school house walls – such as forest assessments and surveys, the Wood Bison restoration project, riverbank erosion analysis, high tunnel project for possibly extending the local growing season and options to more locally produced food, conservation practices for local gardeners and helping to eradicate invasive plant species.

**We realize that these are trying times in terms of the financial issues that face many agencies across the state and nation. But we feel that MYK-SWCD has helped to move the people of this region forward in the area of environmental awareness. If you have any questions or should need more information, please feel free to contact me at the above listed information or via email at [ballen@kuspuk.org](mailto:ballen@kuspuk.org).**

Respectfully,



Brad Allen  
Superintendent – Kuspuk School District

City of Chuathbaluk  
1001 Community Rd.  
Chuathbaluk, AK 99557  
Ph. (907) 467-4115 Fax (907) 467-4180

Steve Hicks, Executive Director, AACD  
1700 E. Bogard Rd, Suite 203  
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Mr. Hicks,

We are all aware of in these times of financial uncertainty, efforts to stabilize the economic situation often results in cuts to government funding for agencies such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, agencies that have been here to assist in the development, conservation and enhancement of our natural resources for decades. Alaska is rich in natural resources. The Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation Districts, (MYS-SWCD) works cooperatively with NRCS in accomplishing the following deliverables, to assist in the responsible development of those natural resources. These resources can be used in creating employment and business opportunities for our citizens and lessen of financial uncertainty.

**-Forest Stand Assessments:**

We are in the process of doing surveys for the landowners, to determine species type, age composition, quality and approximate lumber yield per acre. This information provides data for landowners who are interested in utilizing renewable natural resources to create jobs in rural Alaska. Added benefits are building material for new and existing homeowners; value added products and biomass for possible renewal energy production.

**-High Tunnel Demonstration Project**

Working with NRCS, MYK-SWCD constructing a 20X40 ft high tunnel to demonstrate the effectiveness of utilizing such a structure to extend the growing season, and grow more and different kind of vegetables for local food production.

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The Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District is involved in supporting the efforts of the State of Alaska Wildlife Conservation Division, to reintroduce bison into the region. If successful, the reintroduction of bison will be an important source of alternate red meat for local residents. Efforts are under way to possibly reuse the fencing for the bison after they are released, for reindeer, musk ox, or other ungulates.

**-Riverbank Erosion Surveys**

MYK SWCD is in the process of compiling riverbank erosion surveys, to assist private and government agencies in determining the rate and potential effects of erosion along the rivers. We are in the initial stages of documenting erosion that could affect runway operations in one community and historical sites such as graveyards in another community.

**-Assisting Gardeners in Applying Conservation Practices**

MYK SWCD is also involved in the ongoing process of increasing agricultural production for gardeners in the Mid Yukon-Kuskokwim region, by encouraging gardeners to incorporate conservation practices such as crop rotation, pest management, nutrient management, irrigation practices, etc. Incorporation of such practices offsets the high cost of purchasing imported vegetables by growing local produce to put food on the table, and store for the winter.

**-Invasive Plant Eradication**

MYK SWCD has worked with invasive Plant Coordinator in noxious weed eradication, to prevent the spread of invasive plants that are not naturally grown in this region and may be harmful to plants, humans, animals and the local environment. Getting rid of the plants before they spread is important in controlling the problem before it becomes unmanageable.

MYK SWCD is working to create jobs and benefits our state through the application of the above mentioned, and other conservation practices that develop, conserve and enhance Alaska's abundant natural resources and lessen the financial uncertainty of these trying economic times.

Thank you for the services SWCD's and NRCS in Alaska provide. Please let our elected representatives know that we appreciate their consideration in continuing funding for SWCD's and NRCS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Petusos".

11/14/11

Dear Cooperator,

The Mid Yukon Kuskokwim is once again asking for your support in our efforts to continue providing services to the residents of the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District.

If you can find it in your heart to please sign and send the enclosed letter to the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you prefer, you can also write a shorter letter of support, or use the enclosed letter.

