



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
Vol. 50 No. 8 • August 2025



TCC Hosts Annual Partners Boat Trip

Each summer, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) hosts its Annual Partners Boat Trip—a unique opportunity to bring state and federal decision-makers directly into the heart of Interior Alaska. This year's trip, held from July 8–10, included visits to the villages of Evansville, Allakaket, Alatna, Hughes, and Huslia.

The trip builds meaningful connections between Tribal leaders, community members, and influential policymakers and granting agencies. It provides a platform for firsthand dialogue about the pressing challenges and opportunities facing rural Alaska—from infrastructure and healthcare to housing, public safety, and the

protection of traditional ways of life.

This year's boat trip welcomed a diverse group of participants, including representatives from state and federal agencies, Congressional offices, Tribal organizations, granting agencies, public safety, and infrastructure and health entities. Their presence helped ensure that the concerns of Tribal communities were heard directly by those who shape policy and funding decisions.

Throughout the trip, community leaders shared their priorities and challenges—including the urgent need for affordable housing, improved healthcare access, more consistent law enforcement presence, and action

to address the salmon crisis. Site visits, cultural exchanges, and community meals created meaningful opportunities for visiting partners to better understand life in rural Alaska and to witness the strength and resilience of these communities.

"We can write reports and submit testimony, but nothing replaces being here—seeing the beauty of our land, talking face-to-face with Elders and leaders, and understanding what's truly at stake for our people and our future," said Chief Brian Ridley.

As Interior Alaska continues to navigate the compounded impacts of climate change, economic disparity, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.

Restorative Re-Entry Gathering

Wellness Event for Re-Entrants and Family Members of Those Who Are or Have Been Incarcerated

All are welcome at this family-friendly event. Join us at the **Wedgewood Taiga Center** to learn how to support each other and restore balance into the lives of everyone impacted by incarceration. Enjoy guest speakers, Native foods, crafting and music!

Call (907) 452-8251 ext. 5002 (Marie Estrada) or 3869 (Morgan John) with any questions.

August 16th
9am-5pm



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Mission

Tanana Chiefs Conference provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign Tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.

Vision

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

Executive Board

Trimble Gilbert, Arctic Village
1st Traditional Chief

Andrew Jimmie, Minto
2nd Traditional Chief

Brian Ridley, Eagle
Chief/Chairman

Sharon Hildebrand, Nulato
Vice-President

Charlie Wright, Rampart
Secretary/Treasurer

Herbie Demit, Tanacross
Upper Tanana

Claude 'Joe' Petruska, Nikolai
Upper Kuskokwim

Nancy James, Gwichyaa Zhee
Yukon Flats

Ivan Demientieff, Grayling
Lower Yukon

Lori Baker, Minto
Yukon Tanana

Charlie Green, Galena
Yukon Koyukuk

Peter Demoski, Nulato
Elder Advisor

Mackenzie Englishoe, Gwichyaa Zhee
Youth Advisor



Letter from the Chief

Dear Tribal Leaders and Tribal Members,

Last month, I had the privilege of participating in our Annual Partners Boat Trip alongside several State and Federal representatives, as well as leaders from key granting agencies. This trip took us to the communities of Evansville, Allakaket, Alatna, Hughes, and Huslia—at a time when our Tribes are facing growing uncertainties around our fiscal future. I want to sincerely thank each community for your hospitality, generosity, and for opening your doors to important conversations about the future of our lands, health, and sovereignty.

At the national level, we continue to monitor developments in the federal budget process. TCC remains actively engaged in advocating for our Tribes and working to protect funding streams that support our people. I also want to assure you that we are continuing to push for long-term solutions to ensure greater stability and self-determination for our Tribes.

Here in Alaska, Governor Dunleavy has called a Special Session of the State Legislature to focus on education funding. TCC will continue monitoring for any developments that may influence budgets or legislation important to our region. As always, we encourage Tribal leaders to stay engaged with their legislators and continue advocating for equitable and sustainable funding for our rural communities.

Another issue that requires our collective voice is the proposed revocation of land protections on over 2 million acres north of the Yukon River. This action would remove federal safeguards and open the area to mining, oil and gas development, and other industrial activity under public land and mining laws. It would also allow the State of Alaska to proceed with long-standing land selections in this region. Once those selections are activated, these lands would no longer be subject to rural subsistence protections under ANILCA. I strongly encourage Tribes and community members to speak up during the public comment period. You can learn more on page 3 of this newsletter.

