Yvonne Mullan loves wildflowers. She often incorporates their colors and shapes into her beading. Fireweed, wild geranium, and lupine remind her of her grandmother and of the beauty of Kodiak Island. For Speridon Simeonoff, carving is a spiritual practice. When he creates traditional games, tools, and boats he feels a strong connection to his ancestors and pride in his Alutiiq heritage. By teaching others, he passes this pride along. Rock art inspires Janelle Barton. She often begins a carving or a piece of jewelry by beachcombing, then transforms her finds with petroglyph designs.

These are just a few examples of the ways Alutiiq artists fill their works with traditional materials, ancestral knowledge, and a unique worldview. The authenticity of Native art has been a focus of the museum’s Arts Advocacy project this past year. While helping Native artists learn to market their creations, the museum has been promoting the value of genuine works. Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller explains.

"Many people don’t know that much of the Native-style artwork sold in America is made by non-Native people. It is illegal to advertise reproductions as genuine Native works, but there is a huge international market that fuels the production of fakes. This practice disadvantages Native artists, who have to compete with imitations. Knockoffs steal Native designs for profit. They don’t support Native people."

How do consumers avoid mistaking reproductions for genuine works? The museum recommends visiting reputable retailers, reading labels, and asking questions. Soon, buyers will also be able to look for the Alutiiq Seal, a logo that indicates that the maker is an Alutiiq artist registered with the Alutiiq Museum.

“We want to feature Native artists in our store and for patrons to feel secure in their purchases,” said Counceller. “With the help of our Cultural Arts Committee we are creating a registry for Alutiiq artists and a logo that can be added to labels on genuine works. Like Made in Alaska, which identifies products made in the state, the Alutiiq Seal would ensure consumers that they are buying an authentic piece of Alutiiq art.”

Counceller adds, “Remember, when you purchase a piece of genuine Alutiiq-made artwork, you show respect for Alutiiq heritage and help our people live their culture.”

Efforts to develop the Alutiiq Artists Registry and Alutiiq Seal logo are supported by a grant from the Alaska Community Foundation’s Alaska Native Social Justice program.
Cama’i Friends,

The pandemic has caused weighty losses for so many people—in health, well-being, and economic security. The personal and professional effects will be felt for years. Yet, recent months have also been a time of immense kindness. I am humbled by the outpouring of support for the Alutiiq Museum. Many individuals, organizations, and agencies have reached out with assistance. Thanks to the generosity of our friends, the museum has gifts, grants, and contracts sustaining our services. Quyanaasinaq. We thank you all most sincerely. Your contributions and encouragement are essential and deeply valued.

Our staff have been exceptionally busy this summer completing archaeological projects, scanning family photographs, developing marketing materials for Native artists, creating activities, and building new Alutiiq Word of the Week lessons. The arts and culture are restorative in times of stress and the demand for access remains high.

There are many ways you can brighten your days with Alutiiq heritage. We are welcoming visitors again, from Noon to 4:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, with enhanced cleaning and protective measures. Our website has an expanding set of videos, virtual exhibits, and instructions for activities at home. Our store is filled with beautiful works by Alutiiq artists. The next time you shop for a gift, support one of these talented craftspeople by purchasing a piece of their unique, handcrafted work.

To learn more about our recent projects, join our annual meeting. We will be hosting a virtual gathering on our Facebook page with video presentations, live Q&A, and prize drawings on Saturday, August 29th, starting at 11:00 am.

With gratitude,
April Isilik Counceller, PhD
Executive Director

ALUTIIQ MUSEUM STAFF

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<td>April Laktonen Counceller, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief Curator</td>
<td>Amy Steffian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>Emily Capjohn</td>
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<td>Curator of Archaeology</td>
<td>Patrick Saltonstall</td>
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<td>Curator of Collections</td>
<td>Amanda Lancaster</td>
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<td>Exhibits Manager</td>
<td>Alexandra Painter</td>
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<td>Director of Grants and Contracts</td>
<td>Molly Odell</td>
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<td>Public Programs Manager</td>
<td>Djuna Davidson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Living Culture Manager</td>
<td>Dehrich Chya</td>
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<td>Gallery and Retail Specialist</td>
<td>Alyssa Madrid</td>
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ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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<tr>
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<td>Margaret Roberts, KANA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice Chair</td>
<td>Alex Cleghorn, Koniag, Inc.</td>
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<td>Shauna Hegna, Koniag, Inc.</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Lorena Skonberg, Ouzinkie Native Corporation</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Fred Coyle, Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Pat Heitman, Natives of Kodiak, Inc.</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Tanya Inga, Old Harbor Native Corporation</td>
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<td>Denise May, At-Large</td>
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<td>Gordon Pullar Jr., Leisnoi, Inc.</td>
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<td>Andy Teuber, KANA</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Emerita-at-Large Ruth Dawson</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Emerita-at-Large Rita Stevens</td>
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Mission and Vision:
By preserving and sharing cultural traditions of the Alutiiq people, we celebrate Alutiiq heritage through living culture.