Thank you very much, again, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



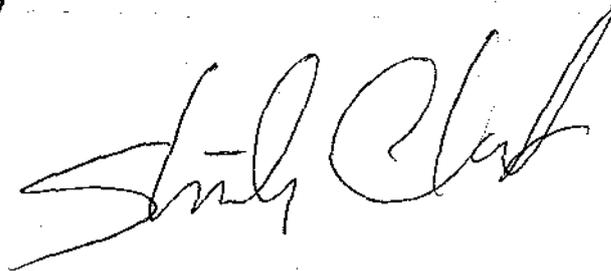
Herman W. Morgan

District Manager / Coordinator -

MYK-SWCD

P.O. Box; 88

Aniak, AK. 99557



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1700 E. Bogard Rd, suite 203  
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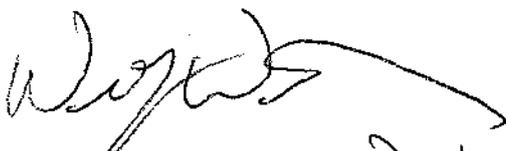
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William J. Wilson

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Sincerely,

*Agnes Overton*

P.O. Box 81  
Aniak AK 99557

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AACD,

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Sincerely,

Dynis Hoffman  
P.O. Box 35  
Aniak, Ak.  
99551

Steve Hicks, Executive Director, AACD  
1700 E. Bogard Rd, suite 203  
Wassila, AK. 99654

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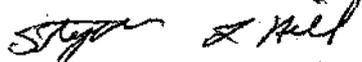
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Sincerely,

  
Stephen L. Hill  
Board Member / MYK-SWC

Steve Hicks,  
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MYK SWCD is in the process of compiling riverbank erosion surveys, to assist private and government agencies in determining the rate and potential effects of erosion along the rivers. We are in the initial stages of documenting erosion that could affect runway operations in one community and historical sites such as graveyards in another community.

**- Assisting Gardeners in Applying Conservation Practices**

MYK SWCD is also involved in the ongoing process of increasing agricultural production for gardeners in the Mid Yukon - Kuskokwim region, by encouraging gardeners to incorporate conservation practices such as crop rotation, pest management, nutrient management, irrigation practices, etc. Incorporation of such practices offsets the high cost of purchasing imported vegetables by growing local produce to put food on the table, and to store for the winter.

**- Invasive Plant Eradication**

MYK SWCD has worked with Invasive Plant Coordinator in noxious weed eradication, to prevent the spread of invasive plants that are not naturally grown in this region and may be harmful to plants, humans, animals and the local environment. Getting rid of the plants before they spread is important in controlling the problem before it becomes unmanageable.

MYK SWCD is working to create jobs and benefits our state through the application of the above mentioned, and other conservation practices that develop, conserve and enhance Alaska's abundant natural resources and lessen the financial uncertainty of these trying economic times.

Thank you for the services SWCDs and NRCS in Alaska provide. Please let our elected representatives know that we appreciate their consideration in continuing funding for SWCDs and NRCS.

Sincerely,

*Cheraine A. Cutter*  
ANIAK, AK.

Steve Hicks, Executive Director  
AACD,

We are all aware of in these times of financial uncertainty, efforts to stabilize the economic situation often results in cuts to government funding for agencies such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, agencies that have been here to assist in the development, conservation and enhancement of our natural resources for decades. Alaska is rich in natural resources. The Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District, (MYK-SWCD) works cooperatively with NRCS in accomplishing the following deliverables, to assist in the responsible development of those natural resources. These resources can be used in creating employment and business opportunities for our citizens and lessen the impact of financial uncertainty.

**- Forest Stand Assessments:**

We are in the process of doing surveys for landowners, to determine species type, age composition, quality and approximate lumber yield per acre. This information provides data for landowners who are interested in utilizing renewable natural resources to create jobs in rural Alaska. Added benefits are building material for new and existing homeowners; value added products and biomass for possible renewal energy production.

**- High Tunnel Demonstration Project**

Working with NRCS, MYK-SWCD constructed a 20X40 ft high tunnel to demonstrate the effectiveness of utilizing such a structure to extend the growing season, and grow more and different kind of vegetables for local food production.

**- Wood Bison Restoration Project**

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Thank you for your time and consideration in continuing funding for SWCDs and NRCS.

