



Cama'i Hello,

Think of all the things you do every month. From enjoying a date night to putting gas in the car or recycling, our months are filled with recurring activities. What if one of them was supporting the Alutiiq Museum? If you believe we are stronger when we understand history, if connecting to Native culture inspires you, please consider making a recurring monthly donation. A small regular gift can have a big impact.

This holiday season, the Alutiiq Museum is asking its supporters to consider recurring giving. Instead of purchasing an annual membership, make a monthly donation using your credit card. For the cost of a coffee or a sandwich, you can invest in preserving and sharing Alutiiq heritage. And if many people give monthly, it can create a dependable stream of funding for the exhibits, programs, and resources our community loves. Learn more and join us at https://alutiiqmuseum.org/give/monthly_giving/.

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.

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ALUTIIQ MUSEUM STAFF

Executive Director	April Laktonen Counciller, PhD
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Place Names Map

For centuries, Kodiak places had Alutiiq names. Petevalnie Point on the northern tip of Shuyak Island was called Ek'arsuumarwik—place to cross an open stretch of water. Kazakof Bay was known as Isuwilek—has a lot of seals. A new interactive map available on the museum's website shares over 300 Alutiiq names for Kodiak communities and geographical features. Dehrich Chya created the map from archival documents and Elder interviews. It includes links to audio files and photographs, so viewers can hear the Alutiiq name pronounced and see photos.

"The names preserve cultural knowledge," said Chya. "They identify the places people harvested, they preserve information on hazards, like dangerous rocks and strong currents, and they recall past events like a battle or the discovery of an iron source."

To Chya, the map is a place to share and compile information. "I'm always looking for additional names," he said. "Sometimes people remember them. Other times, names are preserved in historic documents. And as Alutiiq is a living language, speakers are continuing to name places. As we identify additional place names, we will add them to the map."

The Native Village of Afognak and the US Bureau of Indian Affairs supported map development.

Cover photo: Ar'ursurwik-Whale Island.

Rattle Activity

Loosely translated, the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq word for rattle, *kalla'un*, means “magical object” or “shaman’s object”. Rattles were part of the ceremonial gear that helped dancers and shamans interact with the spirit world, a process that involved singing, whistling, drumming, and shaking rattles. The noise attracted spirits.

Craftspeople made two types of rattles. One was carved from two pieces of wood that were lashed together, like a maraca. A space inside held small amulets that jangled when the rattle was shaken. The other was made with a circular wooden hoop. Carvers attached a handle to the hoop and tied puffin beaks along its edge to make noise.

A new museum craft activity provides instructions for making a hoop-style rattle, using an embroidery hoop and shells or animal hooves. The instructions are available on the craft page of the museum’s website and were developed with support from the Munartet project. The activity is also part of our traveling educational box on Alutiiq dance. These boxes are available for check out for up to two weeks. Learn more or reserve a box on the education page of our website.



Dance rattle.

Jerry Laktonen Honored

Every year Rasmuson Foundation honors the career and creative excellence of one Alaskan with its Distinguished Artist award. The prestigious recognition has been bestowed on some of Alaska’s best-known visual and performing artists. This year, Alutiiq artist Jerry Laktonen joins their ranks.

Jerry was recognized for his leadership in reawakening carving traditions and his exceptional work. Raised in a family of woodworkers, Jerry began carving artwork after the EVOS oil spill—seeking a creative outlet and a new source of income. He was one of the first people in over a century to make masks and paddles, and a pioneer in studying ethnographic works. His work illustrated that artists who felt disconnected from their cultures could find knowledge in the creations of ancestors.

Jerry’s carvings are expertly crafted, filled with Alutiiq colors and imagery, and deeply personal. He unites traditional forms with his worldview to tell unique stories. These stories may be political—a mask of Joe Hazelwood, reflect his family’s fishing history—a compass rose made of Alutiiq paddles, or give a nod to a modern passion—a basketball mask.

