

# Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

## Funding Request

The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) respectfully request continued legislative support with funding for this year's field and administrative operations.

The AACD has leveraged millions of federal dollars, which have been used state wide to protect, restore, and enhance communities and their local natural resources. Throughout the state of Alaska the AACD has helped protect, fish habit, river banks, lands from erosion, native Alaskan species, trails, wood lands and much more.

Please support funding for the AACD which works with all Alaskans to grow communities, protect Alaska's lands and supports economy.

### State Funding from 2007

2007 \$750.000

2008 \$350.000

2009 \$0

2010 \$300.000

2011 \$500.000

Please Call : Pete Fellman with questions and concerns 907- 803- 3571

**Project Title:** Alaska Association of Conservation Districts - Provide the technical guidance and assistance in soil and water conservation

**TPS Number:** 57008

**Priority:** 1

**Agency:** Commerce, Community and Economic Development  
Grants to Named Recipient (AS 37.05.316)

**Federal Tax ID:** 92-0161947

**Grant Recipient:** Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

**FY2013 State Funding Request:** \$1,500,000

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:	(\$1,500,000)
Project Deficit:	\$0
<b>Explanation of Other Funds:</b>	
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. Across the state, SWCDs help landowners develop their land responsibly, while taking into consideration such issues as air quality, soil degradation and erosion, water quality, and forestry management. Thousands of personal contacts with landowners are made each year in districts around the state.

Other 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 and resource education to local schools. Districts conduct land capability surveys and investigations of potential agricultural areas and soil conservation and erosion control. Construct, improve, and maintain soil erosion control and conservation structures. Local districts work with numerous agencies, organizations, local government, and private citizens to deliver our programs. Working cooperatively within the community helps the district to be well informed and provide services that are useful and timely.

Districts provide a report on activities to the Natural Resources Conservation Development Board, who, in turn, advises the Governor and 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 projects statewide unless we have funding for 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.



# 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



Ken Marsh, President  
Alaska Association of Conservation Districts  
1700 E. Bogard Road, Suite 218  
Wasilla, Alaska 99654

March 16, 2012

Dear Mr. Marsh,

I am writing in support of the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District's plans to continue 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 their work provides meaningful benefits to local communities and resources. With our support over the past several years, these youth have done substantial work to restore salmon habitat along streams and lakes and to survey for and control invasive plants in 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 through 2013. It is clear that engaging youth in outdoor conservation efforts provides for both their improved fitness and work ethic and direct benefits to our natural resources. We hope that the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District receives enough support to retain the Youth Conservation Corps program.

Sincerely,

Jeff Heys  
Habitat Restoration Biologist

Windows Live™ Hotmail (1006) Messenger (0) SkyDrive | MSN

pet

Hotmail

New | Reply Reply all Forward | Delete Junk Sweep ▾ Mark as ▾ Move to ▾ Categories

**Inbox (1006)**

Folders

**Junk (18)**

Drafts (9)

farmland eq

Sent

**Deleted (50)**

**2012 lobby (6)**

business

family

**farm bureau (1)**

jokes

**lobby (3)**

New folder

Quick views

Flagged

**Office docs (38)**

**Photos (106)**

Shipping updates

New category

**Messenger**

Search contacts

Your friends are offline right now.

Sign out of Messenger

Home

Contacts

Calendar



## Fwd: Provide Funding for Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Heidi Chay Add to contacts

To Pete Fellman, Kenneth Marsh, Steve Hicks

3/21/12

Reply ▾

⚠ Attachments, pictures and links in this message have been blocked for your safety.

Show content | Always show content from kenaiswcd@gmail.com

from Kenai...