Sincerely,

*Jane and James Fausser*  
PO 313 Aniak AK 99557

11/21/11

11/14/11

Dear Cooperator,

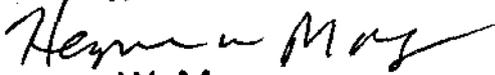
The Mid Yukon Kuskokwim is once again asking for your support in our efforts to continue providing services to the residents of the Mid Yukon Kuskokwim Soil and Water Conservation District.

If you can find it in your heart to please sign and send the enclosed letter to the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you prefer, you can also write a shorter letter of support, or use the enclosed letter.

Thank you very much, again, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Herman W. Morgan

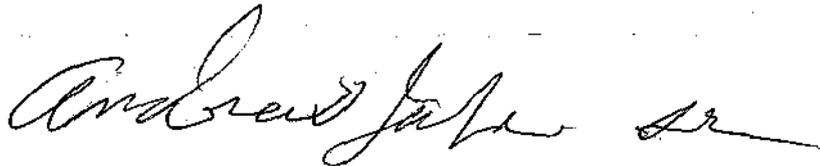
District Manager / Coordinator

MYK-SWCD

P.O. Box; 88

Aniak, AK. 99557

ph; (907) 676 0336



Steve Hicks, Executive Director  
AACD,

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Thank you for your time and consideration in continuing funding for SWCDs and NRCS.

Sincerely,



## **Alaska Association of Conservation Districts**

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CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF – GOVERNMENT

### **History of Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

Alaska's soil and water conservation districts formed after the Territory of Alaska enacted legislation in 1947 that allowed the formation of districts. Districts are legal subdivisions of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, authorized under Alaska State Statute Chapter 41.10, Soil and Water Conservation Law.

By the late 1940s, all states had adopted laws reflecting the Standard State Soil Conservation District Law, promoted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was in response to the Dust Bowl Days, and was designed to be a grassroots complement to the Soil Conservation Service (now USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service), which was begun in 1935.

The conservation district concept was developed to voluntarily enlist the cooperation of landowners and users of natural resources in carrying out the program authorized by the Soil Conservation Act of 1935.

### **Alaska's SWCDs**

Alaska's Soil and Water Conservation Districts were established as groups of local farmers and landowners united to form SWCDs in their respective areas. There are 11 state-formed SWCDs in Alaska: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Homer, Kenai, Kenny Lake, Kodiak, Mid-Yukon Kuskokwim, Palmer, Salcha-Delta, Upper Susitna, and Wasilla. Currently, efforts are underway to establish a new SWCD in the Southeast. In 2005, the Tyonek Tribal District became the first Native Conservation District formed in Alaska under federal jurisdiction. More recently, three additional Native Conservation Districts have been formed.

### **AACD's origins**

The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts was organized in 1965 to help the 12 state-formed SWCDs in Alaska do cooperatively what they could not do independently. In 1998, the AACD incorporated with 501c3 status. Its work includes administering programs that encompass multiple districts and seeking and administering grant funding. The AACD is also the statewide voice on conservation issues pertaining to and requiring federal, state and local legislative and agency support. AACD provides conferences, training, education, and outreach programs collectively for the districts.

### **SWCDs' work**

District staffs work with landowners, land managers, local government agencies and other special interest groups in addressing a broad spectrum of resources concerns: erosion control, flood prevention, water conservation and use, wetlands, groundwater, water quality and quantity, non-point source pollution and community development. District activities and interaction with private landowners is voluntary, not regulatory. Districts work with government agencies to provide technical guidance and resource management assistance. The work of the SWCD staff aligns closely to that of our federal funding partner, the Natural Resources Conservation Service,

as well as with other agencies, such as the US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, NOAA, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

### **SWCDs' structure**

Soil & Water Conservation districts are comprised of cooperators within a geographical area and each is administered by a five-member board of supervisors elected from those cooperators by the cooperators. These are volunteer positions and they receive no compensation for their work with the local board. The chairperson of each district, or another designated supervisor, serves as that district's representative on the AACD board.

### **AACD's administration**

Each district is represented on the AACD board, and that board elects its president, vice president and secretary/treasurer. AACD's day-to-day operations are handled by an executive director and other staff.

