

# ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ALUTIIQ MUSEUM

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## ABSTRACT

Although archaeology is not a traditional Native way of studying the past, Native peoples are increasingly embracing the management of archaeological sites as ways to access, preserve, share, and celebrate their heritages. This paper examines public education as a component of resource management at the Alutiiq Museum, an Alaska Native culture center and repository. It describes two collaborative programs—Community Archaeology and Site Stewardship—that involve volunteers in the documentation of archaeological sites. These programs illustrate how public participation in resource management can effectively preserve the past while enhancing respect for Native traditions and promoting dignity among Native people.

**KEYWORDS:** public education, site stewardship, Kodiak Island

## NATIVE PEOPLE, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Archaeology is a destructive science. Studying history by excavating materials from the past requires dismantling cultural deposits—the very sources of that history. Ironically, the unique story held in each archaeological site can only be understood by taking it apart. Most archaeologists solemnly recognize their responsibility to mitigate this destruction: to carefully recover and record the information preserved in the settlements they study. And many scientists have devised truly ingenious methods for enlivening the past, squeezing astonishing information from soils, rocks, charcoal samples, animal bones, and the remains of structures.

Until recently, however, few archaeologists recognized the need to mitigate the destructive forces that archaeological investigation can have on the indigenous societies

whose history they study. The disturbance of ancestral settlements and graves, handling of culturally sensitive objects, removal of cultural materials to distant museums, and inaccessibility of the information unearthed by such studies are all sources of lasting anger, frustration, and grief for Native people (Deloria 2000; Fine-Dare 2002; Pullar 1994; White Deer 2000). Paradoxically, a practice designed to preserve history has its own well-documented record of separating people from the stories it seeks to share. To Native Americans, archaeology can be as spiritually destructive as it is physically destructive.

Like many regions with an intense history of archaeological inquiry, the Kodiak archipelago has experienced its share of conflicts generated by archaeological field research. The first academic excavation in the 1930s disturbed many

Alutiiq graves and removed hundreds of ancestral remains and cultural objects (see Heizer 1956; Hrdlička 1944), an action that eventually led to one of the first major repatriations in the United States (Bray and Killion 1994; Thomas 2000:260). Alutiiq people, however, have reached beyond this intensely troubling experience and adapted both archaeological research and cultural resource management to meet their needs (Steffian 2001:129). On Kodiak, the heritage movement developed hand in hand with archaeological research (Knecht 2001; Pullar 1992), and the cultural renaissance currently underway continues to be closely tied to the study of prehistory and the management of the region's wealth of prehistoric sites.

To peoples who have experienced the imperialism of past archaeological practice (Fine-Dare 2002), who have seldom been encouraged to study archaeology (Echo-Hawk 2000:3), and who were denied the opportunity to participate in the development of most antiquities laws (Fine-Dare 2002:70–84; White Deer 2000:9), this may seem an odd if not objectionable choice. However, a growing number of tribal governments are embracing archaeology and cultural resource management (Thomas 2000:254; White Deer 2000:13). They are training their own archaeologists, maintaining tribal historic preservation offices, leading field research, caring for collections, and working in collaboration with archaeologists (Dongoske et al. 2000; Ferguson 2000; Thomas 2000:266). Like Alutiiqs, these people are faced with both pragmatic and spiritual issues that make cultural resource management an important pursuit, particularly when it is conducted in culturally meaningful ways.

First, as populations grow and economic development races forward, traces of the past are increasingly discovered, threatened, and unearthed. Although state and federal laws provide some protections for these materials, this protection may come in the form of funds for research and recovery. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, for example, when construction projects involving federal funds or permits have the potential to negatively impact significant cultural deposits, developers can negotiate to pay for archaeological inquiry rather than alter construction plans. Thus, the stewardship of archaeological sites often generates objects and information that require care.

Second, because Native American artifacts can be sold for great profit (a point driven home by flea markets, e-Bay, and television programs like *The Antiques Road Show*), and because it is impossible to monitor the millions of ar-

chaeological sites that hold these materials, site looting is a vast problem (White Deer 2000:14). Ancient deposits are continually pillaged for artifacts, a situation fueled by the ease with which antiquities can be bought and sold.

