



Cultural Wellness Check

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We would like to begin with a land acknowledgement by thanking the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, Dena'ina/Tanaina and Yup'ik/Yupiaq people of Bristol Bay. We recognize the thousands of years of stewardship and acknowledge the people of the region as they continue to be the caretakers of the land.

We would like to thank all the key informants who took time to provide qualitative in-depth interviews that provided valuable information on their culture.

We would also like to thank BBNC's Land Department and Shareholder Development Department for their work on the development of the surveys, conducting the qualitative in-depth interviews, and assistance reviewing and editing this report.

Without each and every one of you, we would not have been able to complete this work to help guide the development of our program

– Quyanaa – Chin'an – Quyana –

Bristol Bay Native Corporation Education Foundation

MISSION

To provide support for and encourage shareholders to pursue educational opportunities and to promote and preserve cultural heritage.

CORE PURPOSE

Connecting to our past and investing in our future.

VISION

Cikiqucaaraq (sharing culture, experiences, food, knowledge, subsistence, philanthropy, caring)

CORE VALUES REFLECTED IN EACH LANGUAGE OF OUR PEOPLE

Liicugtua /Elicugtua/ Duhdeldih Yineszen
(I want to learn)

Quyurrluteng ("coming together," family, supportive, giving, taking care of each other, community)

Yaghelich' (the "right way")

Piniq' ("strength," no matter the obstacle, resilient, supportive community, empowering our people)

CORE PARTNER – Bristol Bay Native Corporation

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1	Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	26
FINDINGS	2	Dena’ina	26
INTRODUCTION	4	Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes.....	26
HISTORY OF THE BBNCEF CULTURAL PROGRAM	5	Yup’ik.....	27
BRISTOL BAY CULTURES	6	Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes.....	27
Alutiiq/Sugpiaq	9	HISTORICAL SITES	28
Dena’ina	9	Alutiiq	29
Yup’ik/Yupiaq.....	9	Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	29
METHODS	11	Dena’ina	30
LANGUAGE	14	Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes.....	30
Alutiiq	17	Yup’ik.....	30
Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	18	Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes.....	31
Dena’ina	18	TRADITIONAL SONG & DANCE	32
Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes.....	18	Alutiiq	33
Yup’ik.....	19	Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	33
Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes.....	19	Dena’ina	33
SUBSISTENCE	20	Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes.....	33
Alutiiq	22	Yup’ik.....	34
Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	22	Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes.....	34
Dena’ina	22	ARTS & CRAFTS	35
Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes.....	22	Alutiiq	36
Yup’ik.....	23	Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	36
Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes.....	23	Dena’ina	36
AUDIO, VIDEO, AND PHOTOS	26	Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes.....	37
Alutiiq	26	Yup’ik.....	37
		Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes.....	38
		TRADITIONAL MEDICINES	39

Alutiiq.....	40
Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes.....	40
Dena'ina	40
Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes.....	40
Yup'ik.....	41
Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes.....	41
DISCUSSION.....	42
WRAP-UP QUESTIONS AND QUOTES	43
In what ways is your community, tribe, or schools working to maintain their local culture and traditions?.....	43
What is the greatest need when it comes to maintaining and preserving our cultural heritage?	46
What activities are not offered in your community that you would like to see offered?	49
What areas of our cultural heritage do you view as most endangered?.....	52
MISSION	56

Figures

- FIGURE 1.** Bristol Bay Native Corporation boundary and communities..... 6
- FIGURE 2.** Three cultures represented in Bristol Bay. Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska (Krauss et al. 2011)..... 7
- FIGURE 3.** Alaska Native Language Groups... 8
- FIGURE 4.** Two aspects of culture - surface culture and deep culture (Model Developed by Lower Kuskokwim School District). 12
- FIGURE 5.** Tribal Interviews. Of the 32 communities in Bristol Bay, 87% of the tribes consented and were interviewed with 13% either declining interviews or were unable to be reached..... 13
- FIGURE 6.** Percent of Community Population and Interviews by Cultural Group 13
- FIGURE 7.** Cultural word cloud based on Wrap-Up Quotes. 55

Tables

- TABLE 1.** ANLPAC Report on how to identify and access language endangerment. 15
- TABLE 2.** Describes the health of language based on when languages are spoken. 16
- TABLE 3.** Estimated speakers & vitality of language by cultural group. 17



Executive Summary

In January 2015, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation Education Foundation (Education Foundation) Board of Directors approved the design of a Cultural Heritage and Native Place Names grant program. These programs were created to engage Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) shareholders and descendants in a wide range of educational activities to help promote, preserve, and celebrate our Alaska Native heritage and way of life.

The purpose of this document is to guide the Education Foundation's investment over the next 10-20 years and identify clear areas where focused leadership would be welcome and needed. This is particularly important for the Education Foundation as its history is rooted in its role as a scholarship provider, and has only recently started working on aspects of cultural heritage.

In February 2020, the Education Foundation Board of Directors requested that staff conduct a needs assessment to guide the development of a 10-year strategic plan for the Cultural Heritage portfolio. The needs assessment, also called Cultural Wellness Check, included key informant interviews of key Bristol Bay cultural leaders that focused on language, traditional arts and crafts, subsistence activities, local knowledge, traditional medicine, and historical and archaeological items.

Between September-December 2020, the Education Foundation conducted 56 key informant interviews on cultural heritage in Bristol Bay. Of the 32 villages in the region, 87% of the Tribes participated. In addition, we interviewed individuals who are involved in cultural work throughout Alaska and the Pacific Northwest.

See findings on page 2.

Findings

Language is at a critical state.

The survey showed that throughout all three cultural groups, regardless of where people lived, our shareholders were concerned about the loss of their language and the lack of opportunities to learn it. Language loss was identified by the Tribes and cultural workers as their primary concern.

Historic documentary media (audio, video, etc) exists.

Tribes reported that they have access to critical media, but often lack adequate funding and resources to care-take and digitize these resources.

Historic sites of cultural significance are important.

Nearly all key informants said that documenting and preserving cultural sites and artifacts is important for varying reasons. This is largely something that has not been accomplished throughout our communities, due to lack of funding or lack of staff with the necessary experience.

Traditional song and dance is dormant.

The majority of people agreed that this is an important aspect of culture; however, the majority of communities throughout the region do not have active dance groups.

Arts & Crafts is well practiced.

Nearly all key informants knew of individuals who practiced arts and crafts, but many agreed there are concerns about the loss of knowledge in this area.

Traditional medicines.

Throughout all three cultural groups there was agreement that most people rely on our Western medicine, pharmacies, and doctors, and traditional medicines. We also found that there are few opportunities for people to learn about traditional medicines, their identifications, and their uses.

Subsistence practices are rich.

Across all three cultural groups, subsistence was one of the strongest areas of culture. There were concerns about knowledge being lost on rarely harvested species and those that are not harvested anymore but overall, it is a very active area within our cultures and communities.

Through this project, we recognize that much of the loss is related to the steady influence of Western culture, cultural genocide, and colonization on our region. The appendix includes a wide variety of thoughts on how to recover and move forward in celebrating our rich cultural heritage and creating a positive environment for our families to live and thrive.

“Across the board, we have a lot of strengths and people who are working diligently. However, the limiting factors appears to be two-fold: human capacity and funding.”

"We are rich with culture and language we just need to keep it preserved. I think because since we had to go to online teaching and we are becoming technology oriented we can preserve what I mentioned. Nowadays we are seeing a resurgence of programs. Like UAA, they have Alaska Native studies. They are requiring if you have a degree you have to take a language class and includes indigenous classes. I think there is more interest; even though I am right here in urban I still see interest."

"Language is an important key to how we view the world, because it was how we understood the world around us and how we survived the land. How we harvested animals and plants is in our language. Language is an important key to our survival on our traditional lands."

"Language is most endangered. I think they that there are only 33 fluent Alutiiq speakers left in the Kodiak region. I don't know if that includes Cordova and Alaska Peninsula. It's just a handful of people who can speak fluently. I think when you think in a different language, then you can know that culture better –when you lose the language, you lose the fundamental building blocks of that culture. There are all kinds of things inside it."

INTRODUCTION

The richness of the cultural heritage of Bristol Bay cannot be overstated. For generations, our ancestors lived on this land, connected by families and a deep knowledge of its lands, waters, plants and animals.

This connection is described by the Alutiiq people as “Unguwacirpet – a subsistence lifestyle respectfully sustained by the natural world “our way of being alive.”¹ These intergenerational connections led to an array of cultural practices including art and adornment, dance, language, medicine, spiritual and those of daily living.

While we are resilient, for more than 150 years, Bristol Bay’s Alaska Native groups, the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, Dena’ina, and Yup’ik have born a series of trauma related to colonization, including forced assimilation practices, outbreaks of illnesses, transition to a cash-based economy and steady outmigration. This has resulted in intergenerational trauma, as well as language and cultural loss. This loss and trauma have long been recognized by our people.

During the Bristol Bay Native Corporation Education Foundation’s (Education Foundation) Board of Directors retreat in February 2020, the board asked Education Foundation staff to conduct a gap analysis to determine what types of cultural activities are available and what types are needed to help promote and preserve Bristol Bay’s cultural heritage. The board will use this document as part of its strategic planning.

To develop an understanding of our communities’ and shareholders’ perspectives on cultural preservation and priorities, we conducted key informant interviews of tribal and community leaders.

The following is a summary of the survey results and the cultural priorities participants identified.



¹ Kodiak Island Borough School District. (n.d.). *Nuna - Earth; Land*. Alutiiq Education. <http://alutiiqeducation.org/html/home/earth.php>.

HISTORY OF THE BBNCEF CULTURAL PROGRAM

In January 2015, the Education Foundation's Board of Directors approved the design of a Cultural Heritage and Native Place Names grant program. This program was created to engage Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) shareholders and descendants in a wide range of educational activities to help promote, preserve, and celebrate our Alaska Native heritage and way of life.

The Cultural Heritage grant program is intended to support efforts that foster the study and preservation of our culture; work to preserve our languages and customs; teach BBNC shareholders and descendants about the history of the Native people of Bristol Bay and their traditions, and; celebrate and support the rich cultural heritage of Bristol Bay. The Native Place Names grant program is intended to support efforts to identify, preserve, and publicize the historical Native place names of the Bristol Bay region. These grants provide up to \$5,000 in funding per organization per year. The majority of the grant funds have been used to support culture camps by tribes in rural communities or cultural activities in classes through local schools (Figure 1). These activities typically take place over a short period and are most often taught in English.



