



For Immediate Release

Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository
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Kodiak Alutiiq Repatriation Project Funded

With a \$99,713 grant from the National Park Service's Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) program, the Alutiiq Museum will lead the Angitapet—We Are Returning Them project. This two-year effort will advance the repatriation of ancestral Alutiiq remains in partnership with the ten federally recognized tribes of the Kodiak Archipelago.

At present, 12 collecting institutions in the United States hold the remains of at least 168 Kodiak Alutiiq ancestors from at least 65 distinct locations in the Kodiak region. To help tribes identify which of these remains are most closely affiliated with their communities and plan for repatriation, the museum will provide resources, training, and individualized support.

"The repatriation process is complicated, time-consuming, costly, and sensitive," said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counciller. "Tribes need to determine which remains to repatriate, complete a formal request, and then oversee the repatriation process. Many people don't realize that multiple tribes can claim the same remains and that there is no easy way to track what remains have been claimed or reburied."

Through the Angitapet project, the museum will develop a private online database where tribes can see a list of remains affiliated with their communities and track their repatriation status. Additionally, museum staff will work individually with each tribal government to discuss the repatriation process, share the database, identify potential repatriation claims, and plan for future repatriations. One aspect of these meetings will be to determine the appropriate way to care for human hair samples. Harvard University's Peabody Museum currently holds 20 hair samples collected on Kodiak in the 1930s from named individuals. The museum will work with tribal councils to develop a protocol for repatriating and caring for these samples.

"This project will lay the foundation for bringing home all the identified ancestral remains we are aware of," said Counciller. "Our island-wide repatriation commission, representing all Kodiak Alutiiq people, has identified reburial of our ancestors as the central goal of current repatriation work. Angitapet will advance this important effort in a thoughtful, systematic way. By the end of the project, we will have a solid plan that our tribal governments can implement with support from the museum."

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.