

Newsletter

Spring 2024



From the District Coordinator

Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD) staff have had a winter full of planning, outreach, training, and education. This included hydroponics and agricultural workshops, conference presentations, local participation in natural resource events, partnership outreach, and getting ready for this summer's busy season of soil testing, riparian restoration, invasive weeds control and much more that you will read about in this newsletter.

There is so much happening in natural resources across the state and in our conservation district which encompasses and serves over 30,000 acres of Interior Alaska promoting wise development and offering technical assistance to private landowners.

The FSWCD Natural Resource Showcase in December showcased a variety of natural resource endeavors to the interior delegation and other civic leaders. A big thank you to local folks who shared their expertise and presented at the showcase. This included an overview of areawide mining, forestry, FFA, local seed and plant growing, an update on Cripple Creek restoration, and an outline of resource happenings in Nenana, "the little city with big ideas and projects". Thanks to our own staff as well, who updated us on invasive weeds, composting, natural resource education, hydroponics, agricultural land development, soil sampling, riparian restoration, and more.

And now Spring is on the Way! Contact FSWCD for your natural resource needs and look for us at the Home Show March 22-24 , Mining Conference March 26-29, and our annual Tree and Shrub sale May 24-25 .

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Education and Outreach Program

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AFFECT Project Update

Last summer, The AFFECT project received a no cost extension to its original 3-year timeframe. We are in the fourth and final year of the project and plan to work in partnership with UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden this summer to combine with the Harvest Collective Project in offering our Farmer Training Program this summer. We are providing a number of community classes at the Fairbanks Food Bank Volunteer Clubhouse on Thursdays throughout the rest of the winter and into the Spring. Some of the classes are listed on the infographic below and visit the AFFECT webpage (www.affectfarm.com) for the most recent list. We will post information about the Farmer Training Program as soon as possible. If you have any questions about this program please contact Mel Sikes at mel.fswcd@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 22

AFFECT's Free
Community Garden
Planning Workshop

Mar. 7

AFFECT's Free
Nutrient Management
Workshop

Mar. 14

AFFECT's Free
Seed Starting
Workshop

Mar. 28

AFFECT's Free No
Till Gardening
Workshop

Apr. 13

AFFECT's Free
Community
Seed Swap

Interested?

Visit affectfarm.com to
learn more!

Alaska Agriculture In the Classroom Update

Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom has been providing educators with resources and training to integrate learning about the many aspects of agriculture into student education throughout Alaska. FSWCD has been the state AITC program leader since 2012. Mel Sikes, FSWCD staff, is one of two Western Regional representatives and sits on the executive board of the National AITC organization. FSWCD hosts the AK AITC webpage on our website. We have lessons for all ages, including pre-K available free for download at <http://www.fairbankssoilwater.org/education-agriculture-classroom.htm>.

From March 29-30, 2024 FSWCD and Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom will be hosting an educators workshop on Indoor Gardening. This 1+ day hands-on workshop is for teachers and educators who are looking for interdisciplinary activities including STEM-based methods to teach about simple, inexpensive, but effective techniques for indoor gardening including hydroponics and in soil. Indoor gardening systems will be built during this workshop and given away to participants. If you're an educator, teacher, or work with schools or educational programs, you can register

for this workshop by contacting Mel at mel.fswcd@gmail.com or calling 907-479-1213 x 5 for more information.

Utqiagvik Middle School Hydroponics Intensive

From December 10-14th, 2023 FSWCD staff Scott Faulkner, Emily Cheney, and Mel Sikes went to Utqiagvik to teach middle school students from Nuiqsut and Utqiagvik all about how hydroponics works. Students experienced hands-on lessons about plant growth, soil and nutrients, native plants, as well as being introduced to the idea of horticulture as a career path. Students built four hydroponic grow towers. Two of the towers stayed in Utqiagvik, and two of the towers went back to Nuiqsut with the teacher and the students. In March, we will return to Utqiagvik to work with students from Point Lay and Wainwright for another week long intensive.



FSWCD employee Emily Cheney and some middle school students pose with their newly built hydroponic tower in Utqiagvik.



FSWCD employees Mel Sikes, Scott Faulkner, and Emily Cheney pose in Utqiagvik.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MORE AFFECT WORKSHOPS ON AFFECTFARM.COM!

