

Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative

Building a collaborative strategy for compatible, sustainable, and profitable tourism ventures on the Y/K Delta

OVERVIEW

Developing Alaska Rural Tourism (DART)

Sponsored by:
Alaska Department of Commerce
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Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative Overview

This summary outlines many of the tourism planning and development efforts underway in Yukon Kuskokwim Delta (YK Delta). It also presents recommendations and next-step actions designed to support the growth of a locally-led *Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative*. The Initiative presents opportunities for compatible, sustainable, and profitable economic development options for the many communities in the YK Delta region. This summary is supported by a draft *Letter of Agreement* that establishes a Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Collaborative Partnership.

The summary is a result of a collaborative effort by many regional and local YK Delta entities and individuals (see Resource section). These organizations include but are not limited to The University of Alaska, the Association of Village Council Presidents, the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association, the City of Bethel, and the communities of Chevak, Scammon Bay, and Quinhagak, among others.

The Alaska Department of Commerce Office of Economic Development (OED) has provided coordination and technical services, with funding and support from the United States Economic Development Administration as part of the Developing Alaska Rural Tourism (DART) Project.

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INTRODUCTION

Opportunities

The vast and pristine landscape of the YK Delta is home to large numbers of unique and highly valued wildlife, especially bird varieties. It has one of the largest aggregates of water birds in the world and serves as a breeding habitat for hundreds of other varieties. Over the past fifteen years there has been a growing interest from national and international birders, sports fisherman, and other niche eco-tourists wanting to raft or trek to view flora and fauna.

Interest in birding and sports fishing has significantly increased over the past ten years and they both offer an immediate opportunity for real success. Bethel has developed a steady stream of visitors and business travelers, who, with targeted improvements in Bethel, could be encouraged to stay over and explore the area or bring a friend or family member along. Other sub-regional hubs for villages in the region, such as St. Marys, have also experienced increased business and tourist travelers.

The YK Delta National Wildlife Refuge is the largest in the United States. Added to that attraction are the Yup'ik people and their deep and rich cultural heritage that includes the arts (both traditional and modern), dancing, drumming, and modern music, and the fairly well-known natural products from local wildlife, including reindeer, muskox's quiviut yarn, basketry, as well as the beautiful traditional kuspuks (Native dress or coat). The power of the culture, art, and village way of life leaves visitors with a profound and memorable experience.

With this mix of strengths, the villages that choose to expand the number of travelers and tourists into their community have real opportunities to enjoy the economic benefits that those visitors can bring.

Challenges

There are challenges for the YK Delta communities that choose to capture the benefits of travelers and visitors to the region.

- Much of the current YK Delta ecotourism business is run by Anchorage entrepreneurs and “out of state” tourism interests.
- Not all villagers and villages in the YK Delta want to participate in an effort that will bring strangers into their community. Consequently, to be successful, it is essential to clearly establish which villages want to welcome a tourism development initiative.

- For the region and its villages to capture the economic benefits of YK Delta tourism, it is essential that there be a collaborative regional and village development strategy.
- Villages lack the support and resources to establish viable local infrastructure to support visitors on their own.
- There is a need for small business development that will support guiding, lodging, and other small business opportunities associated with meeting tourist needs and interests.
- Business challenges at the community and village level include costs of operation/transportation, lack of insurance, a general lack of tourism infrastructure, and cumbersome government policies.
- Land access and “permissions” to travel or operate on Native lands need to be addressed.

A Broad Effort is Underway to Build YK Delta Tourism

Currently there are many communities as well as local, regional, and State agencies committing resources and efforts to support tourism in the YK region. They include, but are not limited to:

- The City of Bethel VISTA Project;
- The Alaska Department of Commerce, Office of Economic Development (OED)’s Developing Alaska Rural Tourism (DART) program;
- Lower Kuskokwim Economic Development Council;
- UAF Marine Advisory Program and UAF Kuskokwim Campus;
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game- Watchable Wildlife Program;
- Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association;
- Association of Village Council Presidents;
- The communities of Quinhagak, Mekoryuk, Chevak, Scammon Bay, and St. Mary’s;
- The Alaska Native Cultural Center (ANHC);
- The Alaska Bed & Breakfast Association;
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council; and the
- Yuut Elitnaurviat People’s Learning Center.

