

TTCD Newsletter—Summer 2014

Tyonek Tribal Conservation District

July 2014

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Subsistence is our Agriculture.

Tyonek Tribal Conservation District Updates

Summer is our favorite season here at TTCD, and we are enjoying spending it outdoors and in Tyonek! In this quarter's newsletter, we're sharing updates on our many exciting programs. All of our work is community guided—please let us know if you have suggestions! Enjoy!

Community Agriculture Program

Summer is now in full swing and with a lot of help and hard work, the Tyonek garden is flourishing! So far this season we have had national attention from the USDA, involved community youth, developed a harvest distribution plan and have fun events planned for the rest of the season.



With spring's prompt arrival, TTCD staff and community participants achieved an early start with a blessing and planting ceremony led by village president Al Goozmer in the high tunnels on May 9th. The garden is now filled with thriving plants, including tomatoes, corn, squash, herbs, potatoes, rhubarb, radishes, and many more.

The Tyonek garden project has captured the attention of many important figures throughout the State and now the Nation. In June, TTCD welcomed high-profile visitors from both Alaska and Washington DC including the Office of Secretary Director of Tribal Relations Leslie Wheelock, NRCS Assistant Chief Kirk Hanlin, and others in agricultural, tribal and natural resource sectors.



Youth involvement and continuing education is a high priority for TTCD. This year Tyonek youth have been involved since February starting plants in the school and transplanting them in the spring. This year we were thrilled to hire four youth workers aged 15-18 to assist in the garden. They are amazing workers and are becoming great young farmers that can pass

knowledge on to their peers and community.

The first harvest occurred on June 30th and was distributed to Tyonek Elders. We will be selling organic produce at a weekly farm stand at the Tyonek garden for a low cost to residents. All proceeds go directly to the garden project for future. Your support will allow us to continue this program for years to come.



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Fish Passage Program

Fish passage and habitat have continued to be major priorities for TTCD since it was started in 2005. This year, TTCD was one of two successful grant applications in Alaska to be selected into the Tribal Wildlife Grant program through US Fish & Wildlife Service.

This grant will fund the Tyonek Area Watershed Action Plan, a two year project that seeks to restore, enhance, and protect freshwater systems in the District. TTCD plans to participate in area wide watershed planning to identify priority watershed and aquatic resource issues and establish a watershed monitor-

ing program with an emphasis on: invasive species removal, increasing in-stream and riparian habitat, and conducting outreach to tribal members that explains the information gathered and the importance of habitat restoration and protection.

As part of our overall efforts to improve fish habitat, TTCD successfully secured funding to complete the Tyonek Creek culvert replacement this summer. This project, funded by US Fish & Wildlife Service, AK Dept of Fish & Game, Tyonek Native Corporation, Hilcorp, the Cook Inlet Region, Inc, and ConocoPhillips, will open nearly 7.5 miles of upstream habitat for salmon. Tyonek Con-

tractors, LLC and Dowl HKM have begun work on this project and we anticipate that the project will be complete by July 31.

Please contact TTCD if you have any suggestions for potential culvert replacement projects in the District.



Above: Partially completed culvert installation on Tyonek Creek. Photo by Dowl HKM.

Other Summer Projects

Later this summer, TTCD will be starting two new projects. Through generous funding from the Alaska Native Fund, TTCD will be participating in Tyonek's 4th Annual Big Lake Culture Camp. TTCD will be covering topics in agriculture, watershed science, plant ecology, and wildlife ecology.

Also in July, TTCD will implement our new invasive plant control project. Staff will be documenting and developing control methods for invasive plants in Tyonek, Beluga, Skwentna and Alexander Creek. This will be a two year project, with the goal of locating and eradicating invasive plants before they spread.

Are you a District resident or stakeholder? TTCD wants to work with you to help you achieve your conservation goals! Please call Tonya Kaloa at 907-646-3126 or email tkaloa@tyonek.com to learn more.

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New TTCD Staff



TTCD is pleased to welcome Nicole Swenson as our new Conservation Project Manager.

Nicole has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a Master's of Science in Natural Resource Management. Having grown up in Alaska, she is passionate about Alaska's natural resources and local food production. This summer she is focusing her efforts on the Tyonek garden and a district wide invasive weeds monitoring program.

Nicole is honored to be a part of TTCD and is eager to help people grow their own food and sustainably use their resources.