

Cama'i Hello,

The Alutiiq Museum's renovation is winding down. As construction enters its final stages, we are planning our return to the building. When the contractors leave, our staff will focus on readying the building for public use. We have big plans and they will take until spring to complete.

We are creating a whole new set of displays to fill our new exhibit hall, moving our library to the second floor, furnishing the new classroom, and moving our store into its new larger space. All of these spaces will be accessible on May 22, 2025, with our grand reopening. Mark your calendar. Everyone is invited.

While this important work is underway, we will continue to provide programs and resources. Our popular holiday bazaar takes place on December 7, and there will be two beaded cuff workshops early next year. This is also a great time to start shopping for holiday gifts—at our store in the Marketplace or online at alutiiqmuseumstore.org.

In this season of thanks, I want to acknowledge the many generous gifts to our capital campaign. We have raised over \$607,400 in individual and business donations and we are tremendously grateful. All of our donors will be recognized with an engraved tile on the honor wall in our new lobby. The capital campaign ends on November 30. If you haven't given there is still time to add your name to new museum. Join us!

With warm wishes for the holidays,

April Isiik Counciller
Executive Director



Newsletter Sponsors



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OUR MISSION

The Alutiiq Museum preserves and shares the heritage and living culture of the Alutiiq people.

OUR VISION

Celebrating heritage through living culture.

ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION BOARD

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| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
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ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Generous Gifts

About 1820, during the height of the Russian fur trade, someone collected a unique wooden mask on Kodiak. The piece has an asymmetrical face with a titled brow, bent nose, and one partially closed eye. The design is similar to an ancestral mask from Karluk and to asymmetrical masks made by neighboring peoples. Some believe such carvings are shamanic and show a spiritual transformation in progress. Others suggest they represent a specific spirit. We do not know the full history of the piece, but it made its way into the collections of McMaster University's Museum of Art in Ontario, Canada. Recognizing its spiritual significance, McMaster offered it to the Alutiiq Museum. In September, the mask returned to Kodiak.

The mask is one of several recent donations enriching our ability to tell Alutiiq/Sugpiaq stories. This fall, Perry Eaton donated two pieces acquired during his travels. One is an ancestral necklace made of fox bones and trade beads, which he found in a Paris flea market. The other is a mask carved by Alutiiq artist Jacob Simeonoff in the 1960s, which he purchased at a Juneau store. We also received two special spruce root hats worn by culture bearers Vickie Era and Larry Matfay. These are beautiful examples of traditional garments and we have pictures of both Elders in their hats. Other woven additions include a grass basket made in about 1935 and gifted to the Nachand family, and a large coiled basket that was part of the Helgason family's Terror Bay bear camp for decades. People also brought in collections of ancestral artifacts—a red chipped point from Pauls Bay and stone tools from Uganik Island.

We are grateful to the donors and loaners who entrusted these items to our care. Some will appear in our new exhibits. Many can be seen online in the Amutat Database linked to the collections page of our website. All of them will be available for study when we reopen to the public next spring.



Nineteenth-century wooden mask from Kodiak.

Archaeology in A Box



Archaeologists mapping a site.

The latest addition to the Alutiiq Museum's educational resources is a traveling box about archaeology. Designed for upper elementary school students, the box includes eight lessons developed with Kodiak educator Monica Claridge. Supporting resources include artifacts from our teaching collection, copies of presentations, publications, videos, and posters about archaeology, and links to online activities.

A great deal of information on Alutiiq/Sugpiaq history is buried in the ground. Ancestors left the remains of their houses, tools, and meals on the landscape. Each deposit is like a book, with a unique story to tell. The archaeology education box helps students learn about decoding the past from the items people left behind. The central activity is a mock dig. Students remove layers of packing peanuts to reveal cultural material represented by pictures. Then, working in teams, they interpret their finds. For older students, there is a mapping and orienteering lesson. Just as archaeologists create landscape maps, students learn to make a scaled drawing of their school playground. Each lesson includes ideas for modification to fit a variety of abilities. Teachers can also coordinate extensions like inviting a museum archaeologist to present in the classroom or scheduling a field trip to a local site.

The archaeology education box is one of eleven traveling boxes available for checkout. Visit the education page of our website to make a reservation. There is no charge to use the materials. If you need shipping, the museum pays for the outbound shipping and the borrower pays to ship the box back. *Quyanaa*—Thank you to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council and the CORaL network for supporting this unique resource.

