Plantlore Exhibit Debuts

Plants aren’t just for food! That is the message of the Alutiiq Museum’s latest exhibit, Naut’staapet—Our Plants, which opened on May 3, investigates how plants contribute food, fuel, material, and medicine to Alutiiq life. It is an exploration of vegetation!

The exhibit is based on the research of Priscilla Russell, an anthropologist who visited all of Kodiak’s communities in 1990 to meet Alutiiq plant harvesters and record their knowledge. Russell’s work, which the museum published in book form in 2017, provided rich material for the exhibit.

“We’ve used many of Priscilla’s photos, which are part of our collections. But we’ve also expanded the presentation to include artifacts and recent photographs,” said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller. “Alutiiq people continue to use plants and the show is a celebration of those living traditions.”

Visitors to the exhibit will find more than just photos and text, however. The presentation includes a life-sized model of an Alutiiq banya, also known as a magiwiq or steam bath.

“Steam is an important ingredient in Alutiiq medicine,” said Alex Painter, who designed and fabricated the show. “It activates the healing qualities of plants. To emphasize this message, we wanted people to get a personal look inside a steam bath where so much healing takes place.”

Other exhibit features include an entire wall devoted to fuel wood with examples of important species; a six-hundred-year-old slate storage box recovered from an Alutiiq village on Afognak Island; baskets, carvings, and canned goods.

The exhibit also offers the chance for visitors to get creative. Tables in the gallery invite people to make an art card, a small drawing showing a plant of importance to them. Visitors can title their cards and are invited to add them to the display.

“The activity encourages people to think about plants in their own lives,” said Painter. “It’s also fun to make something in the museum and leave it for others to enjoy. Some people draw local plants they love. Others are thinking about plants they rely on every day, like cotton or coffee.”

Naut’staapet—Our Plants will be on display for three years. The exhibit was funded by the Munartet Partnership with support from the Kodiak Area Native Association, Petro Marine, and the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

“Looking for something to do with your friends and family this holiday season? If you’re a current member, you already enjoy free admission to the Alutiiq Museum. Now, thanks to the generous support of KeyBank, everyone gets in for free between November 25 and December 23! Add a little local culture to your holidays with a visit to the Alutiiq Museum, a gift to our community from KeyBank.”

Akhiok men work together to harvest a cedar drift log. Photograph by Sven Haakanson.
Cama’i Friends,

As we gear up for summer at the Alutiiq Museum, there are many exciting accomplishments and plans to share. This month we debut a gorgeous exhibit on Alutiiq plantlore (p.1), we begin a series of new archaeological research projects (p.5), and we are refreshing our popular Alutiiq Word of the Week program (p.6).

We are also working to build new partnerships for future sharing of the Alutiiq world. We are pleased to be collaborating with our sister museum, the Kodiak History Museum (previously the Baranov Museum) and with the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge to enrich Kodiak’s cultural scene. Stay tuned for more news of these growing partnerships!

As we continue to share Alutiiq heritage with Kodiak and the world, we are grateful to supporters like you. You keep our mission alive. After all, we not only document and preserve Alutiiq heritage, we celebrate and share the living culture of today’s Alutiiq people.

Our members are our closest supporters, donors, and advocates, who share our same commitment to the mission to “Preserve and share Alutiiq heritage and living culture.” Today I invite you to become a new or renewing member at https://alutiiqmuseum.org/give and experience the joy of investing in our culture! I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event, or for those of you who support us from afar, I welcome your correspondence and encourage you to access our resources and opportunities on our website, social media pages, or in the pages of our publications.

We are part of a vibrant cultural region. From the Dig Afognak culture camp, to the Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers group, to Akhiok community’s annual petroglyph camp, we see Alutiiq culture thriving throughout the archipelago. As a community museum, we are proud to provide you with opportunities to enrich daily life on Kodiak through our culture.

Warm Regards and Quyanaa,
April Isiik Counceller
Executive Director

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ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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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 Alutiiq Museum’s board. Funding is provided by charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales from the museum store.

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Alutiit Kasitat is published quarterly by the Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository.
The Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial, Kodiak’s newest public park, is nearly complete and already welcoming visitors. On sunny days we see people enjoying lunch on one of the many benches around the memorial circle or stopping to read the park’s signs. Even on blustery days community members stop to view the pavement of bricks with memorial messages. The park is quickly becoming a well-known, well-used spot in downtown.

