

# ALASKA NATIVE NOTES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

## HELLO!!

Kristi Harper here and I am very excited about the second issue of our Alaska Native Newsletter. I hope this newsletter finds everyone's freezers full of fish and moose from this season's harvest.

For those who do not know USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), we are a federal agency with in the United States Department of Agriculture. NRCS is an agency that works with private landowners to help conserve their natural resources.

Apparently, my last issue, titled *Alaska Native News*, is an existing publication used by another group. I am sorry for the confusion. The new title is *Alaska Native Notes*. Hopefully this one is more unique and will not cause any confusion!!

As stated before, my intent within each newsletter is to bring you important dates, program information, highlights and examples from our projects with Native customers and current activity with the Tribal Conservation Districts (TCDs).



Me taking a break from fishing on the Klutina

In this issue I will highlight the Tribal Conservation Districts gardening projects, the Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance's Symposium: *Preserving Alaska*, and USDA's newly established Tribal Advisory Councils, the CNAFR and RTCAC.

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## COUNCIL OF NATIVE AMERICAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Council of Native American Farmers and Ranchers (CNAFR) was created to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on ways to eliminate barriers to participation for Native

American and Alaska Native Farmers and Ranchers in USDA programs. The Council was established as part of the Keepseagle Settlement and is pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as

amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

The representative selected for the Alaska region is Angela Sandstol from Tyonek, Alaska.

For more information on Angela see page 2. For more information on Keepseagle see: [www.indianfarmclass.com](http://www.indianfarmclass.com).



"Guiding the Way for Native Agriculture"

## ANGELA SANDSTOL



Angela Sandstol's official CNAFR photo.

Angela is quickly becoming the face of Tribal Conservation Districts (TCD) in Alaska. She is Dena'ina Tribe from Tubugh-nenq' (Tyonek), Alaska.

Some of her notable accomplishments include being apart of the first ever established TCD in Alaska, Tyonek TCD in 2005 and then going on to serve as their Chairperson. After

her term ended in fall 2011, she didn't take a break or even pause long enough to catch her breath before jumping right into the newly formed Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance (ATCA) where she was also nominated and selected to serve as Chairperson. Shortly there after, she was appointed by the Board of Directors to serve as their

first Executive Director.

She just finished hosting their very successful First Annual Symposium: *Preserving Alaska*.

She is also the representative for Alaska on the Council of American Indian/Alaska Natives Farmers and Ranchers. She can be contacted at Angelasandstol@gmail.com.

## REGIONAL TRIBAL CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Michael Sloan at the first RTCAC meeting

The Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Committee (RTCAC) can be instrumental in assisting the NRCS Chief, Regional Conservationists and State Conservations in strengthening government-to-government relations and clarifying the lines of communication and consultation

with Indian Tribes. These councils can also provide a venue for agency leaders to gather input on Tribal issues. Members for the RTCAC were selected late this summer.

Alaska's representative is Michael Sloan.

Michael Sloan is the Tribal Resource Director

for the Nome Eskimo Community. He looks to bring awareness of Arctic agriculture, invasive species and climate change impacts to subsistence resources, and energy issues.

This committee met for the first time in Phoenix, Arizona in September.

## USDA TRIBAL COLLABORATION MEETINGS



Participants at the Southeast Alaska meeting, May 2012

Starting in 2011, USDA Rural Development (RD) began hosting Tribal Collaboration meetings throughout Alaska.

To date, meetings were held in Bethel, Nome, Ketchikan, Juneau, and Tazlina. Two additional meetings are to be

scheduled, one in September in Kodiak and one in Anchorage in October.

These USDA RD led meetings involve face-to-face collaboration meetings with the acknowledged leader or point of contact for each tribe. USDA NRCS also

participates in the meetings along with other federal agencies.

For more information and a blog about the meetings please see: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/AKTribalBlog.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/AKTribalBlog.html).

## SYMPOSIUM: PRESERVING ALASKA

The First Annual Symposium: *Preserving Alaska* was held at the Dimond Center Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska on August 21 and 22. The event was hosted by the Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance. At least 20 different Tribal entities and more than 75 individuals were present.

Scholarships were available to help assist with the high cost of travel in Alaska.

This year's symposium focused on why and how a Tribal Conservation District can help



communities.

Presenters included, NRCS State Conservationist Bob Jones, NRCS Southern hub Leader Meg Mueller, NRCS Alaska Native Liaison Kristi Harper, NRCS Agronomist Craig Smith, US Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Native Affairs Specialist Crystal Leonetti, USDA Rural Development State Director Jim Nordlund, USDA Farm Service Agency State Director Daniel Consenstein, Tyonek TCD Executive Director Christy Cincotta and Grant Writer Erin Hoffman.

The established TCDs of Tyonek, Mt. Village, Kwethluk, and Copper River/ Ahtna participated on a panel; the topic of discussion was how their TCD was created.

Also present at the Symposium, thanks to technology, was USDA Office of Tribal Relations Senior Advisor Janie Hipp. A good question and answer session took place through the live web meeting.

Jerry Thompson from the Wisconsin Tribal Advisory Council gave an in-depth presentation on Key Tribal Policies within USDA NRCS and the Indigenous Stewardship Methods Guidebook. His presentation was by far the most popular.

For those who may not have made this year's Symposium, keep your ears open for next year's date! Request a CD of the Symposium presentations by emailing Kristi Harper at: [Kristine.harper@ak.usda.gov](mailto:Kristine.harper@ak.usda.gov).



Tribal Conservation District Board Member Panel Discussion at the Symposium

“GREAT PRESENTERS... VERY BENEFICIAL FOR ME. I ENJOYED THE OPEN DIALOGUE FORMAT WHERE PEOPLE CAN BE HEARD!”  
SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANT

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: TCD GARDENING

This Kwethluk TCD and Tyonek TCD both planted very successful community gardens. Kwethluk was able to use high tunnels or “hoop houses” for the first time while Tyonek broke ground on a large plot with hopes to secure a high tunnel next season.

Kwethluk tested three different sized high tunnels. Local residents favored leafy greens and are excited to harvest some fresh lettuce. Kwethluk residents think high tunnels may do well if placed at fish camp.

Tyonek planted a variety of potatoes, cabbage, carrots and radishes. The residents in Tyonek visited the garden regularly throughout the summer, caring for their individual plots. Tyonek plans to harvest in October.



Planting in Kwethluk, Summer 2012



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## FALL/WINTER TIDBITS FROM THE ALASKA NATIVE LIAISON

Looking ahead to plans in the fall and early winter, USDA NRCS will be present at the following conferences: Elders & Youth, Alaska Federation of Natives, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, BIA Providers Conference, and the Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management.

Also please visit the Alaska Native Groups website for USDA NRCS Alaska where you can find additional information. The site is updated when new information arises. The web site address is:  
[www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/Alaska%20Native%20Groups/AlaskaNativeGroups.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/Alaska%20Native%20Groups/AlaskaNativeGroups.html) or search online for Alaska NRCS Native Groups.

Another good source for information is the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC). IAC not only provides technical assistance to Tribes but was founded in 1987 to "pursue and promote the conservation, development and use of Tribal agricultural resources." The IAC Alaska Technical Specialist is Maricia Skinna. Her email is: [mskinna@indianaglink.com](mailto:mskinna@indianaglink.com). Please visit their website at: [www.indianaglink.com/index.html](http://www.indianaglink.com/index.html)

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Don't hesitate to send me a message!



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