

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Living and Working Together

*Tribal/Alaska Native
Collaboration in Alaska*



Alaska Region

OUR SHARED STORY

We are stewards of America’s last true wild places and resources, an unparalleled and vast array of fish, wildlife, and lands for people to live with, live from, discover, and enjoy, now and for generations to come.

Everything we do has a connection to Alaska Native peoples, and we believe in talking early and often to the people whose lives are impacted by the agency’s actions.



The USFWS partners with tribes and Alaska Native organizations on formal financial and non-monetary agreements; and countless ongoing, long-standing informal and formal agreements across Alaska.

This booklet is a snapshot of the many activities in which, together with Alaska Native peoples, we *collaborate, live with, live from, discover,* and *enjoy.*

Table of Contents:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Collaborative Management – The Many Methods | 3 |
| Live With – We Are Lifelong Neighbors | 7 |
| Live From – We Eat Together, Care for the Resources Together | 9 |
| Discover – We Research and Share Knowledge | 11 |
| Enjoy – With All Ages, We Have Fun | 13 |

With a common goal to sustain the resources, the USFWS works with Alaska Native hunters, fishers, and berry pickers through management bodies, tribal governments, corporations, and organizations to collaborate on managing those resources. Here are some examples.

Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council

USFWS, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG), and ten Alaska Native regional partners have worked collaboratively since 2003 to co-manage the spring and summer migratory bird subsistence hunt. The primary purpose of this council is to conserve migratory birds through development of annual harvest recommendations, assessment and reporting of subsistence harvest, and statewide outreach. The Co-management Council is designed for direct involvement by Alaska Native peoples and other qualified individuals living and subsisting in the many remote communities within Alaska. The Executive Director position has transitioned from a USFWS employee to that of an Alaska Native partner funded by the USFWS. This has provided an individual whose leadership can efficiently tackle problems and issues that are outside the realm of normal Federal functions. Other efficiencies and improved Alaska Native access to the process are consistently being made. Conservation and collaboration is helping us achieve great things together.



Refuge Information Technician Program

The Refuge Information Technician Program on Alaska’s National Wildlife Refuges allows the USFWS to locally hire and employ Alaska Native peoples in their own communities. The Technicians work part-time in approximately 20 communities across Alaska to provide a physical and cultural bridge to the local residents on or near Refuges. They are teachers to the USFWS staff and managers, Native language translators at agency and community meetings, resident advisors of hunting and fishing rules, species biology technicians, and outreach professionals.

Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments Annual Funding Agreement

Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments, a consortium of 10 tribal governments have collaborated together under an annual funding agreement for 10 years. The Refuge partners with CATG through this agreement to collaborate on activities related to moose management. Future activities and projects are planned, including opportunities to support fisheries programs in the Yukon River basin.



Polar Bear: Co-Management of the Chukchi Sea Population

The Alaska Nanuq Commission together with the USFWS, successfully negotiated the 2000 Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska–Chukotka Polar Bear Population. The Agreement recognizes Alaska Native and Russian Native peoples as equal stakeholders, and provides for enforceable quotas in the U.S. and the Russian Federation of subsistence harvest of polar bears. The Commission and the USFWS, working with tribes and hunters, are developing the best approaches for implementing the quota including reporting requirements, methods and timing.

Traditional Law Enforcement in the Native Villages of Gambell and Savoonga

USFWS supports the implementation of self-limiting harvest ordinances adopted by the tribal governments in the villages of Gambell and Savoonga. The written ordinances are a direct reflection of traditional Siberian Yupik practices of traditional law enforcement. These ordinances are seen as a significant community-based effort to ensure conservation of the species as well as sustainable subsistence use for the future. Tribal Governments handle violations of local trip limit ordinances and USFWS law enforcement investigates violations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Liaison Agreement in Allakaket

The Allakaket Liaison Contract is a shining example of the Refuge staff relying on a tribal employee for all of their liaison needs at Allakaket. The Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge requests the Allakaket Tribal Council to select and support one part-time employee, paid for by USFWS specifically to work as a liaison between the Village and the

Refuge. Whenever a village resident needs a hunting license or federal permit they can go to the liaison’s house for “one stop shopping” and meet all of the legal requirements for licenses and permits.

Memorandum of Understanding between USFWS and Kaktovik Village

Upon request from the Native Village of Kaktovik Tribal Government, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge entered into a Government-to-Government Memorandum of Understanding in March of 2014. The goal of this MOU is to maintain effective communications, consultation, and coordination with the Native Village of Kaktovik ensuring that consultation on tribal and Arctic Refuge matters are conducted in a timely and culturally sensitive manner respectful of tribal sovereignty.

Law Enforcement and Education

Federal Wildlife Officers work across Alaska to interrupt unlawful hunting and fishing activities, which helps ensure traditional and cultural opportunities exist for future generations. Understanding the sensitivity of Alaska Native cultural traditions and ways of life, in recent years, officers have utilized more of their time, simply visiting and listening to rural hunters and fishers. Federal Wildlife Officers are making regular pre- and post-fishing season visits to villages, offering youth engagement and learning activities, and communicating more with village leadership.