### **AACD's leadership**

Contact information for AACD's staff and executive committee:

#### **Staff**

Steve Hicks, AACD Executive Director, 1700 E. Bogard Rd Ste 203A, Wasilla, AK 99654 907-373-7923; [aacd@mtaonline.net](mailto:aacd@mtaonline.net)

Dee Pond , AACD Admin Assistant, 1700 E. Bogard Rd. Ste. 203A, Wasilla, AK 99654  
907-373-7923; [aacdoa@mtaonline.net](mailto:aacdoa@mtaonline.net)

Joan Hope, AACD Project Manager, 1700 E. Bogard Rd. Ste. 203A, Wasilla, AK 907-315-1795;  
[aacdjoan@yahoo.com](mailto:aacdjoan@yahoo.com)

#### **Officers**

Ken Marsh, AACD president, 907-733-2557; [trappercreekmuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:trappercreekmuseum@yahoo.com)

Todd Pettit, AACD vice president, 907-745-5610; [trpettit@mtaonline.net](mailto:trpettit@mtaonline.net)

Charlie Dorman, AACD secretary/treasurer, 907-486-5396; [kodiaksmoking@gci.net](mailto:kodiaksmoking@gci.net)

Chris Rainwater, AACD past president, 907-235-6278; [growingk@gmail.com](mailto:growingk@gmail.com)

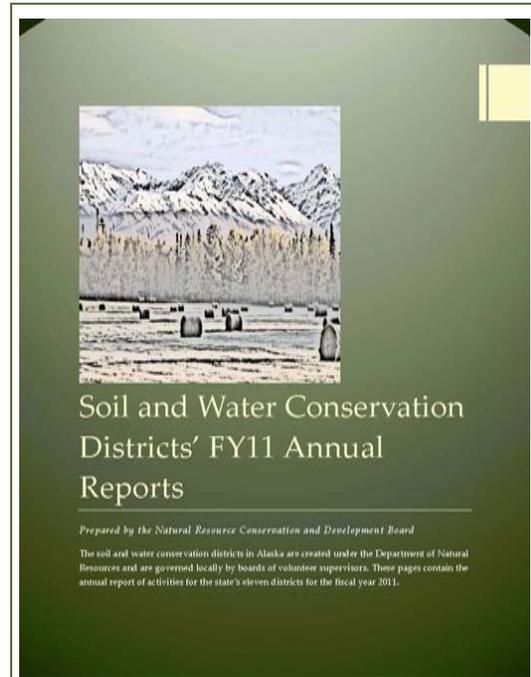
- Governed by Alaska Statute 41.10 - Soil & Water Conservation Law
- Districts are authorized quasi-state entities under the Department of Natural Resources
- Operated by locally-elected five-person boards of volunteer supervisors
- Representing over 1,000 cooperators statewide.
- Cooperators are local land users who produce renewable resources and sign an agreement with their local soil and water conservation district.
- Districts provide many services to the public including natural resource education opportunities



**Agriculture to aquaculture**  
**Salmon to bison**  
**Erosion and flood control to restoration**  
**...districts can help**

### Alaska's Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide support and services to property owners and land managers.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Agriculture &amp; Subsistence</li> <li>✓ Mariculture</li> <li>✓ Forestry</li> <li>✓ Horticulture</li> <li>✓ Renewable Energy</li> <li>✓ Land Management</li> <li>✓ Nutrient Management</li> <li>✓ Erosion Control</li> <li>✓ Resource Development &amp; Conservation</li> <li>✓ Confidential Technical Assistance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Educational Services</li> <li>✓ Land Capability Surveys</li> <li>✓ Land Use Consultation</li> <li>✓ Comprehensive Planning Services</li> <li>✓ Assistance Under the Alaska 'Right to Farm' Law</li> <li>✓ Assistance With Other State, Federal, and Local Agencies</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



**Don't miss the Soil and Water Conservation Districts' annual reports for FY11!** This report is available on CD by request and is posted online at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/swcdb/resources.htm>. Read about the district projects in your area.



WE WORK WITH A DIVERSE CUSTOMER BASE. HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District for assistance



# Soil & Water Conservation District History

The state of the nation's soil resources during the 1930's, a decade known as the Dust Bowl Era, inspired the establishment of soil and water conservation districts across the nation.