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Fairbanks Waste Reduction Week

2024 marks the first annual Fairbanks Waste Reduction Week. Compost FBX, the composting program at FSWCD, teamed up with Green Star of Interior Alaska to coordinate this week of free, community events. Our goal is to promote the idea of sustainable living and waste reduction in Fairbanks and connect the community with the existing resources that can help them reduce waste in their daily lives. Fairbanks Waste Reduction Week runs March 4th-9th with one or more free events every day. Stop by a different local group or organization every day for tours, workshops, and open houses to learn more about what services they offer in the community to help Fairbanks residents reduce their waste stream. These events include an open house at the Chena Tool Library on Wednesday, multiple hour-long tours of the Central Recycling Facility, a weeklong reusables drive at the Fairbanks Children's Museum, and more. Fairbanks Waste Reduction Week concludes with the Sustainable Living Expo. The expo will take place the JP Jones Community Center (2400 Rickert St.) on Saturday March 9th from 12pm - 5pm. The expo will feature presentations, outreach tables, family activities hosted by the Fairbanks Children's Museum, and waste diversion collections. The collections include food donations for the Fairbanks Community Food Bank, frozen meat not fit for human consumption for sled dogs, coffee grounds for compost, and gently used clothing products for the Fairbanks Resource Agency. There will also be a couple waste "swaps" at the expo. GlassRoots Alaska will host a swap of used glass jars and bottles. GlassRoots collects glass bottles that the Central Recycling Facility is unable to process and uses a glass pulverizing machine to create a fine sand product for other uses so Fairbanks residents don't have to take glass to the transfer sites. Occasionally, they receive glass donations that are "Too Cute to Crush." GlassRoots will bring their cute glass bottles to trade with folks attending the Sustainable Living Expo. Leave a bottle you don't want and come home with something new-to-you. This is not a full collection, but if you have more glass to recycle you can stop by one of their collections at Green Star. Check glassrootsalaska.com for more information. There will also be an electronic swap. Bring your working electronics, something with a cord or a battery microwave sized or smaller, on Saturday March 9th to trade it in for a new electronic device. Come visit a sustainable business or group in town for an open house during the week. Come drop off something you were planning to take to the transfer site so it can be reused. Connect with groups and organizations in town that can help you reduce your household's waste stream and live more sustainably. Every aspect of Fairbanks Waste Reduction Week is free and open to the public.

Schedule of Events

Mar 4 **Composting Workshop**

Mar 5 **Green Star Warehouse & ReUse IT Store Tour**

Mar 6 **Chena Tool Library Open House**

Mar 7 **Northern Center Art Show & Open House**

Mar 8 **Tour of the Central Recycling Facility**

Mar 9 **Sustainable Living Expo at the JP Jones Center**



GO TO COMPOSTFBX.COM TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FAIRBANKS WASTE REDUCTION WEEK!

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Student Farm Design Workshop

Scott Faulkner, a Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District Agricultural and Natural Resources Educator, and Erik Johnson, a Natural Resources Specialist from the Alaska Division of Agriculture, are set to teach a Farm Design Workshop for students in North Pole next month. The workshop will be at North Pole High School on March 16, 2024, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, and will provide an engaging opportunity for 7th to 12th-grade students. This workshop is open to homeschool, private school, and public-school students, and will teach participants how to create a farm conservation plan. The plan will be based on a 100-acre tract in the Nenana-Totchaket Agricultural Project in Nenana, Alaska. Students will explore various aspects, including how to purchase agricultural land, basic business plans, soils, weather, the Nenana Community, potential crops, livestock, buildings, and land clearing.



Students will consider a 100-acre tract of land in the Nenana-Totchaket Agricultural Project.

Throughout the workshop, students will begin creating a comprehensive farm plan. This involves completing a detailed paper report, crafting a 3' x 4' presentation poster, and delivering an oral presentation. Successful project completion will equip students with valuable skills and earn them a trip to the Nenana-Totchaket Agricultural Project and a stipend for their efforts. For those seeking additional incentives, there's an opportunity to enter a contest. Winners may secure a trip to present their farm plan at the 2024 State Farm Bureau Conference in Anchorage. For more information or to reserve a spot at the workshop, contact Scott Faulkner at scott.fswcd@gmail.com. There is no cost to attend the workshop. Don't miss this chance to learn about farm design and conservation planning.

FFA Spotlight: Nurturing Future Leaders in Agriculture

For over 25 years, FSWCD has collaborated with the Future Farmers of America (FFA). In the past 7 years, a new FFA Chapter, Silent Springs FFA, has flourished and established a meaningful partnership with FSWCD.

Silent Springs FFA, chartered in 2017, has become a beacon of success. In 2021, the chapter achieved a remarkable 3-star ranking, the highest available, and was recognized as a top 10 chapter in the nation by the National FFA Organization. The chapter conducts activities, classes, and meetings at the district's offices on Mondays. Their current class offerings include Agricultural Communications and Chemistry. The program is open to all 7th – 12th-grade students without access to agricultural education and has made a significant local impact.



Silent Springs FFA members recently practiced job interview skills for upcoming district and state FFA competitions.

Scott Faulkner and his wife, Amy Faulkner, educators and advisors for Silent Springs FFA, have been instrumental in fostering the program's success. Scott extends his passion for agriculture to Effie Kokrine Charter School, where he teaches middle school students and successfully re-established the FFA chapter. He offers a botany class utilizing a jointly funded hydroponics system which provides fresh lettuce for the school's lunch program.



