

To: Elizabeth Benolkin, Program Officer

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

605 West Fourth Avenue, Room G-61

Anchorage, AK 99501

From: Laura Allen, District Manager

Upper Susitna Soil & Water Conservation District

HC 89 Box 8461

Talkeetna, AK 99676

Regarding: Final Performance Report for 'Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps Habitat Restoration' 2012-2013

Agreement: F12AC00617

Project Title: Upper Susitna Youth Conservation Corps Habitat Restoration

Reporting period: August 30, 2013 – December 31, 2013

Today's Date: November 8, 2013

Due Date: December 31, 2013

Summary of activities conducted and accomplishments achieved:

Goal: Restore habitat for anadromous fish and migratory birds through streambank restoration and early detection of and rapid response to invasive plants.

Objectives:

1. Objective one is to rehabilitate and enhance approximately 170 feet of shoreline and riparian habitat on Montana Creek.
 - a. This was accomplished in 2011. Objective met.
2. Objective two is to educate recreational user groups about the importance of shoreline rehabilitation and introduce people to the idea of restoring the entire shoreline in the future. Additionally, recreational user groups will be surveyed and interviewed so that future restoration projects can take these opinions into consideration during planning.

- a. Public education occurred by first educating the new YCC group about shoreline restoration since there were many new members who did not experience the project last year. Amber Bethe gave a shoreline restoration training to the YCC group of 2013 at the beginning of the season. Objective met.
 - b. Also, public education occurred at the End of the Season YCC celebration where community members were invited to come see presentations and a slideshow about the YCC accomplishments from this summer, including shoreline restoration and it's importance to salmon spawning habitat. Objective met.
 - c. The YCC crew visited Montana Creek to survey fishermen about the 2012 shoreline restoration project. Unfortunately, when the crew was there, the fishermen were not, or the few that were there declined to be surveyed. Sunshine Creek was also visited, but no fishermen were there. Surveys are attached to this report. Objective met.
3. Objective three is to survey and control high priority invasive plants.
 - a. Please see the following list for sites where invasive plants were surveyed. Objective met.

Slow moving creeks where aquatic surveys were completed:

1. Birch Creek
2. Sunshine Creek
3. Rabideaux Creek
4. Trapper Creek

Land where terrestrial surveys were completed:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Talkeetna Village Park | 11. Trapper Creek Inn |
| 2. Christiansen Lake Beach Park | 12. Crane Sanctuary in Trapper Creek |
| 3. Far north end of Christiansen Lake Road (turnaround) | 13. Swiss Alaska Inn in Talkeetna |
| 4. Talkeetna Lakes Park parking lot | 14. Talkeetna Playground |
| 5. Talkeetna Lakes Park (Ermine trail) | 15. Talkeetna Library |
| 6. Goose Creek | 16. Talkeetna gravel pit on Beaver Road |
| 7. Kashwitna River | 17. Sewer Road in Talkeetna |
| 8. Montana Creek | 18. Talkeetna sled hill |
| 9. Susitna River Road, Trapper Creek | 19. Talkeetna Look out (Mile 13) |
| 10. Oilwell Road at Moose Creek bridge, Trapper Creek | 20. Second street in Talkeetna |
| | 21. Susitna river in Talkeetna |
| | 22. Sunshine Creek |
| | 23. Northern Susitna Building in Talkeetna |

To see which species of invasive plants were surveyed at the above locations, please see the attached AK EPIC data form, which includes all invasive plant work that was completed for this period.

To summarize, 45.7 acres were surveyed for the presence of both aquatic and terrestrial invasive plants. There were no species of invasive aquatic plants found, thus, no control mechanisms were needed for the aquatic surveys. There were 17 different terrestrial invasive plants found. The YCC controlled a total of 10.2 acres. Control methods included manual hand pulling, digging with a shovel, using weed wrenches for Mayday Trees, and staking down a black tarp for two years to get rid of the invasives. The sites were all documented using protocol set forth by AK EPIC and data was submitted to the Alaska Natural Heritage Program for verification and inclusion into the State wide database at the end of each year. USSWCD staff attended an educational workshop in Talkeetna to learn how to appropriately identify and survey for invasive species. Tools and personal protective equipment were purchased to be able to put these learned methodologies to work. The workshop was useful and skills were applied successfully in the field. Objective met.

The work was completed by September 1, 2013. See attached SF425 for budget report. The final report was submitted early because the work was completed ahead of schedule and the funds were exhausted completely. Therefore, we would like to close out the agreement early. The final report is submitted in lieu of the interim report.

Problems or issues that may prevent achievement of goals:

At most tarping locations the ground was very hard, making it difficult to pound in a 6 inch staple. At times, the stake would bend and resist fully going into the ground. The YCC crew overcame this issue by doing their best in driving the stakes as far as they would go in these circumstances, and used extra stakes to reinforce them.

Another problem that arose was acquiring the weed wrenches which are highly effective tools used to pull Mayday trees, an invasive tree that is in Talkeetna and Trapper Creek. These weed wrenches are very expensive to purchase. Fortunately, we were able to overcome this problem by contacting Tim Stallard, the invasive weed coordinator of Anchorage, who owns a stock of weed wrenches. Tim was kind enough to lend us eight weed wrenches for two weeks so we could get the job done.

No other problems were encountered that would prevent the achievement of goals.

Other pertinent programmatic and budget information:

Laura Allen has returned as full time District Manager while Chris Love has regained his job title of Environmental Programs Manager. Therefore, only one District Manager exists currently, and that is Laura Allen. No deviations from the original budget have occurred. A few of the control and survey sites have changed since the original proposal, largely due to the permissions that were obtained.

Outreach occurred at the YCC End of the Year celebration where public was invited to learn about invasive plants. There were many questions about the work the YCC completed. Informational signs about Orange Hawkweed, the invasive plant that was tarped, were hung in all tarped areas where the public may have access to. Additionally, informational flyers regarding Mayday Trees were hung in Talkeetna and Trapper Creek with facts about the invasive tree and how the USSWCD could assist in

eradicating them. Moreover, while the crew was working at the sites listed above, many people ask questions about what work was being done. The YCC took this opportunity to educate interested people.

Please contact Laura Allen at 907-733-7923 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Laura Allen

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