YK DELTA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

Following is a review of current resources and efforts. It includes summaries of several of the efforts as well as outcomes and lessons learned.

Regional and Sub-Regional Efforts

1. City of Bethel VISTA Project: City of Bethel VISTA Volunteer Sara Scott worked on these and other tourism projects in 2006:
 - Taught Alaska Host training in Bethel, which included basic customer service training for the visitor industry, primarily to restaurant and hotel employees.
 - She conducted a survey of Bethel businesses related to tourism development, and put together a business directory and a “Things to Do in Bethel” guide.
 - Organized the Bethel Visitor Industry Panel with monthly meetings to work cooperatively on Bethel tour packages.
 - Held a Business Plan Writing Workshop with 10 participants from Bethel, Kotlik, and Chevak.
 - Put together a Tourism Booth for the 2006 Bethel School District Career Fair in 2006.

Beginning in 2007, the UAF Marine Advisory program will host a VISTA position that will provide support for the tourism initiative. The VISTA will operate from the UAF Kuskokwim Campus for the next three years.

2. UAF Alaska SEA Grant Marine Advisory Program

Terry Reeve, UA Marine Advisor for the Bethel area has taken over the VISTA tourism project from the City of Bethel. UAF Kuskokwim Campus will host the VISTA position for the next three years. The new VISTA will serve as the central point of contact and coordination for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative.

3. Lower Kuskokwim Economic Development Council and Calista

Carl Berger, E.D. provided:

- Leadership for DART assistance, including partnerships with the YK Delta Wildlife Refuge and local villages.
- With OED, conducted a regional tourism workshop in August 2005.
- Working with the Bethel Chamber of Commerce on local participation in the Alaska Travel Industry Association meetings – aimed at marketing the region.

4. Birding Assessment Tour, June 2006

This event was coordinated by Karla Hart of the ADFG Watchable Wildlife Program, with help from UAF Marine Advisory Program (MAP), City of Bethel, OED, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and by the participating communities, including Bethel, Quinhagak, St. Mary's, Chevak, and Scammon Bay. A team of Alaska birders, augmented by nationally-known birding specialists, visited Bethel and the other villages to help in the assessment of avian resources with tourism potential. Following is a brief overview of the Tour's outcomes and findings:

- **Quinhagak and Scammon Bay**—The village corporations and tribal council did extensive outreach; the welcome was widespread and almost overwhelming to the visitors. Birds identified here appear to make these communities good targets for ongoing efforts in birding tourism. Housing and guiding options will need to be developed.
- **Chevak**—A local guide led the tour; there was not a universal understanding of the visitors' purpose within the village, but a broad feeling of welcome was extended to these strangers with binoculars, cameras, and layers of gear. Chevak also provided good birding and is a good target for future birding tourism. In Chevak, a family provided lodging, though more capacity will need to be developed.
- **St. Mary's**—Visitors had excellent accommodations, but for the most part they remained separate from the villagers. At the store and in the boat tours the interactions were positive and felt welcoming. Visitors were disappointed to miss the anticipated bristle-thighed curlew. Later sightings kept hopes high that this location might yet prove a good target.
- **Bethel**—The visits included a boat tour led by a local professional, experienced guide and yielded a surprisingly high number of bird species.

This came on top of plentiful lodging, food, and infrastructure. Bethel rated high among the various village birding tours, with its combination of available bird species and traveler amenities.

- **General observations**—Local birding “guides”, who are also experienced subsistence bird hunters, demonstrated sharp eyes and extensive local knowledge of land and birds. The region’s air transportation is well established and adequate, and many options exist for tourism packaging. Good boats are available in all sites and the local stores proved adequate in providing the necessities or snacks. Business and training opportunities for guides is critical.
- **Areas that need attention**

Safety—Lifejackets, safety kits/procedures, and emergency communication.

Visitor Services—Additional professional visitor service training and standards as well as visitor needs lists should be sent in advance of travel.

Transportation—Providers such as those with “6-Pack” licensed

Guiding—Guides will need to learn Western bird knowledge including bird names, ways to use and set up scopes and other tools, and interpret visitors’ language and behavior.

Permitting and Local Control—With much of the land around villages under village control, there are great opportunities for local control. Regional planning, however, will require coordination by AVCP or another regional leader.

