

Appendix F: Previous Alaska Community Food System Assessments/ Planning

This review was compiled by APFC 2022 Summer Intern, William Kessler.

NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of Alaska community food system assessments. For more food systems research and planning resources, visit:

www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/ak-food-system-research

Anchorage/ Girdwood

[2019 Anchorage Climate Action Plan](#), 2019 (Food Systems - p. 68-73)

Anchorage Climate Action Plan Steering Committee

Anchorage, Alaska

95% of food Alaskans purchase is imported, which is vulnerable to climate shifts that affect game animals and wild foods. Wild food in Anchorage is cost prohibitive due to expenses like fuel, nets, and firearms. Weather events can also delay shipments and with a high percentage of imported food, is dangerous to food security. Plus sides to a warming climate are that certain growing seasons are extended and new crops may be able to be grown. Recommendations for addressing food-related greenhouse gases and food security include preserving agricultural land for production, raising awareness of the Alaska Grown program, developing facilities to process local food products, educating on traditional foods, and decreasing food waste.

[Community Action Plan for Anchorage: Local Food Local Places Technical Assistance](#), 2018

Multistakeholder Steering Committee/ EPA

Anchorage

The action plan was designed to create a downtown urban farm at the 3rd Avenue site in downtown Anchorage. The goal of this plan is to advance urban agriculture following the circumpolar north model for social, economic, and human development needs. The plan aims to increase local food production and accessibility to the community, provide economic and educational opportunities to empower the workforce needed, revitalize the urban area around, and show the value of healthy food that the site would generate.

Northern Alaska (Utqiagvik)

[Summary Report - Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative](#), 2019

Utqiagvik Steering Committee

Utqiagvik, Alaska

The Utqiagvik Steering Committee seeks to maintain traditional Inuit practices and enhance biodiversity conservation plans while also achieving food sovereignty. Recommended actions towards this goal include building public awareness and involvement through promotions at

events like town hall meetings. Emphasizes education for youth around culture and hunting by those with experience. Address regulatory issues that are noted as too restrictive and too many, but ensure they cannot be abused by opportunistic hunters. Notes a lack of authority and respect given to Native groups by the state, leading to concerns going unaddressed.

Aleutian Region

[Wellness Strategies for Health Community Health Assessment](#), 2015

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, Alaska

Weather events like wind and fog isolate communities on the islands from services like food delivery. This threatens food security through an inability to ship food onto the island. Contemporary Native (Unangan) diets rely heavily on purchased imported food. It is expensive to ship healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, so instead foods high in carbohydrates and with poor quality fats are imported. This contributes to the death rate of Alaskan Natives at 1.5 times compared to white populations. Community members desired to see a lowering of costs of healthy foods like vegetables, as well as learn traditional subsistence methods.

Northwest Alaska (Nome)

[2022 Bering Strait Community Needs Assessment](#), 2022

Mckinley Research Group

Bering Strait Region/Kawerak Service Area (Nome Census Area), Alaska

Goals for the region are self-sufficient villages, the protection of traditional ways of life and culture, subsistence resources protected, and cooperation and respect between tribal and government entities. Subsistence opportunities are seen by 80% of the surveyed population as a strength. 79% of those surveyed see a high cost of living as a community challenge, which can at least partially be attributed to the cost of imports. 39% of households outside of Nome report at least someone in their household being unable to afford food. The calculated price differential for food is 1.7 times greater in the region than in Anchorage. Climate change threatens food security by affecting current food subsistence practices like fish camp access, types of fish available, and berry harvests.

Palmer/ Wasilla

[Local Foods. Local Places A Community-Driven Action Plan for Palmer, Alaska](#), 2016

Local Steering Team/ EPA

Palmer, Alaska

The action plan involved supporting a local food by replicating the Alaska food hub model, strengthening the Monday Farmers Market, educating on what is seasonally available, and establishing space for small local producers for local/ regional processing. Additionally, the plan recommends gathering data and creating groups that seek to promote farmland and wild resources stewardship and preservation, as well as increasing the availability of local food to local residents by surveying and documenting local food availability and then identifying any barriers to that.

