

**STEVENS VILLAGE TRIBAL
NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 74016
STEVENS VILLAGE, AK 99774
PH 907-452-7162 FAX 907-452-5063
E-Mail: dschwalenberg@hotmail.com**

**BIA/AGENCY FY09 4th. QUARTER REPORTS
NATURAL RESOURCE/LAND/ROAD PROGRAM
July-September, 2009**

Following is the FY09 4th. quarterly report for the Stevens Village Tribal Natural Resource Program. The Natural Resource Program is responsible for the Land and Resource related activities of the Council and Community. These reports will explain the activities that were undertaken during this time period.

**BIA FY09 P.L.93-638 contract #CTE03T46323
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

Fisheries:

The Council was represented at the various Fisheries meetings at TCC, CATG, AKDF&G Rural Advisory Committee Meetings, and the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. The critical issue addressed this period was the restricted subsistence fishing on the Yukon River. The subsistence fisheries season was drastically cut back due to the Canadian Escapement requirements on the Yukon River. The at sea fishers by-catch was capped at approximately 60,000 kings and the targeted escapement to Canada was met. The bad news was that the local people were short of their needs and were demanding answers as to why they had to pay the price. The Native community will have to address the States management strategy for anadromous fish management or be reduced to a token subsistence fishery. This summer we continued the Dall River Northern Pike Survey with the summer youth crew. We surveyed the flood damage to the River and the habitat. We sampled some larger pike to determine their relative abundance in the destroyed habitat. There appeared to be few fish in the river due to exceptionally low water. We also seined various location to determine the young of the year production of forage fish. We caught numerous small Ciscoes, Hump Back Suckers, and Lush. The water conditions were very bad due to bank cave-ins, low water, and numerous river blockages from downed trees and flood debris. Longer range surveys will need to be performed to determine the full extent of the damage to the environment and fish populations.

Wildlife:

The program continued discussions with the USF&WS, ADF&G, Doyon, and Dinyee concerning the possibility of the re-introduction of Wood Bison into the Refuge. We entered into an agreement with the Wildlife Conservation Center in Portage, AK to purchase 14 Plains Bison. This action triggered an investigation by Congressman Young's office after another Bison farmer erroneously reported that he was selling us "Woods" Bison. The Buffalo issue remains volatile

Bison Farm:

The Bison Farm Project activities for this period are as follows. Pasture maintenance and improvement activities were completed to fertilize approximately 500 acres of improved pasture.

ANCSA

During this period, the Council approved the use of 7(j) funding for the Tribal Natural Resource Management effort. The Dinyee Village Corporation is often overlooked in the Tribal Land and Resource management effort but the Corporations hold the future of these programs in their hands. The ANCSA 7(i) funding section specifically sets aside funds for the "village" to use for local projects. The 7(j) section funds have historically been used by the Corporation with little in-put from the Council. This situation has now changed in the fact that the Dinyee Native Corporation, which owns the Land, and the Council, which manages the lands and resources have agreed to a formula for distribution of the 7(i) funds. The council now receives an annual percentage of the fund to conduct the resource management activities while the Corporation will keep a percentage to operate its ventures. A significant percentage will be placed in a long term investment fund that will ultimately be a source of capital for both the Tribal and Corporation needs, thirty years down the line. The Corporation Board and Council agreed to this distribution at their, respective, annual membership meetings. To our knowledge, this is the first ever joint Tribal/Village Corporation agreement to share the 7(i) funds. The program used some of the funds for the Bison farm development, the flood cleanup supervision, and for environmental work to clean up fuel drums, paint cans, and fire extinguishers that floated around the village during the flood. We also concluded an I-GAP grant agreement with the EPA to expand our Environmental activities.

Oil and Gas Development:

The program continued its technical support of the Councils participation in the agreement with Dinyee and Doyon to participate in the exploration for Oil and Gas on Corporation Lands. Seismic work is being planned and the ultimate decision for development will be made only after the information has been collected and analyzed. The Council has established a position statement to clarify their interests in these development activities and what they expect within the process and the assurances that the environment and Cultural sites will be protected throughout this process. The program continued to work with the Oil and Gas Industry through the Denali Gas Pipeline Company to initiate a dialogue about the role that Tribes should play in the development of the Alaska Gas Pipeline.