Members of the Effie Kokrine FFA chapter are preparing an agriscience project that studies the effect of biologicals and biostimulants on seed germination rates.

FFA's roots trace back to 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri, where it was initially dedicated to advancing agricultural education. Today, as the National FFA Organization, it reflects the diverse landscape of modern agriculture. The National FFA Organization serves as a unifying platform for 8,995 chapters and 850,823 members across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It provides mentorship, skill development, leadership training, and career exploration opportunities, collectively earning over \$4 billion annually through work experience.

FFA influences education through a comprehensive approach, catering to various interests. From math and science to hands-on work experience and life skills development, it welcomes individuals aspiring to pursue careers ranging from production farming to business ownership. FSWCD takes pride in its collaboration with FFA and eagerly anticipates continued cooperation for the next 25 years.

CHECK OUT THE EDUCATION TAB ON OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT STUDENT FARM PLANS!

Soils and Agriculture Program

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Interviews with High Tunnel Users Coming Up!



We are beginning an evaluation of high tunnel use in interior Alaska and would love to hear about your experiences. If you are an experienced high tunnel user, just getting started growing this year, or even a former high tunnel user, we are interested in learning more about the challenges and successes of your operation. The goal of this project is to develop a guide for best management practices for new high tunnel growers, to highlight the diversity of high tunnel growing approaches in interior Alaska, and to increase the efficiency and longevity of high tunnels for seasoned growers.

Interviews will take place this spring from March-May and there will be a \$50.00 stipend for your interview time. Please contact us at aleya.fswcd@gmail.com (907-479-1213 x 7) if you would like to participate in this study or have relevant ideas to share.

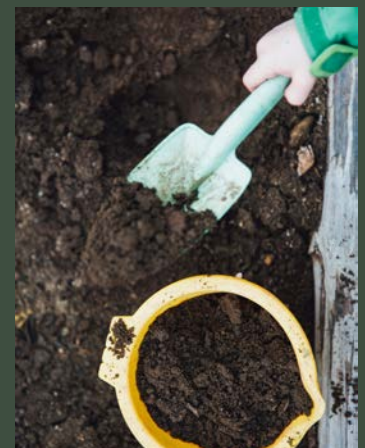
Topics can be: design layout, irrigation, planting layout, weed management, high-tunnel age, new-user considerations, working with NRCS, removing plastic during winter, building, etc.

Whatever you would like to talk about and share with new and seasoned high tunnel users!

"Have you grown in a high tunnel? If so, we would like to talk with you!"

**\$50.00
Stipend!**

Spring Soil Sampling!



Don't wait! Submit your soil samples collected last fall now!

Are you ready for your best gardening year yet? It starts with knowing the nutrient levels in your soil!

We can help you with this. You can get your garden or farm soil tested with FSWCD. We will send out your sample to an agricultural lab for a full nutrient analysis and we will craft fertilizer and soil health recommendations based on the results.

The cost is \$40.00 per sample and it takes around 4 weeks in the spring to receive the results and report.

Please contact us at aleya.fswcd@gmail.com (907-479-1213 x 7) if you would like to participate in this study or have relevant ideas to share.

Soils and Agriculture Program

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2024 Annual Tree and Shrub Sale

"Providing our community with edible, ornamental, and native tree and shrub species."

We are looking forward to Memorial Day Weekend where we will have our 24th annual tree and shrub sale at the Delta Barn on the Tanana Valley State Fairgrounds. The sale will take place on Friday, May 24 to Saturday, May 26 from 10-4 on both days.

The mission of the tree sale is to increase food security, support local farmers, create wildlife habitat, and beautify our community. We source our plants from other conservation districts and nurseries in northern states as well as Alaskan producers. We are always looking for local growers with proven plants to sell at our tree sale or to invite as a vendor.

Preordering will be available in mid-March for many of the plants but we will also have plants that can only be purchased on the day of the sale such as red currant, haskap, gooseberry, and lodgepole pine seedlings.

The proceeds of our sale support natural resource education. Cooperators receive a 10% discount.

This year we will be offering:

Black Chokeberry (Aronia)

Russian Almond

Nanking Cherry

Golden Currant

Siberian Crabapple

American Elm

Red-osier Dogwood

American Black Currant

Wood's Rose

Sweet Gale

Dolgo Crabapple

McDermid Pear

Latham Raspberry

Kiska Raspberry

Toklat Strawberry

Iris

Russet Buffaloberry

Common Lilac

White Lilac

Amur Maple

Sarah Bernhardt Peony

Felix Crousse Peony

Mons Jules Elie Peony

Karl Rosenfield Peony

American Plum

Serviceberry

Scots Pine

White Spruce Seedlings

Tamarack



Red-osier Dogwood



Serviceberry



Sweet Gale

Place a pre-order in Mid-March on our website:
<https://trees.fairbankssoilwater.org/>

Habitat Restoration and Conservation Program

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Aquatic Invasives

The days are getting longer and the 2024 field season is on its way! We are looking forward to getting back to our task of eradicating elodea in Interior Alaska. Part of that effort includes increasing awareness about how elodea can spread. It may be a surprise to some but people can easily encounter elodea while ice fishing. Elodea and other vegetation are sometimes encountered while drilling holes in the ice and can potentially be spread by augers and fishing equipment.