To help prepare the park for summer, and even more visitors, a group of museum staff members and community volunteers came together in April for a spring clean-up and planting party. Volunteers from ages three to sixty worked together to transplant rhododendrons and primroses, create raised beds for chives and rhubarb, and plant heirloom crocuses. In addition to landscaping, the cross-generational group raked and swept, watered and fertilized plants, and enjoyed some snacks.

The final step in park construction will occur in May with the installation of a memorial archway. Sponsored by Koniag, Inc., this wooden arch over the pathway will be covered with more than 1,100 metal cutouts of salmon, each representing the remains of an ancestor repatriated to Kodiak for reburial.

April Laktonen Counceller, who led development of the park, explains, “The salmon symbolize returning home and togetherness. They remind us of the importance of bringing our ancestors back to Kodiak and remembering those who came before us, individually and collectively.”

All people are invited to honor their ancestors in the park by purchasing a memorial brick with a custom inscribed message. Bricks may be ordered until May 31st and will be laid in July as the final step in park construction. To order a brick, visit the memorial webpage at https://ancestorsmemorial.org, or contact Djuna Davidson for assistance, 844-425-8844, x20.

The museum will host a park dedication ceremony on Friday, June 14th from 4:00-6:00 pm. Tribal leaders, city representatives, business owners, and community members are all invited to attend this free public event.

Honor a loved one at the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial

CUSTOM BRICKS AVAILABLE TILL MAY 31
ancestorsmemorial.org or 844-425-8844
Artwork Purchased

In March, the museum purchased three oil paintings for its permanent collection. A $10,350 grant from Rasmuson Foundation’s Art Acquisition Fund helped to acquire works from Kodiak artist Bruce Nelson and Alutiiq artist Linda Infante Lyons.

Bruce Nelson’s *Back Side of Ugak Island* is an oil on hardboard painting that shows a whale surfacing against the backdrop of Kodiak’s coast. The whale is seen from the water, similar to the view an Alutiiq hunter would have from a kayak. Nelson is known for his natural history illustrations and ability to capture landscapes and wildlife with careful detail. The painting shows the view of Ugak on a calm, misty summer day.

Linda Lyons is an Alutiiq artist with ties to the community of Karluk. The museum purchased two of her paintings—*Spirit of the Merganser* and *Sunset at Pyramid Mountain*. *Spirit of the Merganser* depicts a Native woman in a parka holding a duck. The image combines Christian symbols with Native traditions. It asks viewers to see Alutiiq traditions as equally important to the spiritual lives of Alutiiq people as those of later cultures.

Lyons’ second painting, *Sunset at Pyramid Mountain*, shows a familiar Kodiak landscape from the shore of Chiniak Bay. It is a portrait of both the mountain and coastal Kodiak. Lyons says that the quiet landscape reminded her of beach-combing with her Alutiiq grandmother.

Sitkalidak Collection

In 1963, a team of archaeologists from the University of Wisconsin made an exciting discovery. In a bulldozed road on remote Sitkalidak Island, they found a deeply buried Alutiiq settlement. A small excavation recovered finely-chipped leaf-shaped points, slender slate bayonets, and a small triangular lamp. These stone tools were unlike any previously discovered and evidence of an older culture. Don Clark dubbed the culture the Ocean Bay tradition—a reference to a nearby bay, and demonstrated that it dated to at least 6,000 to 4,000 years old.

“The collection is small but important” said Alutiiq Museum Chief Curator Amy Steffian. “Not only was it the first recognized assemblage older than about 4,000 years, it confirmed the antiquity of the Alutiiq homeland. The tools for the Road Cut site resembled those found on the Alaska mainland, at places like Lake Iliamna and Takli Island, suggesting that the areas Alutiiq people live today, were also inhabited by Alutiiq ancestors thousands of years ago.”

For many years, the Road Cut Site collection was stored at the University of Wisconsin, where Clark and other archaeologists studied it. Today, it is back in Kodiak, loaned to the Alutiiq Museum for care by the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

“We are grateful for the Service’s interest in storing materials from the Alutiiq world at the Alutiiq Museum,” said Steffian. “This loan is part of our long-term partnership to locate and return collections so they are accessible to the Alutiiq, the people whose ancestry they reflect.”
Leisnoi Lands Survey

With a $43,075 Tribal Heritage Grant from the National Park Service, Leisnoi, Inc. and the Alutiiq Museum are partnering to study ancestral Alutiiq settlements in the Chiniak Bay region. The two-year Leisnoi Lands Survey, which began this month, is helping the corporation locate and document archaeological sites on their lands.