- **Success Breeds Success**—Following the successes of the 2006 Birding Assessment Tour, several of the communities are planning to stage similar tours for birding guides in Summer, 2007. So far Chevak, Scammon Bay, and Bethel are mobilizing to offer these “pioneer” tours. In addition to this, Craig Wiest, an Anchorage based birding expert who participated in the 2006 birding assessment tours, is working with Terry Reeve at the MAP to plan further exploratory birding tours on the Y/K Delta in Summer, 2007, along with several other Alaskan based birding guides.

5. UAF Kuskokwim Campus Biology Camp & Tourism Venture

Nash Harbor, Nunivak Island – NIMA Corporation: A successful partnership of the University of Alaska Rural and Community Development Department combined high school math and science program with outdoor skills and training in tourism development. In 2005 and 2006, a small cruise ship from Cruise West made several stops at Nash Harbor during the camp. Students at the camp served as guides. Passengers came ashore to see dances, buy artwork, kayak, and take bird and wildlife tours.

6. UAF Marine Advisory Program & Kuskokwim Campus

Terry Reeve, UAF Marine Advisory Program, and Reyne Athanas, UAF Kuskokwim Campus have organized three-part in-depth workshops during their spring semester for the past two years, and will continue offering the workshops in 2007, 2008, and 2009, with funding support from HUD. The workshops include sessions out in designated villages (this year those are Chevak, Mt. Village, and Aniak) in January, with two weeklong training sessions in Bethel in both February and March. The heart of the workshop runs participants through the process of writing a business plan. This year the emphasis is on tourism, so there are additional classes in website development, “starting and operating a bed and breakfast”, and Alaska Host - customer service for the visitor industry. 6-Pack license training for charter boat operators is also being offered this year.

7. Tourism Analysis

2004 The Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association commissioned a survey by the McDowell Group, a market assessment of Yukon Delta Tourism opportunities (copies available).

8. Alaska Marketplace Award Recipient Ulric Ulroan, Ecotourism in Chevak

Ulric Ulroan was awarded a grant for business startup for “Chevak Bird and Culture Tours” in 2006.

9. The Yuut Elitnaurviat People's learning Center

Workforce training consortium that partners with all of YK Delta's educational resources to provide the workforce with the areas it will need to focus on for the future.

Work at the Village Level

Some villages are better positioned, or more interested than others in building tourist opportunities within their communities. Following are examples of the actions and efforts of village tourism development in the YK Delta in 2005 and 2006:

1. The communities of **Scammon Bay, Chevak, Quinhagak, Mekoryuk, St. Marys, and Mountain Village** offer good opportunities for the expansion of a local tourism industry. They have each done some training and planning and have had successful small projects. All but Mekoryuk and Nunivak Island participated in the Birding Assessment Tour in August 2006.
2. The communities of **Akiak, Goodnews Bay, Hooper Bay, Marshall, Emmonak, Kotlik, and Toksook Bay** have attended some training and shown interest in tourist-related types of development.

Regional and local efforts provide a pathway to develop YK Delta Ecotourism. They also present a glimpse of a sustainable source of income that could offer great economic development opportunities within the context of the existing YK Delta subsistence and cultural framework. Carefully done, a good tourist and visitor industry that is well defined and locally planned and owned, could bring new resources to the region and still have few major negative consequences for the land or its people.

Next Step Action: Collaborative Leadership and a Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative

A collaborative leadership group is extremely important to building a much-needed YK Delta tourism framework. The collaborative leadership group is essential to guiding and supporting an effective regional tourism development effort. Working together the region has the capacity to capture the opportunities as they arise and to identify regional strategies that will support a village, multi-village, and regional strategies.

1. Regional Collaborative Leadership Group

To build a useful partnership that effectively captures and grows the YK tourism opportunities, the basic structure of the partnership agreement must

be simple and focused. Its primary intent is to build on the recognition that working together is the best way of capturing the opportunities for the region as a whole. Since October, 2006, several key regional stakeholders (below) have participated in teleconferenced meetings to discuss ways in which their leadership can help build and sustain a tourism development strategy.