If a suspicious plant is spotted either in the water or your gear, please take a clear picture of the plant and report it to 1-877-INVASIV (1-877-468-2748), or to FSWCD's Habitat and Invasive Plant Program Coordinator at (907)-479-1213 Ext. 4 or aditi.shenoy@gmail.com. For more information about elodea, visit our invasive species page at: fswcd-weeds.squarespace.com/elodea.

Habitat Spring Outreach Events



We are planning on attending a few events in Fairbanks to spread awareness about invasive plants in interior Alaska. Here are some events you will find us at this Spring!

Exact dates TBD, search for event listings for more details:

- Month of the Military Child at Pioneer Park
- Earth Day at Fort Wainwright
- The Home Show at the Carlson Center
- The Outdoor Show at the Carlson Center
- Family Recreation Day at Chena Lake
- The Annual Spring Migration Event at Creamers field

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ELODEA

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Tackling Invasive Chokecherry in Fairbanks

Prunus padus and *Prunus virginiana* (hereafter referred to as *Prunus* spp.), commonly known as European Bird Cherry and Chokecherry, are native to Northern Europe and across Asia. So how did they get all the way over to Alaska? Both *Prunus* spp. were introduced around 1959 in Alaska, as an effort to increase tree fruit culture in Alaska. Since then, both *Prunus* spp. have become common ornamental trees that are planted in residential areas and in public parks. The first collection and record of chokecherry spreading into natural areas was documented by Welsh in 1968 in Palmer. A year later it was documented in the surroundings areas of UAF. Since escaping cultivation, it has spread into native riparian habitats as well as intact forests in the Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, Southeast and Fairbanks areas. Currently, both *Prunus* spp. are considered aggressive invaders (each has a high invasiveness rank of 74 according to the Alaska Natural Heritage Program invasiveness ranking system) that can form monocultures in natural forests and riparian areas and have negative impacts on native fish and wildlife populations.

Prunus spp. are deciduous trees that can appear as a shrub or small tree and can grow up to 10m tall. The trees are rounded in shape and have low branching crowns, and their bark is a purple grey to green-grey color. The leaves are ovate, elliptical, and they have sharply serrated edges. Along a branch, the leaves alternate. These ornamental trees are known for their showy flowers, which are usually white or cream-colored, and that bloom usually between May and early June.



Photo of *Prunus* spp. flowers



Photo of *Prunus* spp. trees canopy during fruiting time

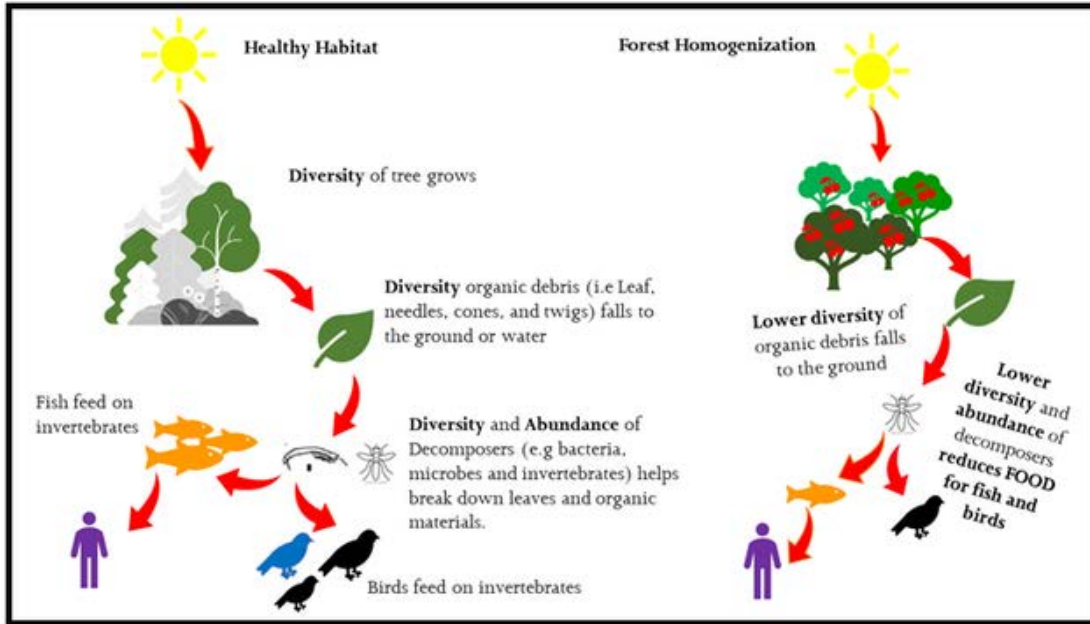
The *Prunus* spp. reproduces and spreads via the seeds of their fruit, which birds eat and then distribute far from the original tree. Another equally effective reproduction method is through growth of bare roots and distribution along stream banks. Chokecherry's ability to reproduce so readily allows it to take over the under-story of intact native forests. It can create thick thickets and shrub layers that reduce light, moisture, and nutrient availability to native species, thereby out competing and displacing them. In addition to out competing native species and reducing local biodiversity, chokecherry coverage displaces terrestrial invertebrate biomass and disrupts moose habitat and food availability. Chokecherry is known to produce cyanogenic glycoside, especially during the cold winter months, which can be toxic to mammals with segmented stomachs. There have even been cases of poisoned moose calves in Anchorage, AK. The *Prunus* spp. monocultures have been documented to decrease terrestrial invertebrates along stream banks, which in turn affects the food availability for young salmon and other native fish species. It is clear that even though these trees make for beautiful gardens and human consumption (i.e use of chokecherry berries for jam, etc) their detrimental impacts of their spread on native ecosystems are cause for alarm.