Alaska's first district was formed in 1947 and is still in operation today in Wasilla. In 1965, the districts collectively formed the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) to provide administrative services and in 1983, the Natural Resource Conservation & Development Board (NRCDB) was established to assist districts. Districts work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement Farm Bill programs in Alaska.



## Alaska's Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Alaska's SWCDs encompass the following populated and surrounding areas:

Anchorage (1,251,640 acres)  
Fairbanks (3,218,856 acres)  
Homer (1,048,636 acres)  
Kenai (298,430 acres)  
Kenny Lake (206,522 acres)  
Kodiak (3,134,209 acres)  
Palmer (1,572,804 acres)  
Salcha-Delta (2,493,650 acres)  
Upper-Susitna (1,707,746 acres)  
Wasilla (2,493,650 acres)  
Mid-Yukon Kuskokwim (9,793,700 acres)

All other land not within a local SWCD (331,298,200 acres) is overseen by the Natural Resource Conservation & Development Board.



Natural Resource Conservation & Development Board  
Department of Natural Resources  
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1400  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone: (907) 269-5007  
FAX: (907) 269-5605  
[www. http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/swcdb/swcdb.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/swcdb/swcdb.htm)

## Helping Alaska's Land Owners Develop and Conserve Their Natural Resources

Main Identity

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**From:** "Alaska Nature Guides" <info@alaskanatureguides.com>  
**To:** "USSWCD Assistant" <assist@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 29, 2009 9:09 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Letter of Support

Howard and Noelle Carbone  
Alaska Nature Guides  
P.O. Box 170  
Talkeetna, AK 99676  
(907) 733-1237

To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing in support of the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District Youth Conservation Corps' application for a work experience grant. We have worked with the YCC program and find it to be an excellent experience for the youth of our community.

We are a locally owned guided hiking business. The YCC has worked on the Talkeetna Lakes Trail and Byers Lake Trail, two of the main trails we use, and has done an excellent job. They are well organized, have outstanding leadership, and have a sterling reputation in the community. Their program gives our youth a productive outlet and teaches responsibility, strong work ethics, and how to be a good employee. The projects they do benefit the community in many ways, including the economic boost we get from being a tourist destination with well-maintained trails. Participants learn valuable skills, develop a respect for their surroundings, and come away with a sense of ownership for their community.

Please accept this letter of support and be assured that this program is a worthy recipient for a work experience grant.

Sincerely,

Howard and Noelle Carbone  
Owners, Alaska Nature Guides



**Jessica Stevens Community Foundation**

*An Affiliate of The Alaska Community Foundation*



**The local Youth Conservation Corps is building healthy northern Susitna communities.**

**You helped make that possible.**

**Please join the Jessica Stevens Community Foundation to celebrate our achievements.**

**Friday, November 4, 6-8 PM**

**Appetizers/Refreshments at Twister Creek, Talkeetna.**

For more info: [2011grants@jessicasfoundation.org](mailto:2011grants@jessicasfoundation.org)



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office  
605 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room G-61  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2249



Mat-Su Health Foundation  
950 E. Bogard Rd., Suite 218  
Wasilla Alaska 99654

January 24, 2011

Dear Mat-Su Health Foundation.

I am writing in support of the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District's proposal to continue and expand their Youth Conservation Corps program. The Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps provides an excellent and unique way for area youth to engage in service learning outdoors for an entire summer and provide meaningful benefits to local communities and resources. With our support over the past several years, these youth have done substantial work to revegetate disturbed lands along streams and lakes and to survey for and control invasive plants that are just beginning to colonize the northern portion of the Mat-Su Borough. Based on the impressive results of this work, the quality of these experiences for participating youth, and the professionalism of the staff, we are preparing to further support the crew's work during the summer of 2011 with an expanded focus to include improving multiple degraded stream crossings of a recreational trail near Talkeetna. It is clear to the US Fish and Wildlife Service that engaging youth in outdoor conservation efforts not only provides for their fitness over the course of the work and benefits to our natural resources. This work also instills in youth the importance and enjoyment of time spent outside and active that can keep them healthy throughout their lives. We hope that you too will make the support of the Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps a priority to this end.

