

RESEARCH NOTES

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Recent Research Notes is intended to be a useful venue for making colleagues aware of ongoing or recent research in any of the four fields of anthropology, and for disseminating brief notes of new C¹⁴ dates or other interesting finds, particularly those which do not seem likely to lead to other publication. We do not limit coverage to research taking place in Alaska but rather include information on research anywhere in the circumpolar Arctic and subarctic.

ARCTIC ALASKA

WALAKPA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SALVAGE PROJECT (WASP) 2017

Submitted by Anne M. Jensen, UIC Science LLC,
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In 2017, volunteer salvage efforts continued. Despite the placement of significant protection in fall 2016, the site had sustained some damage over the winter. UIC Lands and UIC Science LLC provided significant financial and in-kind support to the effort. In addition to volunteers, a small archaeological field school was held, sponsored by the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

During the 3.5-week field season, the primarily volunteer crew of 20 excavated approximately 47.3 m³ and recorded approximately 36.5 m of profile in addition to those recorded last year. We recovered one complete house with a partially intact entrance tunnel (Figs. 1 and 2). We were able to reach the uppermost floor of the house. There appear to be additional floors under this, but time did not permit us to reach them. We were able to do photogrammetric recording. A team from University of Texas at El Paso also recorded the structure with lidar. We also excavated the extreme rear of one of the houses that Stanford had excavated in 1969, the B-8 house. There were quite a few artifacts, including a very nice Birnirk throwing board (Fig. 3).

We also recovered numerous artifacts, faunal samples, bulk soil samples, flotation samples, C¹⁴ samples, a long-headed polar bear cranium, and one complete and two

partial mummified ring seals. Most of the artifacts and faunal samples have been stabilized, with more delicate items placed in the freezer to await a conservator. The complete seal has already been sampled by Dr. Raphaela Stimmelmayer of the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management.

WASP 2017 accomplished the dual goals of rescuing a portion of the critically endangered cultural heritage of the Iñupiat community of Barrow and collecting paleoecological data that can contribute to improving understanding of Arctic ecosystems through time. This data can also contribute to better, more sustainable management of those ecosystems in the future, to the direct benefit of local residents who depend on them for food security, as well as others who are concerned with the Arctic.



Figure 1: View of partially intact tunnel and crew excavating down to the house roof sods. Photo Anna Prentiss.



Figure 2: Southern Area C house and tunnel. Erosion face at lower left. Photo Wioleta Hypiak.



Figure 3: Birnirk throwing board from B-8 house in situ.

RECENT RESEARCH AT NIGU HEADWATERS LAKE, GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

Submitted by Caitlin Holloway (National Park Service), caitlin_holloway@nps.gov

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Adam Freeburg (National Park Service)

Jillian Richie (National Park Service)

During the 2017 field season, National Park Service archaeologists traveled to the central Brooks Range as part of a multiyear project to assess the integrity and data potential of archaeological sites in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve for Determinations of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The Upper Nigu Headwaters Lake West Shore Terrace site (XSP-377) was discovered in 2008 and revisited in 2017 for additional testing. The site is located in the upper Nigu River area on an exposed terrace overlooking the lake to the east and a small outlet stream to the south (Fig. 1). The site consists

of three lithic scatters with an estimated 200 lithic artifacts, two subsurface hearth features with associated bone and charcoal, and seven additional concentrations of fire-cracked rock. On-site analysis identified six lithic material types, including obsidian. Geochemical analysis of the obsidian shows that Batza Tena (Group B) is the dominant type ($n = 15$), although a small amount of Group P ($n = 4$) is also present. Lithic artifact types include a flake core, late-stage debitage, expedient tools such as utilized flakes and flake tools, and formal tools such as bifaces, a unifacial scraper, and microblades. In addition, a historic or modern tent ring was found at the northern boundary of the site.

Excavation near fire-cracked rock concentrations at XSP-377 identified two subsurface hearth features. Feature 1 consisted of an irregularly shaped oxidized stain with associated chert flakes, a chert scraper, calcined bone, and charcoal ranging from 3 to 7 cmbs. A wet-sieved matrix subsample from Feature 1 (40 ml) yielded 10 *Salix* sp. (willow) charcoal fragments. Feature 2 was a dark brown to black deposit that contained charcoal, obsidian flakes, and burned and unburned bone from 2 to 8 cmbs. The Feature 2 subsample (700 ml) contained microflakes, calcined and unburned bone, a carbonized *Empetrum nigrum* (crowberry) seed, and abundant charcoal fragments, 30 of which were identified as *Salix* sp. Charcoal fragments from Features 1 and 2 yielded radiocarbon dates as listed in Table 1 (BETA-477899 and BETA-477900, respectively). The ubiquitous presence of *Salix* in the charcoal assemblage could indicate single burning events. However, the presence of both burned and unburned long bone fragments suggests multiple processing and consumption events occurred in and around Feature 2. The carbonized crowberry seed found in Feature 2 could indicate a late-summer occupation, when crowberry fruits mature, although the berries can remain on the plant throughout the winter (Viereck and Little 2007).