Recently, Senator Lisa Murkowski included funding for a Mobile Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) in the federal appropriations bill—an important step forward in addressing a critical gap in services across rural Alaska. Too many survivors in our communities go without the care, support, and justice they deserve. The Mobile SART will ensure that no matter where someone lives, they have access to immediate, compassionate, and trauma-informed care. Just last year, TCC Tribes passed two resolutions—24-01 and 24-02—calling for victim-centered services and demanding greater accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence. This mobile team directly responds to those calls, helping us uphold our commitment to survivors, reduce barriers to care, and break the cycle of violence. We are deeply grateful to Senator Murkowski for recognizing the need and helping make this life-saving resource a reality.

As always, I am proud to serve our communities. These are challenging times, but they also bring opportunities for us to rise together toward our vision of Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.

Mahsi' Choo,
Chief Brian Ridley
Tanana Chiefs Conference

SUBMIT TIPS ANONYMOUSLY:

Text AKTIPS followed by your tip to 84711
or visit

<https://dps.alaska.gov/ast/tips>



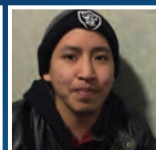
Call the Alaska State Troopers at 907-451-5100, Fairbanks Police Department at 907-450-6500 or TCC Public Safety at 907-452-8251 ext.3269.

Visit www.tananachiefs.org/missing for more information.

MISSING



Lorraine
Ginnis



Willis
Derendoff



Debbie
Nictune



Frank
Minano



Doren
Sanford

Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming Advocacy Opportunities

By Dilool Erickson, Tribal Resource Stewardship Department Director

The Tribal Resource Stewardship Department is gearing up for a packed fall and winter of hunting & fishing state and federal management meetings! If you are interested in engaging and advocating for Tribal hunting & fishing priorities or would like to learn more about ways to engage with upcoming regulation proposals, please reach out to the Tribal Resource Stewardship team at TRSP@tananachiefs.org. We invite your questions and encourage you to sign up for our email list to stay up to date on all things hunting & fishing in the TCC region!

As we set dates for the upcoming fall and winter virtual and in-person trainings, develop toolkits, and publish proposal booklet assessment matrixes, we will notify those on our email list and post updates on TCC social media.

8-Month Outlook on State and Federal Management Meetings

Please see below for a quick 8-month outlook on upcoming state and federal management meetings:

Date	Meeting/Update	Federal/State	Location
Mid-August/ Early September	Anticipated Release of the AYK BOF proposal booklet	State Management	
September - October	Anticipating local Interior Advisory Committees meeting dates in this window	State Management	TBD
October 7-8, 2025	WIRAC Fall Meeting	Federal Management	McGrath, AK & Virtual
October 8-10, 2025	EIRAC Fall Meeting	Federal Management	Tok, AK & Virtual
October 15, 2025	Online written comments due for BOF Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Island, Bering Sea, and Chignik Pacific Cod Meeting	State Management	
October 30- 31, 2025	BOF Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Island, Bering Sea, and Chignik Pacific Cod Meeting	State Management	Anchorage, AK
November 3, 2025	Online written comments due for AYK BOF Meeting	State Management	
November 18- 22, 2025	AYK BOF Meeting	State Management	Fairbanks, AK & Virtual
November/ December 2025	Anticipate the release of the Area M Board of Fish Proposal Booklet	State Management	
February 2-11, 2026	NPFMC Meeting on Chum Salmon Bycatch EIS Final Action	Federal Management	Anchorage, AK
February 3, 2026	Online written comments due to Area M BOF Meeting	State Management	
February 10- 12, 2026	Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council Spring Gathering	State, Federal, & Tribal Management	Anchorage, AK
February 18- 24, 2026	Area M Board of Fish Meeting	State Management	Anchorage, AK
February 24- 25, 2026	WIRAC Winter Meeting	Federal Management	Fairbanks, AK
February 2026 - Tentative Dates TBD	NPFMC Meeting on Chum Salmon Bycatch EIS Final Action	Federal Management	Anchorage, AK
March 3-5, 2026	EIRAC Winter Meeting	Federal Management	Fairbanks, AK
April 20-24, 2026	Federal Subsistence Board Wildlife regulatory Meeting	Federal Management	Anchorage, AK

Acronyms Key

When you attend management meetings and read proposed policies, you will encounter many acronyms. Here are a few of the acronyms most often referenced in our area.

