

Trail, Road — Aprun, Apruteq

KUINGTUA APRUTKUN. – I AM WALKING DOWN THE TRAIL.



Photo: Students hike down a trail on Spruce Island.
Smith Collection, courtesy of Tim and Norman Smith.

Across the Kodiak Archipelago, trails help hikers travel overland through thick forests and dense brush. You can hike to the summit of Kashevaroff Mountain on a trail or follow the network of coastal paths that lead to Termination Point. Although animals, four-wheelers, and even the military are responsible for establishing many local trails, a number of these paths are quite ancient. Some of Kodiak's well-worn byways have been used for as long as anyone can remember and are considered archaeological features. For example, the presence of prehistoric village sites at both ends of the short overland trail that connects the head of Larsen Bay with the Karluk River illustrates that people made the journey between coast and river for millennia. There is also an old trail connecting the head of Uyak Bay on western Kodiak with the head of Three Saints Bay on the island's southeastern coast. Legend has it that steps have been cut into mountain bedrock along this trail to assist hikers.

In addition to aiding travel, trails provide convenient places to ambush game. Foxes, otters, and even bears use predictable routes to and from feeding and resting areas. Here, Alutiiq hunters set up traps and snares to intercept furbearers, particularly in the fall. In the past, shamans also used trails to communicate with people. A shaman who wished to scare someone would carve a doll in the person's likeness and leave it along a path that he or she commonly followed.