Environmental and Emergency Disaster Flood Relief:

The program responded to the Yukon River Flood Disaster in the Village by assisting in the coordination of the State Division of Homeland Security and FEMA interaction with the community and residents. We provided the primary community assessment which alerted the agencies to the needs in the village from damage of the flood. We worked with the AK Energy Authority to repair the Electric Distribution System. We worked with the Village Safe Water program on the water and sewer system upgrades and flood repairs. We initiated action of the DEC to coordinate the clean-up of the materials washed out of the landfill onto community and private property, we worked with the NRCS, obtain a commercial Burn Box for the incineration of the garbage, trash, and flood debris, and operated the incinerator. We coordinated a summer youth program to clean up the community, consolidate the recyclable flood debris (eg. Steel drums, plastic, batteries etc.), and collected and stored burnable wastes for incineration in the Burn Box. We worked with the emergencies services coordinator to identify costs for facility and road repairs resulting from the flood. Subsequently, the work orders were signed for the repair of these damages.

Travel/Trip Report:

During this period, the Director traveled to Fairbanks to assist with the Resource Program Administrative, Accounting, and Auditing functions with the RVI Management Services Company. We also met with the AKDNR in an effort to resolve the exchange of the old BIA school Land to the Tribe. I also traveled to the Village to assess the damage caused by the flood and to meet with the Council, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State Homeland Security, Emergency Services Representatives. While in the village I supervised the summer youth crew in environmental and natural resource related activities. I attended to Council related business in Anchorage with the Tribal Attorneys, the WH Pacific Engineering Company, USF&WS, BIA, and other agencies. My travel and expenses were provided by the various Tribal grants and participating organizations. Travel to Delta and Fairbanks is considered "Local Travel" under the Tribal Policies and Procedures. My mileage compensation and expenses for Travel were documented via a Mileage Log book, submitted receipts, and properly approved Check Request forms.

BIA FY08 ITBC Bison Grant #9E00460074 FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009

Bison Farm:

The Bison Farm Project activities for this period are as follows. Pasture maintenance and improvement activities were completed to fertilize approximately 500 acres of improved pasture. 168 acres of pasture was improved through brake disking, plowing, harrowing, fertilizing, and seeding with Nugget Blue Grass, Wheatgrass, and Oats as a companion crop. The Buffalo meat distribution of the \$5,000 in the Grant for the Healthy Food initiative was completed with the meat and products provided to the Tribal members. The materials funding was used to provide for the handling facility upgrade and for the materials to complete the pasture improvement. Lack of funding prohibited us from completing the hay storage shed. The agencies must realize that when the Tribe requests \$100,000 to do the work reported in the proposal, that \$37,000 will obviously not allow us to get everything done. You will see these unfunded projects again in the FY10 proposal. They remain critical elements in the successful operation of the Farm and herd. The Grant activities have been completed and the Grant can be closed.

BIA FY09 IRR program contract #E003706136 April-June 2009

Roads/IRR:

The Indian Reservation Roads Program continues to proceed to community roads Construction. Following is an updated progress report of the projects that the IRR program encompasses, their relationship to the responsibilities of the Tribal Resource Program, and their current status. Tribes will need to be very proactive of their Tribal Roads Programs if they are to continue to receive current or increased levels of funding into the future. Our projects, none-the-less must continue to push ahead or they may be lost in the reorganization.

Community Roads Project:

This is a \$3.435 million dollar construction project to engineer, design, and rebuild all the main roads in the Village. During this period the engineering and design is completed, the Right of

Way surveys and legal easement documents have been completed with the exception of (1) restricted lot easement that is now in probate due to the death of the owner. We are awaiting the BIA final approval to put the Project out to Bids so that the construction phase can progress. Upon approval, the Council will close out the initial E&D Contract and complete the contracting for construction through a competitive bid process, will select the construction company to do the work, will negotiate the construction agreement, (including the working relationship with the village), and will proceed to construction.. All funds have been raised and the Council signed the BIA High Priority Construction Contract which provides \$1 million grant funding to the construction project. The Council also signed a Road Maintenance Agreement for the maintenance of the road after construction.