Prunus padus and *Prunus virginiana* remain persistent in Alaska, prompting proactive efforts by Fairbanks SWCD to manage and mitigate their impact. In response, we have enhanced survey initiatives targeting both species within the Fairbanks region. Our findings reveal that both species are flourishing and spreading rapidly throughout the area (see Fig. 2A & B).

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON FOR THE INTERIOR ALASKA COOPERATIVE
SPECIES MANAGEMENT AREA (CISMA).

Habitat Restoration and Conservation Program

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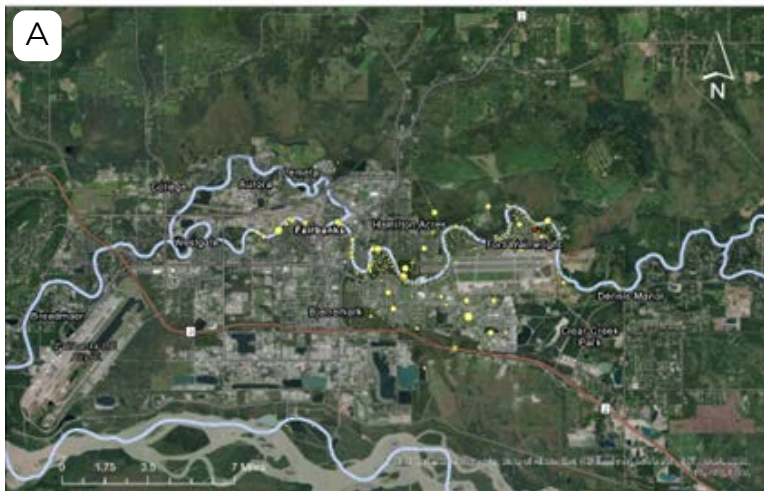
How you can help:

- Don't plant invasive chokecherry trees
- Stay informed and participate in our annual chokecherry pull events! (stay tuned for dates)
- Help us raise awareness by spreading the word!
- Take action to remove highly invasive species like chokecherries from your property. Contact us for further guidance and information:

Hazel Berrios
fairbanksswcd@gmail.com
(907)-479-1213 Ext. 4

Fig 1. Diagram showing the consequences of introducing invasive species into native habitats.