Following are key elements around which the **Regional Collaborative Leadership Group's** letter of agreement can be drafted. Together the region and villages will:

- Leverage regional and village resources to build a sustainable locally-led YK tourism industry.
- Support village tourism-related training and infrastructure development.
- Respectfully work to include and collaborate with local, sub regional and regional leadership structures.
- Effectively communicate - Hold regular (monthly) project team meetings.
- Work together to lobby for local and regional resources to support tourism development.
- Develop a regional tourism marketing strategy that promotes the region and its villages.
- Work efficiently in a coordinated way using a common plan and strategies that promote YK Delta tourism.

2. Terms Of Engagement

The YK Delta is a big region with diverse perspectives. It is recognized that an effective, good, collaborative agreement must be done with care and a sense of open invitation. It is also important to create the agreement around specific *terms of engagement* that respond to village and regional concerns and boundaries. Following are draft *terms of engagement* that have been identified for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative Regional Collaborative Leadership Group:

- Recognition of sub-regional similarities and differences
- Recognition of each village's right to choose whether or not they want to invite visitors into their village
- Recognition and support of existing village tourism development efforts
- Education of the visitors to YK subsistence values, traditions, and needs
- Some actions are best done at the village and sub-regional levels; others will work best with regional support.

- The YK region has many of the resources and entities it can leverage towards developing the YK leadership tourism initiative
- Local control and benefits of a YK tourist industry
- Encourage and support villages that are interested and/or that have begun tourism efforts.

3. Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative Plan

There is a need for a solid, regional-wide, master plan for YK tourism development. To be effective, the plan should be driven by YK Delta leadership entities and villages that hope to engage in tourism. However, it is important to start with key, doable projects. The process must include careful and cautious planning, modest- sized start-up projects, and solid regional support with local and regional follow-through. These elements will afford the highest levels of long-term success at building a viable, sustainable, locally-controlled YK Delta economy. Some elements the YK Delta Tourism Development Initiative Plan should address are aimed at building a **Long-Term Sustainable Strategy**:

- Regional marketing strategy;
- Coordination and packaging;
 - What are the attractions and opportunities that each village is interested in going after?
 - How do they fit together among different villages?
 - Educate visitors about the area - brochure, website
 - Trainings - regional priorities, regional calendar;
- Business plans and funding tourist-related businesses – business assistance;
- Other elements needed for success;
- Community tourism development template.

4. Support Current Opportunities

As the plan is being developed, use a collaborative leadership structure to support current opportunities and initiatives in coordination with the planning efforts. The Tourism VISTA member at the UAF Kuskokwim Campus will serve as the coordinator for the next three years. Following are examples:

- Hold Bethel/YK Delta pride-building events and outreach efforts to the villages to help them become aware of the potential for this kind of low-impact development that can help them maintain their traditional way of life, as well as provide additional cash revenue;
- Birders have been invited back to help provide input into where the viewing opportunities are best available;
- Villages can be supported in their local efforts to meet next summer's visitors;
- Villages can be surveyed to see if they want to participate;
- Continue development work in small birding activities, building partnerships with ANHC and others who can coordinate economies-of-scale tours from Anchorage, and who can do market research on business travelers to identify likely visit extenders;
- Continue local awareness efforts in Bethel and the villages, and create local plans for community development of cultural and natural resources;
- Continue funding for technical assistance and training programs (State OED, UAF Marine Advisory Program, ADFG, for example);
- Develop effective communication network that ensures that villages know about training and tourism development opportunities;

5. Foster and coordinate the projects programs now underway

- Assessments and Village outreach (in conjunction with AVCP community outreach); find out more about what planning villages have done, and which villages are interested in planning for tourism;
- Village trainings and workshops, such as the UAF KuC/HUD workshops;
- Local infrastructure improvements and planning;
- Support village partnerships and collaboration;
- Other.