Road Inventory and Construction Activities:

To date, the Council has applied for the FY09 funding to be placed into escrow for use in the construction project. The BIA, we learned recently, did not process the FY09 Contract during the Fiscal Year. Although we submitted 3 signed resolutions for the FY09 Contract, starting as early as November 2008, we were contacted in September for yet another Resolution for the same contract. This situation cannot be tolerated if the Tribes are to be active participants in the IRR program.. The BIA IRR Tribal Programs are also eligible for the Federal stimulus grants (ARRA). We are eligible for approximately \$175,000 additional road construction for this year. We have applied for this funding. Later this year if the other Tribes do not use their shares we may be eligible for more funding in the FY10 year.

**BIA 2% ROADS Contract #CTE03T46302
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

The less than \$6000 in funding for 2% planning was expended for planning purposes during the fiscal year.

**Denali Commission Community Roads and Dalton Highway Feasibility Grants #311-07
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

The Dalton Highway Access Project:

The activities this period included working with Western Federal Lands Administration Agency (WFLA) to complete the Stevens Village-Dalton Highway pre-engineering Feasibility Study. The Denali Commission has provided \$250,000 for this project completion. The cost estimates of \$57-71 million prohibit the continuation of the project until funding is identified. We retain the option of continuing to develop the alignment as a winter Trail.

Community Roads Construction Project.

The \$1 million Road Construction Grant remains within the Community roads construction Project. The Denali portion of the road was designed independently of the BIA portion. We are going to the bid process and the expenditure of these funds will be after the construction contract is awarded.

**USDA Rural Development Landfill Project (Grant awarded). Case # 60-026
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

The New Solid Waste Landfill Project:

The \$2.4 million dollar sanitation road project is being done by the State DOT&PF and has progressed through the public notice and review process. The State informs us that the final survey will have to be completed prior to bidding of the construction project and there remains some final environmental concerns due to the construction within a wetlands. They will be soliciting bids for the project as soon as this work is completed. A key to the success of this project is the new landfill funding from the USDA Rural Development agency. During this period we modified the USDA proposal to expand the size of the facility, to include fencing and a burn box at the site, and to update the expenditures for the construction of the new site and the close-out of the old landfill. The new grant application is for \$886,000. We completed submission of all the Council Financial and Audit information, completed the Grant assurance documents, and have received the Final notification of the Grant Award. The States funding will be used only to build the road. The road right-of-way will be turned over to the Tribe when the road is completed who will maintain the road under a road maintenance agreement and will use a portion of its IRR funding for this purpose. We have met recently with the Denali Commission representatives, the BIA High Priority Projects representatives, the BIA IRR representatives, and the WH Pacific engineering representatives to insure that all entities are working within the same Construction schedule. Although they maintain that that is the case, I am not convinced that the three projects are lining up to be bid or constructed at the same time. The best that we can hope for is that the projects will follow one another so any company getting the first project will be at an advantage to get the second and third, as well.

**BIA Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant # CTE03T46310
FY09 4th. Quarter July-September 2009**

(This report was submitted independently).

**USF&WS Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project #FWS701818J751
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

(This report was submitted independently.)

**Alaska Department of Natural Resources-Division of Forestry 09-DG-1110489-003
ARRA Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant.
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

(This report was submitted independently).

**USDA-FSA/NRCS EQUIP, GRP, and CRP cost share agreements.
FY09 4th. Quarter Report July-September 2009**

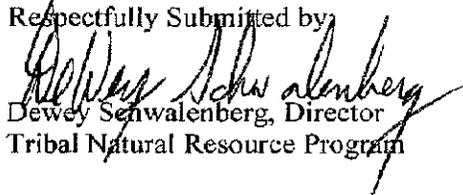
During this reporting period, the Program and Farm staff worked with the NRCS, FSA, and University County Extension agents to complete the Bison Farm Range Management Plan and Scope of work for the pasture improvement. During May-July, approximately 500 acres of improved pasture were fertilized through a Farm assistance agreement with Bryce Wriggly, contract farmer. An additional 168 acres of pasture improvement was completed with the pasture being brake disked, plowed, harrowed, fertilized and planted to Blue grass and wheat grass, with

a companion Oat cover-crop. These activities meet our EQUIP and GRP requirements. We completed the CRP brush-cutting of approximately 400 acres and the CRP payment will be processed and used to pay of the Farm mortgage.