Before 2021: Known Infestation in the Fairbanks Area



Current known Infestation in the Fairbanks

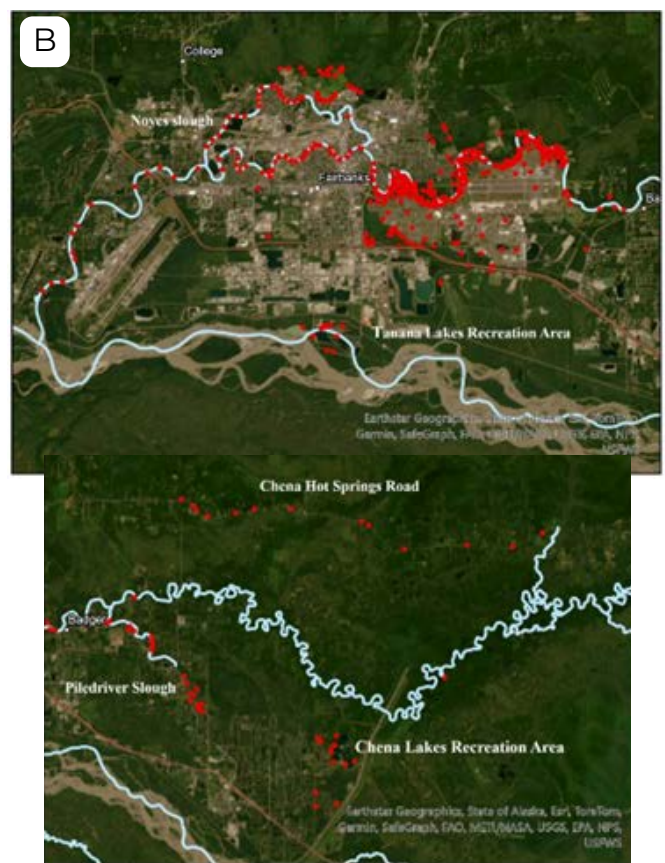


Fig 2. As of 2021, a documented infestation of *Prunus padus* and *Prunus virginiana* exists within the Fairbanks area (A). To better understand the spread of chokecherry and evaluate its potential impact on the community, Fairbanks SWCD has revitalized survey efforts from 2022 to the present (B). Presence of *Prunus spp.* is denoted by yellow and red dots on the maps.

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON FOR THE INTERIOR ALASKA COOPERATIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT AREA (CISMA).

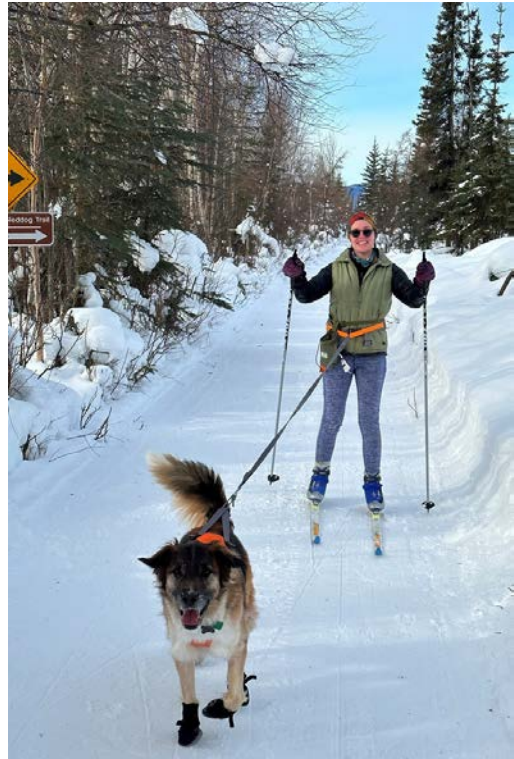
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New NRCS Staff at the Fairbanks Field Office!

Emily Donaldson
Conservation Planner
Fairbanks Field Office - NRCS

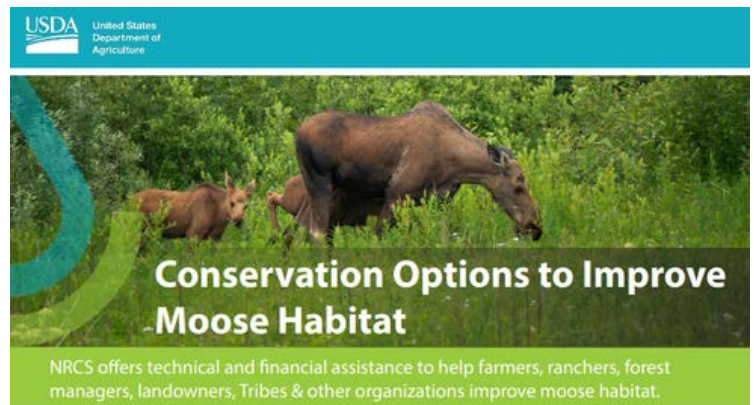
Emily is from Wisconsin, earning her B.A. in Sustainable Community Development at Northland College. She served as an environmental conservation volunteer for Peace Corps- Paraguay, before earning her MSc. in Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming. She moved to Alaska for a job with the Subsistence Division with ADF&G, then accepted a position at the end of 2023 with NRCS-Alaska as a conservation planner. Emily loves hiking, skiing, and camping with her partner, running, biking, reading, and combatting the inequity of climate change impacts. She's excited to get to know and work with the Fairbanks SWCD.



Conservation Assistance for Moose & Salmon Habitat

NRCS assists private landowners with conservation practices that improve and enhance food, cover, shelter and connectivity of habitats for moose. Conservation Planners can visit your property and evaluate current habitat quality as well as discuss your management objectives. Together, we can identify possible conservation practices to help improve moose habitat on your eligible agricultural or forest land.

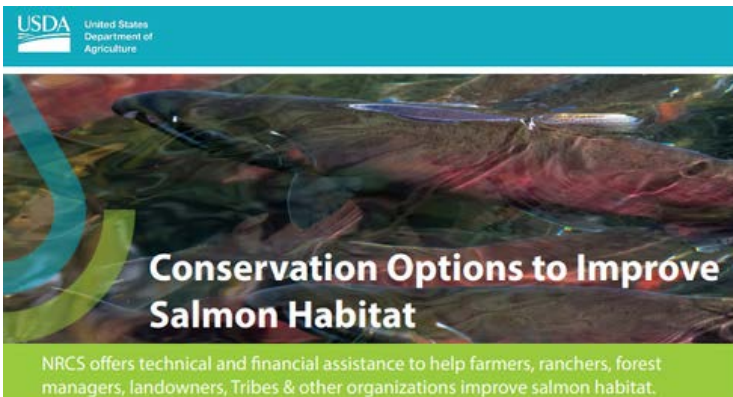
[Read More: Moose Habitat Fact Sheet](#)



Are you interested in improving habitat for salmon and other aquatic species in Alaska? USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) may be able to help.