AYK = Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim

BOF = Board of Fish

AC = Advisory Committees

WIRAC = Western Interior Regional Advisory Council

EIRAC = Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council

AMBCC = Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council

Area M = The Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Management Area (State Management)

NPFMC = North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

In-Season Teleconference

Every Tuesday at 1:00pm
AKST

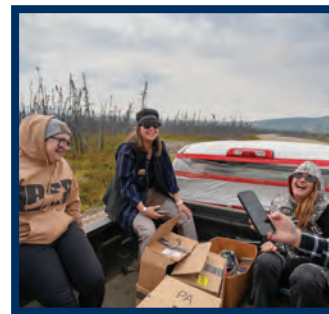
Tune into the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association's weekly teleconference for first-hand information, management Q&A, and to share traditional ecological knowledge.

Dial 1-800-315-6338
Participant Code: YUKON#
(98566#)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

aging infrastructure, the Partners Boat Trip serves as a critical step in building understanding and strengthening partnerships in Tribal communities.

TCC extends its sincere thanks to the communities of Evansville, Allakaket, Alatna, Hughes, and Huslia for their warm hospitality and for sharing their time, stories, and priorities. We are also grateful to all those who joined the trip and took the time to listen, learn, and engage more deeply with the needs and realities of our rural communities.



Congratulations
2025 Graduate

Anthony K Hildebrand, 18
Nulato Tribe
West Valley High School
High School Diploma

**We can't wait to see where
life takes you next!**

Now Hiring
**Hughes
Village Council**

Join Our Team!

We're looking for
dedicated people
to support our
community &
Tribal members!

Positions Available:
Bookkeeper: \$20/hour DEO FT/PT
Transportation Director: \$25/hour DEO FT/PT
Grants Manager: \$25/hour DEO FT/PT

Email hughestribalcouncil@gmail.com or
call 1-907-889-2239 to learn more. To apply,
email us your resume and preferred contact
information.

Introducing TCC's New Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor/Case Manager: Samantha Hoskins

By Samantha Hoskins, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor/Case Manager

My name is Samantha Hoskins, and I am originally from the lower forty-eight states. I moved to Fairbanks in 2021 and have been proud to call Interior Alaska my home ever since. I graduated magna cum laude from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2025 with a Bachelor of Arts in Fisheries, with a concentration in Rural & Community Development, and a minor in History.

My academic and professional journey has taken me all across Alaska. I worked on the Yukon River near Eagle in 2022 and 2023 and witnessed firsthand the devastating decline of king salmon. I have seen how this decline has afflicted the people, and I have heard their pain and suffering. I have also worked seasonally in the Nome region, the Copper River/Ahtna region, and in Juneau with Sealaska Heritage Institute.

Interior Alaska holds a special place in my heart. I enjoy reading nonfiction, watching movies, appreciating traditional Alaska Native arts, especially Athabascan caribou tufting and canoe making, spending time on the water, and going on long hikes, boat trips, and camping trips.

I am excited to begin my new role with Tanana Chiefs Conference in Workforce Development, under coordinator Amanda Race in the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Program. I look forward to supporting your goals and building strong partnerships here in Fairbanks or during village travel this fall.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me by phone at 1-907-452-8251, extension 3329, or email me at samantha.hoskins@tananachiefs.org. I look forward to working with you, serving you, and listening to all of your needs and concerns, in the spirit of Ch'egh-wtsen' (true love) supporting the mission of **Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes**.



Fight for Life Suicide Prevention Trip

Tanana Chiefs Conference and partners are hitting the river for the Fight for Life trip—an empowering journey to support, connect, and uplift our Tribal communities. From August 18–24, we'll stop in five villages to bring resources, spark conversations, and strengthen community bonds.

Event Schedule:

- August 18 – Rampart
- August 19 – Stevens Village
- August 21 – Beaver
- August 22 – Fort Yukon
- August 24 – Circle

Each stop includes a Meet & Greet, presentations, and open discussions on the issues that matter most—from health and safety to career exploration and wellness. Food and door prizes at every location!

This trip is brought to you by My Grandma's House, TCC Career Exploration, TCC TANF, TCC VPSO, TCC Wellness & Prevention, the American Red Cross, Tribal Protection Services, and Tribal Court Services.

Let's come together to build stronger, safer, and healthier communities—one river village at a time. We can't wait to see you there.

Chief Peter John Tribal Building 5th Floor Closure

Due to continued renovations to the building, the 5th floor will be temporarily closed from June 12th through October 1st.

The following programs under Family Services and support will be affected during this time:

- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- General Assistance
- Child Care Assistance
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)
- Employment & Training
- Education & Indigenous Learning

Call 907-452-8251 to schedule an appointment.

All in-person
appointments must
be scheduled in
advance.