The Alutiiq Museum is governed by Afognak Native Corporation, Akhiok-Kaguyak Inc., KANA, Koniag, Inc., Leisnoi, Inc., Natives of Kodiak, Inc., Old Harbor Native Corporation, and Ouzinkie Native Corporation. Each organization elects a representative to the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation, the museum’s board. Funding is provided by charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales from the museum store.

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Alutiiq Kasitat is published quarterly.
Planting Interest

Every summer a burst of bright green plant life envelopes Kodiak and entices people to harvest wild vegetables. Alutiiq herbalist Gayla Pedersen is one of Kodiak’s most passionate local collectors. She has been studying the island’s plants for two decades and sees the landscape with special eyes. Pedersen can tell you how to spot ripe spruce tips. She can point out the environment where each type of local greenery thrives. She knows which plant can irritate your skin and which ones can treat rashes and abrasions. And her knowledge is filled with Alutiiq values—respect for plants and sustainable harvesting. This summer the museum is sharing some of Pedersen’s wisdom in a set of short videos.

Supported by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, the videos provide instructions for harvesting and preparing common, easily identifiable plants. Pedersen demonstrates how to pick spruce tips and steep them in sugar for a delicious syrup. She collects sheep sorrel and goosetongue to sauté for side dishes. She shows how to infuse grilled halibut with the delicate, delicious flavor of wild celery smoke. Each short video is accompanied by a written set of instructions.

To find these videos, and begin your own culinary journey with Kodiak plants, visit the craft page of the museum’s website at https://alutiiqmuseum.org/explore/crafts.

What’s Your Word

From accordion to yeast, the Alutiiq Word of the Week has covered many cultural topics in its two-decade run. There are lessons on familiar things like bears and berries, and humorous entries on spam, nicknames, and the art of borrowing. Other lessons challenge assumptions, like one about eating aakanaq—old fish. And many of the weekly offerings explore harvesting—animals, tools, the weather, and much more. For twenty-three years, the popular program has shared the Alutiiq world in over five hundred unique lessons.

Now with grant funds awarded to Koniag, Inc. by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the museum is writing a big set of new lessons. We want your ideas. What do you want to know about Alutiiq culture? Is there a topic or a word you would like to see featured? Tell us by completing this form: https://zfrmz.com/437saflhifSRj45RkaR. All ideas welcomed. Quyanaa—Thank you (and yes, quyanaa has a lesson!).
What is that?!

Technology Tuesday is by far the most popular feature on the museum’s Facebook page. Our weekly posts on traditional Alutiiq tools and their uses garner many likes, comments, and shares. People are fascinated by Alutiiq artifacts—how big they are, what they are made of, how they are made, and how they are used. To help answer these questions, the museum is developing an artifact identification manual, the Alutiiq Technological Inventory. The manual will describe all of the major types of ancestral tools in our collections, those dating to the era before Russian conquest.

How many different tools types are there? At present the museum estimates about 300 but these are broad categories reflecting a very diverse set of objects.

“Many tools types can be broken into finer classes,” said archaeologist Patrick Saltonstall. “Take salmon harpoon heads. Most are made with two pieces, but some have three. The size and shape of these tools, and the materials used to make them, also vary. It can be complicated to decide what is a tool type and what is a stylistic difference, but the project is helping us standardize the way we identify tools. It’s helping us to be consistent.”

Staff members are currently focusing on studying artifacts carved from bone, ivory, antler, and wood. Organic artifacts are less common in Alutiiq sites, and they can be harder to identify. Saltonstall explains.