NRCS can help remove barriers that restrict salmon access to historical spawning and rearing habitat, such as removing undersized or failing culverts and replacing them with salmon-friendly culverts or bridges. We provide engineering design assistance on fish passage projects to ensure the right design for the right stream and the right cost.

[Read More: Salmon Habitat Fact Sheet](#)



Contact your local NRCS office for more information and to begin the application process.
Fairbanks: (907) 479-3159

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Historic Funding Available for Alaska Landowners and Tribes for Voluntary Conservation

This is a historic time in the history of NRCS for funding available to private landowners and Tribes in Alaska!

The passing of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has brought unprecedented funding to NRCS nationwide with \$19.5 billion that will supplement our existing conservation programs through 2027. IRA nearly doubled the agency's budget and represents a once-in-a-lifetime investment in conservation.

The IRA funds are in addition to otherwise available program funds; however, IRA funds are only available for specific conservation practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase storage of carbon in soil and trees.

This year, we have an additional \$15 million in IRA-EQIP on top of our normal EQIP allocation, plus additional IRA funds for our other Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program. There is tremendous opportunity in Alaska for producers, Tribes, and other entities to implement conservation projects with IRA funding.

NRCS is actively building partnerships to support our programs including new grants and agreements. We are always looking for new and creative ways to partner with various organizations including Tribes, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Tribal Conservation Districts, non-governmental organizations and more.

EQIP is our most commonly-used program in Alaska. EQIP provides agricultural producers (Tribes, entities and landowners) with financial assistance and conservation planning services to implement improvements on their land using what NRCS calls "conservation practices." Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, you can voluntarily implement conservation practices, and NRCS co-invests in these practices with you.

Here are a few examples of things you can do with EQIP:

- Install a high tunnel to extend your growing season and grow better quality crops
- Install an irrigation system to maximize water efficiency
- Plant cover crops to improve soil health and reduce erosion
- Apply soil nutrients properly to improve crop health and reduce excess inputs
- Thin your forestland to reduce wildfire risk and improve wildlife habitat
- Plant native trees/shrubs on your land to improve water quality and habitat
- Replace or remove undersized culverts to improve salmon habitat
-and much, much more!

Apply for EQIP in Alaska

Fiscal Year 2024 EQIP application ranking deadlines: Starting December 8, 2023, eligible and ranked applications will be evaluated for funding every second and fourth Friday of the month with the last funding evaluation on June 21, 2024.

Fiscal Year 2024 EQIP application deadline: Applications received by close of business on April 19, 2024, and are eligible and ranked by June 21, 2024, will be considered for funding. All applications must be obligated by August 23, 2024.

[Learn more on the Alaska EQIP webpage!](#)

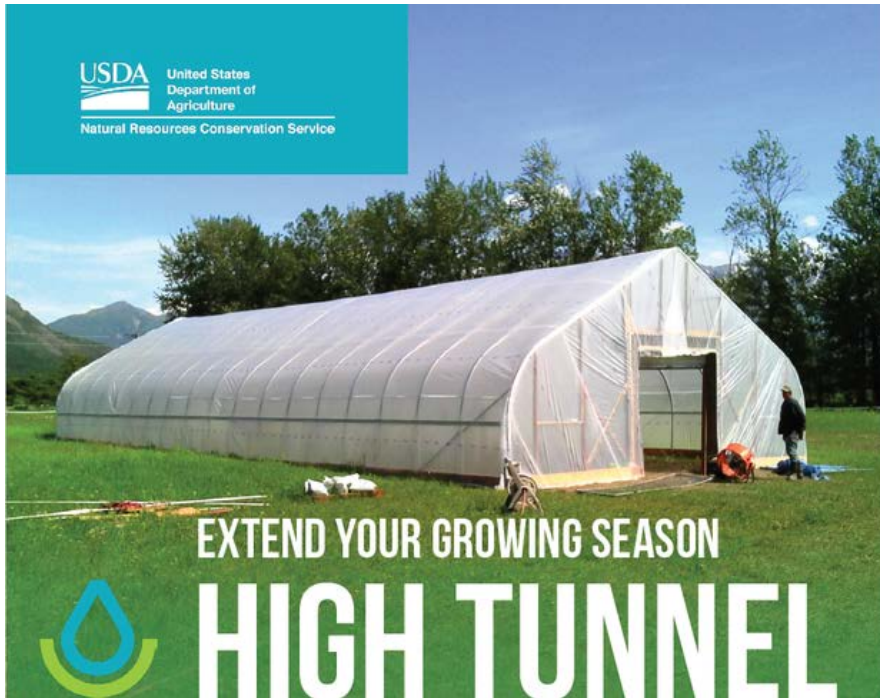
Contact your local NRCS office for more information and to begin the application process.
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Extend Your Growing Season with a High Tunnel



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers financial assistance to help Alaskans install high tunnels through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Contact your local NRCS Field Office to learn more and to submit your EQIP application!

