



MEMORANDUM
Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: August 17, 2016

FROM: Arthur J. Keyes IV
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
July 2016

ARLF

- Loan officer is working on the disposal of Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage (MMM&S). One response was received to the Requests for Proposals for Lease with Option to Purchase. Loan officer is working on follow up with the proposer. Also, per the Director's request, loan officer has updated a white paper on MMM&S.
- Loan officer participated in a tour of the DOC Pt. MacKenzie farm. Loan officer also participated in farm visits in the Pt. MacKenzie area.
- Loan officer is assisting with the disposal of the Palmer Property previously known as the Palmer Blow Mold Manufacturing Facility as needed.
- Loan officer has received and processed three new loan applications and has processed one resubmittal.
- Loan officer has had conversations over the phone and in person with several potential new borrowers and current borrowers and provided them with application and loan program information.
- Loan officer has processed warrant requests, loan closings, loan payoffs, associated Deeds of Reconveyance, and UCC filing updates, as well as other duties associated with ARLF management.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers. Default borrower contact list has been updated.
- Loan officer has been managing loan insurance requirements and other ARLF loan requirements.
- Loan officer has updated the interest rate comparison for review.
- Loan officer has updated the asset report.

Marketing and Development

- The Publications Specialist has fully transitioned to the marketing team and continues to provide web, graphic design, outreach, advertising, and social media support.
- Staff processed Alaska Grown and Source Book applications.
- Staff continues to update the 2016-2017 Online Alaska Grown Source Book.
- Staff selected and interviewed 2016 Farm Family of the Year and published a media release to announce the recipient.
- Staff continues to prepare division media releases, quarterly newsletters, BAC reports, forms, surveys, fact sheets, and general web maintenance duties.
- Staff made additional edits to the 2016 Spring Agricultural Land Auction booklet.

- Staff is creating 'Alaskan Potato' flyers.
- Staff is creating a new Alaska Grown brochure.
- Staff hosted an outreach booth the Mid-Summer Garden & Arts Faire.
- Staff attended the Local Foods, Local Places workshop.
- The 'Meet Me at the Market' campaign participants are continuing to distribute Alaska Grown giveaway items and conducting surveys. Staff completed four market counts around the state to observe and support the program.
- Staff contacted greenhouses throughout the state to invite them to join the Alaska Grown program. An interactive map is in development with their contact information. Staff is also verifying CSA information for updates to that existing map.
- Staff performed 33 store visits throughout the state to inspect the quality of Alaska Grown products and deliver Alaska Grown display materials.
- Staff continues to serve on multiple food system boards: National Farm to School Network, Alaska Food Policy Council, and Alaska School Nutrition Association.
- Staff continues to manage over \$1,000,000 in federal dollars.
- Staff continues to run and support the Farm to Summer Meal grant program conducting three additional site visits this month.
- Staff successfully hosted and ended the Summer VISTA program which operated in Hope, Dillingham, and Anchorage. All three sites were a great success.
- Staff completed federal reporting requirements for VISTA, USDA Team Nutrition grant award, and the Farm to School fund from Child Nutrition Programs.
- Staff submitted the 2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant State Plan. We heard back from USDA with minimal questions for the awarded \$212,000.
- Staff has completed four Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) audits since May bringing in \$2,400 from USDA (\$800/audit).
- Staff attending the North American Agriculture Marketing Officials conference in San Antonio Texas.
- Staff launched the Farm to University / Hospital mini-grant opportunity.
- Staff leveraged an additional \$20,000 in money for advertising Alaska Grown product in the stores.
- Staff took the Director and the Governor's Ag liaison on a tour of Delta Farms and the Bio-mass / Greenhouse facility in Tok.

Land Sales

- Staff was contacted by two real estate companies with questions regarding ag covenants and updating State Farm Conservation Plans (SFCP).
- Staff answered several requests for information on farming in Alaska.
- Staff participated in a Planning Team meeting for the Copper River Basin Area Plan.
- Staff presented one SFCP to the Director for approval, two farm plans are pending approval by relevant Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and two others are in development.
- Staff is working with DOC on updating the Pt. MacK. prison farm plan.
- Staff is working with two Soil and Water Conservation Districts to update farm plans on State owned lands under SWCD management for educational projects.
- Staff completed one Final Inspection for Patent of a 440 acre ag parcel near Trapper Creek.