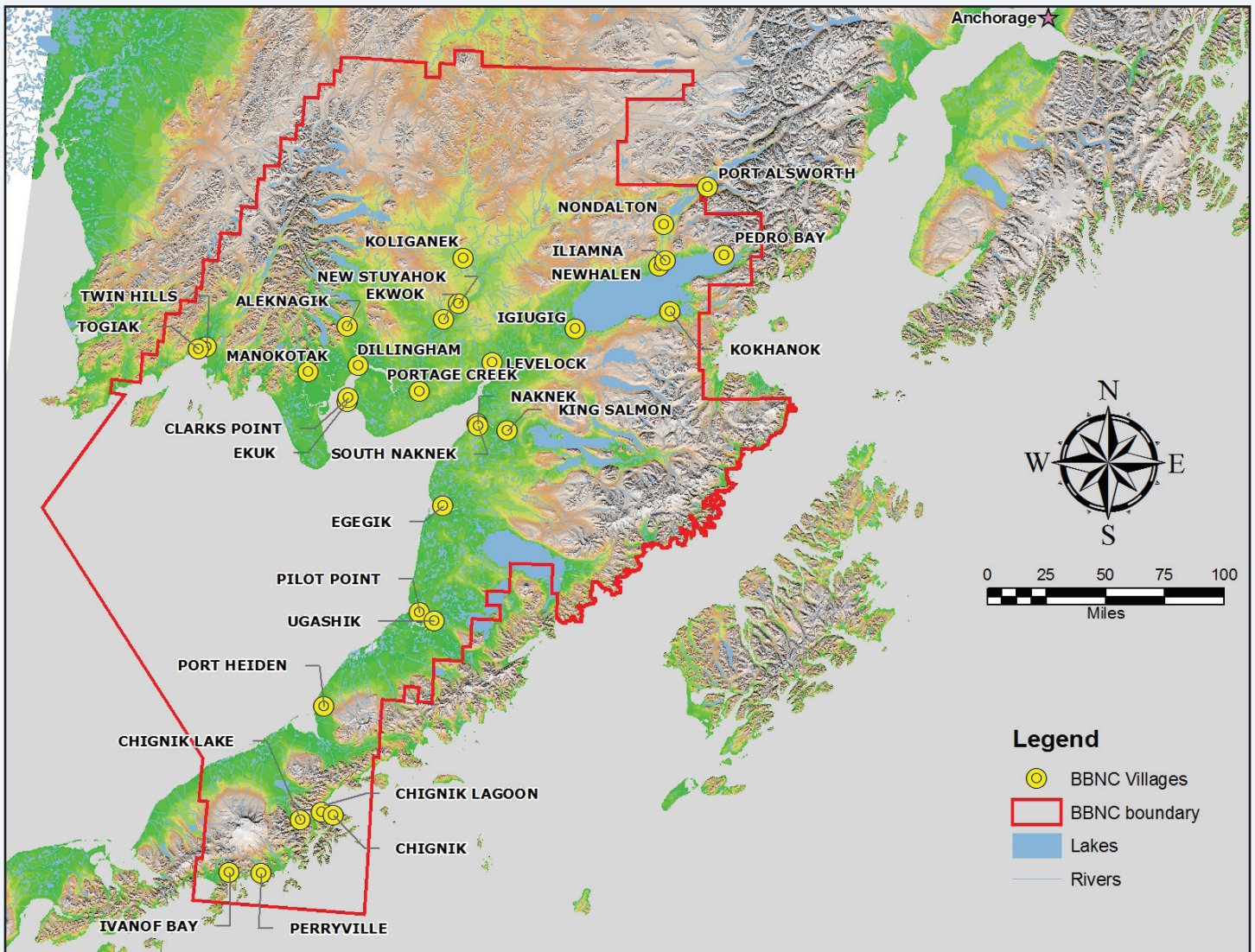


Figure 1. Bristol Bay Native Corporation boundary and communities.

BRISTOL BAY CULTURES

Located in Southwest Alaska, the Bristol Bay region encompasses more than 27.5 million acres and 12 million acres of marine water (Figure 1). There are 32 communities with a population of roughly 7,500, of which 3,918 are shareholders. Of the remaining shareholders that live in Alaska, 3,288 live in the Anchorage area; 353 live on the Kenai Peninsula; 121 live in Fairbanks, and; 534 live in other communities. There are 1,574 shareholders spread throughout the lower 48 and Hawaii and across all regions: West Coast (902); Rocky Mountain (130); Midwest (243); Gulf Coast (131), and; East Coast (168).

Bristol Bay is home to three indigenous groups, the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, Dena'ina, and Yup'ik. For thousands of years these three groups thrived living a nomadic subsistence lifestyle. However, over the last century Bristol Bay's Alaska Native population saw a considerable decline due to a culmination of events. In the early 1900s, Bristol Bay had an influx of canneries that brought cannery workers from Asia and commercial fisherman from Europe. Traders, trappers, and miners from all over settled in our rural communities. Many of these men married into Alaska Native families. At the same time, missionaries from Catholic, Moravian, and Russian Orthodox churches along with federal and state officials were "civilizing

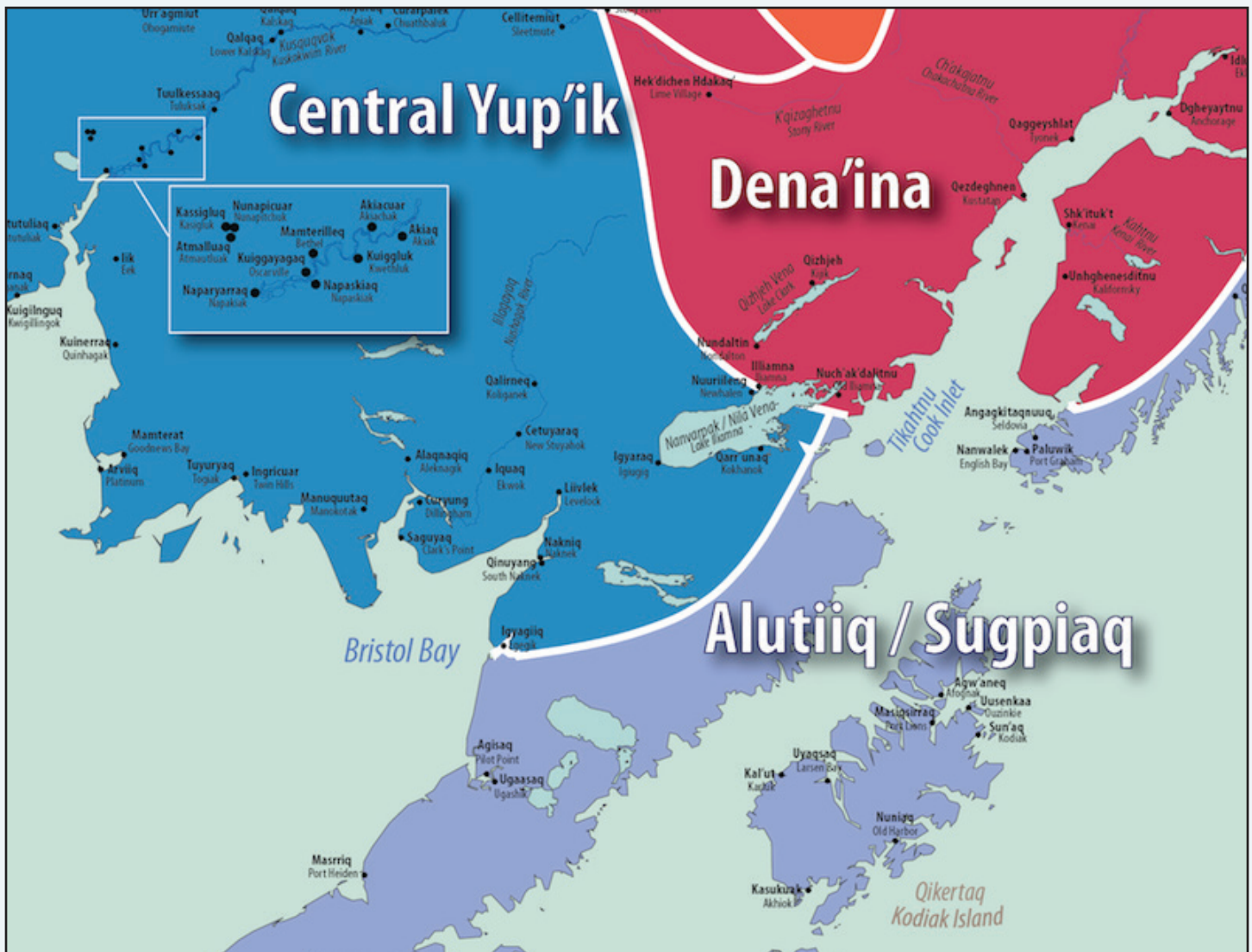


Figure 2. Three cultures represented in Bristol Bay. Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska (Krauss et al. 2011).

or assimilating” the local native populations through cultural genocide. Native children were taken from parents and forced into schools where they were beaten and shamed if they spoke their language. Families were forced into settlements that later became permanent communities, which stopped their nomadic subsistence lifestyle. Adults and children, were not allowed to speak their native language or participate spiritual practices. During this same time period, the 1918 Spanish flu decimated the local native population. Communities also saw other diseases that had wiped out communities.

We are all born into, but not with, the culture of our people. This is learned from our parents,

extended family, community, and the history around us, including the art and artifacts of past generations. As the past is incorporated into the present and future, we know that some aspects of our customs and culture will change. As the world around us changes, so do we; but change does not have to dictate loss. We continue to learn from our family and community, but we can also incorporate new and different approaches that will help us and our children maintain our language, know our heritage, and live our culture.

ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE GROUPS

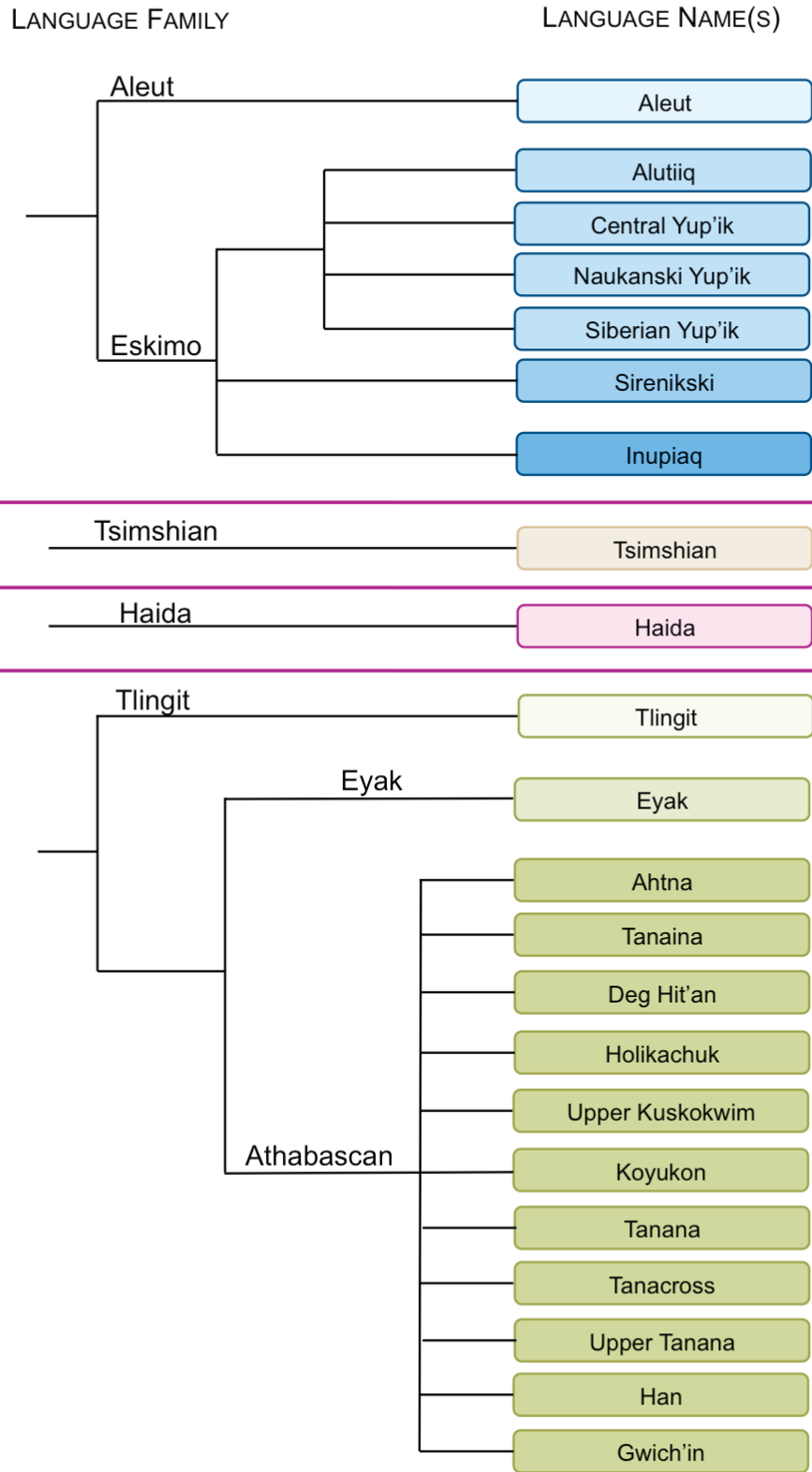


Figure 3. Alaska Native Language Groups.

Alutiiq/Sugpiaq

The Alutiiq/Sugpiaq language has two recognized dialects, Koniag and Chugach. The Koniag dialect is spoken from the Alaska Peninsula to Kodiak, whereas the Chugach dialect is spoken from the Kenai Peninsula to Prince William Sound. Our Alutiiq communities are located on the Alaska Peninsula from Egegik, down to Perryville, and up to Lake Iliamna. Today's diet includes many western foods, but many continue to subsist on traditional foods such as berries, greens, coastal foods, tidal foods, octopus, fish, and sea mammals. In addition to many subsistence foods being used as a food source, they also provide the materials needed for clothing, arts, and crafts, and were historically used to build boats and provide oil for their lamps. Alutiiq people were well-known for their skill in water and made two types of craft: the small, decked canoe known as the qayaq or bidarka, and the large, open boat called the angyat or baidar. Although our Alutiiq people no longer use qayaqs, they still have a strong connection to the waters through commercial fishing and subsistence. Although many of our Alutiiq people have left their traditional communities (all populations are less than 105), their location and connection to their culture, the land, and waters are still important.