In the 40 years since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, Native communities have found themselves responding with increasing frequency to situations that threaten ancestral settlements and the materials they hold (Ferguson 2000). Establishing tribal cultural resource management programs, developing tribal museums, and forming meaningful collaborations with archaeologists are an increasingly common response to this circumstance (Dongoske et al. 2000). By governing, funding, and participating in archaeology, Native people ensure that decisions about the care of prehistoric resources directly benefit Native communities and are made and implemented with cultural sensitivity. They can also endow their members with a powerful sense of identity by using research to meet their own economic, political, and educational goals.

Overarching the practical aspects of tribal archaeology programs are deeper social and spiritual issues. Native people often seek ways to revitalize cultural traditions eroded by western conquest and restore a sense of dignity to communities plagued by social problems. Examining their history is a foundation for many of these efforts. Many Native people, including Alutiiq elders, argue that knowing who you are is essential to securing a healthy future (Crowell 2001:3). Although archaeology is not a traditional Native way of exploring the past, it offers a unique opportunity in the modern world to know and even experience history. As Sven Haakanson, Jr., executive director of the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak notes (2003, personal communication), “having oral traditions and the actual objects that correlate with them offers a unique and deeper sense of the objects.” This is something the Alutiiq people have realized. Archaeological research provides a pathway into another time, opens dialogues about the past, and unites people with very different backgrounds towards a common goal. There is nothing quite like a month spent in an excavation unit to teach you about the surrounding environment, enhance your knowledge of those who made a living from that setting, and deepen your respect for different ways of life.

Field work can also be a spiritually moving experience, particularly for those with an ancestral connection to the finds. We once watched an Alutiiq teenager uncover a net weight—a ubiquitous stone tool that seldom generates

more than a casual look from Kodiak's seasoned excavators. The young woman immediately recognized that she was the first person to touch this object in 1,500 years. It was as if an ancestor had handed her the tool. Her emotional reaction illustrated the power of archaeological research to do more than record history. Such experiences are why museums maintain living history programs, and there is no reason why archaeological projects can't be designed to have the same broadening impact. Archaeology is much more than an academic discipline. As the history of anthropological research in America has shown, archaeology is a practice with profound social consequences (Thomas 2000). When done by or in collaboration with Native peoples, and with the realization that the study of human history is but one of this science's potential functions, those consequences can be exceptionally positive.

This paper investigates the links between archaeology, cultural resource management, heritage preservation, and public education in the Kodiak archipelago. It describes two educational programs—Community Archaeology and Site Stewardship—created and led by the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository. At this Alaska Native cultural center in the City of Kodiak,<sup>1</sup> archaeology contributes to heritage preservation in many ways. However, the discussion below focuses on educational programs that involve museum patrons in field work. Both programs reflect the widening role of archaeology in America and illustrate how cultural, academic, and management goals can be jointly pursued to great mutual benefit. By focusing on threatened sites, involving the public in research, and uniting research results with the community whose heritage they most closely reflect, these programs promote understanding. They dismantle old stereotypes of both Native people and archaeologists, generate respect for heritage, and inspire cultural exploration while preserving pieces of a remarkable history.

These two programs have not only given light to the rich history of Kodiak, but given power back to Natives and non-Natives in protecting and understanding the importance of cultural preservation for everyone. (Dr. Sven Haakanson, Jr., executive director, Alutiiq Museum, 2003, personal communication)

## KODIAK'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Kodiak archipelago is home to some of Alaska's richest archaeological resources. There are more than 1,300 known sites in the region (Alaska Office of History and Archaeology 2005). These deposits represent about 4 percent of all the known sites in Alaska, in an area that makes up just one half of one percent of the state's land mass. Large prehistoric populations, a reliance on maritime resources, and a persistently cool, damp climate combined to create this wealth of sites, which have been identified through extensive surveys. In addition to the stone tools commonly found in ancient settlements, Kodiak sites contain organic materials and cultural features (Knecht 1995). Bone, ivory, wood, and fiber objects occur in association with the remains of sod houses, stone tent rings, smoke pits, and storage features documenting more than 7,500 years of Native history.

