

Kodiak Archipelago Local Working Group Meeting Agenda- 2021

Date: Tuesday February 9th

Time: 1:30- 3:30 pm

Where: Virtual via Zoom

Notes: Blythe Brown, recording

Agenda:

- Welcome & Introduction – 10 minutes- Danielle Butts

Attendees: Danielle Butts, KSWCD; Blythe Brown, KSWCD; Amanda Crowe, NRCS; Meg Mueller, NRCS; Craig Sanders, NRCS; Jacob Keplinger, small farm owner; Matt VanDaele, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak; Fred Shanagin, Native Village of Ouzinkie; Robbie Townsend-Vennel, Kodiak Area Leadership Institute; Patrick Cummings, NWFF Environmental; Sam Booch, Tangirnaq Native Village; Barbara Zimmerman, KSWCD Board member.

- Introduction to zoom tools and components.
- Welcome to LWG meeting & goals and outcome of the meeting.

- NRCS Program review- Amanda Crowe – 20 minutes

Excellent presentation included a lot of information, detailed notes were not recorded.

NRCS works with private lands – growing food or fiber. Gives technical assistance. Assess natural resources to determine areas that need improvement.

- Farm Bill Programs
 - Overview of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW), Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

CIG is a grant; other programs are financial assistance through reimbursement.

First a site visit, inventory and evaluation, CART assessment, then written conservation plan.

Applications go through an eligibility ranking tool.

5% of budget must go to beginning farmers and 5% to disadvantaged but actual distribution was greater.

So far only Working Lands for Wildlife in Alaska is on Kenai Peninsula for Salmon habitat.

- Q&A

Q: Kodiak Small Farms in Villages have been supported through a USDA 2501 grant for disadvantaged farmers. They have also been working with Kristi Harper, NRCS Tribal Liaison – how does her position work with the NRCS programs Amanda listed?

A: NRCS is a USDA agency but the USDA 2501 is not an NRCS program. Kristi connects people but does not manage “programs” such as EQIP, but Amanda’s office is right next door, and they talk and can work together. NRCS programs must work on private land therefore a tribe cannot apply but a corporation can. Also, some of the Kodiak village farms are on city land and not eligible. It is confusing and complicated.

Q: Small farm owner would like to add more pig production but realizes there may be an odor issue. Can NRCS help?

A: NRCS can give technical advice for manure management before the issue arises and hopefully to prevent the problem but there must already be an issue for one of the programs to apply.

Q: Kodiak native soils are naturally poor; would a program apply if it was not caused by the farming?

A: Yes, it would fall under the soil quality category – nutrient management plan.

- Resource Concern Prioritization (“Resource Concern Categories” in pre-meeting packet.)
 - Introduction to the 17 Resource Concern Categories- 10 minutes- Craig Sanders
 - Local and state- level priorities drive what activities/practices get funded.

- Resource Concern Categories used for ag land and forest land.
- Discussion – 5- 10 minutes
 - Is there a natural resource concern not covered by one of these categories?
- Polling & break- 10 minutes
 - Top 5 categories on ag land
 - Top 5 categories on forest land
 - Discussion on polling results, confirm results- Danielle.

Polling results:

Top three Agriculture Lands concerns were:

- Aquatic Habitat,
- Pest Pressure, and
- Soil Quality Limitations.

Other issues receiving votes were: Air Quality Emissions, Concentrated Erosion, Livestock Production Limitation, and Storage and Handling of Pollutants.

Top Forest Lands concern was:

- Pest Pressure with Aquatic Habitat, Fire Management, Inefficient Energy Use, and Terrestrial Habitat all getting equal votes.
- NRCS Response to polls-10-15 minutes
 - NRCS staff to discuss practices to address top concerns in each category: ag and forest.

Craig listed practices and resource concerns relating to Kodiak. He also listed a few that would probably not be a concern in Kodiak. A few examples of what he covered:

- Under Aquatic Habitat there is a potential for elevated water temperature in logged areas. Homer collects water temperature data – maybe needed for Kodiak?
- Fish Passage culvert replacement would also be an Aquatic Habitat practice.
- Bank erosion from streams is a problem in some areas of Kodiak but NRCS usually keeps to freshwater and lake shorelines, not intertidal or saltwater bluffs.
- Ephemeral gully erosion is more common in areas of annual tillage – not much in Kodiak, but perhaps on a steep garden site.
- Plant productivity and health would be addressed in High Tunnels.
- Examples of Plant structure and composition would be Forestry practices with replanted species, or crop rotation, or brush management on grazed lands.
- Nutrients transported to ground or surface water could occur when manure is applied near water.
- Fire management is possible in Kodiak! One example of an issue could be the flush of grass (fine fuels) after logging.
- Livestock production limitation category has many practices to address issues such as overgrazing, animals in riparian areas, improved hay fields, windbreaks for animal shelter. Need to be aware of potential problems caused by fixing another problem, such as fencing animals from riparian areas could cause inadequate availability of water for the animals.
- Pest Pressure is a concern and could be addressed with the Herbaceous Weed Treatment Practice. KSWCD could help with this practice.
- Concentration of salts, under the soil quality limitation resource concern, is very possible in Kodiak if you are amending with kelp in a high tunnel.
- Practices for use in High Tunnels can also fall under the Source Water Depletion category, for instance if a person were using inefficient watering methods such as a watering can or

- haul a hose from row to row.
- Terrestrial Habitat category could create early succession conditions and brush piles for wildlife such as rabbits (but in Kodiak you may not want rabbits - they are not native and eat your planted seedlings).
- Another terrestrial habitat practice encourages the planting of species for wildlife and invertebrates, including elderberries and other pollinator species.
- Ponding, flooding, and seasonal high-water table are all possible in Kodiak. Seeps would occur on trails and cause erosion.
- There is still no published soil survey for Kodiak so the calculations cannot be completed to use the wind erosion practices.

Also mentioned: a current National Priority is Pollinator Plantings – Alaska is lucky, we get overlap of Asiatic and North American bee species.

■ Q&A

Q: Good Ag land on the Kodiak road system is rare, is there a program to protect lands from development?

A: Yes, there is an Easement Program, it needs a sponsor, can address development rights.

• NRCS Programs Discussion – Danielle – 20 minutes

- Working Lands for Wildlife – Is there a need for WLFW in Kodiak?

Kenai program started with 20 streams, Audubon & Kenai NWF, Kenai Watershed Forum, etc. “Mountains to Sea”. Now expanded. Look at ADFG stream assessments. Combine funds and technical resources.

- Species identified:
- Partners who are interested:
- Geographical area of interest:

- State Conservation Innovation Grant- are there any new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies that NRCS can support for resource conservation on private lands?
- Are there any special projects that NRCS may be involved with in Kodiak in the future?

Q: What about protecting culturally sensitive sites? For example: potential trampling of sites by cattle and horses. Recent find of remains in development area also mentioned.

A: Craig says NRCS has fenced out culturally sensitive sites in the past – not sure if practice is still active. Amanda, Meg, and Craig will discuss possible ideas.

• Closing & Adjourn- 5 minutes

- Any additional comments to submit with final notes?
- Thank you!

Continued discussion after many logged off.

Q: What about horses and urine draining into adjacent lake?

A: NRCS can give technical advice but it must be a farm to sign up for reimbursement in a program/practice.

Q: More discussion about hog manure, composting, runoff, smell, etc. Farmer also has goats and wants to expand production.

A: Need to get Craig out for a visit.

Q: More clarification of Tribal Liaison position.

A: Now that villages have farms established NRCS can implement programs for resource concerns.