Education, Outreach, and Training to Alaska Native Beginning Farmers & Ranchers

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Tyonek Tribal Conservation District
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Award No. 2015-70017-22859
Tribal Conservation Districts (TCD)

- Charges Tribe and the TCD to enter into MOU with USDA and work on long term natural resource management plans
- Provides forum for USDA/NRCS and Tribe to work together
- 1st TCD in Nevada in 1954, now 42 in lower 48
- Tyonek TCD 1st TCD in Alaska in 2005
- Now 12 TCD’s in Alaska
TTCD

• 6 million acres (~8 Rhode Islands)
• 4 communities
• Tyonek, Alaska Native Village
• Community driven conservation
  – Fish passage
  – Science education
  – Technical assistance
  – Food security
Food Security

- Community concern and interest in healthy food
- Gardening considered lost knowledge
- Off road system communities
- No grocery store in Tyonek
- Purchased food flown in on small plane for 39 cents per pound
- Gas $7.10 per gallon
Tyonek Grown: Demonstration Farm

- Off-grid, off-road growing
  - Solar power ventilation and irrigation
- TTCD as farm manager, technical assistance
- Native Village of Tyonek owners, eventual managers
- Tyonek and Anchorage Markets, School snack, Elder’s Lunch
Growers in Training

- Continuous youth involvement and education
- Start plants in school
- Planting ceremony with community and school
- Summer interns
- Harvest celebration
BFRDP

• Approached by other Alaska Native Villages (ANV’s) for help starting farm/subsistence garden
• Developing network of outreach for TCD’s helping interested communities increase food security
Project Audience

- Alaska Native Villages
  - Statewide (~540 Rhode Islands)
    - TCD’s
    - Most off road system
  - Off-grid vegetable production
  - Exploring stage
Partners/Collaborators

– Angela Peter, Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance
  • Outreach, community visits and connections

– Native Village of Tyonek
  • Owner of experimental farm, garden committee

– Connie Downing, Tyonek Native Corporation,
  • Lands manager

– Tebughna School
  • Farm to School activities, outreach, youth education, labor
Key Approaches

• Key Approach:
  – Reaching communities through Tribal Conservation Districts (TCD’s) and direct technical assistance
  – Training community liaisons and experts
• Direct outreach and community involvement in Tyonek, provides example for other ANV’s
• Community directed organization
• Native youth summer internships
• Two years of a 6 week winter course for TCD’s
• Three years of on-site summer classes at Tyonek Farm
Tyonek Grown Workshop

- Held a 4 day workshop in June for 8 participants from 5 communities
- Will hold a winter class online for participants interested in starting a garden/farm
Future Goals

- Food storage, etc
- Crop expansion
- Continue grow interns
- Year round production in school
- Livestock
- Cooking education
- Tyonek managed
Overall Target Outcome

By the end of this project, we will have helped:

• 11 Tribal Conservation Districts (including approximately 100% socially disadvantaged residents) start a farm

• 50 Alaska Native Beginning Farmers and Ranchers will receive business and holistic management training

• Create an approachable network for ANVs interested in agriculture through Tribal Conservation Districts
What I Can Share

- Working with Tribal Conservation Districts
- Working in off-road communities
- Working in communities with little agricultural background
- Growing watermelons against the odds and converting large areas of land into Rhode Islands
What I hope to learn from other projects

• Best platforms and approaches for distance education
• Evaluation tools and tips
• Beginning farmer curriculum ideas and resources via distance education
Keep in touch!

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