EPA I-GAP Grant (Grant Awarded for FY10) # 96097901

(Activity was expended to secure this grant during this period but work will commence on October 1, 2009 if the Council accepts the scope of work).

Respectfully Submitted by



Dewey Schwalenberg, Director
Tribal Natural Resource Program

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NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 74016, STEVENS VILLAGE, AK 99774
PH. 907-478-7228 FAX 907-478-7229 CELL 907-230-0663
E-mail dschwalenberg@hotmail.com**

Hazardous Fuels Quarterly and Final Report
BIA and FWS
October 12, 2009

Following is the FY09 4th. Quarter and Final Report for the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grants numberd USF&WS 701818J751 and BIA CTE03T46310, respectively, as provided to the Stevens Village Council. If you require any additional information please feel free to contact me.

The Stevens Village Tribal Natural Resource Program instituted the Hazardous Fuels Mitigation activities in late July of 2009. The Council appointed a Crew Boss with 17 years of firefighting experience to supervise the crew of 10 workers. Ultimately, 15 different local residents worked on the project as fire fighters had to leave to fight fire throughout the State. In those periods other village residents would be employed to keep the crew at 10 members. The Council provided (6) chain saws and the grants provided the wages, fuel, oil, chains, repairs and equipment rental for the operation of the project.

The area targeted for this seasons project was the core area of the Community Facilities. The area included the Electrical Generating Plant, the Fuel Tank Farm, the Clinic and Council/Natural Resources Office Building, the washateria, well house, water lines, the utilador for the sewer and water lines, the public school and teacher housing, and the river front adjacent to the facilities compound. As a result of a major flood in May of 2009 the work area had been flooded and debris was present as well as the vegetation surrounding the facilities. The area of treatment was approximately 12 acres. The treatment removed all White Spruce, Willow, and Aspen and thinned the Birch hardwoods to provide some shade where possible. The Crew members worked 40 hours per week and were able to complete the 12 acres by September 10, 2009. Some time was taken off, without pay, during the King Salmon run in July but with a very limited Subsistence season this year the time was minimal. All brush was removed from the site by dump truck, front end loader, and 4x4 pickup. The brush was staged on the old gravel runway in piles and burned. We filed a burn plan with the USF&WS and our Crew Boss was responsible for the burn.

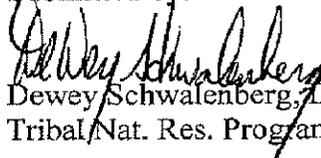
Sam Patten, FWS conducted an on-site inspection on September 9, 2009 and certified the project as being professionally done and in compliance with the generally accepted Hazardous Fuels Reduction practices. I have included a copy of his report, which better describes the work accomplished. I am also including photos of the area treated before and after to visually illustrate the successful treatment and the extent protection from fire

that the area now enjoys. The debris and flood damage mitigation was ancillary to the purpose of the project but the benefit was well received by the community.

This project was an important part of the reconstruction of the community after the devastating flood. The cleanup of the area was a psychological boost for the people and the income from the project provided funds for the people to cleanup their flooded homes and replace items lost in the flooding. The treatment further included cutting back and removing hazardous brush from around 10 private residences. We also cleaned up debris across trails and roads to facilitate travel and transportation throughout the community. And cut in a 150' x 150' interim dump site for temporary landfill purposes because the existing dump was under water from the flood. The cutback will serve as a fire buffer should the dump be set on fire. All work for all the projects, including the burning was completed in early October. We are now developing plans for the FY10 Hazardous Fuels Project which will be to complete a fire-break from the village downriver to the Dall River. A distance of 3-5 miles.

Please review the attached FWS Inspection Report and photos. Note that the Council declined to provide photos of the work Crew as being too intrusive into the workers personal lives and not essential to conveying the success with which the project was accomplished. We hope that the State and Federal agencies that supported this project will accept our sincere appreciation and will consider a partnership again with us on additional projects in the future.