Yup'ik/Yupiaq

The Central Alaskan Yup'ik language has the largest number of speakers and covers the largest geographical area within Alaska. There are four recognized Yup'ik dialects in Bristol Bay Region: Bristol Bay dialect, Egegik dialect, Lake Iliamna dialect, and Nushagak River dialect (Jacobson and Jacobson 1995). The majority of our Bristol Bay communities and shareholder base are Yup'ik. They have settled in communities that stretch along the coast from the Alaska Peninsula inland to the Iliamna Lake area toward Togiak. Just like their ancestors, they are hunters and fishers who live on caribou, moose, and other mammals, while also having a diet rich in marine and freshwater species such as seals, walrus, salmon, and salt and freshwater fish. Salmon make up the majority of their diet, and summers are focused on the subsistence harvest of this vital species. Salmon are also an important part of our rural coastal economies, as many have harvested salmon since the early 1900s. Their culture is rich with language, dancing, subsistence, and arts and crafts. Many communities are working to regain their cultural traditions and language that was taken from them this past century.

Dena'ina

Dena'ina is part of the Athabascan language family and has four recognized dialects, with the Inland/Iliamna dialect from the area surrounding Iliamna Lake and Lake Clark. The Dena'ina have inhabited this area for thousands of years and continue to live there today. Just as their ancestors did, they harvest subsistence foods such as moose, caribou, salmon, bear, beaver, porcupine, freshwater fish, and waterfowl. The Dena'ina lived with the land, water and all the offerings, creating a system that revolve around respect. For hundreds of years, they traveled the trails connecting them to main waterways for trading such as the Kuskokwim, Nushagak, Mulchatna, and Southcentral Alaska. Today the Dena'ina don't rely on the trails like they used to, but they still practice the values like respect and revere these ancestral sites. To support the youth, every year they hold the Quk'Taz'un, ('The Sun is Rising') Outdoor Leadership Camp, on their ancestral lands of Kijik. Although this camp revolves around the Dena'ina culture, it is open to all cultures in the Bristol Bay Region and adjustments are made to honor this. They work closely with Lake Clark National Park Service (LACL) to identify, document, and interpret Dena'ina traditional knowledge and related resources thereby making sure what is documented is represented through the voice of the people and is true to the meaning.



Survey

The survey focused on language, traditional arts and crafts, subsistence activities, local knowledge, traditional medicine, and historical and archaeological items that promote, preserve, and celebrate our Alaska Native cultural heritage and way of life.

METHODS

The Education Foundation conducted a needs assessment which we have called a “Cultural Wellness Check,” to understand what services, programs, and supports are needed to preserve the cultural heritage of Bristol Bay. To accomplish this we conducted qualitative in-depth interviews of key informants that were identified as being involved in teaching culture and language throughout Bristol Bay, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest. These areas were selected due to the majority of our shareholders living in these areas and most activities related to our region occur here. We assume in areas where there are less concentrations of shareholders and descendants there are likely less opportunities to lead, practice and learn our cultures. We also looked at what type of cultural activities are available to BBNC shareholders and descendants to participate and learn about their cultural heritage and language. The Cultural Wellness Check is not a scientifically sound study but rather a snapshot in time.

The survey focused on language, traditional arts and crafts, subsistence activities, local knowledge, traditional medicine, and historical and archaeological items that promote, preserve, and celebrate our Alaska Native cultural heritage and way of life. We asked a series of questions within each of these categories for consistency across interviews but allowed the key informants to provide as much or as little information as they wanted. At the end of each section we also asked if they wanted to provide any information that was not covered in our questions. At the end of each survey asked four open-ended questions regarding culture; direct quotes from responses are included in the Appendix. The interviews were conducted telephonically and were done in more of a friendly conversational tone to encourage openness and have more of a dialogue.

Throughout the qualitative in-depth interviews, key informants would often refer to areas of

surface culture as active in communities and culture; including areas of deep culture as at risk of being lost. The iceberg analogy is universally used to describe indigenous cultures. The Lower Kuskokwim School District adapted this model to their Yup'ik Culture and shows two aspects of culture – surface culture and deep culture (Figure 4). Surface culture — the what — includes things that are usually tangible and accessible to the sense and observable. This may include specific foods, holidays, arts, or folklore (stories). Deep culture may include traditional ecological knowledge, beliefs, ethics, family ties, and values of a specific group. Deep culture — the why — refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions. It is the deep culture that is embedded in our indigenous languages is often not incorporated, as these activities are often taught in English, thus losing vital information and context.

Education Foundation staff first reached out to Bristol Bay tribes through an e-mail that explained the board of directors' request and described the Cultural Wellness Check. Following initial contact, BBNC and Education Foundation staff followed up with a telephone call to request an interview. Interviews were largely conducted telephonically and over video conference during the fall and winter of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the tribes, we interviewed individuals involved in cultural preservation or teaching throughout Bristol Bay and the Pacific Northwest. These key informants were identified based on our experience as grant-makers, as well as a snowball technique of one key informant identifying another key informant that we should speak with to get additional information. In total, we conducted a total of 56 interviews with 12 interviews from (Alutiiq), 10 interviews (Dena'ina), and 34 interviews (Yup'ik). In order to preserve the privacy of the information shared, we have aggregated the data in this report.

Following the survey, Education Foundation staff



Figure 3. Two aspects of culture - surface culture and deep culture (Model Developed by Lower Kuskokwim School District).

organized interview responses by cultural group, noting the community and location of each interview. Responses were analyzed by cultural group, community, in-region and out-of-region, in-state and out-of-state. Education Foundation and BBNC staff worked closely together to prepare this report. A final draft was then sent to all tribes and individuals who participated in the interviews, with an invitation to make any necessary changes or modifications to their information.

BBNCEF recognizes that the Bristol Bay region shares strong cultural ties, values, and history. There are also a variety of languages, customs, traditions, religions, and environments across the region. We recognize that people experience and identify culture in different ways. This report is an overview of the information we gathered from individuals and does not necessarily reflect how each shareholder views their culture and opportunities to learn and practice it.

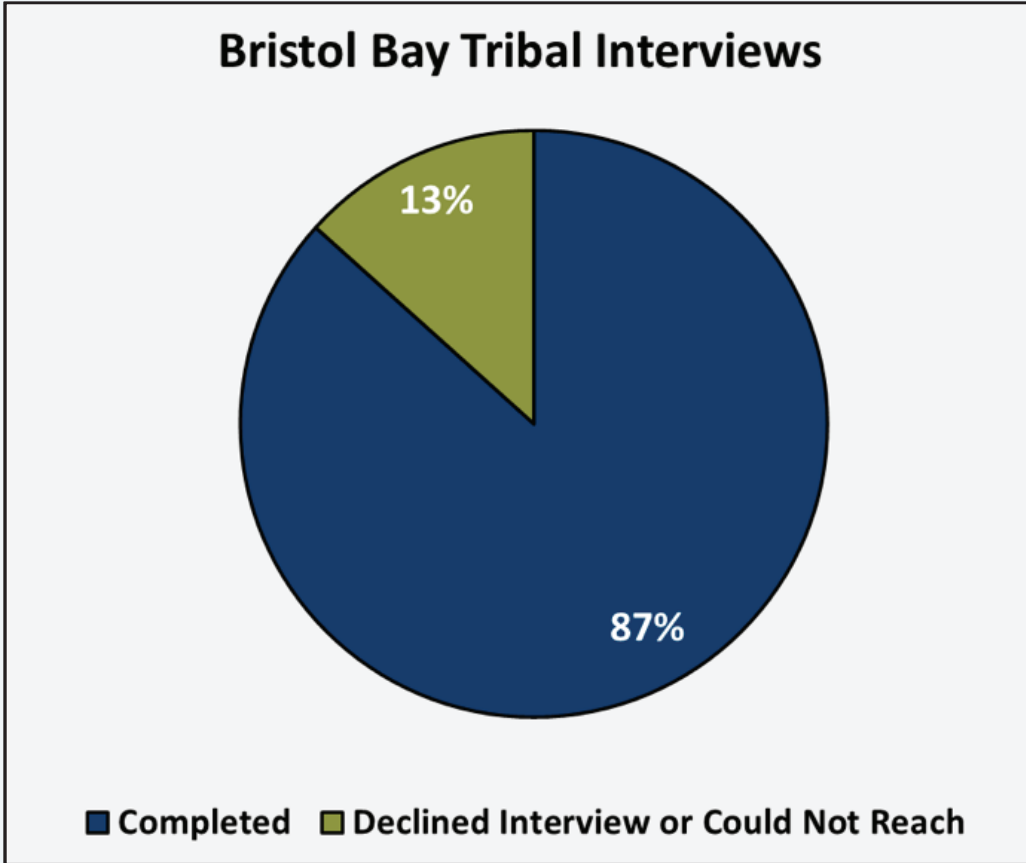


Figure 4.

Tribal Interviews. Of the 32 communities in Bristol Bay, 87% of the tribes consented and were interviewed with 13% either declining interviews or were unable to be reached.

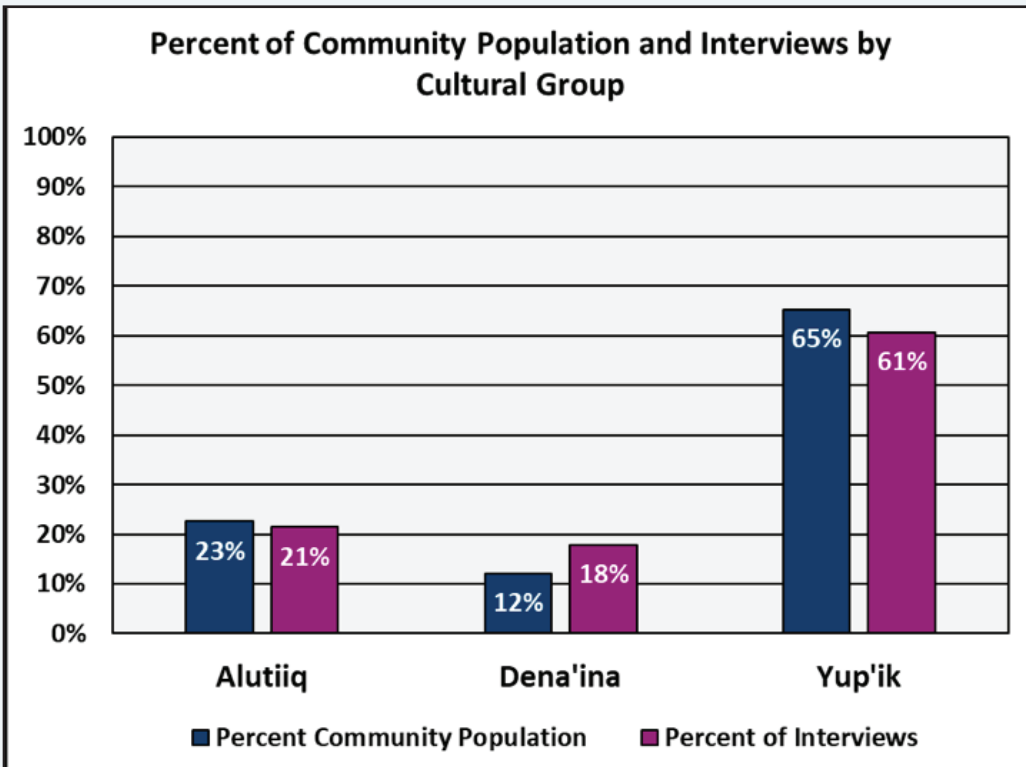


Figure 5.

