



STATEWIDE COMMUNITY FORESTRY SURVEY

When Congress approved the historic 1.5 billion dollars for Urban and Community Forestry through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Alaska Community Forestry Program, like everyone else, got pretty excited. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) considered lots of ideas for grant projects. Ideas were floated, shot down, reconsidered, pondered, and debated. The DOF staff decided to take a breath and ask the fundamental question, “What community forestry projects do Alaskans want?”

To find out, program staff retained a nationally regarded natural resource planning and research consultant for assistance. The consultant helped develop a statewide survey to assess the priorities among Alaskan communities regarding community forestry programs and projects. Over 900 survey invitations were sent to community leaders, agencies, nonprofits, and schools in more than 250 Alaskan communities.

Working with the consultant was invaluable in determining what type of grants DOF should offer. Based on the survey results, the Alaska Community Forestry Program (ACFP) landed on the following grant categories:

- Green Infrastructure Projects
- Streambank Stability/Restoration Projects
- Invasive Tree Control Projects
- Phytoremediation Projects
- Community Forestry Management Plans, Tree Inventories, Tree Canopy Assessments

Alaska launched the first round of IRA grant program funding in March 2024 and will announce recipients of the second funding round by December 2024.

Header: Steve Masterman’s Zone 3 orchard outside of Ester, Alaska. Photo: Josh Hightower. **Right:** ACFP staff and Alaska Community Forest Council members tour an Intrinsyq Environmental phytoremediation project at a former petroleum transfer site adjacent to the Fairbanks International Airport. Photo: Jim Renkert