Submitted by:


Dewey Schwalenberg, Director
Tribal/Nat. Res. Program

Attachments:

Sam Patten, FWS Inspection Report
Area Before and After Photos(E-mailed or hand delivered).

Stevens Village FWS – DOF WUI Project Site Visit/Inspection Sept. 9, 2009

Sam Patten, Fire Management Specialist, USFWS

Per request from the Stevens Village Council, I conducted a site inspection of the FWS – DOF Stevens Village Wildland-Urban Fuels Reduction Project on September 9, 2009, 1400 – 1600 hrs. I flew out to Stevens Village from Fairbanks and returned on a chartered Everts Air aircraft.

I was met on arrival by Stevens Village Crew Boss Darrell Kriska and his assistant, who escorted me through the following inspection. The first item that I noted at the airport was that floodwaters still occupy considerable low-lying areas north of the village, dating from the May 2009 ice-jam flooding. This includes most of the cut firelane constructed in Fall 2008 north of the village, extending east from the airport runway to the Yukon River. Slash piles formerly in the center of this fire lane have either been washed away or displaced, or in a few cases still project as isolated islands in standing water, five months after the flood. It will very difficult to treat these piles any further until there is significant decrease in remaining flood water levels.

We next proceeded from the airport to the center of the village. Here, substantial thinning progress around the public facilities, including the power plant, fuel storage tanks, tribal office, and local school, was evident and remarkable. Over ten acres surrounding these facilities has been cleared of spruce, brush, deformed birch, and ground fuels. Healthy birch have been left, leaving an open and pleasing viewshed around the public facilities, in accordance with National Firewise standards. In Fall 2008, this area was overgrown with dense vegetation, with spruce trees overhanging the powerplant and fuel tanks, for instance.

Darrell had one concern around the local school, which we then reviewed. The vegetation northwest of the school building remains to be thinned. I confirmed Darrell's concern. I recommend that heavy thinning proceed another 50 ft further back from the 2-storey public school, with healthy deciduous trees left with increasing frequency further away from the school, in order that lateral fuels do not provide ember showers onto the school, if the area should burn. If this is completed, most public facilities in the village are considered adequately treated. The Community Center may also require a light thinning treatment, but this structure is located principally in deciduous willows, and thus is of less concern.

Darrel also indicated that several hundred yards remain to be completed on the west end of the fuels break north of the village. Clearing here ceased in -30 below weather in November 2008. I recommended that the clearing should continue to complete this line, linking up with the village road system, to provide a complete fuels break north of the village.

The project plan is now to continue with thinning around the residences in Stevens Village. Only those residences in which the homeowners request thinning assistance will be treated. We inspected several such residences where treatment was ongoing or recently completed. These two residential sites were completely satisfactory, and treated in accordance with National Firewise principles. Heavy thinning needs only to be completed until approximately 30 feet around residences, and healthy deciduous birch trees may be left with increasing frequency after that distance.

I next met with the Stevens Village thinning crew, working at one of the residences. The crew is composed of Stevens Village emergency firefighters and the local volunteer fire department fire chief. I congratulated the local crew on their good work. I also verified that there is a Code Red Fire Pump available in the village, as well as a Mk III pump, but adequate fire hose is lacking.

I next inspected the three large burn piles on the old village airport runway, next to the Yukon River. The placement of these slash piles is also completely satisfactory. The slash piles are located on an expanse of open gravel, in proximity to water. The piles have been compacted by a front-loader. These piles will likely be burned in early winter 2009, once several inches of snow are on the ground.

I also recommended that the remaining funds in the fuels reduction project be closely tracked. This will determine how many additional remaining structures in the village will eventually be treated.

One additional fuels reduction question remained to be addressed. That was the disposition of the flammable flood debris along the riverbank at Stevens Village. Darrell reported that this material is mixed with sand throughout, and this mixture will quickly damage any chainsaws used to attempt removal. Darrell recommended that this material could be burned on site next to the river, and that he had tried several small test burns of this flood debris. I agreed with this recommendation to attempt to burn this material.

This should be on site under the right conditions, such as late fall or early winter, just after first snowfall, when risk of spread is minimal.

This concluded my site inspection of the Stevens Village WUI project. I returned to Fairbanks 1645 hrs via Everts Air.