6. Funding and resources for the YK Tourism Development Initiative

Group agrees that going after three or four projects for funding would be a good idea. Here are some of the potential resources:

- USDA– planning and infrastructure;
- Denali Commission– planning, marketing and infrastructure;
- Economic Development Administration- Planning and Infrastructure;
- Alaska Department of Commerce – continued technical support;
- AVCP- Training;
- Rasmuson Foundation;
- State Department of Labor-Workforce Development;
- UA Marine Advisory Program- Training and Technical Support;

Regional Collaborative Leadership Group

Participants

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Additional Regional Stakeholders

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Wildlife Conservation

Karla Hart, Watchable Wildlife

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<http://wildlife.alaska.gov/>

St. Mary's Regional Training Center

St. Mary's AK

Steve Paukan, Director

(907)478-2315

Alaska Airlines – Bethel

**Other Regional Air Carriers – Hageland,
Grant Aviation, etc.**

Resources

Alaska Department of Commerce Office of Economic Development, Developing Alaska Rural Tourism

<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/dart/home.htm>

Alaska Tourism Handbook

<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/oed/oed/toubus/pub/ruraltourism.pdf>

Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment – Lower YK Delta

http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/pub/4_lower_yukon_kuskokwim.pdf

A Profile of Visitors to Rural Alaska and the Western Alaska Region

http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/pub/Western_Alaska.pdf

The Community Tourism Assessment Handbook, Western Oregon Rural Development

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwrdc/index.html>

LKEDC SWAT analysis

<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/dart/whatsnew.htm>

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“Yup’ik Country”

Developing Alaska Rural Tourism—Impressions, Thoughts, Information

Mayan Village Visits in South Belize Case Study

<http://www.southernbelize.com/mayanvillages.html>

Toledo Ecotourism Association, Belize Case Study

<http://www.southernbelize.com/homestays.html>

Interview 2006: Support information and assistance from Ann Spohnholz, *Expert in rural Alaska workforce development 2*, ann@apicc.org

Appendix 1:

Sample Memorandum of Agreement from Bristol Bay

Memorandum of Agreement

I. PARTIES TO AGREEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

A. PARTIES TO AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is by and between the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC), the Bristol Bay Housing Authority (BBHA), and the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC). It replaces the 1994 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) previously agreed-to between these Bristol Bay area service organizations.

B. JUSTIFICATION

FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS Bristol Bay Native Corporation, the Bristol Bay Native Association, the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, the Bristol Bay Housing Authority and the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation have entered into this Agreement:

1. That all five organizations are incorporated under Alaska Statutes to serve the needs of essentially the same constituency (i.e., Alaska Natives of the Bristol Bay Region of Alaska);
2. That all five organizations operate programs to serve this constituency and have experience in addressing their respective mandates and responsibilities;
3. That the activities of all five organizations have generally been mutually complementary, with any exceptions attributable to accident rather than design (see Attachment 1 Areas of Program Concentration/ Definition of Roles);
4. That all five organizations desire to work together in a coherent and coordinated manner and desire to support constituent and public understanding of their organizations' inter-relationships.
5. That all five organizations believe they will accomplish their goals and objectives more effectively if they have in place effective protocols for communication and coordination of their respective activities.
6. That all five organizations believe that they can best serve their constituents if agreed upon protocols are used to build partnerships that leverage resources and support efforts to work together.

II. PURPOSE AND INTENT

A. THE PURPOSE of this Memorandum of Agreement is to:

1. Facilitate the communication and coordination necessary for achievement of the purposes of the related missions by those organizations that are now parties to this MOA. (See Attachment 2, Mission Statements of the Participants).
2. Support the best interests of all five organizations' constituents and the Bristol Bay region through mutual collaboration with each other and other regional agencies by:
 - a. Developing and presenting a unified front on issues affecting the constituency;
 - b. Establishing a quarterly meeting with principal parties to discuss mutual concerns;
 - c. Identifying village and regional needs, and determining the most appropriate programmatic and administrative response;
 - d. Seeking project funding and leveraging resources in a coordinated and cooperative manner;
 - e. Collaborating in administrative areas, program and project planning, and services delivery, when it is determined to be mutually beneficial; and
 - f. Supporting workforce development infrastructure for local and regional training in the latest technologies and equipment being utilized by the emerging industries in Bristol Bay

III. METHODS OF IMPLEMENTING THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

A. MEMBERSHIP

This Memorandum of Agreement is between the *Principal Partners*, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, the Bristol Bay Native Association, the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, the Bristol Bay Housing Authority, and the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation.

