

Forming Tribal Conservation Districts

ALASKA



What is a TCD?

Tribal Conservation Districts (TCDs) combine local and traditional knowledge with technical resources to actively manage natural resources in a defined area.

The goal of a TCD is to set local priorities for conservation and ensure sustainable use of natural resources for subsistence, economic opportunity, resource development, and cultural preservation.

TCDs establish a formal partnership between the USDA and the tribal nation, allowing for an efficient framework to identify, develop, and provide technical, financial, and educational resources.



The Kuiglugmiut (Kwethluk) Tribal Conservation District celebrated the establishment of their TCD with a signing ceremony in 2009.

Benefits of a TCD

Providing a Voice

TCDs provide a local voice in efforts to address natural resource concerns. They provide leadership for intra-tribal coordination between tribal governments and other tribal natural resource managers, and they coordinate assistance from NRCS and other federal, state, local, and private sources.

Nation-to-Nation Relationship

TCDs work with the USDA in strengthening the government-to-government relationship. A TCD can support enhanced working relationships with state and federal agencies that can assist in meeting the community's needs.

Access to Funding

TCDs can provide streamlined access to federal conservation programs within their communities. TCDs may be recipients of funding such as cooperative agreements or partnership agreements. TCDs can facilitate the application process for tribal landowners to apply for NRCS Farm Bill programs. TCDs may apply for a variety of non-federal funding sources to provide match-funding that may be required for federal programs. They provide a mechanism to secure and manage diverse funding sources to accomplish projects on-the-ground.

Technical Support

TCDs provide technical, financial, and educational assistance in addressing the resource needs of traditional lands.

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Forming a TCD

The TCD formation process is relatively simple but can be lengthy. Typically, one or multiple tribes work with NRCS staff to develop a mutual agreement between the future TCD participants and the USDA. TCD participants may include tribes and village and/or regional tribal non-profits and corporations.

Additionally, each participating tribal entity must draft and sign a resolution through their governing body which authorizes the future TCD to be a party in the agreement.

NRCS then submits these documents through a series of approvals all the way up to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Step-by-Step Process to Form a TCD

1. Tribal entity determines interest in creating a TCD. In Alaska, TCDs are typically initiated by one or more local tribes, though participating entities may include village and/or regional non-profits and corporations.
2. NRCS provides TCD participants templates for one Mutual Agreement (MA) and a resolution for each TCD participant. All entities are signatories of the MA.
3. NRCS will review the MA and all corresponding resolutions and draft a Cover Memo. These three items comprise the TCD package.
4. The TCD package is sent to the NRCS State Conservationist for review. It is then elevated through a series of governmental offices for review and approval. At any point in the review process the package can be returned to NRCS Alaska for clarification, inconsistencies, incomplete information, or other concerns.
5. If the package successfully completes the multi-step review process, the USDA Office of Executive Secretariat submits it to the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) to secure the Secretary's signature.
6. The package is then first signed by the Secretary of Agriculture, then by leadership of each participating tribal entity.
7. USDA encourages TCD participants to have a signing ceremony, develop a TCD board and bylaws, and identify and define common goals, roles and expectations.



Asa'carsarmiut TCD staff build a greenhouse.



Theo Garcia with Knik TCD (right) talks with NRCS Alaska State Conservationist Alan McBee about the Tribe's agricultural production at their potato storage facility.



Tyonek TCD is working with many partners including USDA to install fish passage culverts to improve salmon habitat.





Tonya Kaloo harvests zucchini inside a high tunnel in Tyonek.



Student interns prepare garden beds in Tyonek.



Salmon hang inside a smoke house in Akiak.

ALASKA TRIBAL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (TCDs) BY YEAR ESTABLISHED

1. Bering Sea Interior TCD	Pending
2. Native Village of Goodnews Bay Tribal Designated Conservation District	Pending
3. Chugach Region TCD	2021
4. Keex' Kwaan TCD (Kake)	2021
5. Ruby TCD	2019
6. Ketchikan Indian Community TCD	2018
7. Nuiqsagmiut TCD (Nuiqsut)	2018
8. Southeast Regional TCD	2018
9. Tanana TCD	2018
10. Eklutna TCD	2016
11. Yakutat TCD	2015
12. Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission TCD	2014
13. Akiacuarmiut TCD	2014
14. Knik TCD	2014
15. Kuuvaniut TCD (Ambler)	2014
16. Nuvendaltun TCD (Nondalton)	2014
17. Prince of Wales TCD	2014
18. T'ee Drink Jik TCD (Venetie)	2014
19. Tuyurak TCD (Togiak)	2014
20. Nunivak Island TCD (Mekoryuk)	2011
21. Asa'carsarmiut TCD (Mountain Village)	2009
22. Kuigglugmiut TCD (Kwethluk)	2009
23. Tyonek TCD	2006