Central Kenai Peninsula - Soldotna/Kenai

[Food Security on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska A Report on Local Seafood Use, Consumer Preferences, and Community Need](#), 2012

Philip Loring, S. Craig, Hannah Harrison - Senior Thesis
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

The assessment finds that a great majority of locally caught seafood plays a role in household food security, especially for lower-income households. Access to seafood is then seen as a primary contribution to household food security outcomes. The data found shows evidence of a need to keep more Alaskan seafood in Alaska.

Lower KP- Homer/ Anchor Point/ Communities around KBAY

[Buying Local Food: A survey of southern Kenai Peninsula Restaurants and Institutions](#), 2018

Homer Soil and Water Conservation District
Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

The many dynamics of the kitchen and the grocery store aisle keep these buyers on their toes. The farmer, swayed by weather, timing, and labor issues, may not always see the consumer's perspective. This study shows how these large-scale consumers are instead swayed by strong relationships, dedication and reliability, and any tactics that reduce uncertainty for their businesses. Understanding these dynamics will benefit the farmers who wish to enter into this large-scale market or wish to improve on sales they presently have. To lessen our dependence on food imported into the state and strengthen our local economy, building relationships between our local producers and our largest consumers is key. This survey shows what aspects of those relationships are the pivot points between success and failure.

Fairbanks

[Assessing Food Security in Fairbanks, Alaska: A Survey Approach to Community Food Production](#), 2011

Charles David Caster - Senior Thesis
Fairbanks, Alaska

In order to combat food insecurity, a robust local food system is needed to ease the dependence in Fairbanks, and throughout Alaska, on imported food. Imported food brings both high costs and susceptibility to natural disasters and other weather events. Increased local production should be encouraged through season-extending techniques. Additionally, participation in agriculture should be encouraged, especially for younger people to replace an aging farmer population. To ease the cost of growers entering the profession and to encourage younger generations, a central marketing outlet, like a food hub, could decrease the transaction costs between producers and consumers is encouraged.

[Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update, 2022-2026](#) (pg 12-15; 65-67), 2022

Agnew::Beck Consulting with support from Northern Economics
Fairbanks North Star Borough

Emphasizes the high reliance that the area has on imported foods that present extra costs and provide logistical challenges. Locally grown food currently on the market in Fairbanks has lower costs and better quality than imported food. One goal of the strategy is to achieve food security by increasing the production, distribution, and processing of locally grown food to limit outside dependence. Increased food storage capacity for emergencies could be achieved by creating a community processing and storage facility. To grow the agricultural industry, efforts should be made to recruit new farmers through new training programs and reducing barriers to entry.

Tanana Chiefs Conference

[Tanana Chiefs Conference Regional Food Assessment and Recommendations](#), 2021
Alaska Interior

Key concerns of the Tanana Chief's Conference include food quality, the ability to gather food through subsistence methods, and food storage. Recommendations that are given to address these problems include educating kids by editing school curriculum to include information on subsistence methods which aims to create a connection between youth and subsistence. Also, they recommend acquiring funding for infrastructure and storage like refrigerators, creating a marketing campaign to educate on the connection of food from subsistence methods to health outside of schools, partnering and supporting already existing groups to use resources more effectively such as the Interior Alaska Food Network which seeks to create a food distribution model, and promoting the use of farmers markets.

Southeast

[Southeast Alaska 2025 Economic Plan](#), 2022

Rain Coast Data

Southeast Alaska

Emphasizes the importance of a strong and reliable ferry system for maintaining food security, especially with the burdens that the pandemic brought on. Local food harvesting practices for households are encouraged for both Native and non-Native peoples, as well as education in schools and the community about respectful wild harvest skills. Recommendations include investment in local production and processing, and utilizing municipal lands that can be turned into urban farms, high tunnels, and greenhouses while providing incentives for local farmers and composters.

[Southeast Alaska Food System Assessment: A pilot project to identify actions to promote self-sustaining communities and a resilient food system](#), 2014

People and Place Program, Southeast Conference, Sheinberg Associates, and University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service
Southeast Alaska

This report presents an analysis of data collected for a pilot study of Southeast Alaskan community and regional food systems from September through December of 2013. The purpose of this research is to identify existing food system challenges in order to target areas of change and actions that can be taken to promote self-sufficient communities and a more resilient food system. As new data is collected, this report can be updated. Ultimately, this research will help guide future efforts to increase the production of cultivated and harvest of wild food that is locally processed, distributed, and consumed in Southeast Alaska.