Deep History at Karluk Lake

If you look carefully at the grassy bank of Karluk Lake, you will see gentle depressions in the ground. These are the remains of *ciqlluut*—sod houses that were once home to Alutiiq/Sugpiaq ancestors. Just a few hundred years ago over a thousand people were living along the shores of the salmon-rich Karluk—from the lake head to the lagoon. Alutiiq Museum archaeologists have been studying their settlements with support from Koniag, the landowner. Surveys and excavations have focused on sites from the past 3000 years—sites that are visible on the ground surface. But what lies beneath these villages? How long have Alutiiq people lived by Karluk Lake and what were they harvesting? Excavations in the summer of 2024 provided some clues.

Beneath the remains of a 600-year-old house, our team encountered chipped stone tools from an older era. Knives, projectile points, and long slender blades resemble implements used during the first few millennia of Alutiiq history—up to 7,500 years ago. Kodiak's environment was drier then with fewer trees and salmon. Studies of sediment from the bottom of the lake suggest that reliable salmon runs were not established until after 6,000 years ago.



Sarah Simeonoff with a chipped stone knife found beside Karluk Lake, 2024.

This hints that the lake's first settlers may not have been fishing. Alutiiq ancestors may have visited Karluk Lake well before the large salmon runs offered this source of food and materials. Although Alutiiq people have always harvested from the ocean, it appears that they have also long used interior, land-based resources—bears, foxes, ducks, and berries. More evidence of these early settlers likely lies buried along the lake shore and could help illustrate how people used inland areas long ago.

To learn more about the Kodiak's earliest Native settlers, download our Alutiiq history book, *Imaken Ima'ut—From the Past to the Future*. It is available as a free eBook on the publications page of our website or as a paperback from the museum store.

Sacred Storage

In a quiet corner of the Alutiiq Museum's collection vault, there is a special place. Separated from the larger storage area a small, windowless room provides a secure spot for culturally sensitive objects—like shamanic pieces and funerary objects. This unique addition to our new collections vault is called the sacred storage area and it is purposefully less accessible. Tours do not visit the room. Staff members only enter when necessary.

In the Alutiiq world, objects have an inner consciousness, a human-like awareness of their surroundings and treatment. All objects deserve respect and excellent care, but some are more sensitive. Many of these items in sacred storage are spiritually powerful—an ivory amulet, a shaman's doll, belongings from an ancestor's grave, and they are best handled by a cultural specialist. Others reflect the Alutiiq practice of Russian Orthodoxy over the past two centuries. The museum cares for icons and church artifacts that are holy.

The sacred storage area also has an important role in repatriation. When ancestral remains are returned to our community, tribes often need storage while they make reburial plans. Rather than keep ancestors in offices, the sacred storage area provides a quiet place for them to rest.

In the past, the museum kept sensitive collections in a special set of covered shelves. The new sacred storage area, made possible by our renovation, helps us provide ancestors and sensitive objects with more private care.



Petroglyph of a drummer, Cape Alitak. From a drawing by Sven Haakanson.

Donor Spotlight



Beth Lynk at the helm of the Tustumena. Courtesy of Beth Lynk.

Beth Lynk's first visit to Kodiak was an adventure. She came to meet the state ferry Tustumena for a trip to Unalaska. But Kodiak's beauty and history quickly intrigued her. When Beth visited the Alutiiq Museum, a group of local students were taking a tour. She joined them and found the staff and exhibits captivating. She was particularly impressed by the integration of ancestral artifacts and contemporary art.

"The displays were so wonderful and merged the past and the present in such beautiful ways," said Beth. "I thought, this is what a living museum can be! Anybody coming to Kodiak needs to stop in and see what you have. Their interest will be sparked, and they will never look at Kodiak the same again."

After her visit, Beth began exploring the museum's digital resources. The diversity of online materials stood out to her. They allow anyone who wants to learn about the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq world to access information easily. She enjoys listening to the legends podcasts and exploring the Alutiiq Word of the Week archive to learn more about Kodiak's first culture and language.

Although Beth lives on the opposite side of the country, she gives annually to support our work. She even purchased tiles for the Honor Wall of the new museum lobby—including one dedicated to the Tustumena. When asked why she would recommend supporting the museum, Beth said, "Support what you want to see continue. You have to breathe life into it because that is how you keep things going."

Quswanaa! Maqinret tut'ekutaraakut.
Rejoice! The holidays are upon us.

The Alutiiq
Museum
Holiday
Bazaar

Saturday, December 7th,
10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Kodiak National Wildlife
Refuge Visitor Center



Meet Kodiak artists and find unique gifts for everyone on your list at our popular holiday bazaar.

Alutiiq
MUSEUM Store