The date from Feature 2 (BETA-477900) is within the range of 4000–3300 cal BP given for the Denbigh Flint Complex (DFC) by Tremayne and Rasic (2016).

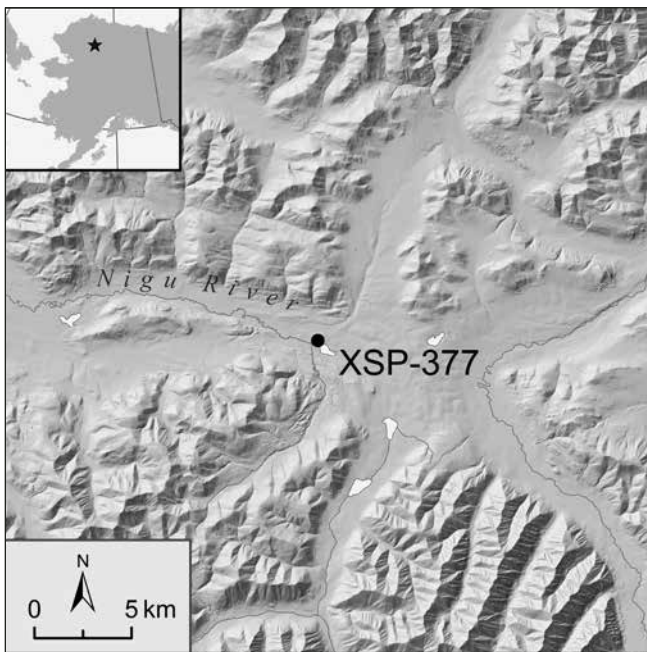


Figure 1. Location of XSP-377.

Table 1. AMS radiocarbon dates.

| Lab Number | RCYBP (1 σ) | Cal BP (2 σ) | Material | $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰) |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| BETA-477899 | 4460 \pm 30 | 5286–5158 (p = 48.3%) | <i>Salix</i> sp. charcoal | –25.9 |
| | | 5090–4970 (p = 36.4%) | | |
| | | 5143–5098 (p = 10.6%) | | |
| BETA-477900 | 3720 \pm 30 | 4150–3980 (p = 95.4%) | <i>Salix</i> sp. charcoal | –26.4 |

Calibrated with BetaCal3.21 and the Intcal-13 curve (Reimer et al. 2013). Multiple intercepts are listed with corresponding probabilities.

XSP-377 lies within 50 km of well-known DFC sites, such as Matcharak Lake (Tremayne 2011), Kurupa Lake (Schoenberg 1985), and Punyik Point (Irving 1964). The date from Feature 1 (BETA-477899) falls centuries before the DFC range and suggests that the hearth is associated with a Northern Archaic occupation, although it is impossible to determine cultural affiliation without diagnostic artifacts. The extent of the site, the range of lithic materials present, and the presence of at least seven additional concentrations of fire-cracked rock suggest repeated use of the landform throughout prehistory and later use as a campsite during the historic or modern period.

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INTERIOR

AN UPDATE FROM THE WALKER FORK 2 (EAG-00154) SITE, FORTYMILE RIVER AREA

Submitted by Sam Coffman (University of Alaska Museum of the North)

Robin O. Mills (Bureau of Land Management, Fairbanks)

The Walker Fork 2 (EAG-00154) archaeological site is located adjacent to the confluence of Wade Creek and the Walker Fork of the Fortymile River, on a raised landform several meters above the surrounding black spruce and tussock lowlands. The site was discovered in 1981 by Bureau of Land Management archaeologist John Cook and test-excavated two years later by Yoshinobu Kotani, then at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan. He excavated a large 2 x 7 m block, along with about 20 50 x 50 cm test units, to determine the extent of the site's limits. The artifacts were returned to the University of Alaska Museum of the North in Fairbanks, Alaska, from Japan in 2001. Kotani's excavations yielded around 35 formal tools, including multiple-staged bifaces, a notched cobble, and microblades, along with thousands of lithic flakes. Kotani's catalog that accompanied the returned artifacts indicates "charcoal samples," but none were returned with the rest of the assemblage. A short report by Kotani (1983) lacks any lithic analysis, presents no radiocarbon dates, and does not provide any information into site use or activities. In 2017, BLM and UAMN archaeologists returned to the site with the dual objectives of locating Kotani's original testing locale and recovering *in situ* cultural material in association with dateable material.

