

Welcome and Introductions, Scott C.

- Sign in sheet used
- Phone:
 - Eunice Bower
 - Donna Rae Faulkner and Don McNamara, Oceanside Farms?
 - Charles Parker, AVI

Opening - FPAC and New Agreement Process, Cassie Storms

- Unique PMC b/c it is not part of NRCS like it is in other states
- This PMC is run by the state
- NRCS, RMA and FSA are administratively being combined into the FPAC for processing support activities such as agreements, contracts, etc.
- We used to be able to control payment issues, etc. but now we do not have any control over how issues are handled
- Please continue to call us if you are running into problems or support issues
- NRCS overview. NRCS has two separate houses. —Cassie oversees the admin side of the State Office—coop agreements, grants, contracting (non EQIP), HR., etc. and then there is the tech side of things and that is where the EQIP (Program) contracting is conducted
 - EZ fed grants is on the admin side of things—FPAC will be using EZ fed grants
 - 3 people in your org. will need level 2 e-auth. access (not employee/e-auth. level two)
**Sydney question for Cassie... will this be like CCG where folks need two separate level 2 e-auth. acct access.
 - Please call before an appointment is made at NRCS to get the level 2 e-auth. access
 - She has list of contact people
 - Please call if people get stuck in the process and Pam Collier can help you through
- SAMS/DUNS—still necessary for admin grants and cooperative agreements. It is only the Programs contracts that don't need SAMS/DUNS

Tribal Conservation Districts Update, Kristi

- Intro on herself—range management and archaeology background
- **PowerPoint—The Rise of TCDs in AK**
 - TCDs in Alaska are unique in that we can have multiple tribes involved in one TCD vs. in the lower 48 where it is exclusive one tribe, one TCD
 - **Tyonek TCD initially established in 2005 and has expanded tremendously**
 - Received a RCPP==culvert replacement
 - Pike removal
 - TYCS (tikes) program-Tyonek Youth Conservation Science where they do science and technology programs
 - Tyonek Grown – integrated into the TYCS program, large gardening program with two high tunnels (EQIP) and utilizing solar power
 - Older youth internship program

- **Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC doing business as CRITR)**
 - Formed in 2014
 - CIG completed last year to identify new techniques for improving moose habitat
 - Moved into a new building and hired specialist and admin staff
- **Asa'carsarmiut TCD (Mountain Village)**
 - Funding for two small school greenhouses
 - Traditional Place Name Map
- **T'ee Drin Jik (Venetie and Arctic Village)**
 - Garden and working on an EQIP high tunnel
 - Youth involved in gardening and board member
- **Prince of Wales TCD**
 - Four tribes involved plus village corporations
 - Answers the question “why do we need USDA” with “we need to translate USDA...”
- Common Themes: food sovereignty, food security, youth involvement
- NRCS Alaska Office of Tribal Relations
 - Added Ryan Maroney to the staff as AK native technical liaison

Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Brett

- Not a disaster response program—we don't rescue, we recover
- Apply by having a legal sponsor sending a letter to the State Con
 - Legal subunit of gov't or a tribe
 - Interest in the area affected
 - Means and personnel to handle the cost-share percentage, 10-year O&M expenses, plus all land rights and permits
- NRCS does design
- Construction work is by federal or locally awarded contract
 - \$\$\$ must go through EZ fed grants
- 75/25 primarily but 90/10 in limited resource financial split
 - Permit and land rights acquisition does NOT count towards that cost-share amount, it is the responsibility of the applicant
- MUST have a natural disaster-volcanos, fires, floods, earthquakes, etc. when they are significant beyond yearly/regular occurrences
- The disaster causes a sudden impairment of the watershed? E.g. are there buildings, houses, fuel supplies, etc. threatening to fall into the river. The goal is not to save the buildings and houses, the purpose is to keep those things from falling into the river.
- Bank stabilization is the lion's share of our EWP work in AK
- Must have a positive cost/benefit ratio to technically “fix” it and if no cost-effective way, we can move structures
- EWP does not do structural projects on an ocean/coastal/marine environment because the Corps of Engineers is responsible for the jurisdiction of >400 square miles

- We have an MOU with COE to work on rivers >400 square miles when we have the skills to do so
- 11 projects in the works right now
 - Protected emergency broadcast tower in Valdez, still need to seed the area
 - Contract awarded for work in Mekoryuk scheduled to start when barge schedule allows (June)
 - Requests from Juneau and McGrath have been withdrawn
 - Working in Port Heiden area to remove the leftover infrastructure of Meshak to keep it out of Bristol Bay
- Lots of requests this year and we are in the process of getting out in the field to evaluate whether the projects are eligible
- In a best-case scenario, we can respond in only about 30 days but often it is much longer and so NRCS cannot help with immediate need scenarios
- Scott—comments on historic resources being an active part of all projects including EWP.
- Angela—do you have to go through Environmental Review?
- Brett—We have a programmatic EIS written that gives us a fair bit of latitude, but in some cases, we have had to do separate NEPA analysis.

AK GIS data update-Sydney

- PowerPoint—add websites

Soil Health Project update, Casey and Cory

- PowerPoint, by Casey
- Cory—photo and discussion of how no till/cover crop combo assists with infiltration and prevents runoff which is something they have seen out on the fields this spring.
- Question—Conservation Fund—what are the lessons learned from this study that can be applied to other situations such as ATV restoration?
 - Answer: Cory/Casey—getting vegetation planted is essential, and preferably native vegetation. If it is just left to reveg on its own it will be very slow progress
- Question-Brian S-what is the variability of temps?
 - Answer: Casey-5-10 degrees warmer on the cover crop plots. And the litter and roots can insulate better, so we can get into the cover crop plots sooner than the potato plots.
- Discussion on the no-till drill essentially eliminating the weed issues by allowing the cover crop to remain established and subsequently stomp out the weed issues that were initially present in the plots