

State of Alaska FY2004 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources North Latitude Plant Material Center Component Budget Summary

Component: North Latitude Plant Material Center

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Component Mission

To promote Alaska-produced agricultural crops for use in revegetation and seed production. (Differs from SLA 2001, Ch. 90, Section 115)

Component Services Provided

The North Latitude Plant Materials Center provides testing, production, development, and distribution of materials to resource industries to meet environmental requirements that include the development of a native seed industry. It also provides cost-effective practices and testing, production, and distribution of disease-free seed potatoes and plant materials to the produce and forage industries. The PMC provides native and introduced seed for research and industry through the Germplasm Repository. The potato and seed industries encompass the production of seed potatoes and native plant seed and are a healthy sector of Alaska agriculture. The industry employs more than 60 people in Alaska. Both potato and grass seed production are expected to increase. Local grass seed is expected to capture 40% of the market. Local seed potato sales have captured 95% of the in-state market.

The North Latitude Plant Materials Center is recognized as the authority on reclamation, revegetation, wetland rehabilitation and commercialization of native species through release of new crops and expands on the more basic research undertaken at the University of Alaska to answer real life questions. For example, potato improvement research was initiated when plummeting yields and an outbreak of pathogens caused growers to request the PMC's help in developing a reliable source of clean potato seed. As a result of this program, virus infection rates have dropped from 100 to less than 5 percent. The dramatic success of the project has made Alaska a possible seed potato exporter as well.

Through a program of systematic evaluation throughout the state, data on revegetation is collected and distributed by way of reports. This data on plant performance is also used to develop new commercial crops for Alaska promotion. In addition to new native crops designed for rehabilitation and reclamation, breeder seed and foundation seed of traditional grasses and grain are also produced for later sale to commercial seed producers for further multiplication and sale. Cost effective rehabilitation techniques are also developed in using the plant materials. Solutions to common rehabilitation techniques are also developed and found. Forty-seven species are currently being tested. In 1996, the production of breeder seed of all University of Alaska developed grass varieties had been transferred to the PMC. This makes the program the sole source of commercial and pre-commercial germplasm and improved seed for the State of Alaska.

Component Goals and Strategies

The North Latitude Plant Materials Center (PMC) will promote Alaska produced agricultural crops for use in revegetation and seed production. The facility will encourage the wise use of adapted species for crop production and revegetation.

The PMC will assist all aspects of commercial development in Alaska needing adapted crops, revegetation material, applied research and appropriate, cost-effective technology. The PMC also assists the USDA/ARS in the operation of the Arctic Germplasm Repository.

- Encourage private seed producers to grow certified, registered, and in some cases, foundation native seed.
- Develop cost-effective reclamation techniques for industry and develop supplies of native seed needed by industry.
- Maintain forty-seven accessions of seed and thirty potato varieties.
- Develop new cultivars of needed species.
- Test, produce and distribute disease-free seed stock.
- Develop cost-effective production practices.
- Assist industry in compliance of environmental regulations in revegetation and erosion control.
- Provide seed industry and seed users with northern latitude adapted species.
- Increase stocks of foundation seed and grass for commercial production.

- Provide the basic seed needs for Alaska agriculture.
- Develop techniques for cleaning seed.
- Transfer knowledge to end users through demonstration and education programs.
- Market seed through specifications.
- Encourage private seed producers to grow certified, registered, and in some cases, foundation seed.
- Cooperatively develop reclamation techniques with industry.
- Develop supplies of native seed needed by industry and produced by industry.
- Establish an Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Quarantine Station in Alaska.

Key Component Issues for FY2003 – 2004

The Plant Materials Center is having some problems in recruiting and retaining Agronomists. The PMC faces two obstacles in recruitment, the talent and skills are not readily available in Alaska and the entry salary in the Agronomist series is not nearly high enough to recruit let alone retain qualified applicants. This dilemma is having an effect on the PMC's ability to carry forward with the programs being awarded from federal sources.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2002

Economic returns: In 1999, the PMC secured federal funding to assist in developing a strong native seed industry in Alaska. This is expected to be a five-year program. Additional federal assistance was granted in 2001 and one additional program is in initial approval in Congress. Continued federal funding is not totally secure. Recent international developments may cause a reduction in federal funding.

The Northern Latitude Plant Materials Center provides seed that produces within Alaskan climate conditions. Alaskan seed growers have acquired the needed seed and seed potatoes from the Plant Materials Center during the last year. The PMC has also provided new native seed to the producers thereby increasing the variety of material available to commercial growers and expanding the market for their products. None of this material is being produced outside of Alaska giving the instate producers a competitive advantage. Many contractors have been involved in the seed developed by the PMC. This last year has been no exception. During the past years, Alyeska Pipeline Company, Cominco and countless smaller companies have utilized the PMC's talent in restoration and revegetation issues. The PMC will continue to work with industry as it has in the past twenty five years assuring users that plant material and technology needed for sound development will be available. In FY02, the PMC established new breeder blocks of the important revegetation species, including Polar Brome, a species not available for the last ten years. Polar Brome is once again available for commercial production.

