

Qik'rtarmiuwallret Elwillrit – KODIAK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Native people have lived in the Kodiak Archipelago for at least 7,500 years, yet the written record of their history extends back just 250 years, to the time of Russian conquest. Archaeological sites offer the opportunity to study the remaining 7,250 years of Alutiiq/Sugpiaq history. They are an Alutiiq library.

- There are more than 20,000 prehistoric archaeological sites in Alaska. Over 1,800 of these are in the Kodiak Archipelago. Although Kodiak comprises only 0.5% of Alaska's landmass, it holds a large proportion of the state's ancestral Native settlements.

- Kodiak's high density of archaeological sites reflects 7,500 years of Native history and large prehistoric populations. Before Russian traders arrived, archaeologists believe that there may have been as many as 8,000 Alutiiq people on Kodiak.

- Kodiak's large number of sites also reflects the intensity of archaeological research. Scientists have been studying Kodiak archaeology since 1930.

- Many of Kodiak's archaeological sites are remarkably well preserved. A number contain bone, ivory, and antler tools, and some hold wooden and fiber artifacts.

- Archaeologists recognize a variety of different types of sites, from large coastal villages dotted with the remains of sod houses, to streamside fish camps, fort sites on precipitous cliffs, stone quarries, fish weirs, trails, cairns, petroglyphs, and secluded mountain caves where whalers prepared for the hunt.

- Archaeologists recognize five distinctive cultural traditions (see facing page), each representing a different way of life. Despite changes in the organization of ancient societies, evidence from ancestral settlements suggests that modern Alutiiq people are descended from Kodiak's earliest residents.



PROTECT THE PAST

Archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource. There is a limited amount of information available about the past. Each year sites are damaged by vandalism. Recreational digging and artifact collecting are illegal and destroy our ability to interpret history.

YOU CAN HELP

- Never dig in a site. Recreational digging destroys history.
- If you find an artifact, leave it in place, take a photograph, and share your find with the Alutiiq Museum.
- Never buy or sell artifacts. The artifact trade is illegal and encourages site looting.
- Never disturb or collect human remains.