Research will take place on Leisnoi lands throughout the Chiniak Bay region. Museum archaeologists have already taken advantage of warm spring weather to complete survey work in the Termination Point area and to investigate sea stacks and small islands near Cape Chiniak. Work along the shores of Middle Bay, Kalsin Bay, Cape Chiniak, Woody Island, and Long Island, is planned for this summer. Museum archaeologist and project leader Patrick Saltonstall explained.

"Part of our field work is to visit the locations of known sites and record their current condition. The other part of the project is to look for sites that have not yet been documented. Surprisingly, although much of Leisnoi’s land is close to town, there are areas that have yet to be reviewed by an archaeologist. We have already found several undocumented sites in our first days of research and expect to find more.”

In addition to documenting archaeological sites, the project will provide training on the care of archaeological sites for Leisnoi staff and develop an educational brochure about the corporation’s cultural resources.

The Leisnoi Lands Survey is part of a larger Alutiiq Museum effort to create an inventory of archaeological sites in the Kodiak region and assist tribal land managers with their care. The museum completed similar projects for Koniag, Inc. and the Afognak Native Corporation, and continues to work with the US Fish & Wildlife Service on efforts to record ancestral Alutiiq settlements in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

“I am always amazed at the number of ancestral settlements preserved around Kodiak. Every study reveals more about our ancestors,” said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller. “We are grateful to Leisnoi for the opportunity to keep learning and for their interest in preserving our past.”

Molly Odell on survey in Kalsin Bay.
The Alutiiq Word of the Week has been airing on KMXT public radio for nearly twenty-two years, since Dehrich Chya was a toddler! This summer Chya, who has been studying Alutiiq since 2013, is now both a speaker and a researcher. His skills reflect the generation of Alutiiq speakers that has developed in recent decades, and the impact that Alutiiq language programming has on the Kodiak community.

Season 22 of the Alutiiq Word of the Week, which begins in late June, has been in production since February. Each year the museum selects a set of lessons to recycle from the 560 written to date. However, to continue preserving the knowledge of Elders and keep the program fresh, staff members also develop new lessons to accompany the old. This year the museum will debut 14 new words. Among them will be Tuiyuq (Tugidak Island), cuuteq (ear), and kumitgaq (jumping jack / beach flea).

To support this effort, Chya has been working with Elders to pick feature words, write sentences, and record the voices of Nick Alokli and Sophie Shepherd. He has also been recording the English portion of the lessons and learning to edit audio files to build the program’s podcast.

“I am excited about this opportunity,” said Chya. “I want to raise awareness of the language and increase its presence—in Kodiak and all the places the Alutiiq Word of the Week reaches.”

Hear the Word
There are many ways to enjoy the Word of the Week. Listeners can tune into KMXT Public Radio on Tuesdays at 9:00 am, Saturdays at 5:00 pm, or Sundays at noon. You can also read the lessons in Friday’s edition of the Kodiak Daily Mirror, and subscribe to the free program podcast on iTunes. The lessons are also available by email, RSS feed, and on the museum’s website and social media pages. Chya’s voice will begin airing on June 28, 2019.

Listening to the Sound
It’s been thirty years since the EXXON Valdez ran aground in Prince William Sound, spilling eleven million barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Alaska. In the three decades since the spill, the EXXON Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council has been working with scientists and communities to restore coastal environments and address the disaster’s impacts. A new display and a short film by the Trustee Council looks back at the damage caused by the spill and how funding for research, habitat restoration, and monitoring continue to support recovery. The small exhibit will debut in the Alutiiq Museum on May 15. It was created by Alaska State Parks and will be on display until September 2019. The film is also available on the council’s website at http://www.evostc.state.ak.us.
Melinda Lamp lives in Seattle now, but she has ties to Kodiak that reach back into the 1940’s. When she was a small child, Melinda lived on Spruce Island during the fishing season, from May to September. Her late uncle, Hender Toms, managed the Ouzinkie Packing Corporation cannery. During that chapter of her life, Melinda enjoyed the long Alaskan summers and unmatched beauty of the Kodiak Archipelago.

During Melinda’s time on Spruce Island and in Ouzinkie, Father Gerasim Schmaltz was one of the people who cared for her while her family were helping run the cannery and store/post office. He was the first person outside of her family that helped to raise her during those formative years, and she continues to look back on that time fondly.