- Willer-Kash Ag Project is Currently undergoing Public Notice and open to Comments after being postponed 2 months due to DMLW IT issues.
- Staff toured the Eagle River Waste Water facility, continuing to learn about Bio-Solid use/disposal in Alaska.
- Staff completed inspections/research on 4 patent requests out of the Northern Region Office.
- Staff reviewed 3 subdivision plats
- Staff worked with MLW on closing out Doyon's drilling operations in Nenana-Totchaket
- Staff is working with Fairbanks North Star Borough regarding procedures for agricultural subdivisions.
- Staff is Working on brochure for Kobe North sale

Inspections

- Staff managed traps for the CAPS program. Traps managed were for the Exotic Wood Boring Bark Beetle Survey.
- Staff prepared FY2017 work plans and proposals for the CAPS program to be submitted in August.
- Inspection and Regulatory staff have inspected, certified and issued 3 phytosanitary certificates and which facilitated the export of over \$4 (million) dollars of timber exports for July 2016.
- Staff is conducting first, certified seed potato field inspections in Matsu, Fairbanks, Nenana and Delta. Staff also worked with retired, North Dakota Seed Potato Certification Manager, Willem Schrage during that time.
- Staff continues to work with wholesale company, Alaska Grown Producers and USDA on Alaska Grown farmed vegetables and Food Safety Audits. Staff continues to field calls and provide information on Food Safety Audits.
- Staff responded to multiple inquiries on import, registration and labeling requirements for agriculture products to be sold in Alaska.
- Staff reviewed and released permits for the interstate movement of plant pests, noxious weeds and soil.
- Staff has responded to inquiries of Alaska agricultural products to be exported.
- The timber export program has Conducted six export treatments in Korea.
- The Division of Agriculture has hired a Development Specialist position in Fairbanks. This position will work with the phytosanitary and inspection program and add to the services the Division of Agriculture can provide to interior Alaska.
- Staff are working to develop a Timber Export Program Manual
- Staff are developing a training and professional development curriculum for Phytosanitary Export staff.
- Staff are developing program budgets and cost projections for maintaining ACO license and professional credentials for international export treatment work.
- Staff have been updating and calibrating treatment instrumentation for compliance with treatment protocols.

Plant Materials Center:

Erosion Control

- The Soil Health project is established and staff is continuing to collect samples throughout the growing season. Samples consist of soil physical properties, chemistry, biological health, cover crop and commodity data, and weather conditions. This is a five year study of soil health and conservation efforts using cover crops to improve soil health.
- Staff is increasing 'Denali' alfalfa seed. Once adequate stock is preserved at the PMC off-site trials will begin. This project will collect data for five years regarding winter hardiness, seedling vigor, pesticide resistance, cultivation management, and nutritional information.
- Staff is preparing the final report on the five-year Growth Curve project analyzing hay production and soil nutrient Alaska in eight Alaskan regions.
- Staff is working with Alaska Fish and Game on streambank restoration training and project on the Chena and Kenai Rivers, Meadow Creek in Big Lake, and Taku Lake in Anchorage. The PMC will continue to collaborate with Fish and Game on similar projects in the future.
- Staff is collaborating with the Copper River Watershed Project in Cordova to remove Japanese knotweed and begin revegetation. Monitoring and evaluation will continue through the third growing season.

Horticulture

- The PMC hosted the monthly Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association's meeting. Staff and members discussed and viewed the *Malus* rootstock trial.
- Staff is maintaining the broccoli and cauliflower plots for the 2016 trials.
- Staff is maintaining the new *Malus* seedlings for the 2016 planting.
- Staff is assisting in maintaining the seed potato production.
- Staff is assisting the foundation seed program in seeding transplants for the 2016 growing season.
- Staff is helping local growers fine-tune their greenhouses and outdoor production sites.
- Staff completed building a screen enclosure for the greenhouses.
- Staff is working on the final report for the Asparagus Specialty Crop Grant, the Caneberry Demonstration report and the Apple Rootstock report.
- Staff has started harvesting broccoli and gathering data for the 2016 trial.

Invasive Weeds and Agricultural Pest Program

- Staff travelled to Cordova for the first elodea eradication effort in the Chugach National Forest. Coordinating with the U.S. Forest Service, the Copper River Watershed Project, and SePRO Corporation, staff applied fluridone products to three waterbodies; one slough and two ponds, for elodea eradication. This is the first use of an herbicide in Alaska waters on National Forest Lands.
- Staff gave one Anchorage store a Regulatory Violation Notice for Canada thistle found growing in other plant pots.
- Staff is coordinating with the Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plant Management (CNIPM) to plan the annual workshop in October.