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bill Johnson** <johnson@ionia.org>

Date: Wed, Mar 21, 2012 at 6:31 PM

Subject: Provide Funding for Soil & Water Conservation Districts

To: "Kenai\_LIO@legis.state.ak.us"

<Kenai\_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Cc: Heidi Chay <kenaiswcd@gmail.com>

--Please forward to the Finance Committee--

I am a long time resident (in Kasilof) and registered voter. I am writing to strongly urge you to provide funding for the Alaska Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Though the Districts are provided for in part through NRCS, the funding you have control over provides an absolutely essential basis for their operation. The Districts provide many essential services in support of agriculture throughout Alaska. In my own area on the Kenai Peninsula, farmers large and small old and new, are enabled to cooperate about such essential services as producing high quality fertilizer, obtaining critical equipment, exchanging valuable information, understanding and being assisted in working with state land-use guide-lines, working together to build many (50) new hi-tunnel greenhouses that have already transformed the agricultural possibilities of our difficult climate, thus greatly enhancing the hope for Alaskan food security. The members of the Conservation Districts are some of the residents most committed to the long term livability of our shared home state, I urge you to continue to fund their efforts.

Sincerely,

## Fwd: Fund Conservation Districts

From: **Heidi Chay** (kenaiswcd@gmail.com)  
Sent: Wed 3/21/12 8:30 PM  
To: Pete Fellman (petefellman@hotmail.com); Kenneth Marsh (trappercreekmuseum@yahoo.com); Steve Hicks (aacd@mtaonline.net)

from Kenai...

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Judy Queen** <judyqueen@me.com>  
Date: Wed, Mar 21, 2012 at 5:22 PM  
Subject: Fund Conservation Districts  
To: [Kenai\\_LIO@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Kenai_LIO@legis.state.ak.us)

Please forward this message to the Senate Finance Committee.

I'm speaking in support of the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts request for funding. As a 50-year resident of the Kenai Peninsula, I am deeply concerned about our ability to grow food locally to lessen our dependence upon outside supply lines in the event of emergency, to lessen the economic impact of being so far away from our food sources, and to have quality, healthy choices available to Alaskans through sustainable agriculture within our own state.

Our Conservation District here is necessary to promote these goals, and has been very helpful in providing information, learning opportunities, and assistance to dozens of new high tunnel growers on the Peninsula. Further, since agricultural enterprises have historically been limited to a very small section of our State as well as with a relatively narrow production scope, the District has been a great resource in helping to expand options and opportunities for new growers that have heretofore not been available. I'm told that districts in our State have historically brought in 4 to 9 non-state dollars for every state dollar. Base funding received from the state via the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts is essential to keep the doors open and leverage additional sources of federal and private funding.

Please include AACD's funding request in the Capital Budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Judith V. Queen  
54425 Polar Way  
Kenai, AK 99611

907 776 8598

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Heidi Chay  
District Manager / High Tunnel Project Coordinator

## Fwd: Fund Conservation Districts

From: **Heidi Chay** (kenaiswcd@gmail.com)  
Sent: Wed 3/21/12 8:29 PM  
To: Pete Fellman (petefellman@hotmail.com); Kenneth Marsh (trappercreekmuseum@yahoo.com); Steve Hicks (aacd@mtaonline.net)

from Kenai...

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Michelle Martin** <[michelleusu@gmail.com](mailto:michelleusu@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Mar 21, 2012 at 6:25 PM  
Subject: Fund Conservation Districts  
To: [Kenai\\_LIO@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Kenai_LIO@legis.state.ak.us)

Please forward to the Senate Finance Committee:

Dear Senators,

I'm writing to urge you to approve the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts' request for funding in this year's Capital Budget. As a resident of Kenai, I truly value what the Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District (KSWCD) brings to our community. One of my primary concerns as a citizen is local food security. While local meat and fish are relatively easy to obtain, we Alaskans are at the end of a very long supply chain when it comes to most of the produce and dairy that we consume. We need organizations such as KSWCD, which facilitate the exchange of information among local growers, connect growers with federal programs such as the USDA-NRCS high tunnel program, and provide a means of bringing federal and private grant money into our community to continue such efforts. I've also appreciated the work of the Homer Soil & Water Conservation District, which has employed a youth crew for the past few summers to control invasive plants. The existence of these Soil & Water Conservation Districts is mandated by the state, but it is an ongoing struggle for them to remain working and effective because there is no secure, yearly state funding for them. They fill a very valuable role in our communities and our state, and a small amount of state funding would allow them to maintain minimal staff and office space and leverage much more money in order to pursue such goals as local food security. Thanks for your service to our state, and please fund our Conservation Districts!