NEED TO TALK?
Help is just three digits away.

988

Connects You to Careline, Alaska's
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.





How the Federal Budget Really Works

By Josh Clause, Clause Law

From shutdowns to tax laws, every federal budget decision affects our Tribal health care, housing, education, and infrastructure. But how does the budget process actually work—and why does it seem so complicated? Here's a breakdown of the three main tools Congress uses to manage federal spending.

This year has seen several federal budget mechanisms play out in Congress. These include the actual appropriation process, budget rescissions, and budget reconciliation. This article is meant to give Tribal leaders, government staff, and Tribal members insights into what these processes are and how they work.

Understanding Filibusters

Before we dive into the budget process it is important to discuss the Senate filibuster. A filibuster in the U.S. Senate is a tactic that allows a minority of senators to delay or block a vote by keeping debate open—sometimes indefinitely—on a bill, amendment, or nomination. To end a filibuster, the Senate uses a process called cloture, a rule first adopted in 1917 that limits further debate. Under today's rules, invoking cloture requires a three-fifths majority, or 60 out of 100 senators, except for certain nominations where that threshold has been lowered. Once cloture is invoked, debate is capped at 30 more hours, after which the Senate holds a final vote on the matter. In effect, the filibuster gives the minority a powerful tool to compel negotiation, while cloture ensures the majority can ultimately move forward—if they can muster enough votes.

The appropriations process is subject to the filibuster, but budget rescissions and budget reconciliation are not. This means that a simple majority vote in the Senate can move rescissions and reconciliation forward. This generally means that the appropriations process is more bipartisan because it has to be, whereas rescissions and reconciliation are usually very partisan.

Important Definitions

Filibuster: A tactic to delay/block legislation

Cloture: Requires 60 votes to end a filibuster

Impact: Makes most laws bipartisan—but not all

Appropriations Process and Timeline (Subject to the Filibuster)

Budget Timeline

- **February:** President submits budget
- **March–April:** Congress drafts budget resolution
- **May–July:** 12 appropriations bills are created
- **September:** Final versions are negotiated and voted
- **September 30:** Deadline to fund government
- **October 1:** New federal fiscal year begins

Each year, the appropriations process starts when the President submits a budget request to Congress, typically in February for the next federal fiscal year. This is akin to a national “spending wish list,” outlining the President’s priorities for defense, education, infrastructure, and more. While the President proposes how much each federal agency should receive, Congress holds the real power of the purse. In March and April, Congress begins crafting a budget resolution—a broad blueprint that sets overall limits for how much money can be spent in different categories, like health care or national security. This resolution does not allocate actual funds yet, but it guides the next phase.

From May through the summer, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees divide the agreed-upon spending totals into 12 separate bills, each covering a specific area of government (e.g., defense, agriculture, homeland security, Interior). Subcommittees in both chambers write these bills, hold hearings, and revise them based on stakeholder input and political negotiations. By June–July, the House usually votes first, followed by the Senate. If both chambers pass different versions, they work out the differences in a conference committee. Once both sides agree on final versions, the full Congress must approve them again.

The federal fiscal year begins October 1st, so all 12 appropriations bills should ideally be signed by the President by September 30th – this hasn’t been accomplished in more than a decade. If Congress misses the deadline, they can pass a continuing resolution (“CR”) to temporarily extend last year’s funding levels and avoid a government shutdown. If neither full appropriations bills nor a CR are passed in time, non-essential parts of the government shut down until funding is resolved. This final stage determines whether agencies can keep operating smoothly—or face disruptions due to political gridlock.

U.S. Federal Appropriations Process



Budget Rescissions (Not Subject to the Filibuster)

The budget rescission process is a way for the President or Congress to cancel previously approved funding that has not yet been spent. Under the Impoundment Control Act of 1974, the President can propose a rescission by sending a formal request to Congress, specifying which funds should be canceled and why. Once submitted, Congress has 45 legislative days to act. If both the House and Senate approve the rescission by a simple majority vote, the funding is permanently canceled. However, if Congress does not act within the 45-day window, the proposed funds must be released and spent as originally intended. While the rescission process is a tool for fiscal discipline, it is rarely successful unless the President's party controls both chambers of Congress.