The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages 77 million acres of wildlife refuge lands across Alaska. We have a presence along the vast coastline, where marine mammals inhabit the waters. We manage the migratory birds that inhabit every reach of the state; as well as any species that are listed threatened or endangered. Alaska Native peoples have been here for thousands of years and continue to live a traditional way of life; and we honor that livelihood.

Resource Development and Conservation: USFWS provides technical assistance to tribes during pre-permitting processes for large mineral extraction projects, paying close attention to subsistence resources

Native Corporations and Land Exchanges/ROWS: Consolidating lands to benefit ANCSA corporations, their shareholders, and the USFWS

Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Youth Ambassador Program: 18-25 year olds are hired through Bristol Bay Native Association to be community liaisons for the Refuge

Restoring and Conserving Habitat on Corporation Lands for Subsistence: ANCSA corporations work with USFWS to secure funding for critical habitat conservation work





Protecting Sensitive Walrus Areas with Alaska Native Partners: Eskimo Walrus Commission, Qayassiq Walrus Commission and Native Village of Point Lay are important co-management partners for walrus protection

Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program: Partnering with USFWS to provide dozens of interns

Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group: 15 years of cooperative and inclusive caribou management in northwest Alaska
Building Relationships on the North Slope of Alaska: Barrow office staffs locally hired permanent employees, helping USFWS become members of the community

Local Hire: Alaska Native people are hired to work in their own village for the USFWS

The Alaska Native traditional way of life, in which people subsist from local wild food sources, is intertwined with culture, art, songs, dance, and spirituality. That is why Alaska Native peoples have a deep care for the lands and waters around them, making us a good fit for conservation activity and management through policy-making. National Wildlife Refuges are an important subsistence land base in Alaska, the USFWS houses the Office of Subsistence Management, and we have very important, long-standing partnerships with the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Commission, and various regional and statewide Marine Mammal Commissions.

Kuskokwim In-Season Fish Management: USFWS Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge works during the fishing season with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the State to manage fish runs

Extinct Wood Bison Reintroduction: USFWS cooperated with ADFG and local villages to release a herd of wood bison in 2014, providing a potential future food source

Polar Bear Conservation Efforts with the North Slope Borough: USFWS and the Borough Wildlife Department work together on science and human aspects of polar bear conservation

Subsistence Management Program Tribal Consultation: Public participation is a cornerstone of the Federal program with the Federal Board having a 97% deference rate to regional advisory councils; and tribal and ANCSA consultation is now a part of day to day work

Moose Management near Quinhagak: USFWS is collaborating with ADFG and the community of Quinhagak to create and carry out a moose management plan for the Kanektok River drainage

AMBCC's Role in Helping the Emperor Geese Population: After the population declined by 50% in the 80's, USFWS implemented an AMBCC-endorsed management plan and now the population is back at harvest threshold

Legalizing the Alaska Native Sale of Non-Edible Migratory Bird Parts: AMBCC ushered a proposed regulation through levels of the USFWS and gained final approval by the Secretary of Interior

Recovery of Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Waterfowl: Multiple species have recovered from critical levels in the 1980s by collaboration between hunters, AMBCC, and USFWS

Steller's Eider Recovery and Reintroduction on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: USFWS works closely with elders and community members to plan for a possible recovery of this sea duck



Discovering is asking questions, following the scientific process, learning from each other, and finding answers about species and their habitats.

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives across Alaska and Canada: These public-private partnerships work together to address large landscape and seascape issues too broad for any one entity to address

Tribal Wildlife Grants: 40 awards totaling over \$7 million since 2003 to tribes have conserved wildlife habitats, monitored and protected species, and researched tribally-important wildlife