1. ASSOCIATE PARTNERS will be invited to participation in *Principal Partner's* meetings. Associate partners will include: Lake and Peninsula Borough and the UAF-Bristol Bay Campus, SAVEC, Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC), the Bristol Bay Borough, and other Parties approved by the *Principal Partners*.
2. A STEERING COMMITTEE will consist of the Principal Partners and its goals and purpose will be to:

- a. Plan, coordinate, collaborate, and interact with the Parties of this agreement to meet the MOA's intended purpose by addressing other matters necessary for governing the Committee.
- b. It shall establish procedures that will govern the appointment or election and term of office for the chairperson, and quorums, and appointments of alternate board members.

IV. POINTS OF AGREEMENT

THE PARTIES OF THIS AGREEMENT AGREE to the following:

A. BOTTOM UP APPROACH

The Parties to this Agreement will agree to respect the local concerns and priorities of the constituency villages and to work together to provide resources and programs that support village needs using a "bottom-to-top" (village to region) approach.

B. SUSTAINABILITY

The Parties to this Agreement recognize the importance of utilizing sustainability principles when designing and developing projects and providing services for constituents.

C. COMMUNITY PLANS

The Parties to this Agreement will work to support a single community comprehensive plan as a central tool to identify and establish the values, priorities, and developmental goals of each rural community. The plan shall be value-based, with significant community participation and support, and take into consideration: city, tribal council, village corporation, and regional priorities.

D. REGIONAL FORUMS

The Parties to this Agreement recognize that systematic planning and coordination on a local, regional, and statewide level is necessary to achieve the most effective results from investments in infrastructure, economic development, and training. The Parties agree to sponsor and attend quarterly Regional Planning and Development Forums that include Principal Partners and Associate Partners. The forums will focus on:

1. Sharing of planning and development information;
2. Regional collaboration to support projects and programs identified in village, sub-regional, and regional plans;
3. Consideration of issues important to regional development, including public infrastructure, health, economics, housing for constituents; and
4. Strategies for workforce development, job training, and education for their constituents.

E. REGIONAL PROTOCOLS

The Parties of this Agreement recognize that effective protocols are important to building trusted and collaborative partnerships. The Parties agree to develop and use protocols that support regional, sub-regional, and local communication, planning and development tools. The protocols will:

1. Establish ways to increase communication between Principal Partners, Associate Partners, as well as villages and tribal councils.
2. Establish ways to share information regarding important local, sub-regional, and regional development issues with Principal Partners, Associate Partners, as well as villages and tribal councils.
3. Maximize the pursuit of local, regional, and sub-regional priorities, including those identified by village plans, development organizations, local boroughs, regional native non-profits, and other non-profit corporations, economic development “drivers,” and state and federal agencies.
4. Coordinate and collaborate services, training programs, and technical assistance to maximize village recipients’ time, resources, and benefits.
5. Consider and monitor state and federal policies, plans, agreements and regulations that affect projects, programs, funding, and local and regional development.

F. LOCAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Parties of this Agreement will develop independent and collaborative approaches to assist village led initiatives, including:

1. Supporting prioritization lists for infrastructure development that are based on village plans;
2. Supporting villages as they prepare requests for proposals;
3. Supporting local mapping, environmental assessment efforts and other data collection efforts that support community development;
4. Organizing regional funding and workforce development summits;
5. Supporting trainings, conferences and technical assistance to help the village’s access resources and interface with state and federal agencies.
6. Identifying planning and economic development, training, and technical assistance to share or bundle resources.

G. SHARING INFORMATION

The Parties to this Agreement recognize sharing information will increase efficiencies and decrease duplication of services between themselves, other regional and local organizations, as well as between local, regional, state, and federal governments. The Parties will:

1. Develop a combined meeting and training calendar, and a regional village planning needs matrix;
2. Work to coordinate data collection, share data, and where possible, establish common data formats for information associated with important local, sub-regional and regional issues.

H. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Parties to this Agreement recognize that education, vocational, and technical training are critical components to local and regional workforce development, and therefore, the Parties will pursue the following:

1. Identify long and short-term job opportunities associated with communities' new plans and construction projects;
2. Identify village workforce development needs in order to position residents for new, project related jobs in their villages or the region;
3. Identify and create accessible resources that link village training and education programs to village residents, and support local hire in all planning and project-related jobs; and
4. Support the educational and workforce development programs that meet local, sub-regional, and regional needs.