Defining Rescission

- A way for the President or Congress to cancel previously approved funding that hasn't been spent.
- Approved by majority vote taken within 45-day window

Budget Reconciliation (Not Subject to the Filibuster)

Defining Reconciliation

- Allows congress to quickly pass budget-related laws with limited debate and a simple majority vote
- Often used to pass major fiscal legislation when one party holds narrow control
- Under the Byrd Rule, all provisions must directly affect federal spending or revenue and cannot cause a deficit beyond the budget window (10 years)

The budget reconciliation process is a special legislative procedure in Congress used to quickly pass certain budget-related laws with limited debate and a simple majority vote—bypassing the Senate filibuster. It begins when Congress passes a budget resolution that includes “reconciliation instructions” directing specific committees to make changes in spending, revenue, or the debt limit. These instructions are then compiled into a single reconciliation bill, which can be passed with just 51 votes in the Senate instead of the usual 60. Because of this lower threshold, reconciliation is often used to pass major fiscal legislation—such as tax cuts or health care reforms—when one party holds narrow control of the Senate as well as controlling the White House and House of Representatives.

However, to prevent the process from being misused for unrelated policies, the Byrd Rule—named after Senator Robert Byrd—sets limits on what can be included in a reconciliation bill. Under the Byrd Rule, any provision that does not directly affect federal spending or revenue, or that causes a deficit beyond the budget window (usually 10 years), can be removed through a procedural objection, called a point of order. The Senate Parliamentarian interprets the rule, and unless 60 senators vote to waive it, non-compliant provisions are stripped from the bill. This makes the Byrd Rule a powerful guardrail, ensuring that reconciliation remains focused strictly on budgetary matters.

Conclusion

This year has been a case study in the various federal budget mechanisms that exist, including those that are rarely deployed like rescissions. To date the House and Senate have approved a budget reconciliation bill (H.R. 1 One Big Beautiful bill) and are poised to approve a rescissions package. The two chambers are also working through their 12 appropriations bills for Federal Fiscal Year 2026.

BLM Public Land Orders Could End Protections for 2 Million Acres of Land

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to revoke Public Land Orders (PLO) 5150 and 5180, which currently protects over 2.1 million acres of federal land in the Dalton Utility Corridor, located north of the Yukon River. This action follows Executive Order 14153 and Secretary's Order 3422, both of which seek to "unleash Alaska's resource potential."

If finalized, the revocation would open the area to mining, oil and gas exploration, and other activities under public land and mining laws. It would also allow the State of Alaska to move forward with land selections it has already filed ("top filed") in this region. Once those selections are activated, the land would no longer be subject to federal rural subsistence protections under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

Only 72,000 acres within the corridor, those not claimed by the State, would remain under federal management with continued protections for rural subsistence users.

The proposed revocation raises serious concerns about impacts to Tribal

sovereignty, subsistence rights, and the protection of historic and cultural sites.

The BLM is currently preparing a Determination of NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) Adequacy (DNA) to evaluate the environmental impacts of this proposal. A decision from the Secretary of the Interior is expected after the review is completed later this fall.

How You Can Provide Feedback

BLM has initiated Government-to-Government and ANCSA Corporation consultations and is seeking input from Tribes on how this proposed action may affect their communities. In addition, the BLM has begun a Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to identify and address potential impacts to cultural and historic properties.

If your Tribe or ANCSA Corporation would like to participate in consultation or cultural review, please reach

out to the following contacts:

- James Dahlkemper (Tribal Consultation) at jdahlkemper@blm.gov
- Robin Mills (Section 106 Review) at rmills@blm.gov

We strongly encourage Tribal leaders, cultural committees, and community members to get involved in this process and voice your concerns. Engagement at this stage is critical to protecting our lands, rights, and ways of life.

You can read more and view maps of the proposed revocation area by visiting:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2039335/510>

Scan here for more information



<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2039335/510>

NOW STREAMING

New Episodes Every Week



NEW EPISODES

Tune in every Monday at 9:30AM on KRFF 89.1 or listen on Spotify and YouTube.

Your weekly update from Tanana Chiefs Conference - featuring news, upcoming events, highlights, and more! TCC Weekly is a short-form podcast produced by TCC to keep our communities, partners, and employees informed about what's happening across the region!

Visit www.tananachiefs.org/tcc-weekly to listen and learn more!

SCAN TO LISTEN ON SPOTIFY



Cowles Street Summer Road Construction

Alaska Department of Transportation is closing a portion of Cowles Street over the summer as they work to reconstruct the road. This closure will change how you access Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center and the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital Emergency Department. This closure will last most of the summer.

Scan to learn more or visit

<https://www.tananachiefs.org/cowles-street-summer-2025-closure-and-alternate-access-route-for-chief-andrew-isaac-health-center/>



Back-to-School Checklist for High School Students & Families

Get ready for a
successful school
year with this student-
centered prep list!