Sincerely,  
Michelle Martin, Kenai

--  
Heidi Chay  
District Manager / High Tunnel Project Coordinator  
**Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District**

110 Trading Bay Suite 160  
Kenai, AK 99611  
(907) 283-8732 x108  
[kenaiswcd@gmail.com](mailto:kenaiswcd@gmail.com)

My name is Bryce Wrigley. I am a farmer in Delta Junction, Alaska. I would like to speak in favor of adding 1.5 million dollars to the budget for the soil and water conservation districts throughout Alaska.

The Districts work locally to enhance fisheries, improve forests, and improve trails for recreation and hunting. They are the front lines for managing noxious and invasive weeds in the state. They provide research and technical assistance for our farmers and ranchers, create and enhance wildlife habitat, and leverage large amounts of federal dollars that would otherwise be lost. They are not preservationists, but pro development, and work to see that development of our resources proceeds responsibly.

Conservation districts are the most efficient of all state agencies, but they are not funded by the state. They support the mining, oil and gas, agriculture, fishing, and tourism industries, and local quality of life issues that make Alaska a nice place to live and work.

The 1.5 million dollars is spread across 11 districts statewide with another soon to be formed district in Southeast. The money keeps their door open, provides matching funds, and helps fund all the aforementioned projects. Their work benefits residents from Nome to Tok and from Manley to Ketchikan. With permission, they have worked in those areas of the state that do not yet have a conservation district formed.

I hope the Legislature will acknowledge the valuable work performed throughout Alaska by the conservation Districts by providing the needed funds to continue their work as they support virtually every industry, and directly or indirectly, every community in Alaska.

## Fwd: Fund Conservation Districts

From: **Heidi Chay** (kenaiswcd@gmail.com)

Sent: Wed 3/21/12 8:28 PM

To: Pete Fellman (petefellman@hotmail.com); Steve Hicks (aacd@mtaonline.net); Kenneth Marsh (trappercreekmuseum@yahoo.com)

from Kenai...

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <[lheite@alaska.com](mailto:lheite@alaska.com)>

Date: Wed, Mar 21, 2012 at 5:57 PM

Subject: Fund Conservation Districts

To: [Senator\\_Hollis\\_French@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Hollis_French@legis.state.ak.us), [Kenai\\_LIO@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Kenai_LIO@legis.state.ak.us)

Cc: [kenaiswcd@gmail.com](mailto:kenaiswcd@gmail.com)

Dear Senator French and Kenai legislators:

It has just now come to my attention that the State's budget has failed to include funding for the Soil and Water Conservation District program. This program supports agricultural efforts all over Alaska. I presently reside in Senator French's district, and am also a landowner on the Kenai Peninsula. I am in the process of developing a small farm on my land there.

As Alaska's food security is becoming an ever more important issue, the SWCD program has helped people develop sustainable local food sources for all Alaskans, from Bethel to Fairbanks, from the Matanuska Valley to the Peninsula and the Panhandle. This program brings in invaluable development money for a sorely underdeveloped part of our economy, at a rate of \$4 to \$9 for every dollar the state contributes. By supporting local agriculture, the SWCD program is helping Alaska to free itself from the predatory pricing and shipping charges for necessities that are sent from the Lower 48.

Among the services offered is the rental of equipment that can help potential farmers open new land to agriculture. The development pressure on the open land in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley is a matter of public record. The Kenai Peninsula, as the next nearest potential agricultural area to Anchorage, would lose an incredibly valuable opportunity if the development, planning, and technical services that SWCD provides were no longer available.

Please do not let this priceless resource die simply due to an oversight or to a very misguided attempt to "save" money. The tiny amount saved pales in comparison to the huge amount lost. Penny wise is too often pound foolish - we Alaskans can't afford that!

Sincerely,

Louise Heite  
Anchorage and Kenai

--  
Heidi Chay

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



## **Alaska Association of Conservation Districts**

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CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF – GOVERNMENT

5310 S. Bodenburg 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 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)



## 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

**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

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.nrcc.usda.gov](http://www.ak.nrcc.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 black ink that reads "Robert N. Jones".

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