I have wonderful early memories of Father Gerasim, of the wonderful missionaries and the great fun of eating in the mess hall. When I think back and look at photos, it almost seems it was a magical time in my young life.”

Once she entered school, her family moved to Seattle and she stopped visiting Spruce Island. But Melinda has never forgotten Kodiak and as an adult she has visited twice.

“In 1997 I returned with my then 19-year old daughter, sharing Spruce Island, the village of Ouzinkie, and Monk’s Lagoon with her. By accident I stumbled on Herman Squartsoff and he availed himself to ferry us to Monk’s Lagoon. It was a special day for us and walking in the holy land that meant so much to Father Gerasim was overwhelming.”

“In 2007 my older brother and I talked about a trip back to Alaska, the Kodiak area, to walk in the footsteps of our grandparents. We chartered a small plane to fly us from Kodiak to Larsen Bay and Uyak Bay. Circling into Uyak Bay my brother immediately recognized the home he visited sixty years earlier, the home next door to where he lived with our grandparents. It was a joyful reunion of memories.”

The memories never faded and when Melinda heard about the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial, she decided to purchase two bricks to commemorate her childhood. The first one remembers Father Gerasim, the kind man, gentle man who was a caretaker in her early life. The second celebrates her summers in Ouzinkie.

Melinda Lamp, age 4, with a friend in Ouzinkie, 1949. Photograph by Hender Toms, courtesy Melinda Lamp.

Alaska’s largest selection of Alutiiq art & jewelry
Events

Calendar

May 3, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday with Grand Opening of Naut’staarpet — Plantlore Exhibit, and a display by Emerald Isle Essentials

May 11, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Alutiiq design rock painting

May 14 | Opening of Listening to the Sound exhibit

May 31 | Deadline for ordering a custom engraved brick for the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial

June 7, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday featuring Coral Chernoff and her students sharing their study of Alutiiq pottery

June 14, 4:00–6:00 pm | Dedication of Ancestors’ Memorial Park

June 15, Noon–3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases

July 4 | Museum closed for Independence Day

July 5, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday

July 20, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Alutiiq dance rattles

August 2, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday

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Credit cards: join or renew securely online, with options & subscription memberships at: http://alutiiqmuseum.org/give

Or call our front desk at 1-844-425-8844

All memberships include a year of museum admission, store discounts, and invitations to members-only events. At the ilat level and above, members receive a free copy of the Alutiiq Wild Foods Cookbook.

Llikii qupurat kaminamen. – Put the wood in the (banya) stove.
Looking for something to do with your friends and family this holiday season? If you’re a current member, you already enjoy free admission to the Alutiiq Museum. Now, thanks to the generous support of KeyBank, everyone gets in for free between November 25 and December 23! Add a little local culture to your holidays with a visit to the Alutiiq Museum, a gift to our community from KeyBank.

**November 25 – December 23**
FREE ADMISSION

**Events**

- May 3, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday with Grand Opening of Naut’staarpet Plantlore Exhibit, and a display by Emerald Isle Essentials
- May 11, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Alutiiq design rock painting
- May 14 | Opening of Listening to the Sound exhibit
- June 7, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday featuring Coral Chernoff and her students sharing their study of Alutiiq pottery
- June 14 | Ovation or listening to the sound exhibit
- June 15, Noon–3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- June 30 | Deadline for ordering a custom engraved brick for the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial
- August 2, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday
- July 2, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Alutiiq dance rattles
- July 5, 5:00–7:00 pm | First Friday
- July 9, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- July 14 | Ovation or listening to the sound exhibit
- July 20, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Alutiiq dance rattles
- July 27, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- August 3, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- August 10, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- August 17, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- August 24, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- August 31, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- September 7, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- September 14, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- September 21, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- September 28, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- October 5, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- October 12, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- October 19, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- October 26, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- November 2, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- November 9, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- November 16, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- November 23, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- November 30, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- December 7, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- December 14, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- December 21, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- December 28, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- January 4, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- January 11, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- January 18, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- January 25, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- February 1, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- February 8, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- February 15, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- February 22, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- February 29, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- March 7, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- March 14, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- March 21, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- March 28, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- April 4, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- April 11, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- April 18, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- April 25, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- May 2, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- May 9, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- May 16, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- May 23, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- May 30, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- June 6, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- June 13, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- June 20, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- June 27, Noon-3:00 pm | Craft Saturday, Make Father’s Day cards with Alutiiq images and phrases
- July 4, Museum closed for Independence Day