Percent of Community Population and Interviews by Cultural Group



Language

The purpose of this section is to identify language speakers and opportunities to learn the language. We also wanted to document if any technology was used to help provide language lessons or information. Identifying language speakers and levels of fluency is very intricate and requires strict parameters and definitions. Because of this, we decided to focus broadly on two distinct groups: first-language speakers and second-language speakers. First-language speakers were identified as those who were highly proficient, typically learned the language as a child, and still speak it regularly and fluently. Second-language speakers were classified as those who learned the local indigenous language as a secondary language. These individuals may still speak it regularly, but do not typically have the same level of proficiency in speaking and understanding as first-language speakers.

UNESCO Scale of Language Endangerment	
Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
Safe	Language is spoken by all generations. Intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted.
Vulnerable	Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home).
Definitely Endangered	Children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home.
Severely Endangered	Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves.
Critically Endangered	The youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently.
Extinct	There are no speakers left.

Table 1. ANLPAC Report on how to identify and access language endangerment.

Throughout each cultural group and in all locations, key respondents predominantly said language loss and barriers to language learning opportunities were their primary concerns. A more accurate estimate of language speakers can be found in the 2020 Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council’s Report to the Governor (ANLPAC Report). That report found that Alutiiq/Sugpiaq had 80 highly proficient speakers (likely many from Koniag area), Dena’ina had 5 highly proficient speakers, and Yup’ik/Yupiaq had <10,000 (with the vast majority coming from the Yukon-Kuskokwim area). The ANLPAC did note that their report was not an accurate picture of known speakers.

Embedded within each of our languages is what we term deep culture – our traditional knowledge, our way of viewing our world, and our way of living. English is inadequate and is not directly transferable to each of our languages. When our traditional languages are replaced with English, a considerable amount of meaning is lost in translation. Many studies correlate language loss with loss of cultural identity, a decline in social and familial structure, loss of traditional knowledge, increase in suicide rates, and increase in social disruption.

Most key informants appreciated that information is becoming available online and that classes are being offered via Zoom.

This has opened up a few limited language learning opportunities, but overall, there is a clear lack of opportunities to learn and master our traditional languages for all age groups. In most rural communities, lack of access to internet service makes distance delivery to individual homes an unrealistic option. Other identified barriers included no classes, cost of classes, no local teachers, no teachers who are fluent speakers for K-12 school immersion programs, and no opportunity for master apprenticeship classes.

<p>From ANLPAC's Report to the Governor and Legislature —"In order to have a more valuable, more detailed understanding of what successes are happening with Alaska Native languages, it is important to learn the health of each language, considering how and when the languages are spoken in the house and community as well as the overall numbers of speakers by language in four categories. These categories are based upon the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines with ANLPAC's <i>'highly proficient'</i> corresponding to ACTFL's <i>'superior'</i> and ANLPAC's <i>'conversational'</i> speakers corresponding with ACTFL's <i>'intermediate'</i> speaker."</p>	
1	Those who learned the language as children and speak the language well: highly proficient speakers.
2	Those who learned their language as children but, due to childhood trauma associated with physical and psychological punishments for speaking their language, became "dormant speakers" who understand but now cannot converse.
3	Second-language learners who speak the language well: highly proficient speakers.
4	Second-language learners who can carry on short conversations (five or ten minutes)—more than simply using memorized dialog: intermediate speakers.

Table 2. Describes the health of language based on when languages are spoken.

		Alutiiq	Dena'ina	Central Alaskan Yupik (Nunivak Island)
Unesco - 2000	Estimated Number of Speakers	200	50	10,400*
	Vitality	Severely Endangered	Severely Endangered	Vulnerable
The Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council Report - 2020	Estimated Number of Speakers	80	5	<10,000**
	Vitality	Critically	Critically Endangered	Vulnerable

*Central Alaskan Yupik (Nunivak Island) estimate includes all speakers for all Yup'ik populations from the Yukon area, the Kuskokwim, and Bristol Bay. It does not separate dialects.

** Combined Yugtun/Cugtun (Central Alaskan Yup'ik / Cup'ik) from all locations and dialects.

Table 3. Estimated speakers & vitality of language by cultural group.

Alutiiq

Of all three cultural groups, Alutiiq had the least number of speakers and the least number of opportunities to learn their language. Many communities did not have first language speakers present and most individuals were unsure if there was anybody alive who still spoke their dialect. Most classes being offered were from the Kodiak area and consisted of the Kodiak Alutiiq dialect. Based on interviews there are very few (less than 10) first-language speakers of Alutiiq. Of the key respondents, six had first-hand knowledge of first-language speakers, two were unsure if they knew any, and two did not know of any.

Key informants stated that there were a few second-language learners (less than 10). One key informant knew of five people who

wanted to learn the language but lacked the necessary resources. Six people said there were opportunities to learn the language in schools, with one person adding there was an opportunity to learn online or through their tribe. Most free language-learning opportunities are available through primary and secondary schools for youth. Four people said the Alutiiq Language App is being used to teach and learn their language, another person sent resources digitally to language learners, and another person said classes were offered via Zoom for language learners. Most individuals that spoke about language learning time at school said it consisted of: 1) a few times a month; 2) during cultural activities; 3) less than an hour a day for preschool, and; 4) unknown how it is done at school.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

“We bring in speakers to teach Alutiiq but our dialect is lost.”

“We really would love to have additional resources. We are really small. I am the only one there is, so I cannot put together curriculum. The best way is to be immersed but that is not an option. We are interested but don’t know what to do. We have a very scattered population - Atlanta, Seattle, Arizona. The best way would be an online option.”

“There are people who are trying to learn, on their own, but pretty unsuccessfully. A big part of that lack of success, when you’re in Seattle, is that you can’t put yourself around anyone who speaks it. A lot of the goals of, ‘Where’s my keys?’ method, it doesn’t work as well, because there aren’t speakers available. I have to learn to pronounce from reading it because there’s no one for me to hear. Dedicated classes could be helpful.”

“As part of a PNW Camp, in our feedback in our survey, it was the most valued part of camp and the most requested part of it. Integrating language throughout camp was the most impactful and important thing for people. Being able to introduce themselves in Alutiiq – there was a recipient who works for Seattle Indian Health Board – and she said she always felt so inadequate because she couldn’t introduce herself in her language and this was her first time to be able to do that. That definitely came back in the survey as the most important aspect.”

“It is our responsibility for our language to go on. We have to do the work.”

“Adults have to learn on their own, if they have the Alutiiq App, they can use it.”

“The younger kids learn faster.”

“Grandmother spoke, Alutiiq, Aleut, Russian, and Yup’ik. I think language is being lost

because people aren’t visiting like they used to and aren’t sharing it.”

“There are no specific opportunities in the Seattle area. It would be nice if there were some straightforward ways to learn language online, through existing channels like UAA. It would great if there was a separate scholarship for that where it was really streamlined. Shareholders could say, ‘I’d like to take this course.’ Maybe where Education Foundation works with the school itself.”

Dena’ina

Most Key informants said they knew of 10 or fewer fluent first-language speakers, with one key respondent saying they knew 15 or fewer, and another stating they knew of five or fewer speakers. The 2020 ANLPAC Report stated that there were five highly proficient Dena’ina Qenaga (Dena’ina language) speakers, which is likely closer to the actual number of first-language speakers. Three people said they knew of second-language learners, but were unsure of how many. Opportunities to learn the language depend on community and individual access.

We would like to note that the indigenous language of Kenaitze Indian Tribe, which is located in Kenai, is another dialect of Dena’ina. They have been working with Bristol Bay Dena’ina and the University of Alaska Fairbanks to document the language and increase the number of speakers.

Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes

“They need a central place to teach language. They need to be able to hire and teach the younger people. I also think the schools need to teach the language. We as Native people just sit back passively and let our language die. We need to speak up about what is important to us.”

The Elders and older adults were taught not to use their language that's why we don't have any speakers. The Elders had asked to come in and talk to the kids but they refused to come into the school because they had bad memories of school where they were punished for speaking."

"Language is an important key to how we view the world, because it was how we understood the world around us and how we survived the land. How we harvested animals and plants is in our language. Language is an important key to our survival on our traditional lands."

Yup'ik

When compared to the Alutiiq and Dena'ina populations of Bristol Bay, the Yup'ik population is considerably higher and includes more communities. Throughout the region, most Yup'ik speakers are Elders over the age of 60, and the percentage of fluent first-language speakers gets considerably smaller the younger the age group.

Based on interviews, Lake communities (Igiugig, Newhalen, Kokhanok) have an estimated 8 to 25 first-language speakers, with some communities having a handful of individuals who can understand the language. Nushagak and western Bristol Bay communities have higher concentrations of Yup'ik speakers, with some communities having an estimated 40% to 50% of the population able to speak Yup'ik at varying levels. We do want to recognize that there are some Yup'ik communities whose speakers are all Elders and there are little to no younger generations who can speak the language.

Most key respondents estimated the total speakers in a community by percentage, rather than providing estimates of the number of speakers by age. Throughout the region, most Yup'ik first-language speakers were Elders over age 60. In Yup'ik speaking communities where 30% or less of the people speaks their

Native language, the number of speakers gets considerably smaller as the population gets younger, with little or no youth speaking the language. In communities that had no Yup'ik language classes as part of the formal primary and secondary education curriculum, first-language speakers were typically over age 60. Nineteen communities in the region offered Yup'ik language instruction time with a Yup'ik speaker in the formal primary and secondary education (K-12). Still, Yup'ik instruction time is limited to around 30-45 minutes a day, a few times a week, or weekly depending on the school.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

"Changes in writing system make it hard for those who know the older way of writing. I think our language is really important. There are Yup'ik words that you can't translate into English."

"I think the real hardship we have is trying to get the kids interested in speaking Yugtun because their parents don't speak Yugtun."

"It's only taught in the schools. Not sure who else teaches it."

"Nothing after school. There is a lack of opportunity. The language died many generations ago. My mother was never taught it. I don't see how it is going to revive itself. Just the Elders know and understand it. It has to be handed down generation to generation. We need access for adults to learn."

"Some of us are fluent but we speak English to kids and our grandbabies. The language loss started off with group that was punished for speaking. They could only speak English at school. Those people who were punished were our Elders, they are carrying that pain. The memories of the beating they used to get. Paul Johns book mentioned back in the day they wouldn't be swayed up north. The more we can preserve it now the better. It is an urgency to teach it and bring it back."



Subsistence

This section covers the subsistence harvest of local resources. We were interested in finding out what subsistence resources people are harvesting and what resources are rarely or not at all being practiced anymore. Across all three cultural groups, subsistence was one of the strongest areas of culture. There were concerns about knowledge being lost on rarely harvested species and those that are not harvested anymore but overall, it is a very active area within our cultures and communities. All three cultural groups said that as our dependence on western tools, foods, and stores increases, our knowledge of our culture's subsistence resources and the landscapes that support them is declining.

Throughout the region, subsistence knowledge is commonly handed down in families. All generations are typically involved in the harvesting, processing, preserving, and cooking of subsistence resources at varying levels. Involvement in each area is typically done by age and skill level; as individuals master a task, they move on to more difficult tasks. Each skill level builds on another; because of this, it can be difficult for individuals whose families do not actively practice subsistence to learn it on their own.

In two interviews from two separate cultural groups, the individuals said they were concerned with the loss of traditional ecological knowledge and the spiritual aspect of subsistence. These were not topics covered in the survey, as they are highly complex and require in-depth knowledge from both the interviewers and the key respondents. However, traditional ecological knowledge and the spiritual aspect of subsistence is something that is shared among all three cultural groups as a core value, so we wanted to make sure and acknowledge it.

Prior to colonization, the ability to successfully subsist in our region was tied directly to the survival of individuals, families, and communities. For this reason, there was a deep spiritual connection to the land, water, and animals and the action of subsisting. Traditional beliefs, songs, dances, and celebrations often centered around subsistence, such as praying for successful harvests and hunts, safety, and gratitude for successful harvests.

A story from an Alutiiq key respondent perfectly captures how strong this belief was: "I learned from an older man who made a transformation ivory carving, which is one from a polar bear to a man. It is believed that when the man goes to hunt, he has to be healthy and strong, not just physically but mentally. If he is not and the polar bear's spirit is stronger than his, the polar bear will take over the weaker spirit. So, if you went hunting your spirit and body had to be strong or else you wouldn't make it. It is also a great honor that the polar bear chose him."

Beliefs and stories like this are seen in songs, stories, and dances throughout our cultures.