Sincerely,

Jeff Heys  
Habitat Restoration Biologist



## United States Department of the Interior

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Denali National Park & Preserve  
Mile 237 Parks Highway  
P.O. Box 9  
Denali Park, AK 99755

6/30/2010

Bob Henry  
Talkeetna Ranger Station  
PO Box 588  
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

Mat-Su Health Foundation  
950 E. Bogard Rd., Suite 218  
Wasilla, AK 99654

Dear Mat-Su Health Foundation:

I am writing in support of the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District and their efforts at maintaining and growing their Youth Conservation Corps program. YCC has been an important part of the annual Denali-Susitna Exploration Camp co-sponsored and operated by Denali National Park and Preserve and the Conservation District. For the past five years we have together worked with local youth to enhance their connection to the nature they have all around them both inside and outside of public lands. The YCC members have experiences that support healthy lifestyle choices and introduce them to possible vocational opportunities as part of their work. During the week-long Denali-Susitna Exploration Camp, the YCC members are role models for younger adolescents attending camp. They find themselves internalizing positive behavioral choices as they model these behaviors to their younger community members. The individuals who have filled the role of YCC Director with the Conservation District are integral and essential to the planning, implementation, and ultimate success of DSEC. I have particularly enjoyed working with the USSWCD staff preparing for camp this summer. I look forward to our continued collaboration and success for the benefit of community youth. I hope Mat-Su Health Foundation will choose to support Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District efforts toward this end.

Sincerely,

Bob Henry  
Education Specialist  
Denali National Park and Preserve



## United States Department of the Interior

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Denali National Park and Preserve  
Mile 237 Parks Highway  
P.O. Box 9  
Denali Park, Alaska 99755

Division of Business Partnerships  
Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
State of Alaska  
1016 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 205  
Anchorage, AK 99501

April 28, 2009

To whom it may concern,

Denali National Park and Preserve has partnered with Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District (USSWCD) for many years on a "Denali Susitna Exploration Camp" aimed at youth and young adults in the southern portions of the national park. This youth camp has always had goals of exposing students to employability skills development as well as exposing the students to technology in an outdoor setting. The camp's duration tends to be an intensive short term work experience and is part of the much larger experience these youth have with USSWCD as Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) participants. During their overall experience with YCC through USSWCD young adults learn to pay attention to detail, communication skill and teamwork.

Please contact me at the address below if you have any questions about the specific nature of our support. The National Park Service is a formal partner in these young adult efforts of USSWCD in the Talkeetna, AK area and supports their application to the "Alaska Youth First Program" 2009.

Sincerely,

Christie Denzel Anastasia  
National Park Service  
Denali National Park and Preserve  
POB 9  
Denali National Park, AK 99755  
907.683.6440  
[Christie\\_anastasia@nps.gov](mailto:Christie_anastasia@nps.gov)



## Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

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CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF – GOVERNMENT

5310 S. Bodenbug Spur Road • Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Phone: (907) 745-8108 • Fax: (907) 745-1568 • E-mail: [BrianneAthearn@mtaonline.net](mailto:BrianneAthearn@mtaonline.net)

April 29, 2009

Alaska Youth First Program  
Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Business Partnerships  
1016 West 6th Avenue, Suite 205  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, I would like to express my support for the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District's Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) program.

The YCC program offers Youth the opportunity to gain valuable work experience through hands-on training in a variety of employment fields. The youth are exposed to an environment that fosters the development of a strong work ethic that will benefit them as they move through school and enter the work force. In addition to the direct skills they acquire, these youth are given the opportunity to connect and shadow working professionals in exciting, natural resource professions.

As a partner, I have had the chance to personally work with the Upper Susitna YCC program and have seen the impact it can have on both the youth involved and the communities they work in. I would support any funding to this worthwhile program.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Brianne Athearn  
Invasive Plants Program Coordinator  
Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
800 West Evergreen Avenue, Suite 100  
Palmer, AK 99645  
907-761-7760 907-761-7790 FAX  
[www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov)

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The Honorable Charlie Huggins  
State Senator  
Alaska State Legislature  
120 4<sup>th</sup> Street, State Capitol, Room 3  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator Huggins:

I am writing this letter to show my support for the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) and their request for funding from the State of Alaska. Over the years, the AACD has maintained an effective working relationship with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Alaska, in our efforts to promote efficient use and management of renewable resources. Additionally, through previous earmarks, the twelve districts have been effectively providing assistance to landowners and land users.