These sites chronicle the development of Kodiak's indigenous societies from small bands of mobile hunting, fishing, and gathering people to large, permanent, coastal communities led by a wealthy elite class (Fitzhugh 2003). As such, Kodiak's sites contain information on some of the seminal questions in both Alaska prehistory and study of the world's nonagricultural societies: the development of surplus production, origins of settled village life, and evolution of social inequality.

Kodiak's sites also represent one of the best sources of information on Alutiiq heritage. Due to an early and profoundly disruptive period of western colonization, Alutiiq traditions are poorly known. Conquest of the archipelago by Russian fur traders led to the loss of political sovereignty, a catastrophic decline in the Native population, and massive cultural change. When anthropologists arrived in the region in the 1930s (Hrdlička 1944), the Alutiiq people were participating fully in a western economic system and many traditional practices had changed. As such, there is limited documentation of precontact lifestyles and no traditional monograph on Kodiak Alutiiq culture. The only written records are the accounts of Russian explorers and clergymen. Today, the words of Alutiiq elders, collections of ethnographic specimens in distant museums, and archaeological data provide the best records of classical Alutiiq society (Crowell et al. 2001). For Kodiak Alutiiqs,

1 The presence of a Native-governed archaeological repository in Kodiak is itself a testament to the power of archaeological research. The existence of prehistoric Alutiiq collections in need of professional storage was one of the major forces in the creation of this organization, and many of its exhibits and programs make use of objects and information derived from archaeological research (Knecht 2002).



*Figure 1. A mask carved by an Old Harbor School student inspired by artifacts displayed by the Alutiiq Museum. Photo by Sven Haakanson, Jr., 2001.*

the archaeological record is a library—a store of immensely valuable information. Each site offers a glimpse into the past and is an irreplaceable gift to the present (Fig. 1).

Like Kodiak's current residents, past people settled the region's protected shores and major rivers. Thus, most sites are located along major waterways and easily accessed by boat or float plane. Moreover, many sites are easy to spot. Deep pits created for semisubterranean sod houses, dramatic accumulations of shellfish remains, and lush vegetation all announce the location of past villages. Unfortunately, these easily accessed, conspicuous, well-preserved sites are increasingly threatened by human activity. As the region's population increases, tourism brings more visitors to the island, and antiquities markets flourish, Alutiiq heritage is being lost to vandalism, recreation, and development. Artifact digging has long been a favorite

pastime in the Kodiak region (Fig. 2; see also Chaffin et al. 1983:10–13). Many of Kodiak's old families have artifact collections proudly displayed on mantles and coffee tables or decoratively glued to canvas covered boards. For Alutiiq people, collecting artifacts was one way to connect with their little-discussed heritage. For others it was recreation. Commercial fishermen, for example, reminisce about exploring the coastline and digging for artifacts between salmon openers. Site looting is also one of the lesser-known impacts of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Cleanup crews sopping up the oil borne by currents to Kodiak's shores discovered and dug in eroding sites (Mobley et al. 1990:140–143; Pontti and Saltonstall 1999).

In recent years, site disturbance has been exacerbated by the increasing number of people accessing remote regions. As ecotourism and wilderness recreation gain



*Figure 2. Site Stewardship program volunteer Bill Barker stands by a large hole created by recreational digging. Photo by Patrick Saltonstall, 2003.*

economic importance, sport hunting, fishing, and wild-life viewing are bringing more visitors to the archipelago. With additional tourism comes additional disturbance, both accidental and intentional. Fishermen wear trails along riverbanks, furthering the erosion of ancient fish camps. Campers dig latrines and leave refuse that attracts digging bears (Steffian and Saltonstall 2004:135). Hunters ride powerful off-road vehicles into the wilderness, cutting deep scars into the landscape. In addition to enhancing erosion, their tire tracks slash through, churn, and expose archaeological deposits (Fig. 3; VanDaele 2003).

Purposeful vandalism has escalated too. With the gradual downturn of Alaska's fishing industry, residents have learned the economic value of artifacts. Some are simply collecting objects exposed by massive recent erosion and selling them to visitors, collectors, art dealers, and retailers or trading them for services like medical treatment. Others are more pernicious, targeting sites with preserved organic materials for systematic looting. At sites in Uyak Bay and on Chirikof Island (Saltonstall and Steffian 2005:19), looters left behind homemade sifting screens, illustrating the intensity of their recovery efforts and a technique learned from archaeologists.