An initial baseline of food cultivation operations in communities around the region was established. This included a survey of the goals, challenges, and limitations of these growing operations to determine opportunities to improve procedures and identify factors that lead to success. A sample of cultivators were surveyed in the communities of Haines, Gustavus, Juneau, Elfin Cove, Game Creek, Pelican, Sitka and Farragut Bay. This assessment does not provide comprehensive data on all facets of cultivated foods within Southeast Alaska.

[2020 Hoonah Food System Assessment](#), 2020

Jenifer Nu, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition
Hoonah, Alaska

The Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition (SAWC) and the Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) collaborated with the Hoonah Stewardship Council (HSC) and the Hoonah Indian Association (HIA) to initiate a targeted community food system assessment for Hoonah in the winter of 2019 and spring 2020. The assessment aimed to gather specific information about prioritized sectors of Hoonah's food system as identified by the Hoonah Stewardship Council. The assessment gathered information using a local producer survey, a retailer survey, and a community survey. This report summarizes findings from these surveys alongside other relevant

information about Hoonah's food system to provide an overview of the community's food system. This report also includes recommendations for priority projects, programming, and next steps.

[Sitka Community Food Assessment Indicators Report](#), 2014

Community of Sitka

Sitka, Alaska

The Sitka Food Assessment work group launched the Sitka Food Security Survey (SFSS) in March 2013. The workgroup used an online venue as well as printed hard copies that were distributed at the Kettleson library, Office of Public Assistance, and at the Sitka Native Education Program end-of-year celebration. 484 Sitkans completed the survey, but the selected results shared in the food assessment only used data from the 422 surveys that verified their zipcode.

The workgroup set an ambitious goal of completing seven focus groups in Sitka over late spring and early summer. The focus groups targeted key informants (elected leaders, clergy, public assistance and public health staff, concerned citizens), food producers, food shoppers, and those potentially at risk for household food insecurity. A total of 49 Sitkans participated in the focus groups and interviews. Summaries of the focus groups are provided in this report

Kodiak

[Kodiak Rural Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#), 2022

(pgs. 56-60, 71-75)

Kodiak Area Native Association

Kodiak, Alaska

Agricultural activities in the region among village communities are increasing due to a Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute farming project with funding partially from the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Native Americans. Methods of achieving this increase come from Alaskan Native Corporation financial support, local city financial support, and technical assistance training. This report provides an overview of activities and SWOT analysis of both agriculture and mariculture.

Western Alaska

[Development of a quantitative food frequency questionnaire for use among the Yup'ik people of Western Alaska](#), 2014

Fariba Kolahdooz, Desiree Simeon, Gary Ferguson, Sangita Sharma

Western Alaska (focus on Yup'ik population), Alaska

Store-bought foods are deemed less quality than traditional foods. There is a decline in traditional food consumption among the Native population which is linked to a decrease in

health. The study aimed to develop a nutritional education program tailored to Alaska Native populations to address obesity and related chronic diseases.

[Alaska Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to access the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective](#), 2015

Inuit Circumpolar Council - Alaska

North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Strait, and Yukon-Kuskokwim (focus on Alaska Inuit population)

“Alaskan Inuit food security is the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain, process, store and consume sufficient amounts of healthy and nutritious preferred food – foods physically and spiritually craved and needed from the land, air and water, which provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices and self-governance. It includes the responsibility and ability to pass on knowledge to younger generations, the taste of traditional foods rooted in place and season, knowledge of how to safely obtain and prepare traditional foods for medicinal use, clothing, housing, nutrients and, overall, how to be within one’s environment. It means understanding that food is a lifeline and a connection between the past and today’s self and cultural identity. Inuit food security is characterized by environmental health and is made up of six interconnecting dimensions: 1) Availability, 2) Inuit Culture, 3) Decision-Making Power and Management, 4) Health and Wellness, 5) Stability and 6) Accessibility. This definition holds the understanding that without food sovereignty, food security will not exist.”