I. COORDINATION OF PROCUREMENT AND LOCAL HIRE

The Parties to this Agreement shall, when deemed beneficial to the region's villages and tribes, shall:

1. Work with one another to gain economies of scale in purchasing and delivering goods and services and coordinating delivery and services to the villages through local businesses in order to maximize local economic benefits; and
2. Utilize local hire and locally-owned businesses available at local, sub-regional, and regional levels.

J. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INFORMATIONAL SYSTEMS

The Parties of this Agreement recognize that *The Rural Alaska Project Identification Delivery System* (RAPIDS) database, maintained by the State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, provides information on completed and planned projects for most rural Alaska communities. The Parties agree to:

1. Participate in the enhancement of RAPIDS by providing ideas and information;
2. Contribute all appropriate updated information at least annually; and
3. Utilize RAPIDS as a management tool to achieve coordination and maximize the efficient use of available resources.

K. REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (REDI)

The Parties of this Agreement recognize REDI is intended to create links between job placement, training, community and economic development, and enhance the communication between the region and the Governor's Jobs Cabinet. The region will designate and coordinate with the state on this endeavor. The Parties agree to:

1. Participate in the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI); and
2. Participate in REDI-related follow-up.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

This MOA becomes effective immediately for participants upon signature and will remain in effect indefinitely or until otherwise agreed upon by the Parties.

- A. ANY PARTY TO THIS AGREEMENT MAY WITHDRAW UPON 30-DAYS NOTICE to all other participants. The MOA will remain in effect for all other participants so long as two or more remain.
- B. NOTHING IN THIS AGREEMENT SHALL BE CONSTRUED to limit or modify the authority or responsibility of any participating agency.
- C. THIS AGREEMENT WILL ALLOW THE CONSIDERATION and/or addition of other Associate Partners such as government entities, school districts, tribes, and non-profit organizations.

VI. ADOPTION/AMENDMENT

THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT shall be considered adopted upon approval of the Boards of Directors of all five organizations. Any amendments shall take effect upon approval of the Boards of Directors of all five organizations.

VII. TERMINATION

ANY ORGANIZATION SIGNATORY HERETO may terminate its participation in this Memorandum of Agreement by giving thirty (30) days' written notice of termination to the other signatory organizations. The terminating organization's rights and obligations hereunder shall cease at the end of the thirty-day period. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the other signatory organizations, this Memorandum of Agreement shall remain in full force and effect regarding its impact on the aforementioned organizations.

The following organizations hereby subscribe to this Memorandum of Agreement and agree to abide by its provisions:

**BRISTOL BAY NATIVE
ASSOCIATION**

Ted Angasan
President

Dated:

Terry Hoeflerle
Chief Executive Officer

Dated:

**BRISTOL BAY NATIVE
CORPORATION**

Hjalmer Olson Sr.
Chairman of the Board

Dated:

Tom Hawkins
Chief Operating Officer

Dated:

**BRISTOL BAY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Bryce Edgmon
Chief Operating Officer

Dated:

H. Robin Samuelsen Jr.
Chief Executive Officer

Dated:

**BRISTOL BAY AREA HEALTH
CORPORATION**

H. Sally Smith
President and Chairman of the Board

Dated:

Robert Clark
Chief Executive Officer

Dated:

**BRISTOL BAY HOUSING
AUTHORITY**

William Tennyson
Chairman of the Board

Dated:

Dave McClure
Executive Director

Dated:

Appendix 2:

Draft Letter of Agreement for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Initiative, for
Consideration

DRAFT Letter of Agreement
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Collaborative Partnership

The *Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Collaborative Partnership Letter of Agreement* is by and between (*insert members*).....

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Collaborative Partnership (Partnership) consists of regional, sub-regional, and village entities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (YK Delta) who are committed to working together to leverage resources in support of a locally-led, *Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative*. The Partnership recognizes that tourism offers compatible, sustainable, and profitable economic development options for the many communities in the YK Delta region.

This agreement is intended to be simple and well focused. It recognizes that working together is the best way of capturing the opportunities for the region as a whole. The mission of the Partnership is to:

- Develop, guide, and support an effective, regional tourism development in the YK Delta.
- Build regional strategies and seek new resources that will support growth in village, multi-village, and regional tourism.
- Maximize YK Delta sustainable tourism opportunities as they arise, and at the same time, encourage new initiatives.