One particularly distressing result of site looting is the disturbance of graves. The Alutiiq people buried their dead in their villages. Thus, the same deposits that produce the woodcarvings (Fig. 4), ivory figurines, and bone weaponry coveted by collectors are likely to hold human remains. Looters take some of these remains. Others they disturb,



*Figure 3. Off road vehicle tracks cut through Zaimka Mound, a settlement dating from 7,300 to 3,800 years ago. Photo by Amy Steffian, 1998.*

expose, and leave behind (Mobley et al. 1990:140–143). When well-meaning citizens observe human remains in the wilderness, they call the Alaska State Troopers, who must collect the remains for review by the state medical examiner unless they can be determined to be prehistoric.<sup>2</sup> Thus, burials are not only disturbed, but their contents—or some portion—are removed to distant laboratories.

Protecting and managing these resources continues to be difficult (Fine-Dare 2002:83–84). While federal laws like the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979 provide theoretical protection for the hundreds of sites that lie on federal and Native lands in the archipelago, enforcing these laws in a roadless wilderness area the size of the state of Connecticut is both immensely expensive and challenging. Moreover, the location of the sites that need monitoring is not always known. Despite the wealth of recorded archaeological deposits, large areas of



*Figure 4. A prehistoric wooden doll from the Malina Creek Site (courtesy Afognak Joint Venture collection) illustrates the treasures found in Kodiak's sites. Photo by Richard Knecht, 1993.*

<sup>2</sup> The Alaska State Troopers now work with Alutiiq Museum archaeologists to identify prehistoric human remains in the field. Archaeologists accompany troopers responding to reports of human remains in remote regions. If an archaeologist can determine that the remains are prehistoric, the troopers will leave them in place.

the archipelago have never been systematically surveyed, and every new survey reveals significant numbers of settlements (Steffian and Saltonstall 2004). Thus, even for those who have a genuine interest in actively managing the sites on their lands, the task is daunting. Escalating site destruction and a need for new management approaches led the Alutiiq Museum to consider how public education and community collaborations might help.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

As a professional repository, the Alutiiq Museum cares for archaeological materials excavated around Kodiak during the past seven decades. The facilities include a laboratory and a climate-controlled collections storage room designed to support existing collections and sustain research fueling the Alutiiq heritage movement (Knecht 2002; Pullar 1992). In the museum's early years, staff members salvaged objects from a badly eroding wet site (Steffian and Knecht 1998), completed some small archaeological contracts, and helped one of our supporting Alutiiq corporations with Dig Afognak, an ecotourism program that involves archaeological field research (Woodhouse-Beyer 2001). The museum was involved in archaeological research and resource management, but usually in response to a request for assistance rather than as a planned effort with clearly established goals.

However, the growing number of amateur collections brought to the museum, upsetting accounts of vandalism, and intense community interest in archaeology forced us to consider the long-standing problem of site preservation. The museum began to recognize a need to take an active role in saving sites and the information they hold and involving the Kodiak community in this work. Ruth Dawson, chair of the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation, the museum's governing board, expressed this sentiment in a letter to the editor of the *Kodiak Daily Mirror* in November 1998. In response to the sale of Alaskan artifacts in local gift shops she wrote:

Kodiak has many remarkable archaeological sites and the artifacts they hold are a non-renewable resource. The way we treat them today will forever determine the knowledge available to future generations. Let's work together to keep this knowledge safe. Please do not collect, buy, sell, or trade artifacts. The tools of our ancestors should be treated with the greatest respect, not traded for profit.

They should be cared for in museums and culture centers, where our entire community can benefit from their information, beauty, and spiritual power. (Dawson 1998)

During the museum's first strategic planning sessions, board and staff members affirmed that caring for Alutiiq heritage depended on preserving its records, whether they were objects in the museum or sites on the landscape. The team of Native leaders, educators, tradition bearers, and archaeologists further recognized that collaborating with land managers to care for archaeological deposits was an important function of the museum and that this work could promote the museum's broader educational and social goals: increasing knowledge of Alutiiq heritage and generating pride in Native ancestry. The Community Archaeology and Site Stewardship programs evolved from this desire to advance community-wide stewardship of archaeological resources as part of the museum's educational mission.

## COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

In the spring of 1997, the Kodiak Island Borough was in the midst of building a multimillion dollar fisheries research center in the city of Kodiak when soil testing at the construction site uncovered evidence of a prehistoric settlement. Following the guidelines of the National Historic Preservation Act, archaeologists from the Alutiiq Museum were hired to survey the area, evaluate the significance of the cultural materials, and determine the effects of the proposed construction. It was quickly evident that the planned project would irreparably damage a rare Early Kachemak deposit, which represented a little-known era of Kodiak prehistory and was eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Kodiak Island Borough land manager and Alutiiq Museum archaeologists faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the site needed to be preserved. Federal law mandated either changing construction plans or implementing some form of data recovery. On the other hand, construction of this important community-supported facility was in its advanced stages, significant changes to the project design were not possible, and there was very limited funding for any additional environmental work. Following federal law, the Alutiiq community and museum archaeologists could have pressed the borough into a costly excavation contract.

Instead, the museum chose to turn a potentially contentious situation into an opportunity for public education.

The Alutiiq Museum agreed to conduct a salvage excavation under a modestly funded contract. Following a model that had worked successfully in previous academic projects (cf. Knecht 2002), a small team of professional archaeologists would lead community volunteers in an excavation. The project would be widely publicized to attract attention to the value of Alutiiq heritage and the issues of site preservation. The borough would provide extensive technical assistance: permitting, an on-site water system for screening, site preparation, and back filling. The resulting collection would be curated at the Alutiiq Museum where it would be available for study and interpretation.

The field excavation lasted just ten days, followed by a month of lab work. In this short time, three paid archaeologists supervised over 40 volunteers, who gave over 1,000 hours of their time to salvage information and artifacts from the Blisky site (Steffian et al. 1998). Together, they excavated roughly 25 cubic meters of deposit, recorded three unique structures, recovered more than 3,500 artifacts, and processed all these materials in the museum's laboratory. In a small fishing community, where summer is a season of intense work, this outpouring of support far exceeded expectations. Participants included an accountant, geologists, photographers, travel agents, state troopers, housewives, reporters, biologists, fishermen, a borough assembly member, teachers, tourists, and a great variety of students. The goodwill generated by this effort was priceless: of far greater value than a fully funded contract. The community and its political leaders witnessed the museum's commitment to public service and the museum had the opportunity to provide an intensive hands-on educational experience to a large group of community members, Native and non-Native alike. Moreover, the museum preserved a rare assemblage of cultural materials and generated new information on Alutiiq heritage: fuel for exhibits, presentations, publications, and educational programming.

Over the following winter, as staff members completed a project display, wrote a technical report, and prepared presentations for both the community and academic meetings, the museum realized that our work with the borough could serve as a model for an annual public program. We had the facilities, the equipment, and the expertise to lead field research and a community clearly willing to assist.

Moreover, we were painfully aware of the destruction occurring at sites in our immediate surroundings. Why not design a long-term research project that would address important questions of Alutiiq history while helping land managers care for threatened sites, educating the public, building the museum's collections, and creating an opportunity for cultural exploration? Our board of directors supported the idea enthusiastically.

In the spring of 1998, we began planning for another excavation, which we called Community Archaeology. We focused on Zaimka Mound, a site on lands owned by Leisnoi, Inc.,<sup>3</sup> that was being torn apart by off-road vehicles. The deposit contained materials from the same Early Kachemak tradition as found at the Blisky site, but in a different setting. This gave us the opportunity to learn more about regional patterns of settlement and subsistence at a turning point in Alutiiq history: the dawn of intensive salmon fishing and settled village life. This second excavation proved to be even more popular. In 20 days of field work, we attracted 70 volunteers who gave more than 2,300 hours of their time to recover more than 8,000 artifacts and move roughly 60 cubic meters of deposit (Fig. 5). The volunteer effort continued through the winter, as excavators became lab technicians washing, sorting, and labeling the finds.