Another key respondent said: "I am concerned about people not being taught by the Elders that there are certain ways to take care of subsistence, such as spirituality and respecting the animal and land; I feel like that knowledge hasn't been passed on. With a lot of kids going to boarding schools, and we were taught to be ashamed of our values and knowledge, it can be hard to get Elders to share the knowledge. But it is important because you have a sense of respect for the land and what it provides. We are losing our relationship with the land. Take care of the bones and bury them and put them in the water so they can come back. I think it is so important to understanding who we are."

Over a lifetime a person would acquire a considerable amount of knowledge on the ecosystems around them. Often, learning began at a young age and people continued to learn, master, and read the landscape around them, which included water, ice, landmarks, and traditional harvest areas, as they aged. People were also taught how to navigate their surrounding landscape and what to use. Young children would start to learn how to read the weather so they would know whether it was safe to travel or harvest. This knowledge, called Traditional Ecological Knowledge, is equivalent to a lifetime study of the landscape.

Today many people continue to subsist on the same foods as their ancestors. However, due to the churches and governments influence over the last 150 years, many but not all, people don't practice the same spiritual traditions. In addition many people now depend on modern tools such as guns, GPS, snow machines, and boats. Hunting and fishing are done on a State or Federal schedule. Because of this much of our traditional knowledge on the landscape and species has slowly eroded over time. From all interviews, subsistence was considered one of the healthiest and most actively practiced aspects of our culture, but there are key aspects of subsistence at risk of being lost.

Alutiiq

Subsistence is widely practiced today in all of our Alutiiq communities. Traditionally harvested subsistence resources that are not practiced anymore or rarely practiced in some of the communities included smoking fish, pressure cooking, harvesting seal, beluga, ptarmigan, and porcupine, trapping, and processing skins. There was a sense of concern about losing the practice and knowledge of those species that are not harvested or rarely harvested anymore. One community said their subsistence resources are not present anymore, so they have to travel farther out to hunt and gather. Many communities were worried about salmon returns; some communities were unable to harvest any fish for subsistence in recent years and their main income, commercial fishing, has been closed. This year some of the communities had to have salmon donated by a processing company.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

"I don't like the word subsistence. It is a western term as long as it is interpreted as a way of life."

"The salmon are not coming back. Half our village are commercial fishermen. With no fish we aren't able to get money or subsistence fish and need more money for store-bought foods."

"We also trade moose, berries, caribou, fish with other people and with other communities. We don't have big lakes so we don't have a lot of white fish."

"The beluga and seal are rarely harvested, seems like most people aren't interested in them."

"Salmon is widely known. Families teach the children how to harvest and process salmon."

Dena'ina

Subsistence is widely practiced in the Dena'ina communities. Throughout each community, there are concerns about a loss of knowledge about species that are rarely or no longer harvested. Both situations can lead to a loss of knowledge on how to harvest, process, and keep some subsistence species. Key respondents also noted that we are losing knowledge about how to use and practice some of our subsistence resources, such as how to process and tan moose and caribou hide, processing and using sinew for sewing, harvesting squirrels for parkas, how to make hard soles for mukluks, how to make and use bolas for bird harvest, and how to navigate our areas without modern tools. Even though we are very active in subsistence, there is a considerable amount of traditional knowledge that is being lost.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

"With a lot of kids going to boarding schools and taught to be ashamed of our values and knowledge, sometimes it can be hard to get Elders to share the knowledge because of what happened to them growing up. "

"One concern is that kids are relying on phone and GPS to travel. They aren't learning how to navigate and find their way. Technology is not always a good thing."

"I am concerned that we are losing important lessons from Elders related to subsistence, such as certain ways to take care of our harvests, spirituality in relation to subsistence, and respecting the animal and land. I feel like that knowledge isn't being passed on. It is important to learn because it will teach you to have a sense of respect for the land and what it provides. We are losing our relationship with the land, an example is to take care of the bones and bury them if they were from land or if they are from the water, returning put them

in the water so they can keep coming back. I think it is so important to understanding who we are.”

“There is not enough being taught to the young people on how to preserve things.”

Yup'ik

Subsistence is actively practiced on varying levels in all our Yup'ik communities, with most indicating that it is the most actively practiced cultural activity in their community. Many people continue to harvest berries, birds, salmon, non-salmon fish, marine mammals, plants, and land mammals. Most traditional knowledge is passed down within families, which can make it difficult for people who want to learn but their family may not practice.

Even though subsistence is actively practiced in the community there are still concerns. Some individuals from coastal communities have noticed a decrease in the harvest and utilization of marine mammals. Some commented on the loss of knowledge on specific animals, such as squirrel trapping and processing for making parkas. Moose and caribou are actively harvested, but the act of tanning moose and caribou hide or making sinew for traditional clothing or other use is rare.

There were also concerns regarding a loss of the deep knowledge of subsistence, such as the spiritual aspect of subsistence, traditional ways of navigation, and how to treat your animals properly after harvest. Today, most of the subsistence resources are harvested using western tools such as skiffs, four-wheelers, snow machines, guns and ammunition, and GPS. The deeper knowledge of traditional harvest methods is not passed on or used.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

“I am concerned that we aren't being taught by Elders on the certain ways to take care of

subsistence, such as spirituality and respecting the animal and land. I feel like that knowledge hasn't been passed on. With a lot of kids going to boarding schools and being taught to be ashamed of our values and knowledge, it can be hard to get Elders to share the knowledge. But it is important because with that knowledge you have a sense of respect for the land and what it provides. We are losing our relationship with the land. Take care of the bones and bury them and put them in the water so they can come back. I think it is so important to understanding who we are.”

“It's central everyone knows when you're supposed to harvest everything. As a kid the whole town used to go camping up second and third lake before school started.”

“The only barrier is cost. Sometimes getting resources – ammo is expensive, gas, etc.”

“We are losing a lot of traditional practices. Skin sewing - we don't hunt squirrels for the fur or the meat. (My) mom and aunty would trap and hunt and bring home 50 squirrels. This is no longer done for parkas. Maybe one person in Togiak does it. We are going to lose the traditional squirrel parka. They would also dry the meat to eat for a few days.

They would all go up to the lake and camp for a month to get subsistence foods - spawned out salmon, moose. People no longer do that; they go for day trips. (I) remember they would use canvas tents. For bedding they would get tree branches and put blanket over.

In Igushik once in a while someone would get a beluga and everyone would get some but now, they don't get them.

For a while there was a walrus hunting group. One walrus per group. For a while Manokotak was involved but (I don't) think anymore. It takes a willing young man to be involved and lead a crew. Abraham George was doing it for years. Then another young man from Togiak who was married into the village. Guys go for seals for meat and oil.”

"Have kids learn how to set traps. Have someone come in to teach skin and process beaver including the meat and fur."

"Definitely an area of strength. "

"It's being valued by our school's subsistence calendar - taking in to consideration traditional hunting seasons."

"We don't make any more fish traps for black fish, don't make snowshoes anymore."

"I think that is the most alive and intact part of our culture. If we could indigenize it more - by using our indigenous languages when we subsist, we would make it richer."

"I think people are still doing it. Some people don't know how to smoke fish or pressure cook. Not so much plants anymore. I think the big sea mammals - beluga and seals - there are a few people who get them now but not many people."

"It's one of our biggest activities. Our number one thing is subsistence. Throughout the year. Our subsistence is alive and well. It's our survival."

"Subsistence is a really strong area. People in the communities really participate in subsistence activities."





Audio, Video, & Photos

The purpose of this section was to understand which communities have various types of media that have documented aspects of local culture throughout our region. We were also interested in finding out if any of this media has been digitized, if the media is stored in controlled environments, or if there were obstacles to preservation.

Over the past century photographs have been taken that document our people, way of life, and cultures throughout the region. These photographs were captured both for personal and professional collections, including Universities, museums, and federal agencies. There have also been audio and video recordings of Alutiiq, Dena'ina, and Yup'ik Elders describing various aspects of their culture and way of life. In some cases, these recordings may contain clips of dialects that are no longer or rarely spoken, descriptions of stories, and songs and dances that are no longer shared or performed. Photographs may provide visual documentation of locations, families, the construction of traditional houses and transportation, traditional arts, crafts, and regalia, and traditional subsistence practices.

Most individuals were unsure if these items existed beyond families; those who did know of their existence indicated these items were held at the tribe, school, or museums. These items have rarely been digitized, and those few that have been digitized are often held in a western institution such as a federal agency, university, or museum. In cases where this media is not held in a museum or university, storage typically consists of environments that are not humidity or temperature-controlled and have an increased chance of degradation.

Alutiiq

Of the ten people interviewed, six said they knew of historic photos, five knew of historic video collections, and five knew of historic audio collections. Most of these were held at museums or in personal family collections. One person said that a past school teacher had burned video and audio tapes when clearing out the school's storage boxes. There has been little done to consolidate and digitize this media, although one tribe plans to digitize its tribal members' historic photos through a Cultural Heritage Grant.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

"There are a lot of photos. The tribe wants to scan, archive. But they don't have the manpower to do it. They want to hire someone but they need to have funds do it."

"We need professional contracting preserving these recordings and make digital. Some of the videos the Elders talking is hard to hear so we need to contract to make it easier to hear. We need funds to preserve and digitally archive historical videos, photos, and audio recordings. I would love to see more of them available."

Dena'ina

The National Park Service (NPS) has helped to preserve, digitize, and store some of the historic photos and video and audio recordings from the Dena'ina area, as a large portion of National Park Service land falls on Dena'ina lands. The University of Alaska Fairbanks was also identified as having archives containing historical video and audio recordings and photos. Some key respondents said their tribe has a library that contains historic video and audio and photographs. Many tribes and families are limited in their ability to preserve these items due to costs, lack of proper equipment, and unfamiliarity with the preservation process. As a result, the National Park Service has gone into some of the Lake communities and offered their knowledge and services for preserving and creating digital databases.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

"It would be good to hire someone with a scanner that can go house to house; a lot of the Elders are gone who know about the pictures."

"There are lots of photos, videos, and audio recordings and artifacts that are housed at the NPS. The communities wanted the video tapes and audio tapes to be kept at NPS."

Yup'ik

Most key respondents knew of historic video (15), audio (16), and photographic (22) collections, which included personal collections and those held by museums, universities, local schools, and tribes however, most did not know what was included in the collections. Some of the historical documentation was done at the local schools and included biographies of Elders and stories. Much of this data has not been digitized or preserved, except for some digitization done by the University of Alaska Fairbanks. However, the majority of video and audio recordings have not been digitized and transcribed and many photos have not been preserved digitally or documented. We are fortunate that some work was done to document local knowledge, which has helped in the development of school curriculum, and language resources. However, when compared to the amount of work done in the Kuskokwim and Yukon regions, we have much more to do.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

"I wish we had a better history documented. There is no one place or organization doing all this for Togiak."

"I am interested in finding photos but teachers who took photos are no longer around."

"It would be very good to store everything in one place and have access to everything to listen to and learn from."

The key respondent's mom, Evelyn Yanez, Dora Andrew, and Sassa Peterson were involved with the recording of telling stories, measuring, math. They worked with UAF and did a lot of Yup'ik recordings from New Stuyahok, Manokotak, and Togiak. They would do storytelling with the Elders, qaspeq & parka making with Elders, basket weaving. The cross sign or plus sign is used to start the beginning of the basket is always a plus sign. They also completed and published Annie Blue's stories.





Historical Sites

The purpose of this section was to identify known historical sites of cultural significance, concerns regarding sites, and funding status to preserve sites. Historical locations may include burial sites, old villages, fish camps, or subsistence areas. We also sought to identify locations that held artifacts and human remains and determine if these have been recovered or if there have been attempts to recover.

Nearly all key respondent said that documenting and preserving cultural sites and artifacts is important for varying reasons. This is largely something that has not been accomplished throughout our communities, due to lack of funding or lack of staff with the necessary experience. There were a few communities where an outside organization, such as a university or federal agency, has come in and excavated a traditional house or parts of an old community for research. But overall, there are many known cultural sites throughout Bristol Bay, many of which are in jeopardy from erosion. Many people also stressed the need and importance of replacing grave markers, as many have deteriorated and are unrecognizable. Typically, standing historical structures that needed rehabilitation and preservation also included old churches.