A high tunnel, also called a hoop house, provides a controlled environment that protect crops from wind and frost. It can extend your growing season and allow you to grow a wider diversity of crops in a warmer micro-climate. Other environmental benefits include:

- Reduced pesticide use
- Improved soil quality
- Reduced nutrient run-off and leaching
- Improved crop health and vigor
- Localized source of produce

More Information:

- [High Tunnel Flyer](#)
- [High Tunnel Resources in Alaska \(From Homer & Kenai SWCD\)](#)
- [High Tunnel Resources in Alaska \(From Fairbanks SWCD\)](#)
- [High Tunnel FAQ](#)

District News



FAIRBANKS SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

We're Hiring!

FSWCD is seeking an administrative/project/financial assistant. The assistant will execute general administrative duties that support FSWCD natural resource priorities and mission to offer technical and educational assistance to private land users.

Duties:

- Provide administrative support to ensure efficient operation of the office
- Grant management
- Assist in event planning and coordination
- Bookkeeping
- Attend and take minutes at monthly board meetings
- Maintain website and social media outlets
- and more...

We are seeking someone proficient in Microsoft Office, Quickbooks, website management, and basic social media platforms with bookkeeping experience. Grant management experience and a natural resources background are preferred but not required.

- 30-40 hours/week
- \$20-25/hour
- Paid Time Off
- Health and Technical Stipends
- Paid Holidays

Submit cover letter, resume, and at least two references via email to fairbanksswcd@gmail.com or in person to 590 University Ave. Suite 2 in Fairbanks.

FSWCD and NRCS work closely together!

Our Staff

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Joni Scharfenberg - District Coordinator

jonisc@gmail.com

Joni was born in Fairbanks, owns an 80 acre farm in Two Rivers, and sold vegetables at the Tanana Valley Farmers Market for over 25 years. She has worked for the FSWCD for 23 years and has been the District's coordinator for over 15 years.



Melissa Sikes - Natural Resource Education and Outreach

mel.fswcd@gmail.com

Mel Sikes is the Natural Resource Education Specialist. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from Unity College which she received in 1990. Her duties at FSWCD include being Project Director for the AFFECT USDA grant, state program leader for the Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom program, managing the afterschool natural resource education program, instructing educator workshops, managing grants, outreach community events, and sitting on the Alaska Food Policy Council governing board. She and her husband Derek have 3 grown daughters who live in Fairbanks. She quilts, sings, and enjoys walks with her dog Zoe in her free time.



Aditi Shenoy - Habitat Restoration and Conservation

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Aditi runs our Habitat Restoration and Conservation Program. She leads the Interior Alaska Elodea Taskforce, and has been working on eradicating the invasive aquatic plant elodea from interior Alaska. She also manages terrestrial invasive plant survey and control projects in Fairbanks, and surrounding communities in interior Alaska.



Colin McKenzie - Habitat Restoration and Conservation

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Colin has been working on our habitat crew since 2019 and has settled into the role of coordinating and leading our surveys, herbicide applications, and invasive species related outreach. You'll most likely spot him on some sort of watercraft investigating the local aquatic vegetation.



Alea Brinkman - Soils and Agriculture

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Aleya runs our soil sampling program and will tell you what you need to add to your garden or farm soil to grow great plants. She also leads our cover crop variety trial research project and can answer questions on incorporating cover crops into your rotation for soil health. Alea has been in Fairbanks for 16 years and is a huge supporter and consumer of locally grown food.



Hazel Berrios - Habitat Restoration and Conservation

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Hazel leads the terrestrial invasive species surveys and manages various GIS mapping projects and data analysis.



Liz Kempton - Development Coordinator

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Liz is the Project Manager of a Composting and Food Waste Reduction USDA grant. She coordinates the backyard composting program, community compost bins, and local compost sales at the annual FSWCD tree sale.



Scott Faulkner - Natural Resource Education and Outreach

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Scott works with the Education and Outreach department specializing in natural resource and agricultural education.



Emily Cheney - Natural Resource Education and Outreach

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Emily works with the Education and Outreach department specializing in natural resource and agricultural education. She leads the afterschool program, coordinates AFFECT workshops, and works on various other projects. In her free time, she enjoys mushing with her many dogs.



Autumn Fish - Natural Resources Technician

Autumn joined the Habitat team last summer in 2023. She assists the crew where needed in their surveys, herbicide applications, and outreach events. She has a passion for learning and adventuring the outdoors!