Community Archaeology in 1998 formed the foundation for future years of the program, now in its eleventh year. The museum now investigates a threatened site through this month-long excavation every summer. Archaeologists choose a deposit near the city of Kodiak for both its ability to contribute to our research design and for its condition. The program begins formally in early summer with an orientation meeting for volunteer participants. We invite community members to attend a lecture introducing Kodiak archaeology, Alutiiq prehistory, site preservation issues, and the upcoming excavation, and pair this lecture with a gallery display of photos, artifacts, and results from the previous year's project.

Patrons then sign up to participate in the excavation. We limit the crew to 20 people per day—including at least three archaeologists—and all participants must be 14 or older. No previous excavation experience is required. We ask only that first-time excavators spend one full day at the site, so they can receive a half day of training and then put their new skills to work. After this initial day, volunteer excavators can attend for either a half or full day.

3 Leisnoi, Inc., is an Alaska Native village corporation formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.



*Figure 5. Volunteer excavators work at Zaimka Mound, 2002. Photo by Patrick Saltonstall.*

The museum provides all the excavation equipment for the program, but participants must bring their own boots, rain gear, bug spray, water, and bag lunch. The excavation proceeds for up to four weeks with two weeks of lab work, involving the community in nearly every aspect of data recovery and processing. During the winter, museum archaeologists write up the results of the field work in technical reports, conference papers, journal articles, and popular publications. Project photographs and results are also added to the museum's web site ([www.alutiiqmuseum.org](http://www.alutiiqmuseum.org)) to provide broad public access to the knowledge gained through the program.

To enhance the educational experience of the program, the museum created an independent study program with both the Kodiak Island Borough School District and the University of Alaska's Kodiak College, so that students can participate for high school or college credit. The high school program is free. College students pay registration fees at Kodiak College and then give the museum \$50 per credit hour. These fees help to offset the costs of expend-

able supplies needed for the project.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the museum creates paid internships for students with donations from Alutiiq corporations and grant funding from the local school district (Fig. 6).

Friday started off being very exciting, first of all because of the good weather and second of all because Tracy found a beautiful, completely finished stone lamp. And on Friday I began to recognize different artifacts and layers on the ground so I didn't have to ask Amy as many questions as I did before. On Friday I finished off two squares and was able to find an uncountable number of net sinkers, a cobble stone scraper, and two ulu fragments. After the long exciting day I wrapped up by going to the museum and storing artifacts. (Tarran Panamarioff, field journal, June 25, 1999)

Finally, when the excavation begins, all participants receive an educational packet that includes information on Alutiiq heritage, Kodiak archaeology, and the laws that protect archaeological sites to enhance their educational experience. In some years, we produce these packets with grant money from local organizations like the U.S. Coast

<sup>4</sup> The Community Archaeology project costs roughly \$40,000 per year. Most of this funding comes from gifts and donations of in-kind support.



*Figure 6. April Laktonen Counciller, community archaeology intern in 2001, excavating at the Outlet Site. Photo by Patrick Saltonstall.*

Guard Officer's Spouses Association, extending the participation of our community in heritage education and resource preservation.

This enormously popular program, at the center of the museum's public outreach efforts, fulfills many goals. It helps to preserve unique pieces of Native history, promotes respect for Alutiiq traditions, and expands the museum's audience by giving people the rare and exciting opportunity to participate in archaeology. Moreover, the program promotes public awareness of the need to protect sites while enlisting the support of community organizations in this effort. People who have a positive outlet for their interest in antiquities seldom vandalize sites and often become major supporters of preservation efforts and the museum.

Although the Alutiiq Museum is not a land-managing agency, with no archaeological resources of its own to shepherd, the program helps the museum build ties with local land owners and managers to complete essential work.

Our three-year partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to study the Outlet site—a massive prehistoric fishing camp now encompassed in an antenna field—is an example. Erosion into the adjacent Buskin River and the installation and maintenance of antenna equipment were ongoing threats to this large, valuable site. By excavating portions of the deposit, we helped the USCG meet federal site stewardship responsibilities, form stronger ties with the Native community, obtain information for planning future uses of its antenna field, and provide an exceptional educational opportunity for its staff while meeting our own preservation, education, and research objectives. Like the Kodiak Island Borough, the USCG simply didn't have the funds to support more than perfunctory archaeological investigation. Yet they recognized the importance of this work and were willing to help by combining resources.