The outline of Kotani's 1983 block excavation was located, and a square wooden stake marking an excavation unit corner post was found *in situ*. We placed a single 50 x 50 cm test 1 m north of the 1983 excavation. Our test was carefully excavated by trowel and screened through 1/8-inch mesh. We recovered two lithic artifacts and charcoal stratigraphically associated with the artifacts, all of which are accessioned at UAMN. The stratigraphy of the test unit is shown in Figure 1. Our flakes and charcoal sample were found associated with a paleosol ranging in depth from 20 to 25 cm below the surface. Our stratigraphy correlates well with that presented in Kotani's report, which was provided by Dr. Robert M. Thorson. The paleosol correlates with Kotani's Layer 3. He reports that a relatively few artifacts were found in Layer 3, but the

majority of the assemblage was found in the underlying Layer 4, i.e., our C-horizon found underneath the paleosol. Kotani interprets his data as representing a single site component at the site found in Layer 4, with the artifacts in Layer 3 (the paleosol) migrating up from below because of severe cryoturbation noted throughout the excavations.

Unfortunately, no charcoal samples or artifacts were found below the paleosol in 2017. Thus, we have no direct dateable material corresponding to the primary cultural zone at the site, Kotani's Layer 4. The charcoal sample that was collected in 2017 came from the lower portion of the paleosol (Kotani's Layer 3) and was submitted for radiocarbon dating. The sample returned a radiocarbon age of 1280 \pm 30 years (Beta-480322) before present (Table 1), which provides an upper age range for the occupation of the site. This corresponds well with Kotani's interpretation that the site must predate the deposition of the northern lobe of the White River ash (1714–1948 cal BP; AD 2–236) (Jensen and Froese 2006), which is found heavily cryoturbated but stratigraphically above the paleosol. In sum, the Walker Fork 2 site is unique to the Fortymile area, in that after three years of joint UAMN-BLM surveying of the main tributaries of the Fortymile River drainage for prehistoric sites, this site is stratigraphically the deepest and provides an assortment of both finished and early-staged bifacial material, microblades, and unifaces so far not found at any other site in the drainage.

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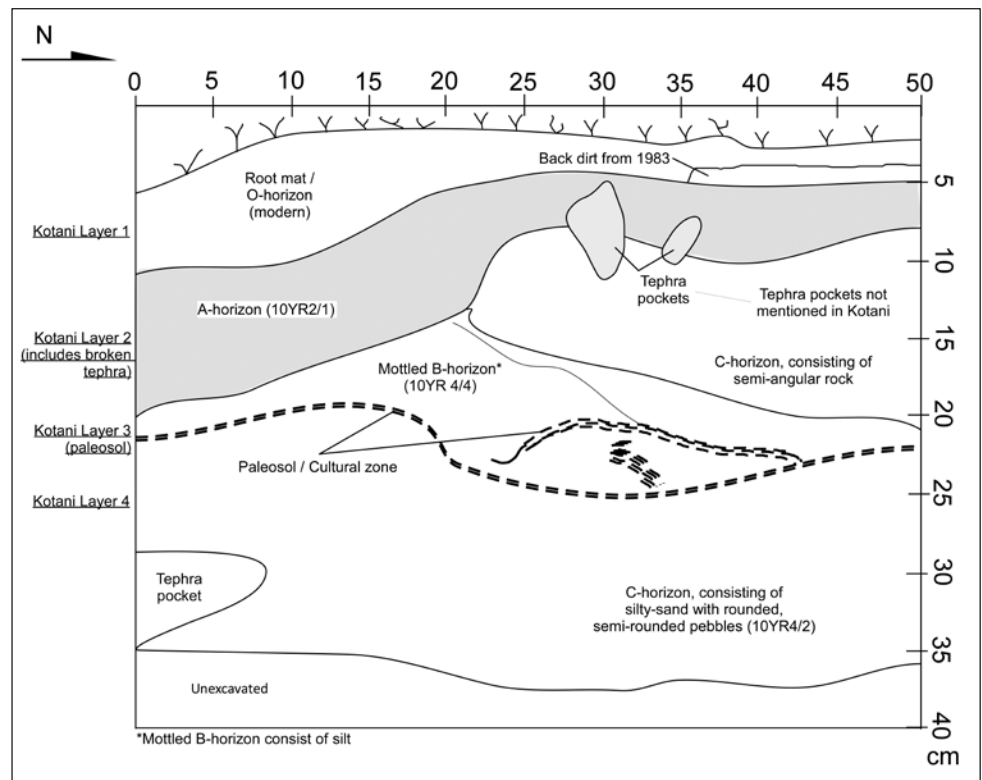


Figure 1. EAG-00154, 2017 50 x 50 cm test unit, west wall profile. The upper tephra pockets are presumably associated with the White River ash.

