



Fairbanks Fish & Wildlife Field Office Alaska Forum on the Environment Youth Track

Background:

The Alaska Forum on the Environment (AFE) is a statewide gathering of environmental professionals from government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, community leaders, Alaskan youth, conservationists, biologists and community elders. Over 1200 people attend the event each year.

Each year, the Fairbanks and Fish & Wildlife Field Offices works with partners to develop two days of Youth Track activities that bring over 50 youth and adult chaperones primarily from rural communities across the state to learn more about natural resource careers and tackle tough environmental challenges being faced by their communities.

The AFE Youth Track has two audiences- adults who want to develop a youth component for their community environmental projects, and youth activists who are becoming environmental leaders in their communities.

Public presentations highlight education resources, project funding ideas, and student learning and work experiences available to rural residents. Model programs that can be adopted by rural communities are highlighted along with sessions that provide tips for developing quality youth-led environmental programs.



Student project presentations



Cordova teacher, Adam Low, discusses the Garden of Eatin' project with Homer students.

Youth Track Planning Partners:

The following groups provide invaluable assistance with the AFE Youth Track

- **Alaska Cooperative Extension Service-** Meg Burgett Sits on the planning committee to develop the Youth Track each year.

- **Alaska Natural Resource & Outdoor Education Association-** Overall Track planning and hires the Youth Track coordinator.

- **Alaska Department of Fish & Game-** Helped to design and produce the agency booth materials, staffs the booth, and helps to moderate sessions.

The participating students also get an opportunity to present their work to an appreciative audience.

In addition to the public sessions, over 30 youth and adult chaperones spend two days getting to know one another, sharing the work they're doing in their communities, developing skills, and learning about resources that they can use to improve their efforts. These students also learn more about natural resource careers and how to tackle tough environmental challenges being faced by their communities.

For more information about participating in the Youth Track, Contact Laurel Devaney: 907-456-0558, Laurel_Devaney@fws.gov.



Environmental project planning exercise



Youth Track participants help with recycling efforts at AFE.