The earmark under which we work with AACD is project oriented and does not allow for sufficient administration funding for the districts; continuing education for staff and supervisors; and, is capped on how much the association can use for public outreach activities. Those funds have to come from another source and, as you are aware, these are critical activities for successful project completion. Furthermore, I would like to point out that AACD is following accountability and compliance procedures in accordance with proper NRCS and OMB requirements.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert N. Jones".

ROBERT N. JONES  
State Conservationist  
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Palmer, Alaska



# Knik Elementary School



*Today, I will be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.  
I will do nothing less than my best.*

Traci Pedersen, Principal

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 877830  
Wasilla, AK 99687  
907-352-0300 Phone

Location:  
6350 Hollywood Blvd.  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
907-352-0380 Fax

June 7, 2011

Ms. Catherine Inman  
Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District  
Building A, Suite 203  
1700 E. Bogard Road  
Wasilla, Alaska 99654

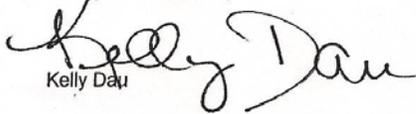
Dear Catherine:

Thank you so much for all of your effort, encouragement, and support in our initial stages of the Knik Elementary schoolyard habitat development. I still can't believe all that we accomplished! We now have a nature trail, we have extended our forest edge habitat (with 104 newly planted and watered trees), and we have a solid concept as to the design of our outdoor classroom seating area. I know that every fourth grade student from this year will always remember 'their contribution' to the initial stages of this on-going project.

I received numerous compliments from teachers, staff, parents, and students who were able to participate in the nature trail tours led by our own trained naturalists. Even our tour monitor, Meghan, shared that all tour guides and groups were interested, engaged, and excited about this new development at Knik! The wealth of knowledge shared by our own naturalists of our nature trail and appropriate trail behavior was impressive. Thank you for taking the additional time necessary to make each of these students a trained tour guide and naturalist!

Again, thank you for helping to make all this happen! It has been a privilege to develop this partnership with you and the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District, Jeff Hayes and the U.S. Forest Service, and Matanuska Telephone Association. I hope everyone enjoys summer, and Knik Elementary School students and staff look forward to continuing to work together on the Knik Elementary schoolyard habitat project next fall and beyond!

With greatest thanks,

  
Kelly Dau

cc: Traci Pedersen, Principal  
Jeff Hayes, U.S. Forest Service  
Catherine Esary, MSBSD



**Mission: Mat-Su Borough School District prepares students for success.**

# *Twindly Bridge Charter School*

Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

230 E. Paulson #76

Wasilla, Alaska 99654

Phone: (907) 376-6680 [www.twindlybridge.us](http://www.twindlybridge.us) Fax: (907) 376-6683

*Greg Miller Principal*

George Taylor  
Wasilla SWCD Office  
1700 E. Bogard Rd. St A203  
Wasilla, Ak 99654

Dear Mr. Taylor,

On behalf of Twindly Bridge Charter School, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of furniture and equipment to our school. These assets are appreciated as we continue to expand and grow our school.

I would also like to thank-you for coming and presenting to our students information on soils and ground water. The scientific information was informative and interesting, and will be a catalyst for further science teaching at our school.

Sincerely,

*Greg Miller*  
Greg Miller Principal

*"A bridge between home, school, and community learning"*

# Wasilla High School

**Warriors**

---

<b>Amy Spargo</b> Principal	<b>Ed Ripley</b> Assistant Principal
<b>Jeff Nelles</b> Assistant Principal	<b>Paul Cossette</b> Activities Director
<b>Shari Taylor</b> Administrative Secretary	

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701 East Bogard Road - Wasilla, AK 99654-7129 Phone: 907-352-8200 Fax: 907-352-8280

September 27, 2011

Dear Wasilla Soil and Water District,

Thank you for your recent donation of the Macro Invertebrate Testing Kit to our Science Department. Your support of hands-on science at Wasilla High is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

WHS Science Department

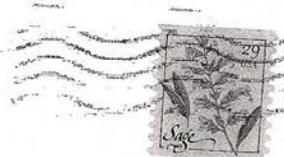
*Sarah Kitzon*  
*H. Cottrell*  
*Faith Brunhoevel*  
*Tim Walters*

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Mission: Mat-Su Borough School District prepares students for success.



