

## Boardwalk — Kuingwik

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### KUINGWIGMI KUINGTUT. – THEY ARE WALKING ON THE BOARDWALK (WALKING PLACE).

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Photo: Building the boardwalk in Ouzinkie, 1968.  
Courtesy of Tim and Norman Smith.

The Alutiiq word for a boardwalk—*kuingwik*—translates as walking place. Boardwalks are a common feature in Alutiiq villages. Ouzinkie is known for its scenic boardwalks, pathways that skirt the shore of the community, wind through large spruce trees, and provide scenic views of the boat harbor. Karluk also has a boardwalk. This pathway runs through the heart of the village and is a place for foot traffic beyond the community's dusty roads. Such pathways are both places for recreation and important elements of community travel. They provide direct, obstacle-free routes between village spaces, while protecting people from muddy or slippery paths, offering an avenue through thick summer vegetation, and helping people move goods.

While modern boardwalks are often elevated structures, expertly built with pressure-treated lumber and concrete footing, and equipped with a handrail, the use of board-lined paths is quite old. Historic images of Alutiiq villages show simpler walkways. Before Karluk had roads, the community had a network of wooden boardwalks and stairs made with lumber salvaged from abandoned cannery buildings. Photos of the village show boards lining paths between houses, with a single board or even a pair of parallel boards providing a clear, stable walkway. Archaeological studies of ancient villages also suggest that people filled wet, mucky places along habitually used routes with planks or even large flat pieces of slate.