Alutiiq

Half of the key respondents knew of culturally significant sites important to the community. The majority of historical sites were traditional communities, graveyards, and traditional subsistence areas. All individuals who were aware of historical sites were concerned about erosion at the site, damage, or lack of documentation. Many key respondents were aware of individuals and families that have found and kept artifacts, with only a few individuals known for finding and selling artifacts. Most artifacts that are found are made of stone, such as arrowheads and oil lamps. Many items that were used by our people daily throughout the region were made of organic materials. These types of materials significantly degrade over time and, in many cases, have completely broken down if they were not buried in permafrost or an anaerobic layer.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

“The graveyard isn’t marked. We are running out of room for burials and need to find a new site.”

“We are concerned that old village sites are eroding.”

“Know where you came from - what grandma used to say. It is important to teach people where they came from.”

“We had some archaeological artifacts that were taken and put in a school museum. The Alutiiq museum came in and taught the kids at school what the artifacts were and their traditional Alutiiq names. The museum also created a digital library of the artifacts and helped to create the (school) museum.”

“This started in the 1970s. More than half of the historic village has already been eroded. Port Heiden is now located more inland. Because of global climate change, with increased storms, waves, increased sea level, we are seeing erosion. The soil consists of pumice so it erodes quickly.”

“Historical items from Bristol Bay are kept in Seattle. There are archival items at the Burke Museum. For example, I visited my great-great uncle’s reindeer collar in the archives that he carved in 1918. There are also family archives that have our great-grandmother’s counting sticks. So, things are around. There’s also the Nordic Museum that has lots of fishing industry archives that intersect with BB.”

“We have gotten funding through National Park Service but we are on federal lands. ”

“You need an archaeological survey to build. They cost a lot of money. Sometimes tribes don’t have the capacity to ask for help to get the money. Most tribes are non-profits. There is a lack of funds.”

“They found arrowheads, seal oil lamps. Not sure if the school has them or if they were sent to the Kodiak Museum.”

“There were people on the hill buried that died of smallpox; the hill is eroding.”

“The bank is eroding where the houses are.”

“People may take some artifacts and not share them.”

“Not sure but they did find an old site in 1980 that had arrowheads and artifacts that aged 3,000 years.”

Dena’ina

Throughout the Dena’ina region, many cultural sites have been identified and documented, in large part due to the United States federal government establishing the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve on Dena’ina lands. Just south of the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve is the Katmai National Park and Preserve and the Alagnak Wild River. The National Park Service has worked alongside and with the local tribes to identify historical sites in this region and, in some cases, doing archaeological work. There are many cultural sites throughout their area and include sacred lands, old village locations, graves and graveyards, sites where tools have been found, and subsistence harvest areas. The Dena’ina have occupied this area for thousands of years, so their knowledge on the area and its historical sites are extensive.

One significant site to the Dena’ina people is Qizhjah Vena, also known as Kijik. Every summer the tribes host Quk’ Taz’un, ‘The Sun Is Rising’ camp, which connects Dena’ina youth to their culture. This site is extensive and has been settled by the Dena’ina people for centuries. Concerns identified by individuals included the continued need to document and protect historical locations, rehabilitation to historical buildings, including churches that are a century old, and replacement of grave markers, as many have deteriorated and are unrecognizable.

Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes

“We need to collaborate and work together and not reinvent the wheel. Just that it is vitally important to hire someone to preserve everything.”

“The tribe works with the Lake Clark National Park on historical sites. They are currently working with the park on the Kijik site marking the graves up there; someone built houses over the gravesites.”

“It’s hard because we are surrounded by National park so the land is very limited. The park is doing a great job of maintaining cultural sites for the community.”

Yup’ik

Every key respondent knew of a historical site that was culturally significant to their community or people. Many of these sites were old traditional village sites, tied to subsistence activities, or burial places. Nineteen key informants were concerned about damage to these sites, which typically included erosion (9), followed by undocumented/unmarked sites (3), looting (2), and water damage (2). Two stated they didn’t have concerns and four were unsure if there were any.

Nearly every key respondent said these sites were very important to their people, but half didn’t have any funds secured (13 had no funds, 2 had funds, and 8 possibly or kind of had funds) to preserve, protect, or excavate these areas. In addition to the preservation of these sites, key respondents were very interested in artifacts and what they could teach us and our youth about our ancestors, how they lived, and how they thrived. Many would like to see artifacts on display in the communities, at schools, tribes, or local museums.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

Not sure but they did find an old site in 1980 that had arrowheads and artifacts that aged 3,000 year

"Places up-river are starting to erode (Togiak)."

"Manokotak is a new village. It came new village around 1940s. Moved from Kulukak -Quluqaq, between Igushik and Manokotak."

"At Igushik there is an old village site. There is a legend, Apanugpak is a warrior. He was a warrior in Bristol Bay. During the early days there was fighting between villages. Near Igushik there is an old historical site at the bluffs. It is old graves or village site. There has been so much erosion, especially near the beach area. Haven't heard if anyone is trying to secure the area."

"Kanakanak (mass graves there) old village sites. 1918 the Tikchik village site - there was an archaeological excavation - documented the distinct cultural divide (defined the salmon culture vs marine mammal culture). Aleknagik there are sites there - the old village site at Silver Salmon Creek- community that no longer exists. All these old village sites are really important - it would be terrible if they were lost."

"We are rewriting archaeology history for Upper Kvichak. We are rewriting archaeology history for the Upper Kvichack. We submitted Old Igiugig to the National Register of Historic Places. Igiugig is a site, there are 21 known sites in the vicinity of Igiugig. The village sites downriver are on corporate land. There are some Native allotments that have old villages. The village sites with two big Qasgiq (men's houses) was on a Native allotment. We need a registered archaeologist. Every year there are sites eroding into the river. We lost three feet from erosion. It is a very layered site. Dishes came out. Brian Craft would like to give the land back to the tribe. Unrealistic liability on easements.

Our former village called Qinuyang or "Old Igiugig", is located on corporate land and we repatriated our 24 ancestors housed at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History to this village where we found records that the church was called Peter and Paul, there are known graves, and we have census records. We also completed a LiDAR survey to map potential cultural sites from the Kaskanak Flats to the headwaters of the Kvichak.

"There is quite a bit of cultural sites. Old Togiak across the bay. Kulukak-Quluqaq. All along the river to the lake people used to live. People were buried wherever they were at. There are a few places outside of the normal burial place. Down towards the Hagemeister island Osviak-Asvigiyaq people used to live there. Stone lady.

There are rocks that have drawings. Less pictures of that and less visits. I don't know if they were ever studied. Carvan there is another island that has walrus. You can't go there now unless herring fishing and kelping due to overfishing from commercial fishing. Egg islands."

"The community is concerned with preserving the church (Ekuk)."

"Yes, we are worried about erosion. Some houses are getting close to the banks."

"Igushik is eroding big time."



Traditional Song & Dance

The purpose of this section was to identify which communities had traditional song and dance groups, if this is something that people are interested in, and what is available for people to learn. We were also interested in knowing whether people had the opportunity to join and participate in a song and dance group regardless of where they live. The majority of people agreed that this is an important aspect of culture; however, the majority of communities throughout the region do not have active dance groups.

Many key respondents said that traditional song and dance in the community had been gone for a couple of generations. In the early 1900s missionaries came to our communities and forced our people to reject their cultural beliefs and practice and follow their religious ideologies. People were forbidden to practice many aspects of their culture, which included the language, shamanism, singing, and dancing. Not only were they forced to abandon these beliefs, but were taught that they were 'evil'. Some key respondents said that some of the Elders that grew up with this mindset still are afraid to sing and dance or speak their language. While singing and dancing are seeing a revival of interest throughout the region, many barriers exist, such as no one who can lead the dance group, no drummers, no one in the community that knows the songs or their dances, no volunteers, and no funding.

Alutiiq

Based on interviews there were no active Alutiiq song and dance groups in the region. Three individuals said there used to be a community dance group, but that the people who led them are no longer in the community or have passed away. There was interest in learning traditional songs and dance, but obstacles included not having anyone to lead and organize the groups, no one in the community who knows traditional songs and dancing, and lack of a gathering place, which was exacerbated this past year due to COVID-19.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

"We do not have a dance group. It seems to be lost at this point. But we do have some members who have joined other Alutiiq groups."

"Traditional songs and dancing are not taught currently in the community. This was done years ago, but in order to remember the songs and

dances you have to practice consistently."

"I love the Bristol Bay-am Qasgia/Na qenq'a for dancing, language, and activities. This is a great way to bring activities to the school and communities."

"People who taught are all gone but they saved some songs. They need someone to teach the community."

"If a tribe is to thrive, they need to go back to their traditional ways, especially the song and dance. If you don't have that you don't have the strength of the tribe. Tribes need to get cultural camps."

Dena'ina

Half of the key respondents said their community has dance groups, but most said they are inactive and have been for a year or more. One of the obstacles consistently identified was the lack of an individual to organize and lead the group. Some key respondents said that their past dance leaders had moved, while others said that the leader had passed away. Regardless of how song and dance leaders left the community, there is consistent difficulty with finding someone to fill these roles.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

"People who taught are all gone but they saved some songs. They need someone to teach community."

"Currently it is unorganized and has no funding for regalia or to have a person organize the group."

"We haven't practiced in a couple of years. The lead drummer passed away a couple of years ago."

"Sometimes they listen to recorded songs to learn from them."

“Obstacles in the past included no space to gather, lead drummer passed and they stopped practicing, need funds for regalia and to pay a coordinator, we don’t have anyone to organize a group, sometimes school administration doesn’t support cultural activities. ”

Yup’ik

As with the other cultural groups, very few key respondents said their community had a Yup’ik dance group (22 had no dance group, 2 had a dance group, 3 were unsure), with Dillingham, Togiak, and Twin Hills answering “Not Sure” if there is an active dance group or “Other”. Throughout our Yup’ik communities there is a generational gap on people who know traditional song and dance, with interest growing in the youth and young adult populations.

Yup’ik Key Informant Quotes

“People who taught are all gone but they saved some songs. They need someone to teach community.”

“We don’t have a place to gather.”

“The Alaska Native Heritage Center has different dance groups and at the ANMC. But I think most of the groups are from Bethel area

and some people from Bristol Bay join their group or participate.”

“The Mission school (Seventh Day Adventist) there had a big impact on the Natives there. They really scared the kids and they punished them for anything for the culture. Another reason why they didn’t teach us. Us older kids can understand it but can’t speak it. It would be good to know if we did have our own dances. The ones I learned were from Elders that came from Dillingham.”

“We didn’t grow up with dancing - it was taken away, so it’s hard to bring back if you don’t grow up with it, understand the meanings and intricacies. Christianity played a large part in the loss of it.”

“Would like to see it taught again in the school; no longer being offered as part of curriculum.”

“We don’t have many kids in school, only 11. Not sure who would teach it.”

“We want to - the desire is there, but don’t have the capability to do so right now (no teachers).”

“The kids and people keep talking about this and ask who they are and where they come from. Many young students ask but nothing is done. They never had any dances - trying to identify themselves.”





Arts & Crafts

Many of our shareholders and descendants, regardless of location, practice traditional arts and crafts on various levels. Knowledge of these skills is handed down within families. With this in mind, we wanted to focus on identifying what opportunities exist for individuals to learn and practice traditional arts and crafts in formalized settings. We also wanted to identify whether any arts or crafts forms that are rarely practiced, which would increase their risk of becoming lost arts. Nearly all key respondents knew of individuals who practiced arts and crafts, but many agreed there are concerns about the loss of knowledge in this area.

Some of our more intricate art and craft activities have a limited number of people with knowledge about how to do them and are not widely practiced or taught. Much of our traditional arts and crafts are related to a way of life that is no longer being practiced due to changes in the way we live. This includes, but is not limited to, traditional clothing, regalia, tools, ceremonial masks, and toys.

Many people recognize certain arts and crafts that are frequently created, sold, and in some instances become fashionable by people from our region and beyond, such as beaded jewelry, ivory carving, or qaspeqs. But oftentimes, these art forms have lost some of the intricacies and deeper traditional knowledge behind them. We no longer process all the materials from start to finish, many of the materials we use now are commercially made and we do not make them ourselves, and we do not use our own language and stories to teach like we used to. What may seem like small or insignificant deficiencies add up to a large portion of knowledge lost in just one craft.