Valley Community for  
Recycling Solutions  
PO Box 8766  
Wasilla, AK 99687



Hi Catherine,  
Happy New Year!

July 20, 2011 was a  
beautiful day for a rain  
garden planting. Thanks  
so much for all you  
and Wasilla Soil & Water  
Conservation contributed  
to help this project be a  
success... including your  
smoked salmon.

Abelate d. Chinan, shida  
Thank you in Denai'ia Athabaskan  
the midst of a snowy winter!!!

Catherine Inman  
Wasilla S & W Conservation  
1700 E Bogard Rd  
Bldg. A j Ste 203  
Wasilla, AK 99654

Thanks you, my friend  
Denai'ia Athabaskan  
Willie A. Boyer  
ex. Director

To whom it may concern,

Peonies bloom in Alaska in July, August and September and nowhere else in the world during this time. The University of Fairbanks has provided research results for the past five or more years helping to establish this new agriculture industry in Alaska. We have more than 15 peony farms in the Mat Su area and that number will continue to increase in the coming years.

Here are some state numbers:

- 1) In 2011, approximately 10,000 cut stems were sold for an average price of \$4.00 per stem.
- 2) There are over 50,000 peony roots in the ground on peony farms in Alaska and farmers are continuing to add roots at over 10,000 roots per year.
- 3) Standard production figures are for 10 cut stems per plant. With 50,000 roots, 500,000 cuts per year are expected 2015. This equates to between and 1 and 2 million dollars a year in sales at a conservative estimate of \$2-\$4 per stem.
- 4) Value per acre: 2500-5000 plants per acre x 10 cuts x \$2-\$4 per stem equals \$50,000 to \$100,000 production value per acre.

One of the most cost effective things that we can do for the success of our peony fields is soil testing. The \$75 dollars we spent on soil testing this summer helped us decide which topsoil vendor to use. Because of soil testing, we were able to save \$20,000 in soil costs. Because of this great savings, I was very willing to serve on the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District board when asked. I do, however, have other motives as well. After some research this summer for equipment rental, I talked with a few peony farmers on the Kenai. I say a few because there are only 7 farms in that area and we already have a larger group here in the Mat Su. Anyway, the farmers down on the Kenai are able to rent equipment from their Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District for minimal costs. Bedshapers and tillers for \$35/day. Peony farmers in the Mat Su do not have that economic advantage in starting their farms. In fact, the high cost of start up is keeping many would be farmers in the stall.

I look forward to working on some of the obstacles we face in the Mat Su as peony farmers, while championing the many great programs the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District already has in place such as working with members of the community, as well as promoting conservation education in our local schools. I also appreciate the work they've accomplished on numerous stream bank restorations to promote healthy salmon habitats.

Please continue your support for the upcoming year! I'd be happy to talk more if you'd like to call.

Thank you,



Rachel Christy  
Alaska Blooms Peony Farm, LLC  
Meadow Lakes AK

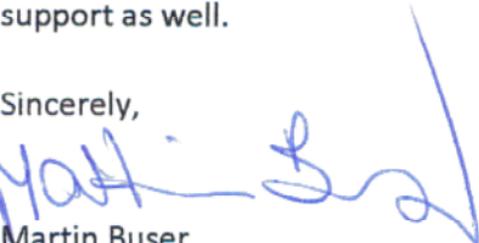
January 17, 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District is a valuable asset to our community. They have performed several streambank restorations, providing improved habitat for our salmon. In 2010, the Wasilla District was the recipient of the National Fish Habitat award. Other accomplishments include several rain gardens at local schools and senior centers, as well as community gardens at senior centers. They promote conservation education in our local schools and sponsor field trips to various conservation sites and projects. With the assistance of the Wasilla District, I participated in the pilot project for dog waste composting. The results were successful and after the District provided free nutrient testing of the compost, we were able to use the product on a flower garden at one of our local schools.

We are very thankful for the Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District and appreciate the many projects and services that they offer to make our community a better place. We would encourage your support as well.

Sincerely,



Martin Buser

Happy Trails Kennel