Table 1. Radiocarbon dates from EAG-00154.

| Lab Number | Context | Material | d13C | Uncalibrated RCYBP (1σ) | Calibrated Date (2σ) cal BP |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Beta-480322 | West wall | Charcoal sample (UA2017–084–0003) | -25.3‰ | 1280 \pm 30 BP | 1177–1286 (1.) |

Calibrated using Calib v.7.1 (Stuiver et al. 2017).

BERING STRAIT

IN DIRE STRAITS: YUPIK LANGUAGE ECONOMIES
ACROSS BERING STRAIT: FIELDWORK IN THE VILLAGE
OF GAMBELL, ALASKA, AND THE VILLAGE OF NEW
CHAPLINO, CHUKOTKA, RUSSIA, SUMMER 2018

Submitted by Daria Schwalbe (Danish Arctic Institute
and Copenhagen Business School)

The project's aim was to obtain new ethnographic and linguistic knowledge on the current situation of the Yupik people and the occurring change in the Bering Strait area.

In May–June 2018, I carried out three weeks of fieldwork in the Native Yupik village of Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. The main focus was on behavioral practices and language attitudes. Altogether, I conducted 14 interviews with community Elders and leaders, health aids, schoolteachers, the school vice principal, and local

men and women in their late 30s and early 40. Eight interviews were tape-recorded. I attended traditional dancing, church services, and the graduation day at the local school, and held a workshop for the local high-school students. All the observations were written down, forming a 62-page field diary.

This was followed by another three weeks of fieldwork (in July–August 2018) in the village of New Chaplino, Chukotka, the Russian Far East, conducted in collaboration with the Danish Arctic Institute and Aarhus University. Altogether, we collected 28 tape-recorded interviews (18 of these are my own). We also were able to locate six of the high-school students who had responded to questionnaires in 2005, and readministered the same questionnaires. We participated in and documented traditional whaling and walrus hunting, bringing back with us rich photo documentation and copies of documents and



Figure 1. Entrance to the John Apangalook Memorial High School and Hugo Apatiki Elementary School in Gambell.

newspaper articles from the local archives, which cover the past 30 years of development in the area.

The collected data includes statements regarding the changing climatic conditions and biodiversity in the area; statements regarding the impact of social media on every-

day communication and psychological well-being of the local population; data regarding the linguistic situation in the area, language attitudes, and local policies; and discourses regarding minority language(s), as well as demographic and health-related data.



Photo 2 (IMG_0082): An old house in Gambell with qasiqaq (dried baby walrus meat)

INUVIALUIT

THE INUVIALUIT HISTORY GATHERING

Submitted by Natasha Lyons (Ursus Heritage Consulting, Simon Fraser University)

Lisa Hodgetts (University of Western Ontario)

The Inuvialuit History Gathering, held September 26–28 in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, was a smashing success with the school and community. The event, organized by the Inuvialuit Living History project team and hosted by East-3 Secondary School, brought together Elders and youth for three days of storytelling, sharing, and learning about Inuvialuit culture. The school hosted a community feast with drum-dancing and traditional games on the first evening, which was attended by hundreds of local residents. Partner organizations for the Gathering included the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, Inuvialuit Communications Society, University of Western Ontario, Ursus Heritage Consulting, Parks Canada, Aurora Research Institute, and Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Each half day of the Gathering, we brought several classes from grades 5 to 12 into the spacious open foyer of East-3, where they were welcomed by Mary Kudlak from Ulukhaktok lighting her *qudliiq* (stone lamp) and ex-

plaining its purpose and importance to traditional life in her language, Innuinaqtun, interpreted by Shirley Elias. We divided students into three groups to have them cycle through stations that included print and artifact making, traditional games, laser etching, and digital mapping. They also learned about archaeological collections from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region brought in from Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife and Parks Canada's Winnipeg repository. Particularly popular stations included laser etching and 3D printing hosted by Aurora Research Institute, which had students drawing Inuvialuit artifacts and scenes on tablets and having them etched onto small wood plates, and making antler fish-hooks and jewelry with Josephine and Darrel Nasogaluak of Tuktoyaktuk. Elders from Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, and Inuvik would conclude each session with another round of storytelling about traditional life and teachings, food preparation and travel, and several memorable stories of polar bear hunting. Many Elders chose to speak alternately in one of three Inuvialuktun dialects and English.

The Gathering was documented in a variety of media. Inuvialuit Communication Society and Inuvialuit Living History team members produced video and photography; local media was on hand to talk to participants; and University of Western Ontario master's student Jeff Grieve



Mary Kudlak from Ulukhaktok lights her qudliiq (stone lamp) to open the Gathering.

recorded scores of family hunting and fishing camps on an interactive map. These various media will be used to produce content for an expansion and re-visioning of the Inuvialuit Living History website (www.inuvialuitliving-history.ca).



Students use drawing pads connected to a laser etcher to create images related to traditional Inuvialuit life.