Alutiiq

All but two key respondents said that their community offered arts and craft courses; however, classes are inconsistent and are offered sporadically. Most often they are only offered every few years and are open to individuals of all ages, except when they are offered through the local schools. Many of the concerns regarding arts and crafts included: techniques disappearing; not many individuals doing grass baskets, and; traditional men's/ boys' arts and crafts not being taught as frequently as women's arts and crafts.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

"Not many of the traditional men's/boys' arts and crafts are taught anymore."

"The village would love to do more, but most

of the people who know it don't want to teach."

"Having people help on Zoom with the technical parts to help it run smoothly. The State has a lot of standards and rules and it's impossible to add in culture."

"My Ap'a made a whole Qayaq using his body for measurements. That is how they were made, so each Qayaq would be made exactly that one person. That is a traditional piece of knowledge that isn't being passed down."

"It would be great to have an opportunity to do training with artists about how best to lead these types of sessions online and in person. There's something to be said about how to train artists to teach and help them be more effective. "

"The only place I know is the Heritage Center for Anchorage. They show tourists how to make traditional arts and crafts."

"One idea would be to create space at BBNC for artists to come in and use good technology to lead classes so you know there's good Wi-Fi, etc. They could come in and use it. Good lighting and the right equipment, etc."

"I think when people talk about labelling art and craft they make - people don't make a connection that it is a story. The concept of the story and the value of Alaskan Native art, you don't see that passed on. There is a lot of value in Alaskan art.

"There is a lot history and story of Alaskan art and it is the form of a traditional story."

"Ideally, there would be a BB arts campus available, like Sealaska."

Dena'ina

Arts and crafts classes were offered in every community and people of all ages were able to participate. The amount and types of classes

offered in each community varied. Factors that affect the types of classes offered include: whether a community member was available to lead classes; funding availability; whether someone was available to organize the activity, and; whether people were interested in taking the classes. Even though classes are offered, they are usually sporadic and only happen every few years, which is not enough time for those practicing the craft to increase their ability. Each person interviewed said they were concerned about the knowledge of arts and crafts being lost, especially for rarely practiced arts and crafts. There are many arts and crafts where the knowledge is already lost, and many are not even documented.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

"I think this is a very important part of our culture, there are not so many skin sewers or beaders anymore. We need more funding for people that know how to do these things. I know of a bone carver that needs a small building and tools; I know of about 15 crafters looking for funding."

"Yes, I am concerned about traditional Iliamna style parkas being lost. There are not many skin sewing for making mukluks. Squirrel parkas - I don't know anyone who makes them but we have the examples on how to make them. We have lost knowledge on how to take care of the hides so that we can use them."

"Classes are sporadic - sealskin parka making, qaspeq sewing, basket weaving."

"We could expand classes with Zoom, but not enough internet. At the community building we have internet access but there is no setup or wiring for it."

"It is hard to get men interested, we need more for them and boys. "

"If we could get BBNC or the Education Foundation to lead this; we don't have the people to do the management finance and managing people."

"Yes, I am worried about the loss of all of our arts and crafts; parka, mukluk, hard-soled mukluks, ulu, baby rattle with ptarmigan, carving and bone work, traditional lamps. Elders today are a lot younger."

"Storyknifing - we lost and current Elders say they don't have it. From how to make a story knife to how to use it to tell stories."

"Yes, we are worried about losing traditional sewing to use sinew from moose and caribou."

"Yes, all of the cultural stuff is not being passed down or taught on a regular basis."

Yup'ik

Throughout our Yup'ik communities, many people continue the practice of traditional arts and crafts. There are beaders, ivory carvers, skin sewers, and jewelry makers in almost every community. Opportunities to learn and participate in arts and crafts most often included youth (10) followed by mixed ages (7), young adults (6), adults (2), and Elders (1). Most of the time classes are sporadic and more of an introductory class. Classes are rarely if ever, offered consistently and nor do they build on prior knowledge.

There are many arts and crafts that are rarely practiced and few people have knowledge of them, such as basket weaving, hard bottom sole kameksiik or kameksak (mukluks), squirrel, fancy trim on gut parkas, baby rattles, dolls, mask making, and traditional drum making. In addition to losing knowledge about how to make the arts and crafts, we are also losing the deeper knowledge on how to harvest and process these raw materials to make the crafts, such as sinew, tanning different hides, bird parts, sea grass, and squirrels. Some of our arts and crafts were used in cultural rituals or spiritual practices that are no longer practiced since missionaries came to our communities and forbid these practices.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

"I am worried about the disappearance of traditional kameksiik or kameksak (Mukluks), traditional parkas, wood carving. The old intricate ways of making, those old crafts that require a great deal of knowledge."

"I wish there was an arts and crafts center where people could go in to make things, help people build these skills."

"No opportunities for arts and crafts. There needs to be more opportunities out here for kids."

"The Alaska Native Art & Culture Grant through CIRI gives out scholarships for individual artists. They need a master artist to help teach them." (The key respondent participated to make Kameksak (Mukluk). Her cousin applied and received funding to make a sea otter parka. Her friend in Manokotak makes a program to teach students how to make with fish traps, mending nets, qaspeq making, yo-yos, berry pickers, uluaq, Native dancing.)

"The Bristol Bay UAF Campus does a good job on providing classes. Most of classes that were listed. With the tribes new building hoping to turn that into a place to learn arts and crafts. Looking into creating makers spaces. Traditional men's and women's space to do crafts, to carve. We need a communal hall where everyone could join (replicating a Qasgiq) - vision and goal to do that. It is our responsibility as a tribe to make that happen."

"Sod house making. No one can make a traditional qasgiq anymore."

"Carving. Things that you do with your hands. When you lose the arts from school you can lose it for a generation. No longer have carving in schools - used to have it back in the 90s. The intricate dance regalia. The different stories behind different patterns, styles, and ways of making. When we stop making things, we stop learning about them as well. It's not just the skill it's all the knowledge embedded inside

them. (We make a headdress on our own, but do we know the deeper knowledge in it, the significance of certain colors, the stories, etc.) Everything is interconnected. We shouldn't just be making crafts but engaging in the stories behind them, learning them through the local language - that makes it a richer experience."

"I am worried about the disappearance of grass baskets, I'm sure there's a "lot of other things at risk too, the whole process of baskets is something that comes to mind. I don't think we have any tribal members who do that."

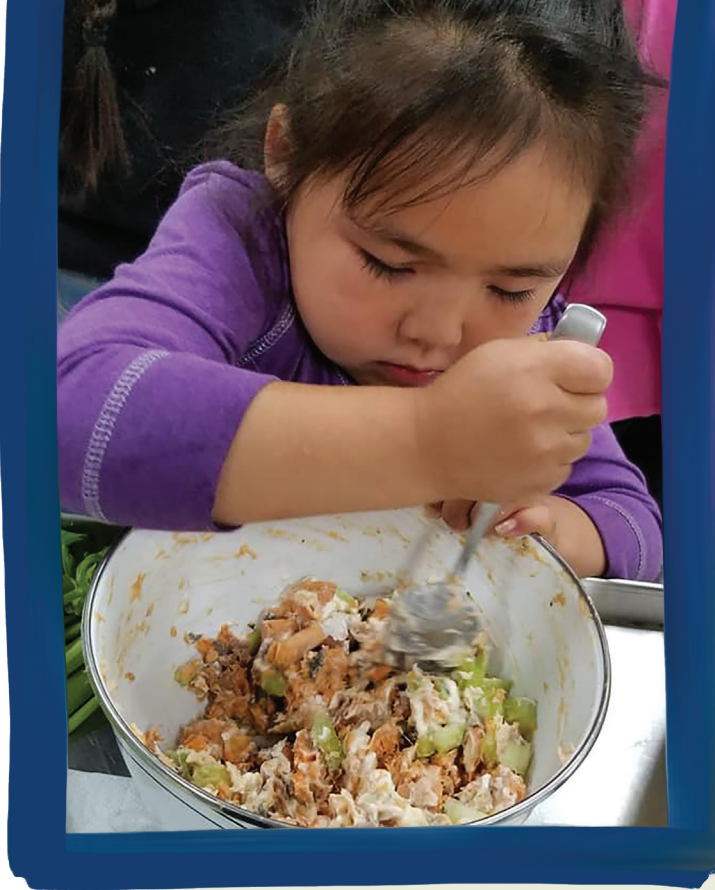
"Yes - all of them. Parka, mukluk, hard soled mukluks, Elders today are a lot younger. Storyknifing - we lost and current Elders say they don't have it, making story knife and telling stories, ulu, baby rattle with ptarmigan, carving and bone work. Traditional lamps. Anything and everything. We held a paint workshop for traditional, addle, tanning, and tanning moose hide.

"Yes, I am concerned about traditional Iliamna style parka making but there aren't many skin sewing for making Mukluk. Squirrel parkas - I don't know anyone who makes them but we have the examples on how to make. Lost knowledge on how to take care of the hides so that we can use them. Michelle teaches caribou skin tanning."

"No classes offered on arts and crafts for school. The state has a lot of standards and rules and it's impossible to add in culture."

"We are losing the hard bottom soles and squirrel parkas, fancy trims for parkas and boots. It is hard to get men's classes and teachers - harpoons, gaffs, curved knife."

"I really wish we would, as a community, teach it after school and the evening. I know of one lady who was so close to suicide, just by learning how to bead, that is what saved her. To become a healthy community, we need to keep busy. "



Traditional Medicines

For this section we were interested in finding out what opportunities there were for people to learn about traditional medicines and how many people were highly knowledgeable. Throughout all three cultural groups there was agreement that most people rely on our Western medicine, pharmacies, and doctors. We also found that there are few opportunities for people to learn about traditional medicines, their identifications, and their uses within the region in organized classes that build on one another. Some traditional medicinal plants look similar to other plants that are poisonous or must be processed and used a certain way to be safe, which could be the reason why people are deterred from teaching or learning about traditional medicinal plants. However, there were a few medicines that are still widely used throughout each cultural group and the region.

Alutiiq

Most key respondents said there was a small number of people in their community who were knowledgeable in traditional medicine; however, the number of people with a wide knowledge base was lower (see Appendix). The number of people in the communities who actively practiced the use of traditional medicines was similar. There are very little to virtually no classes offered on traditional medicine. Most of the knowledge on traditional medicine is passed down in families.

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

“Yes, I am worried this knowledge will be lost, because we don’t have a community-specific book or manual and our Elders are passing away and there are just a few that are over 80.”

“Books are used to learn the information and classes are taught locally on how to harvest, when to harvest, and how to process and use traditional medicines. This is starting to come back through a local effort.”

“There are definitely opportunities for this in the PAN-Native community in Seattle. People definitely support each other and are willing to provide knowledge to each other. There are things that are in Seattle that are also in Alaska like devil’s club, Sitka rose, and salmonberries, but there are things that are only here like cedar bark, etc.”

“I think it is important to know. I think our people would be healthier if they did. Our people are made to use what is made of this land.”

“Grandma showed me how to boil cranberries and then she had a towel and she had me inhale the cranberry steam, the heat, and the fumes. She used to give us cranberry juice when we were sick or if we had a mosquito bite.”

Dena’ina

Traditional medicine is an area where classes are rarely offered. Most key respondents said this knowledge is taught and handed down in families, and not all families are knowledgeable in traditional medicines. However, there are a very limited number of traditional medicines that are commonly used, such as salves. Many are concerned that this knowledge is going to be lost. One tribe offers classes on traditional medicine twice a year, and Southcentral Foundation does collect knowledge about traditional medicines used in Alaska. Nearly everyone agreed this is an area that needs work to preserve this knowledge.

Dena’ina Key Informant Quotes

“Traditional medicine is a vital part of our culture and it is being lost. A lot of the medicines are better than the modern stuff only no one is teaching it.”

“We are so dependent on hospitals and clinics that we forget that we have a whole medicine cabinet in our backyard.”

“I am so worried about knowledge on our traditional medicines that I started to document them. As the Elders get older, they forget the names and what they would harvest. I am seeing a lot of that now and people are exploring self-sustainable methods of living in rural Alaska. I think that traditional medicines are at high risk of being lost.”