By Angela Rutman, TCC Student Support Coordinator

Before School Starts

- ☐ **Apply to the TCC GO Program** – TCC GO is a free program created to support students in rural communities across the TCC region, including those in public, charter, boarding, and homeschool settings.

We offer support to help you succeed, including:

- University courses & required materials
- Stipend opportunities for participation
- Internet reimbursement & installation
- College & academic support
- Fun activities & cultural engagement
- Senior Portfolio Project to help you prepare for life after high school

- ☐ **Review your class schedule and transcript** – Make sure you're on track and taking the right classes.
- ☐ **Check in with your school counselor** – Ask about graduation requirements, dual credit options, and any questions you have.
- ☐ **Gather school supplies & technology** – Make sure you have what you need: backpack, notebooks, charger, working device, etc.
- ☐ **Know your support team** – Teachers, tutors, school staff, and your TCC GO student support coordinator are all here to help.
- ☐ **Update your contact information & check your email regularly** – It's so important that we can reach you with updates, deadlines, opportunities, and support. Make sure your phone number and email are current with both your school and TCC GO – and check your email often so you don't miss out!
- ☐ **Set personal & academic goals** – Think about what success looks like this year (grades, attendance, participation).
- ☐ **Get into a routine** – Start waking up earlier, limiting screen time at night, and setting goals for the year. A healthy routine helps you stay focused and motivated.
- ☐ **Create a quiet study space at home** – A dedicated place to do homework helps build good habits from day one.

About TCC GO (Guiding Our People)

TCC GO is a free program created to support students in rural communities throughout the TCC region. Students who live in one of the off-the-road-system villages within the TCC region are eligible, regardless of race or background.

Students who **live in a community on the road-system (urban)** within the TCC region must be **enrolled in a federally recognized Tribe** to participate.

The program is designed to help you succeed in high school and prepare for life after graduation, whether that means college, career, or something in between.

What makes TCC GO unique is that it's **student-driven** — *you choose how much you want to get out of it*. From taking college classes and exploring future careers to participating in fun and cultural activities, **you're in control of your own journey**. We're here to support you every step of the way.

Now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 academic school year!

Scan here for more
information & to apply!



<https://www.tananachiefs.org/services/tcc-go/>

Raspberries, Rabbits, and a Root Cellar Improves the Food Security of a Two Rivers Family

By Heidi Rader, Professor of Extension at University of Alaska Fairbanks

When I wrote about [growing raspberries in Alaska](#), Charlotte Porter got in touch with me and wanted to tell me about her success growing [Kiska](#) raspberries and her pruning techniques at her Two Rivers farm. Twenty-five years ago, Charlotte was given six Kiska raspberry plants. Today, she has 700 row feet of raspberries, from which she harvests an average of 80 gallons a year.



Charlotte with her raspberries. Photo by Adam Porter.

I didn't write much about Kiska in the initial article, partly because I wasn't aware of anyone selling the plants locally or online. It was a variety developed decades ago at the [University of Alaska Fairbanks Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station](#) from the wild raspberry (*Rubus ideaus*) found throughout Alaska. When I visited Porter Hill Farm, I discovered that Charlotte and her family do a lot more than just grow raspberries.

Charlotte grew up on her family's full-time berry farm in Illinois, growing strawberries, blueberries, and red, purple, and yellow raspberries. Strawberries were the primary cash crop and were sold mostly by U-pick, but some were sold at farmers markets.

"To my own embarrassment, I have never been able to grow strawberries well in Alaska," Charlotte lamented. She explained, "The process here is very different than what we did in Illinois. I have a few strawberry plants that come back in my garden every year and I can't quite bear to kill them, but the most we get is a couple of berries." Growing strawberries in Alaska is challenging both as a [home gardener](#) and as a [farmer](#).

But, she said, "raspberries have been much easier for me to grow."

I've visited gardens and farms across Alaska. I'm amazed by what people have accomplished, but often think, "Wow, that looks like a lot of work." But at Porter Hill Farm, I kept thinking, "That looks easy and cheap, I could do that too!" I don't think that's an accident. Charlotte has tried a lot of things over the years and has whittled it down to what she can grow and raise with relative ease and affordability.

For example, Charlotte showed me that her sole surviving apple tree is trimmed down by the moose every year. She has a makeshift fence around it that doesn't quite do the job. Instead of putting a lot of energy into building a fence and planting an orchard, (which would be especially difficult on the steep slopes of her farm), she puts her energy into what grows really well at her place — Kiska raspberries. She also has a smattering of honeyberries, plums, saskatoons, currants and gooseberries on the farm, but they have not taken off like the raspberries.