In 2000, Community Archaeology received national attention. It was one of three Alutiiq Museum programs recognized with the National Award for Museum Service. Given annually by the Federal Institute for Museum and Library Services, this award honors three American museums that have made an outstanding effort to form community collaborations for education. Receiving the award from President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at a White House ceremony (Fig. 7) greatly reinforced the value of our small organization's efforts to participate in resource management.

On the surface, Community Archaeology is about resource management and heritage education, but at a deeper level, it is also about building dignity. Working



*Figure 7. Museum Director Dr. Sven Haakanson, Jr., receives congratulations from President Clinton, December 2000. Photo courtesy of the White House.*

with others—land managers, educators, students, and volunteers—helps our culturally specific museum prove the value of heritage education to people of all backgrounds. We believe that the best way to increase pride in Alutiiq youth and elevate perceptions of Native people is to involve all people in the exploration of Alutiiq history. We aim to enlighten and preserve through inclusion. Each collaboration is a chance to tear down stereotypes and to create positive opportunities for exploring cultural diversity. With every scrape of a trowel, Community Archaeology achieves this goal.

### SITE STEWARDSHIP

Archaeological excavation is an expensive, labor-intensive, time-consuming process that focuses on just one site. Thus, while the Community Archaeology program makes a big educational splash, it addresses the problem of site management and attrition on only one deposit at a time. The program focuses extensive resources on one of hundreds of sites in need of documentation. Site Stewardship, a smaller, less visible museum program, approaches the issue of site preservation and public education from a broader scale.

In the wake of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) archaeologist Debbie Corbett needed to monitor site conditions on FWS lands in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. The largest landowner in the archipelago, the FWS manages thousands of wilderness hectares with many hundreds of archaeological deposits. In addition to protecting sites, Corbett wanted to track rates of site destruction. She wanted to know what portion of the sites under FWS management was unstable, what were the major agents of site disturbance, and if oil spill clean up efforts had exacerbated site vandalism.

Corbett began the job of assessing site conditions by working with Kodiak set netters. This small group of commercial fishermen (about 200 people) spends their summers in remote regions of the archipelago, where they fish for salmon with stationary nets. Most live in small cabins, spend several months in the bush, and return to their homesteads year after year. Moreover, because set net sites are in prime fishing spots, they are invariably on, adjacent to, or near prehistoric settlements. Corbett recognized that these families could be assets in the battle against site looting. By recruiting set netters to monitor sites, she could educate them about site preservation, re-

trieve information on site conditions, and perhaps isolate areas of vandalism for more intensive monitoring by FWS rangers. Although her initial contacts with rural residents were positive, and several families worked with her in successive years, Corbett found it difficult to sustain the project from her office in Anchorage. The program needed a Kodiak base and a stronger connection with a community organization. The Alutiiq Museum agreed to help. Here was an opportunity to address the issues of site vandalism from a wider, regional perspective while collaborating on heritage preservation with Kodiak's largest landowner and educating a new audience.

We began the program by sending a letter to every set netter in the region to explain the program and extend an invitation to an evening meeting at the Alutiiq Museum. We anticipated that some set netters might be skeptical about the goals of the program, fearing that it was an attempt by the FWS or the Native community to limit their activities in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. To combat this perception, we enlisted the help of Deedie Pearson, a dedicated museum volunteer and long-time set netter. This greatly enhanced set netter involvement.

An evening program at the museum now kicks off each season. Set netters and their families come to the museum to learn about site stewardship and get a quick lesson in site identification and documentation as well as the legal, ethical, and spiritual issues surrounding site looting. The museum essentially trains these volunteers to recognize sites and artifacts and to complete noninvasive recording. Then, each volunteer makes an appointment to spend an hour with a museum archaeologist and the Kodiak site inventory, identifying sites to monitor near their rural home. At this meeting they receive a packet of supplies that includes educational handouts about Kodiak archaeology, Alutiiq prehistory, and site preservation; a disposable camera; a set of blank waterproof recording forms; a completed example of a recording form; a museum pencil; and a stamped, museum-addressed envelope to return the materials at the end of the summer. During the summer, project participants visit the sites and record basic information on conditions: the degree of erosion, any evidence of modern use, animal activity and recreational digging. Museum archaeologists visit some of the set netters each summer to help with site documentation and look for additional sites in the vicinity. Then, in the fall, the museum staff contact each set netter to retrieve their records. Finally, the museum compiles the data and writes a report on the project for the FWS.

