**Mission:** The mission of the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote and assist in the development of private land using sustainable practices and offer natural resource technical and educational assistance to our cooperators and the general public in our critical natural resource areas. The FSWCD acts as a liaison between private landowners and land users and other agencies and organizations in these critical areas.

**Goals (Critical Natural Resource Areas):** Promotion of sustainable agriculture, natural resource education and affordable energy, prevention and eradication of invasive weeds, wise use and development of forestry, soil, and water resources.
What does Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District do?

1. Prevent and Eradicate Noxious and Invasive Species

Noxious and invasive species threaten our agricultural industry, biodiversity in the state, and many human activities such as recreation and subsistence harvests. FSWCD works to:

- Educate the public about the threat invasive species pose and inform them on how to identify and control these species
- Survey for new introductions and rapidly control them before they spread
- Control or eradicate invasive species at strategic locations throughout the district
- Network with other agencies and organizations to improve efficiency of our efforts

2. Conserve Plant and Soil Resources

Biodiversity and soil health are being threatened throughout the world and FSWCD is doing what it can to sustain these valuable resources in Alaska by:

- Providing economical soil testing services to farmers, gardeners, and other landowners in our district
- Free technical assistance to our cooperators on soil and plant concerns (erosion, tree health, etc.)
- Support to the agricultural industry including soil testing, soil quality research, and education
- Improvement of riparian zone quality through free soil testing to prevent excess nutrient runoff, support of revegetation projects, and general public education
- Trail development, degraded site restoration, and conservation assistance to land developers
- Promoting land development using best management practices
3. Promote Sustainable Agricultural Resources and Economy
More than 95 percent of our food is imported in Alaska! Alaska Grown is “fresher by far” and is a key to food security in Alaska. FSWCD promotes locally grown by:
- Outreach and taste testing events, classroom lessons, advertising, and support of local farming organizations
- Technical assistance to farmers within our district, as well as individuals planning new farms
- Review of state farm plans
- Working collaboratively with other agencies and organizations to grow the agricultural industry
- Coordinating the Ag in the Classroom program, including teacher workshops, resource library, and numerous classroom lessons
- Presenting to local policy makers and business owners about the importance of agriculture in AK
- Research and demonstration projects related to improved soils, crops, irrigation, fertilizer, etc.

4. Conserving and Maintaining Water Resources
In Interior Alaska, salmon habitat and water quality are important to recreationists and subsistence users alike. FSWCD efforts include:
- Surveys, coordination, and development of control methods for the aquatic invasive Elodea, discovered in 2011 within Chena Slough, Chena River, and Chena Lakes
- Green Infrastructure (stormwater management) outreach and cost-share projects for landowners
- Chena Slough restoration
- Ensuring the health of the Chena River and its Chinook Salmon population
- Culvert replacement for fish passage
- Streambank restoration projects
- Assistance to landowners installing wildlife ponds or restoring old gravel pits for habitat
- Collaborative projects with and conservation assistance to land developers and agencies
- Public education and classroom lessons on water quality issues
5. Maintaining and Developing Forest Resources

Forests throughout the world are changing rapidly. There are increased wildfires, insect outbreaks, invasive species, and shifts in species distribution. FSWCD works to promote sustainable management of our forest resources and local response to these new threats by:

- Planting trees and restoring degraded sites with youth throughout our district
- Public education and networking with forestry organizations to promote sustainable practices
- Annual tree sale with conservation sized bare-root trees and shrubs
- Assistance to small scale growers and promotion of locally grown trees, shrubs, and native species
- Site visits and assistance to landowners for forestry related concerns

6. Educating our cooperators, personnel, and partners

Natural Resource Education is a high priority for FSWCD. Alaska’s future generations need to learn about and participate in the care and restoration of their natural resources. Our natural resource education activities include:

- After School Programs in Fairbanks focusing on natural resources education for kids of various ages
- Teacher and public workshops
- Participation in local events, organizations, and government committees
- Publication of informational booklets, pamphlets, posters, etc.
- State and nation-wide participation in natural resources education groups
• Natural resources education lessons as requested for local classrooms
• Assistance with 4H, FFA, and other youth development organizations
• Youth Habitat Corps coordination- local teens participating in on the ground conservation projects
• Schoolyard habitat projects at many local and rural Alaska schools, including:
  Fairbanks area: North Pole Middle, Two Rivers, Woodriver, JP Jones, Hutch, Monroe, THREAD
  Rural: Nenana, Minto, Tri-Valley, Cantwell, Ruby, North Slope, Anaktuvak Pass, Ft. Yukon

7. Promoting Affordable Energy
Energy is very expensive in Alaska, especially in remote locations such as many of the villages within our district. FSWCD works to promote affordable and sustainable energy development and distribution, by:
  • Assisting with farm energy audits
Providing information on energy topics
Promoting affordable energy
Booth and activities at local Chena Energy Fair

Special Projects: FSWCD has assisted in the efforts to open the Nenana/Tochaket area, develop “roads to resources”, promote the fast growing peony industry, and partner with the city of North Pole memorial park and trail restoration projects. The district is working with small placer miners and AMA to assist with permitting, policy changes, and reclamation education.

Funding:
FSWCD receives only $2500.00 from the State of Alaska each year. The District works hard to request and receive legislative grant funds for special projects which can also be used to match private, corporate, and federal grants. This allows us to complete more on-the-ground conservation projects. During the last fiscal year, FSWCD utilized $39,273.70 from legislative grants and $399,390.13 from other sources to assist in all of the goals mentioned above.