Pathology

- Staff tested 375 potato samples from nine certified seed growers for potato leafroll virus (PLRV), potato virus X (PVX), and potato virus Y (PVY).
- Staff completed virus and bacteria testing of potato tissue culture plantlets for an additional 14 varieties.
- Staff is assisting the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) coordinator with writing a plant nursery pest survey grant.
- Staff is working on a USDA Farm Bill grant with Cooperative Extension cooperators. The grant provides resources for a plant nursery pest survey grant. The grant provides resources for plant nursery and greenhouse sampling and testing, as well as educational outreach for diagnostics and disease management.
- Staff diagnosed diseases and other issues for several commercial potato growers.
- Staff worked with a Cooperative Extension agent to diagnose and make management recommendations for black rot in brassicas (broccoli and cabbage) for a commercial grower.
- Staff performed virus testing for 14 peony samples from three growers.
- Staff is working with a commercial strawberry producer to diagnose problems and improve management practices.

Potato Program

- All surplus Generation Zero (G0) material was discarded. The cold storage unit has been shut down and is being cleaned and prepared for this year's harvest.
- All requested certified potato seed has been picked up by the growers.
- Greenhouse planting for 2017 seed is currently completed. A total of 1,695 pounds of G0 seed was ordered across 35 varieties.
- Staff is evaluating a new custom-made fertilizer formulation that is made on-site specific for potato production. Results will be compared to standard formulations.
- All plantlets ordered for this spring have been distributed. The plantlets were requested by three growers so that they can perform their own greenhouse production of tubers, due to limited space at the PMC. Approximately 775 additional plantlets were prepared.
- The entire PMC maintenance collection has been initiated into tissue culture. Growers contacted staff requesting additional varieties and have provided the PMC with tubers to be initiated into tissue culture and virus/bacterial testing.
- Greenhouse improvements continue. Netting has been installed to cover up vents and concrete has been poured at the entrances. Damaged roof panels will be replaced after harvest when time permits.
- Staff completed specific gravity and dry matter data collection and photographed all available varieties of field stock potatoes. This information will be input into a database where varieties will be evaluated for french fry processing.
- Staff completed field planting. One hundred forty varieties of maintenance collection were planted, 11 new varieties for the specialty crop experiments, 13 advanced line trial (2nd year), 14 advanced line varieties (1st year), 53 true seed varieties that were retained from the 2015 season and additional Magic Molly to support the soil health evaluation project.

- Staff is collecting weekly data on bud and flowering times of all field stock in the maintenance collection to determine maturation times of these varieties in Alaska. The data will be compared to regions with different climates.
- Staff is preparing for a visit from Vidyasagar Sathuvalli Rajakalyan, a breeding program scientist at Oregon State University to evaluate the field trials and discuss future collaborations.
- Staff escorted the certification inspection team on a tour of the greenhouses and fields to discuss physiology, virus indicators, and true-to-type evaluation criteria.

Revegetation

- Staff is continuing to work with the Alaska Gas Line Development Corporation on the Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline Revegetation and Stabilization Plan for the project. The first draft was submitted to the Corp of Engineers for review and comment. It is expected to be returned for finalization within the next few weeks.
- All resources reports for the Alaska LNG project have been received by PMC staff. These resource reports will form the basis for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The PMC will begin to review and comment on four of the 10 resource reports. Resource Report 1 (General Project Description), Resource Report 3 (Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation), Resource Report 7 (Soils), and Resource Report 10 (Alternatives).
- Continued participation in the Alaska State Revegetation Working Group. This groups is tasked with providing information and assistance to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as they continue to develop new revegetation standards for mine reclamation.
- 2015 Cold Regions Native Plant Commercialization selections have been planted within a plot at the PMC, evaluations of the selections have begun and will continue through the rest of the growing season.

Seed Cleaning and Conditioning

- Staff has been working manually
- Staff visited Noatak for continued seed collection harvesting in partnership with NANA corp and Red Dog Mine. Collections of cotton grass, bluejoint reedgrass, and indian milk vetch were harvested. Staff will visit Noatak again in mid-August for additional harvesting.
- Staff is harvesting the PMC foundation seed fields. Alpine bluegrass, bluejoint reedgrass, and tufted hairgrass is currently drying. Staff plans to harvest the PMC grain fields in early August.
- Bluejoint reedgrass plugs are ready to be transplanted into the field. Plans for transplanting beckmania will follow.
- Seed cleaning equipment maintenance is being conducted earlier than scheduled in anticipation of a bumper crop reports statewide and possible large orders.

Seed Laboratory

- Seed lab conducted 48 seed tests. This includes 17 Purity, 22 Germination, and 9 Noxious weed tests.

Seeds of Success

- Staff successfully completed growing plugs. Portion of the plugs were planted in new box garden beds. The rest of the plugs were given to Anchorage Botanical Garden and Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District for further seed production.
- Staff started seed harvest. Five species were harvested so far.
- Staff is conducting field weed management weekly.