

Meristems Forestry  
22538 Kolp Rd  
Grand Rapids, Mn 55744  
April 4, 2014

Senator Pete Kelly  
Alaska Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Senator Kelly:

Please support full funding of the BAKLAP (Boreal Alaska—Learning, Adaptation, Production) program for 2014 and into the future.

This program is a multi-dimensional program that will greatly improve science/ecological education (the STEM/STEAM mission) for the youth of Alaska in particular, but also the residents of Alaska more generally. Documenting long-term forest growth in response to harvesting, the other mission of BAKLAP, is critical to sustainable management of this valuable, renewable natural resource. Both of these program missions are equally important and deserve your full support.

My personal reasons for the importance of these missions:

STEM/STEAM—This program trains teachers and students directly and the general adult population indirectly and directly. The skills learned, among others, (understanding the scientific method, quantitative and qualitative observational skills, and critical thinking) are essential to good citizenship regardless of one's work or profession. For students with a particular interest in the sciences, this program provides early training and an appreciation for the importance of this knowledge. The inclusion of the arts through STEAM is, I believe, central to a good education. Creative thinking can only be achieved by cross-training in the arts and sciences.

Assessment of long-term forest growth—Forest management for sustained yield of multiple resources is absolutely dependent on developing an understanding of forest development over decades of research and observation. The work proposed here will help to meet this requirement for sustainable forest resource management.

Thank you.  
John Zasada

(Note: this letter of support is based on my 20+ years of work as a research forester with the USDA Forest Service in Alaska (1960's-1980's). For the past 10 years, I have taught birch bark weaving and the importance of nontimber forest products in managing forests in Fairbanks, Talkeetna, Palmer, and other Alaska communities. During my years in Alaska my family was very involved in youth education through the 4-H program as it related to forestry and agriculture.)