The PMC has also secured continued federal funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Agricultural Research Service, and the U.S. Air Force. The PMC has in the last year expanded its international cooperation with the Falkland Islands, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Norway. The PMC was also a major cooperator in the Late Blight control efforts in years past.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 03.22

North Latitude Plant Material Center
Component Financial Summary

All dollars in thousands

	FY2002 Actuals	FY2003 Authorized	FY2004 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	950.6	1,595.4	1,605.3
72000 Travel	15.6	106.0	68.3
73000 Contractual	163.0	295.8	195.8
74000 Supplies	74.3	126.0	126.0
75000 Equipment	22.2	404.0	364.0
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	1,225.7	2,527.2	2,359.4
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	669.8	1,848.1	1,677.6
1005 General Fund/Program Receipts	10.5	14.5	14.5
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	5.0	68.6	38.6
1021 Agricultural Loan Fund	513.3	535.6	538.3
1061 Capital Improvement Project Receipts	20.0	0.0	30.0
1108 Statutory Designated Program Receipts	7.1	60.4	60.4
Funding Totals	1,225.7	2,527.2	2,359.4

North Latitude Plant Material Center

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2004

The PMC has been very aggressive and very effective in securing non-state funding over the last few years. This not only reduces some of the burden on ARLF money, it also allows for expanded services to further assist Alaska residents. Presently, three major federally funded projects are in place at the PMC: 1) Arctic Plant Germplasm Repository, 2) Alaska Native Plant Nursery, 3) Alaska Cold Region Evaluation Project.

The fourth and fifth projects will be put into place with \$4.6 million in approved capital improvement project grants for the construction and rebuilding of the state seed lab and a quarantine facility for agricultural plant material.

A sixth project was forwarded by the PMC for consideration by the federal funding agencies. This will be a 5-year \$550.0 per annum request for an Alaska seed growers assistance project. The project will provide on-farm assistance to established grass and grain seed growers. This program will, it is hoped, be conducted in cooperation with the Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities, as they are the major buyer of Alaska produced seed. An increment of \$350.0 federal receipts was approved to cover the FY03 anticipated expenditures.

These federal funding sources are expected to continue. However, recent events have caused some concern about the future level of federal assistance. Issues in Homeland Security and defense spending could have impacts on domestic programs including agriculture grant programs being used by the PMC. All federal PMC programs are for limited terms, usually five years. The Arctic Germplasm Projects ends in March 2003. While it is expected to continue, the level of funding will likely be reduced. The Alaska Native Plant Nursery will likely be phased out in 2004, allowing the Quarantine Facility to use that building. PMC staff will continue to seek non-state funding for operation, equipment replacement and capital expansion.

Summary of Component Budget Changes

From FY2003 Authorized to FY2004 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2003 Authorized	14.5	1,848.1	664.6	2,527.2
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Annualize FY2003 COLA Increase for General Government and Supervisory Bargaining Units	0.0	7.2	2.7	9.9
Proposed budget decreases:				
-Reduce Funding for Federal Projects to Anticipated Level	0.0	-177.7	0.0	-177.7
FY2004 Governor	14.5	1,677.6	667.3	2,359.4

North Latitude Plant Material Center

Personal Services Information

	Authorized Positions		Personal Services Costs	
	<u>FY2003</u> <u>Authorized</u>	<u>FY2004</u> <u>Governor</u>		
Full-time	13	13	Annual Salaries	1,213,069
Part-time	24	24	Premium Pay	0
Nonpermanent	0	0	Annual Benefits	453,669
			<i>Less 3.69% Vacancy Factor</i>	(61,438)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	0
Totals	37	37	Total Personal Services	1,605,300

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Administrative Clerk II	0	0	0	1	1
Administrative Clerk III	0	0	0	1	1
Agronomist I	0	0	0	9	9
Agronomist II	0	0	0	4	4
Enviro Services Journey I	0	0	0	1	1
Equip Operator Journey I	0	0	0	1	1
Maint Gen Journey	0	0	0	3	3
Maint Gen Sub - Journey I	0	0	0	14	14
Maint Gen Sub - Journey II	0	0	0	1	1
Maint Spec Bfc Jrny II/Lead	0	0	0	1	1
Natural Resource Mgr IV	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	0	0	0	37	37