A major concern at the onset of the project was that training volunteers to recognize sites and disclosing site locations might promote vandalism. We did not want to further arm recreational diggers. However, after eight years of the program, the accumulated results strongly suggest otherwise. Thirty-three volunteers have monitored the condition of 200 archaeological sites in 13 regions of the archipelago. A study of their observations indicates that vandalism is decreasing in the areas most heavily monitored (Steffian and Saltonstall 2004). In short, the stewardship program is reducing an illegal, highly destructive, and avoidable type of disturbance. This is a very positive, somewhat unexpected result. While we expected to document vandalism and hoped to find patterns in its location to assist land managers, we didn't anticipate the program's broader effect. The presence of stewards in the refuge and their commitment to site preservation, the widespread promotion of the project and its goals by the Alutiiq Museum, and the museum's broad efforts to educate the Kodiak community about the value of archaeological resources seem to be reducing recreational digging.

An important part of this project has been reconnaissance-level surveys. The FWS has hired museum archaeologists to conduct site condition surveys on Afognak Island (Pontti and Saltonstall 1999; Saltonstall and Steffian 2005), in Kiavak Bay (Saltonstall 2000; Steffian and Saltonstall 1999), in Olga Bay (Steffian and Saltonstall 2003), on Chirikof Island (Saltonstall and Steffian 2005), and along the banks of the Uganik, Ayakulik, and Red rivers (Steffian and Saltonstall 2004)—all areas with limited previous survey coverage. This work represents a serious effort to assess vandalism in known problem areas, establish a baseline of information on site conditions in areas where recreation is escalating, document sites in regions that have not been surveyed, and develop information that can be used in future years of the Site Stewardship program. Like Community Archaeology, this research produces information for displays, programs, and publications while documenting patterns of Alutiiq prehistory. It also relies heavily on community collaboration to achieve its objectives. Site Stewardship is another example of education through inclusion, of creating respectful, trusting relationships around resource management and heritage preservation.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The archaeological programs described here are still underway, still evolving. Like community needs, these pro-

grams are not static. We will alter them as new challenges in resource management and community education arise. Where will the future lead? There are many possibilities.

At the broadest level, we hope our efforts to use public education as a resource management tool will serve as a model. We have been approached by others wishing to replicate aspects of our programs, and we are happy to share what we have learned. We have advised National Park Service archaeologists leading Yup'ik high school students in salvage excavations in western Alaska and shared program information with a museum in Texas that is using archaeology to study the painful legacy of slavery in America. While archaeology is not always an appropriate tool for public education, we believe that it has many positive applications that can be pursued in cooperation with academic research.

Another logical step is more intensive, farther-reaching collaborations to preserve cultural resources through public education. With help from the FWS and the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, we distributed information on laws protecting archaeological sites and potential consequences of vandalism to Alaska's entire fishing fleet. In the spring of 2006, every fisheries permit holder received information on the penalties for site vandalism in their annual mailing from the state. We also created a site preservation poster in cooperation with the FWS and the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology to be posted in every city and harbor master's office from Ketchikan to Bristol Bay. Perhaps one day we can convince the Alaska legislature to require a statement about looting be included in the information that must be posted in every fishing vessel.

Finally, there may be opportunities for economic development tied to archaeological research. The Dig Afognak program, an ecotourism program developed by the Afognak Native Corporation (Woodhouse-Beyer 2001), is one example of how the exploration of Native heritage and wilderness experiences can be combined to create unique and meaningful opportunities for tourism. Some of Kodiak's other Alutiiq corporations have expressed an interest in working with the museum to develop such programs. Survey projects, site testing programs, and full-scale excavations of threatened sites on Native lands could be expanded to include tourists and generate economic opportunities for rural communities beyond the languishing fishing and timber industries. Here again, archaeology and cultural resource management may have applications far beyond—but not in opposition to—their fundamental goal of preserving human history.

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