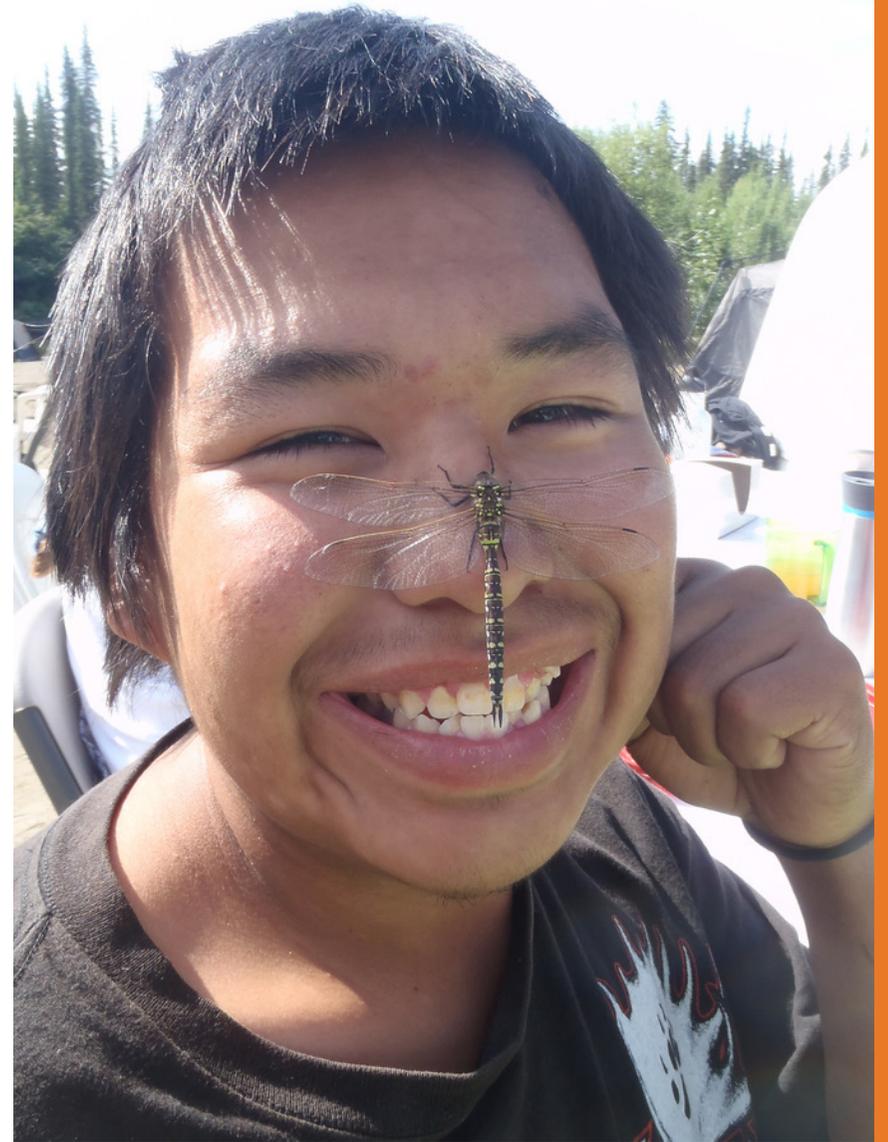
Fishery Resource Monitoring Projects across Alaska: \$103.6 million has been allocated since 2000 to fund 431 projects to provide information for sustaining subsistence fisheries of Federal public lands



Invasive Species Projects on Refuge Lands: Working with tribes and providing funding around Refuges is a critical component to help prevent the spread of invasive species

Partnering on Walrus Harvest Monitoring and Biological Sampling: With Eskimo Walrus Commission and ADFG, USFWS conducts harvest monitoring and biological sampling programs on St. Lawrence Island

Alaska Native Relations Training: Offered twice annually, mandatory training for USFWS staff and managers on Alaska Native cultures, history, laws, and the special relationship to tribes.



In addition to our science and culture camps offered across a broad geography, the USFWS also engages youth and others to both teach us and learn about our work.

Arctic Youth Ambassadors: USFWS, State Department, and nonprofit partner Alaska Geographic have joined together to establish the United States Arctic Youth Ambassadors program (USAYA), which will serve an important role in the Arctic public outreach and education efforts of both agencies

Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress: 21 Alaska Native teens travelled from remote and urban places in Alaska to share their own experiences with climate change

Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors: Kaktovik high school students teach visitors from around the world about polar bear safety and Inupiat culture prior to their polar bear viewing outings

Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors



Working for polar bears and people



Barrow Summer Youth Internships: Middle and High School students choose to work on Eider Journey, Fox Trapping, or Lemming Monitoring, then conduct outreach projects at the end of the summer

Youth Conservation Corps: Hiring tribal youth in this Program offers youth the opportunity to develop unique job skills, allowing USFWS to give back locally and foster long-term relationships with Alaska communities

Youth Game Warden Camp: Youth from 4-18 years old in dozens of villages on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers experience the day in the work of a wildlife officer; the day includes firearm safety (utilizing air rifles) and receiving a Challenge Coin for their participation

Career Discovery Internship Program: Alaska Native students are employed through a partnership, providing a diverse group of youth with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field



Science and Culture Camps: 600 rural youth from nearly 100 communities across Alaska participate in annual camps.

- * North Slope Science and Culture Camps - Barrow USFWS Field Office
- * Taquka Kuik (Bear Creek) Science and Culture Camp - Becharof National Wildlife Refuge
- * Camp Qungaayux - Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- * Sand Point Science & Culture Camp - Alaska Maritime & Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
- * The Pribilof Seabird Youth Network - Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- * Introduction to Field Ornithology(2014; topic changes yearly) - Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge
- * Camp Goonzhii - Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- * Kaktovik Marine Science Camp - Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- * Round Mountain Outdoor Science Camp - Innoko National Wildlife Refuge
- * Saagelekkakk'et (Henshaw Creek) Weir Science Camp - Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge
- * Selawik Science-Culture Camp - Selawik National Wildlife Refuge
- * Kodiak Salmon Camp - Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- * The Cape Peirce Marine Science and Yup'ik Culture Camp - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
- * Salmon Camp - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
- * The Summer Outdoor Skills and River Ecology Float Camp - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge

How can we help serve you better?

Suggestions are always appreciated.

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