Congratulations Jerry. *Silugtukut.* — We are proud.



Rain Mask, by Jerry Laktonen, 2009, wood, abalone, ivory, feathers, paint, and synthetic sinew. Gift of Vicki Howard and the Indian Craft Shop, Washington, D.C.

Living By Karluk Lake



Excavation of a sod house at the Niklirtuusqaq site

About 1600 years ago, an Alutiiq/Sugpiaq family lived in a grassy meadow beside Karluk Lake. At first glance, the location appears unremarkable. There is no stream and no distinctive landmarks. Why did Alutiiq ancestors build here? Archaeologist Patrick Saltonstall explained.

“Red salmon! The shore below the site is covered in pea-gravel, small rocks that are ideal for spawning sockeye. In the fall, thousands of fish gather at places like this around the lake, and each one has an Alutiiq settlement.”

Excavation of the Niklirtuusqaq—One with Lots of Red Salmon site, revealed two sod houses, a place for hanging and repairing nets, and an outdoor fire pit. Artifacts from the site suggest residents used nets to capture fish in the lake and cleaned them with slate ulu knives.

“The site is a classic fish camp, probably occupied in the fall,” said Saltonstall. “The artifacts and features are focused on harvesting and preserving fish. But there are hints of other activities. We found a set of small adzes with different bit shapes. It looks like a carver’s set. Residents were making wooden tools, perhaps even ceremonial gear for the winter season.”

Quyanaa—thank you to Koniag for supporting the research.

Native Welcome Center Opens

Kodiak’s tourism industry is growing, and with it, opportunities to connect with Native heritage. The Alutiiq Museum and the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) are collaborating on a retail and visitor services center. Located in the downtown Marketplace, the Welcome Center opened in October. Here, visitors will find an orientation to the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq world and a selection of museum products inspired by Alutiiq heritage.

KANA is providing space for the center and interns from its Workforce and Economic Development program. The interns are working beside museum staff members to learn about customer service, artist support, and retail management. The museum is providing its professional staff, furnishings, educational materials, and jewelry and artwork purchased from local artists.

“This is the kind of partnership that really works,” said KANA Chief Executive Officer Mike Pfeffer. “It brings people together, shares culture, and creates real opportunities for our interns to grow. The Welcome Center adds something special to our community, and we’re proud to support a space that celebrates who we are and helps shape what’s next.”

The Welcome Center is open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Tuesdays through Saturdays. It is free to the public, and all are welcome.

Artifacts of Conquest

Today, Three Saints Bay is a quiet waterway on the east coast of Kodiak Island. But 240 years ago, it was the location of Alaska’s first Russian settlement. Following the 1784 massacre of Alutiiq/Sugpiaq villagers at Awa’uq—Refuge Rock, trader Gregorii Shelikof took Alutiiq hostages to a Russian encampment at the bay mouth. Here, conscripted Alutiiq laborers built a trading post. It was a dramatic turning point in Alaska Native history. From this point forward, Russian traders worked to occupy Alaska.

Artifacts from the site are now stored at the Alutiiq Museum on loan from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The collection is from the research of Aron Crowell, who excavated the Three Saints Bay site in 1990 to learn about the lives of its inhabitants. The objects come from the post and adjacent housing for Native laborers.

“Ground slate knives, net sinkers, a labret, and other tools made by Alutiiq people are mixed with nails, trade beads, ceramics, and iron tools brought by Russian sailors,” said Curator of Collections Amanda Lancaster. “The objects illustrate the clash of cultures at Three Saints Bay. They will help the museum share this turning point in Alutiiq and Alaska Native history.”



Locations and Hours



Alutiiq Museum
215 Mission Road
Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 4 pm
Saturday: Noon - 4 pm

Kodiak Marketplace
111 West Rezanodd Dr. Suite 12
Friday: 10 am - 5 pm



Shop Local.
Shop Alutiiq.