The members of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Collaborative Partnership agree to the following:

1. Terms Of Engagement

The YK Delta is a vast region with diverse perspectives. The Partnership recognizes the following *terms of engagement* that reflect their respect for village and regional concerns and boundaries:

- a. Recognition of sub-regional similarities and differences
- b. Recognition of each village's right to choose whether or not they want to invite visitors into their village
- c. Recognition and support of existing village tourism development efforts

- d. Education of visitors to YK Delta subsistence values, traditions, and needs
- e. Some actions are best done at the village and sub-regional levels; others will work best with regional support.
- f. The YK Delta region has many of the resources and entities it can leverage towards developing the *YK Delta Tourism Development Initiative*.
- g. Local control and benefits of a YK Delta tourism industry
- h. Encourage and support villages that are interested and/or that have begun tourism efforts.

2. Working Framework

The Partnership agrees to support an orderly and efficient *working framework* that will allow the Partnership to:

- a. Leverage regional and village resources to build a sustainable, locally-led YK Delta tourism industry
- b. Support village tourism-related training and infrastructure development
- c. Include and collaborate with local, sub regional, and regional leadership structures
- d. Effectively communicate and hold regular (monthly) project team meetings
- e. Collaborate in lobbying for local and regional resources to support tourism development
- f. Develop a regional tourism marketing strategy that promotes the region and its villages
- g. Work efficiently in a coordinated way using a common plan and strategies that promote YK Delta tourism
- h. Support current opportunities and initiatives
- i. Use local talent, businesses, and resources whenever possible

3. Long-Term Sustainable Strategy

The Partnership is committed to building a culturally appropriate, and *Long-Term Sustainable Strategy* for tourism-related economic development. The strategy will include:

- a. A clear plan to market and promote the YK Delta regional tourism opportunities at the State, national, and International level
- b. Coordination and packaging
 - o Village attractions and opportunities
 - o Tools to educate visitors about the area- brochure, website

- o Trainings - regional priorities, regional calendar
- c. Business plans and funding strategies for tourism-related businesses–business assistance
- d. Other elements needed for success
- e. Community tourism development template

4. Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative Plan

The Partnership recognizes the need to develop a coordinated, region wide, master plan or development initiative. A *Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Tourism Development Initiative* shall be prepared in a manner that addresses the following:

- a. Promotes long-term sustainability strategies (section 3)
- b. Includes active leadership and guidance by YK Delta leadership entities and villages that hope to engage in tourism
- c. Starts with key, doable projects
- d. Incorporates careful and cautious planning, modest-sized start-up projects, and solid regional support with local and regional follow-through
- e. Supports projects that offer long-term success
- f. Supports projects that promote a viable, sustainable, locally-controlled YK Delta economy
- g. Builds useful links between projects and services that support easy travel and good tourism

5. Meet the Needs for Current Opportunities

The Partnership will work together to address needs and opportunities as they arise, such as the following:

- a. Assessments and village outreach to find out more about what planning villages have done, and which villages are interested in planning for tourism
- b. Village trainings
- c. Support the development of local infrastructure
- d. Support village partnerships
- e. Other

6. Implementation

This agreement becomes effective immediately for participants upon signature and will remain in effect indefinitely.

- a. Any member to this agreement may withdraw at will after providing notification to all other participants. The agreement will remain in effect for all other participants so long as two or more remain.
- b. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to limit or modify the authority or responsibility of any participating entity.
- c. This agreement will allow the consideration and/or addition of other partners such as government entities, school districts, tribes, and non-profit organizations.

7. Adoption/amendment

This agreement shall be considered adopted upon approval of the signatures of its members. Any changes shall take effect upon approval of the members of the agreement.

8. Termination

Any entity signatory hereto may terminate its participation in this Agreement by giving thirty (30) days written notice of termination to the other signatory entities. The terminating entity's rights and obligations hereunder shall cease at the end of the thirty-day period.

The following (Leadership) entities represent the potential signers to this *Letter of Agreement* and its provisions:

Association of Village Council Presidents
Calista Corporation
Nerkliknute Native Corporation
City of Bethel
City Council Chevak
City of Scammon Bay
UAF Alaska Marine Advisory Program
UAF Kuskokwim Campus
Yuut Elitnaurviuat Training Center
Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
Coastal Villages Region Fund