Another example of her low-key approach to farming is that she raises meat rabbits outdoors in dog kennels that she picked up from the dump. They are suspended under a shed roof over slanted tin roofing so that the poop and pee roll into a bin (side note, rabbit poop is excellent for the garden). Again, it looked really easy, so now my family are proud owners of one of her baby bunnies, which also resides outside in a dog kennel. But I promised my kids I will never, ever



A rabbit at Porter Hill Farm. Photo by Heidi Rader.

eat her.

Yet another example of simplicity is her hole-in-the-ground root cellar. It is quite literally just a hole in the ground with an insulated top and plywood sides into which she lowers crates of potatoes and carrots, approximately a cubic yard in size. When I visited in May, she said the carrots and potatoes were just as fresh as when she stuck them in the hole in the fall.

But back to raspberries. Charlotte said, "To me, they seem to grow the easiest and produce the most fruit. They're perennials. They last for years and years and years. And maybe it's because I understand how to prune them because I grew up doing some of that. We had the fall-bearing kind that you'd mow down and then they'd come up and bear the next fall. And we had the spring ones, like Kiska, that you had to prune."

In addition to Kiska, Charlotte has tried Boyne and Latham varieties. Latham died off twice after eight years from cold winters. Boyne has taken a lot longer to proliferate and produce. She planted Boyne and Kiska at the same time from bare-root plants. Many of her Boyne plants died, and after three years, they were only 18 inches tall with two or three suckers each. The Kiska were four and a half feet tall with numerous shoots and handfuls of berries coming on. But she does think in the long run, Boyne are more productive and they take a lot less pruning. If you do plant Kiska, choose your spot carefully. Do not plant it close to your garden, and if you plant it on the edge of your lawn, be prepared for it to invade.

Charlotte has developed a vigorous pruning regime for Kiska that plays a big role in their productivity. Her raspberry patch is different from most of the raspberry patches I have seen around town, both on farms and in backyards.

She said, "It's counterintuitive. It [pruning] feels all wrong." She knows few Fairbanksans who understand pruning. Charlotte asked a friend who grows Boyne how much they pruned. They said, "Oh we don't really prune. We've found they grow really well the

first and second year and so we just plant a new patch.” A local raspberry U-pick she talked to said they simply let the moose prune them. She said I was doing a decent job pruning my patch, but after visiting hers, I went back and pruned more than before — which was hard because I do think more canes equals more berries.

Pruning is an essential way to maintain the vigor and productivity of berries and fruit. I even prune wild blueberries on a piece of land I own where they grow naturally. In the wild, fire rejuvenates wild blueberry plants and is nature’s way of pruning, so to speak. Each berry or fruit has a slightly different pruning regime that may even vary depending on the variety. For more information on growing berries and pruning, check out the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service’s [publications](#), my blog, [It Grows in Alaska](#), or my [growing fruits and berries playlist on YouTube](#).



Charlotte Porter gets ready to prune the raspberries.
Photo by Heidi Rader.

Growing and Pruning Kiska Raspberries

Charlotte prunes her raspberries three times a year for various reasons.

Spring

Charlotte does her main pruning in the spring, removing dead floricanes (second-year, fruiting canes) and thinning primocanes (first-year, non-fruiting canes). This includes weeding the rows to 12 inches wide, with two to three canes per row foot and removing the thin canes (smaller than a pencil in diameter). She often simply pulls them up by the root. In the spring, this looked incredibly sparse, and as Charlotte said before, it’s counterintu-

itive. You’d think a lush, filled-in patch would produce more berries. But it doesn’t.

Then she puts her trellis, which is just one rope attached to T-posts, up. The trellis keeps the berries off the ground and keeps the rows neat. She fertilizes with wood chips, grass clippings, whatever she has available, and some conventional fertilizer every few years.

Summer

In mid-June or the third week of June, she weeds the patch, primarily of excess primocanes that may shade the floricanes. She does have irrigation set up but doesn’t always use it or notice much of a difference when she uses it. She keeps her rows narrow, 12 inches wide, mowing the grass and raspberries within it regularly.

Fall

In the fall, she uses a hedge trimmer to prune the raspberries to a 4-foot height. She takes the trellis down in case a moose walks through the patch. For some reason, moose don’t eat her raspberries.

Harvesting and Selling Berries

In addition to her own use, Charlotte sells the berries and plants. She and her husband pre-sell the plants on Facebook Marketplace and then bring them into town twice each summer.