“Some organic objects are very familiar, like a basket or a paddle. Others are more challenging to identify. We rely on the knowledge of Elders and descriptions of tools made by explorers and anthropologists. Many of the tools from Alutiiq villages are similar to those used by the Yup’ik people of western Alaska.

Saltonstall and his colleagues are also consulting previous technological studies by archaeologists like Don Clark and Rick Knecht.

The museum sees the manual as a working document. “We are compiling knowledge gained from working with museum collections for the past twenty-five years,” said Amy Steffian, the project director. “But the manual is set up so that it can be refined, added to and edited as the museum and researchers learn more about Alutiiq tools.”

The Alutiiq Technological Inventory is supported by a grant to Koniag, Inc. from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The manual will be shared on the museum’s website in 2021.

Share your family photos, school pictures, old yearbooks, wedding albums, and snapshots with the museum and we’ll scan them and return the originals with digital copies. If you agree, we’ll add copies to the museum’s archives so that future generations can see the past. Scanning is FREE thanks to generous support from the Sun’aq Tribe and the US Bureau of Indian Affairs. Contact Amanda Lancaster (amanda@alutiiqmuseum.org, 844-425-8844) to get started, or visit https://alutiiqmuseum.org/research/photos. Pictures of all eras are welcome.

History

A Summer House in Womens Bay

On a low, brushy terrace overlooking Salonie Creek, an Alutiiq family built a summer home. It was small, but cozy—with a stone-lined fireplace and a doorway overlooking nearby Womens Bay. This was not a modern house or a cabin. It was a sod shelter carefully constructed about 1,000 years ago. With support from Koniag, Inc., museum archaeologists studied the structure last June.

The archaeologists believe the site was a fish camp, a place where an Alutiiq family spent the late summer or early fall harvesting salmon. The settlement’s contents provided clues to its use. Alutiiq Elders named it, Kugyasiliwik—Place to Make Nets, for the stockpile of net-weights found in its deposits. Other finds included ulu knives in different stages of manufacture. The family was transforming leaves of slate into sharp-edged cutting tools most likely for butchering fish.

Kugyasiliwik’s location also points to a fish camp. Salonie Creek is known for its runs of silver, chum, and pink salmon, which return well into the fall. Today, Kodiak anglers often fish this gently flowing stream, but they are the most recent visitors in a long line of local fishermen. Archaeologist Patrick Saltonstall, who has studied the valley for a decade, notes that ancestral sites dot its terraces and reflect more than 7,100 years of settlement. Alutiiq people have been harvesting here for generations.

Although it is common to find Alutiiq homes on the banks of salmon streams, Kugyasiliwik has a rare characteristic. It’s small. It seems to record a brief moment in the Alutiiq past.

“This site has one small shelter, a thin garbage deposit, and only a few artifacts,” said Saltonstall. “People took the time to build a structure, but they don’t seem to have stayed very long, or to have returned.”

The result is a snapshot of an Alutiiq summer long ago. Saltonstall explained.

“I imagine a family of maybe four or five people setting a net in Salonie Creek and waiting for the flood tide to bring the salmon in. Between picking the net and butchering fish down by the creek, they made tools, ate, and rested around the structure. It was probably a lot like set netting today, only with handmade tools and no freezer!”

Who Will You Remember?

The Alutiiq Museum is accepting orders for engraved bricks to add to the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial—the public park in downtown Kodiak honoring Native heritage. All people of all heritages are invited to remember their ancestors by purchasing a brick. Complete your order online https://ancestorsmemorial.org, or call Alyssa Madrid for assistance, 844-425-8844.
Events

Beaded Headbands

This month’s Craft Saturday activity will feature beaded headbands. Alutiiq artist Hanna Sholl designed this sewing project to help people create a piece of Alutiiq regalia. The activity focuses on a garment for youth, but can be sized for anyone. Hanna demonstrates each step in a short video accompanied by written instructions. Available August 22, at https://alutiiqmuseum.org/explore/crafts.

Bella Sholl models a beaded headband made by her mother.

ALUTIIQ MUSEUM 25 ANNUAL MEETING
Saturday, August 29, 11:00 am, Facebook

CONNECT WITH US

Bella Sholl models a beaded headband made by her mother.

Cillqat kanagtu’ut. Kiak Iquqlliciuq. – The fireweed are tall. Summer is going to end.