

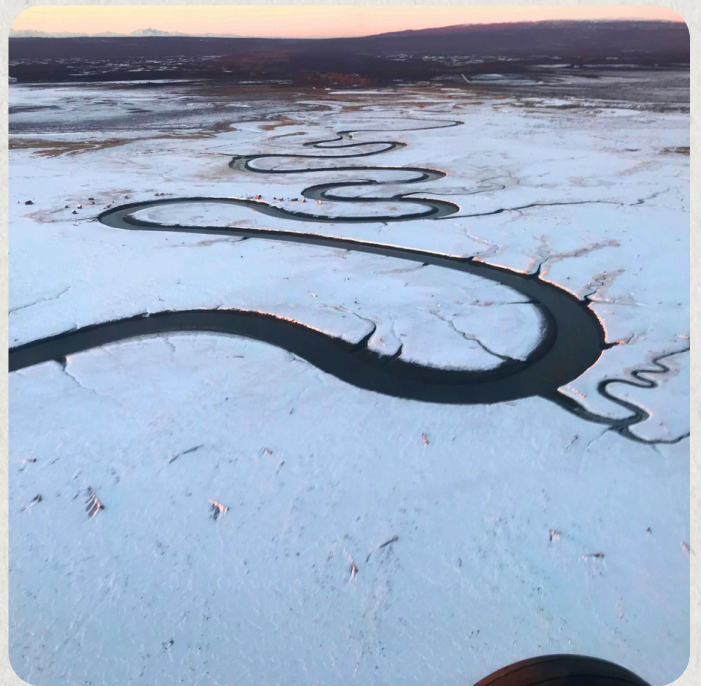


Tyonek

TRIBAL
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

December, 2025

TTCD is spending December delivering salmon caught by Tyonek fishermen to the Tyonek community, facilitating lessons at the Tebughna School on the salmon lifecycle, renewable energy, and invasive pike, and developing a habitat mapping model to identify essential Chinook habitat across the Chuitna drainage. Our team is working hard ahead of our annual holiday break, which runs from December 24 through January 1. TTCD wishes all of our newsletter readers, supporters, and Tyonek community members a happy holiday season!



Dena'ina word of the month



Our Dena'ina word of the month is ten which means ice. This year, December seems determined to remind us why. From frozen ground to slick walkways, ten has made itself well known this winter. Stay warm, watch your step, and try your best to embrace this season of ten!

Ten:
Ice



Tyonek Gather

This month, TTCD delivered 1,300 pounds of frozen salmon, purchased from local Tyonek fishermen last summer, for free distribution to any Tyonek household that wanted fish. There's still more! To receive salmon, email Emma at eshelton@ttcd.org or call (907) 317-9592.. Single portions are also available through Tyonek Gather: <https://tyonekgather.localfoodmarketplace.com/Products> In other Tyonek Gather news, TTCD started getting veggies from Twitter Creek Farm in Homer, including brussels sprouts, onions, bok choy, and cabbage. Look out for these veggies in the new year!

Youth Conservation Science Lesson Plans

The Tebughna School has been buzzing with activity! TTCD explored food systems and the impacts of invasive species, including how pike have become such effective predators of salmon. Students also learned from an educator from the Renewable Energy Alaska Project, diving into topics like insulation, hibernation, migration, and solar energy. This month, our team embraced remote learning to continue delivering lesson plans when winter weather makes travel challenging.



Habitat Monitoring & Restoration

We recently received final reports and thermal data from contactors, NV5, highlighting 38 key cold-water inputs critical for salmonid rearing in the Chuitna. Over the winter, HMR will use these inputs to develop a habitat mapping model identifying essential Chinook habitat across the Chuitna drainage. The team has also been compiling and presenting summer invasive pike results, showing near-extirpation of two pike populations and increases in native fish abundance.

Gatherings & Knowledge Exchange

TTCD's Executive Director and Board Chair attended the annual Intertribal Agriculture Council membership meeting in Las Vegas last week. It was a chance to help set priorities for the IAC in 2026 while learning about other agriculture and food security projects happening in Indian country.



What's on the menu?

Recipe: Snowball Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 and 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- *Optional: 3/4 cup chopped and toasted pecans

Coating

- 1 and 1/4 cups confectioners' sugar

Directions

- In a large bowl using a handheld mixer or stand mixer with a paddle attachment, beat the butter for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy.
- Add 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar and beat until creamy. Beat in vanilla extract.
- Switch to low speed and slowly add the flour and salt.
- Once all flour is added, turn the mixer up to high speed until dough comes together. Beat in the chopped pecans, if using.
- Cover the cookie dough tightly and chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes and up to 3 days.
- Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper or grease. Pour confectioners' sugar for coating into a bowl.
- Scoop or roll 1 Tbsp of cookie dough per cookie into a ball and place on the baking sheets, at least 2 inches apart.
- Bake about 15 minutes, until golden brown on the bottom edges.
- Allow the cookies to cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet, then very gently roll them in the confectioners' sugar to coat completely.



How's it growing?



After a harrowing battle with a leaky hydroponic tower at the Tebughna School, TTCD's Community Agriculture Technician, Emma, fixed the system and restored its production. Pretty soon, the two towers in the Tebughna School will be flourishing with food and flowers!