They also advertise the U-pick for the raspberries on Facebook Marketplace or by word of mouth (\$6 a pound). She said having a U-pick is a delicate balance of having enough raspberries to make it worth it for people to come from Fairbanks to pick and not letting the berries go to waste. So, in addition to the U-pick, she has someone who will buy all the remaining berries frozen (\$30 per gallon). She lets people pick, then cleans up after them and sells those frozen. It works well because she doesn’t have time to pick all the berries herself. Her daughter sells raspberry-rhubarb jam as well.

Charlotte is happy with the niche she’s found and the scale she’s at, which is on par with her energy and interest levels. She equates it to a part-time job. She can’t justify hiring someone, which means she can’t expand, but she’s OK with that. She’s talked to

a lot of vegetable CSAs, and they said it’s difficult to make a living.

“There’s just no money in vegetables on a small scale like this,” she said. I asked if raspberries were worth her time, and she said, “Oh yeah. And the plants even more so.”

Charlotte said, “I think there’s a lot more money to be made easier with raspberries, in particular. The drawback is everyone may not have the space-- you do need space to grow them--but they’re not picky about where they grow.”

Besides growing and raising food, Charlotte is eager to share what she has learned with others and offers classes on growing and pruning raspberries as well as canning.

“People want that knowledge. I don’t have time to grow raspberries for everybody, but I do have time to teach other people how to grow raspberries for themselves.” She wants to support homeschoolers in the Two Rivers area as well. She credits much of her success to the mentorship she’s received from others, including on raising rabbits, goats, and growing berries. Programs like the [AFFECT program](#) offer this kind of mentorship and it’s one of the best ways to learn about the nuances of farming and gardening in Interior Alaska.

I asked Charlotte about her favorite fruits and berries, taste-wise. She said, “Raspberries... there’s something special about a raspberry. I’ve had a plum (locally grown) that was probably the sweetest I’ve had, I was impressed. Also currants. The red currants are really good.”

I would have to agree.

Charlotte can be reached at acelrl@yahoo.com.

Questions about gardening or the Tribes Extension Program? Visit www.uaf.edu/ces/tribes. Contact Heidi at hbrader@alaska.edu or (907) 474-6620. For more articles like this, go to: <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/>

Heidi Rader is professor of Extension in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference. This work is supported by the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program Project 2022-41580-37957. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Fairbanks	RN Diabetes Care and Education Specialist
Fairbanks	Security Officer I
Fairbanks	Optometry Director
Fairbanks	Referral Coordinator II
Galena	Dental Assistant I - Rural
Koyukuk	Behavioral Health Aide Trainee
Minto	Home Care Provider
Nenana	Administrative Assistant II - MCDHC
Old Minto	Addictions Counselor Technician
Old Minto	Addictions Counselor I
Old Minto	Addictions Counselor II
Region-Wide	Service Desk Support Technician
Region-Wide	Health, Nutrition and Safety Coordinator
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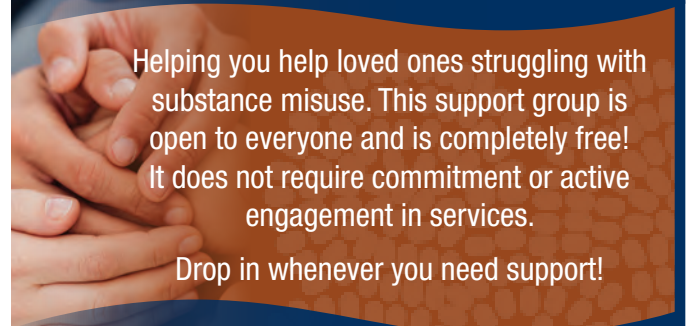


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UPCOMING EVENTS

**AUG
16**

Restorative Re-Entry Gathering

9:00am-5:00pm | Wedgewood Taiga Center | Fairbanks, AK

**AUG
18-24**

Fight for Life Suicide Prevention Trip

Rampart, AK • Stevens Village, AK • Beaver, AK • Fort Yukon, AK • Circle, AK

**AUG
20**

Executive Board Meeting

8:30am - 5:30pm | Fairbanks, AK

**SEP
1**

TCC Offices Closed

Labor Day

**SEP 29-
OCT 8**

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Meeting

Egan Civic & Convention Center | Anchorage, AK
<https://www.npfmc.org/three-meeting-outlook/>

**SEP
30**

Day for Truth & Reconciliation

Orange Shirt Day