“We are seeing an increased interest in traditional medicines.”

Yup'ik

Some traditional medicines are still practiced in our Yup'ik communities, and this knowledge is being passed down within some families. Of our key respondents, 26 said there was at least one person in their community who had knowledge of and practiced traditional medicine, while seven did not answer. There are not many classes offered on this topic and those that are typically offered in a culture camp setting or with kits mailed out. The classes are not very in-depth and they don't build on one another. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been more interest in traditional medicines, especially those that are beneficial for respiratory illness. Nearly everyone interviewed said they would like to see more opportunities for people to learn how to identify and harvest traditional medicines.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

"I think we already lost the deeper knowledge of most of it. We need to document the stories we have about these histories and practices. I worry that if we don't learn from our Elders right now it will be lost."

"No classes on traditional medicines. Not many people practice it. I think it was really great when we had the plants class for which are medicinal and which are edible. A lot of people wanted to take it so they offered it multiple times, this was in the 90s."

"Traditional medicinal knowledge is passed on through families right now."

"Yes, most young people have no idea about any of it. We need a program for all cultural teachings."

One key respondent said that when she was in nursing school, she traveled to different villages to interview Elders on traditional medicine. She has a booklet somewhere with the information that she compiled.

"Yeah, because we practice, we don't hold knowledge on everything. We are so dependent on hospitals and clinics that we forget that we have a whole medicine cabinet in our backyard."

"I think some are still using and practicing it. Especially the stink weed. But I know it is not used as much anymore."

"Many have the basic knowledge on traditional medicine: iuq/labrador tea, caiggluk is wormwood and stinkweed are naunerrluk / stinkweed, pine needles, birch bark, value of chewing tree gum. Maybe five people that have the deeper knowledge - others are learning - know the basics. There should be classes. If people don't share what they know it will be lost. Language plays a very important role in maintaining that knowledge."

DISCUSSION

Language loss is a constant and consistent concern across our communities, region, shareholder base, and cultural groups. The Alutiiq (80 speakers) and Dena'ina (5 speakers) languages are considered severely endangered, while central Yup'ik (< 10,000 speakers) is considered vulnerable to extinction (Table 3). Key respondents all agreed that language loss was the biggest concern they had and it posed the most imminent threat to cultural loss.

The most common language learning opportunities for youth outside of a home setting are in formal primary and secondary education within the public school system. Hurdles to offering language in a public-school setting include lack of certified teachers who are fluent in a local language, lack of funding being funneled to support Alaska Native language, and lack of curriculum surrounding language. Opportunities for young adults, adults, and even Elders throughout the region and within Alaska are inconsistent, often canceled, and cost a significant amount of money. The most common Alaska Native language learning opportunity for adults over the age of 18 is offered at the University of Alaska. These classes cost between \$702-\$936 for resident students (\$2,400-\$3,200 for non-residents) per class, depending on the number of credits. This cost is not affordable for most individuals, especially when you consider the need to take multiple classes to become fluent.

When looking at the results from our cultural wellness check, key respondents considered traditional arts and crafts and subsistence activities to be more active in each of their communities. Within each of those areas that are healthy, there were levels of 'deep culture/knowledge' associated with them that were identified as at risk of being lost or extinct. Most often those areas of deep culture at risk of being lost are tied to language loss, becoming less dependent on the lands around us, and more dependent on western necessities. By recognizing and identifying where our cultures and languages are at, we can start the work to regain them. If we work on saving the languages, those areas of deep culture can also be regained.

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WRAP-UP QUESTIONS AND QUOTES

In what ways is your community, tribe, or schools working to maintain their local culture and traditions?

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

- Our community has done a great job at teaching and keeping beading and fur sewing.
- We have a grant with Igiugig and we hired a lady in the village that teaches kids. Buys jars to make jellies, canning salmon, making little fur keychains, and gummy candies out of wild berries.
- What is so awesome about our region is the different cultures. It would be great to see how we all do everything.
- Usually, we have the summer Cultural Program.
- Alutiiq language program. Flexible employee practices at the tribe so people can subsist. We tried to do a photo gathering program with little success.
- We have a great grant writer which has been great to get grants for traditional culture for their school district. We had a culture week - dance taught, song and dance drumming, Yup'ik headdress made, Native foods.
- I always order kits for the kids. They use Facebook to communicate on subsistence harvest, they did cultural week in March through May.

- Culture camp will be held before school. We still need to teach them our norms, cultural values, traditional foods. We embrace new ways of living and there is a push and pull, between old ways and new ways. It's not perfect and always easy but if you have a good support system it's helpful.
- I think the in-person camp was pivotal for helping to connect people. But I also think the pandemic has also opened up a new way, a more continuous way of being able to connect. Even though there are Alaska Native people who live here, how many people are really interested in tapping in?
- Washington/Oregon is big, so it's hard to get everyone together. Technology has really helped us to get together regularly. If you can get together virtually, that's good. We're grateful to Evergreen State College for partnering with us. For at least Alutiiq culture camp in PNW, it's not an ethnic group that's in one corporation. To have a coalition where multiple corporations and village corporations worked in cooperation to support us and have ongoing opportunities in lower 48.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

- Having the camps is important. The schools have culture week at Nondalton - I don't think a week is enough but there is more awareness in the villages and they are recognizing they need to do more to not forget.
- All three of the camps we run are doing really well.
- It's not something an organization can do, it's family teaching children and grandchildren. This has to be taught from home.

- We have our dance group perform for all public events.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

- The school district is now doing the Yup'ik value of the month. Trying to get into the school more to bring more of the historical aspects. Bits and pieces happening - not necessarily comprehensive. Tribe is trying to make the space available. Trying to get schools into the museums.
- I think all of these activities can be enriched and built up and need to be.
- I don't really see anything.
- Everything regarding subsistence, hunting, gathering, plants. All three of the camps we run are doing really well.
- I don't think they celebrate it and that is unfortunate.
- Let's look at the school - we are trying to bring back the knowledge of oral stories of our ancestors. It's important to understand the legends as it informs us about who we are as a people.
- Not sure about the community.
- Take the kids berry picking, potlucks. But when it comes down to it – we are limited in cultural activities.
- Storytelling and interviewing with Elders, bring kids to senior center to visit Elders, help prep lunches and tables for them. Invite Elders in the community. Bring kids smelting. Study of birds that are local. Wolf season they learn about them. They cook traditional foods in class. Learn the regulations and requirement for harvesting. Learn to process and cook them. Winter ecology class - what causes winter kill for animals. Mask making. Learned how to make dream catchers. History of regional maps, indigenous people and languages. Berry picking, tundra tea, how to make akutaq. They do family trees and a history of their background. Trapping. Skinning. Mending nets. We try to make it fun. Storyknife. Wood carving. Foam carving. Skin sewing- yoyo balls, NYO balls, ornaments, headbands. Twenty-five students per semester, that is a mixture of middle school and high school. Quilts and dolls. Head-dresses. Kids created a calendar for harvesting.
- That's a big question. In our community we still do a good job of teaching our values - sharing with Elders, respecting, value traditional knowledge (even if we don't have it). Cultural bravery from those of all ages - always trying. There is a conversation in institutions on decolonization. We have leaders that are trying to - efforts are being made to bring in local and traditional knowledge whereas decades ago, that wouldn't have been the case. Even though it's not perfect efforts are being made. Pride in culture.
- Dillingham schools have cultural learning opportunities. As far as the tribe, last year we did our first going home celebration - day long (received a grant from BBNCEF). Elders told stories about living in Ekuuk. Wanted to do again - that seemed really powerful.
- Potlucks, that is pretty much it.
- A way they continue celebrations is at the school during cultural week where students give presentations to the community on what they learned during E-Week. Some of the cultural heritage traditions show through fundraising activities.
- Our village corporation offers classes on skin sewing, arts and crafts.
- We are one of the few communities that have our Elders involved in our school with our students to share their knowledge.

- Don't teach cultural activities and language at the school anymore, they did more of that in the 1970s but they don't teach it anymore.
- Our community doesn't really do anything - see more at church during holidays.
- Family gatherings with traditional food.
- At school the students do arts and crafts and traditional foods and feed the community, do an Exploration Week (E-Week).
- This is not practiced much; school community gatherings and potlucks are becoming less and less. Sharing is less practiced.
- Many community members still practice harvesting and hunting moose, berries, salmon, smoke fish.
- The school is involved in keeping the culture going with their activities.
- Potlucks, singing Yugtun at the school during Christmas program; during wellness activities, but not really done that much anymore.
- The school has some dance classes, but not sure about what else school does; our tribe has a grant for cultural camp each month.
- At Kokhanok this year they are taking boat rides to traditional places, kayaking, cooking salmon on the beach, kids cooked their own food on the fire. There is a lot of hunters and subsistence harvesters - parents take their kids out hunting so a lot of kids know how to harvest and process, including berries. Coordinator is teaching how to grow your own gardens, salting their own fish, processing salmon. Community member documented some of the traditional stories and painted the Elders and shared them with the kids. During Spring Carnival, the kids make traditional tools. Kokhanok does so well at pouring their love into the kids.
- School would have culture week and do activities there. Individual families are the ones who usually try to keep the traditions alive
- They don't have any celebrations tied to culture of area; it's all individually celebrated. There is no tribe to organize any events but if there was one then that would make a difference. The biggest community event focuses around the school. They also have a New Year's Eve celebration, but nothing cultural.
- We are rich with culture and language; we just need to keep it preserved.
- One thing the community does is when young men catch large game or fish, they share it with community. When young men catch their first game, they share all of it with the community. We also help Elders.
- Community smokehouse, where people can come to learn to process fish. Also, this last year we did a community garden.
- There really isn't anything.
- We are rich with culture and language we just need to keep it preserved. I think because since we had to go to online teaching and we are becoming technology oriented we can preserve what I mentioned. Nowadays we are seeing a resurgence of programs. Like UAA, they have Alaska Native studies. They are requiring if you have a degree you have to take a language class and includes indigenous classes. I think there is more interest; even though I am right here in urban I still see interest.
- Many members still practice harvesting and hunting moose, berries, salmon, smoke fish. The school is involved in keeping the culture going with their activities. Here in Anchorage, there are dance groups and the

ASD school district they have a language program. Grandkids are learning Yup'ik at school.

it was the only way that some people were connecting with others at all outside their homes.

What is the greatest need when it comes to maintaining and preserving our cultural heritage?

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

- I think we need to get our language back. We need to teach the younger kids to subsist instead of going to store. Our arts and crafts.
- All of it is all important because it is all interconnected.
- Language, dancing, traditional qayaqs-kayaks, drums, and harvesting traditional foods, but the cost of trying to get supplies to our communities is so high.
- We need grants to build infrastructure and to hire people. We don't have the money to hire people.
- There's a desire for people who live outside of Alaska who want to connect with their culture, and really understanding the perspective of those people.
- There's an idea that people who live outside Alaska aren't "Native" anymore. Can we figure out a way for people who are in region to connect with people who are out of region. Some things you'll hear are that people are surprised that there are people who felt like they were Native in the lower 48. Or that people would feel a connection to land, even though they'd never lived there. There is a desire for people to connect. It's imperative for people's mental health. The surprising/not surprising for camp and get together – in the pandemic

- It is our families and parents being involved and only letting the schools teach the kids. I don't know if it is because they are busy or they feel inadequate. Our families need to be more involved.
- I think to maintain our culture the kids need to learn their own language and gathering subsistence in summer and fall.
- We need more camping activities and opportunities to learn about outside.
- Sometimes it's good to get an outsider's perspective. It is good to have a guest educator teach our kids because sometimes they listen to others with different intent. Fresh perspective can have good ideas on how to teach something.
- Our values are declining. We need to take young people to camp and have them leave proud of who they are.
- People used to say, "Natives are the happiest people around." But now when you look around, we aren't.
- Listen to your Elders. If you listen to your Elders you will have learned a true healthy well-being lifestyle. If you see an Elder is respected then it's true. People need to earn respect.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

- To hire a coordinator and a teacher with the proper equipment and supplies.
- I think remembering who we are and where we come from. And connecting back with each other as a people and visiting each other, camping together. People don't rely on each other as much; they used to share and take care of each other. People used to think of others first and now everyone

thinks of themselves. It is a western way to only think of yourself and be greedy and not share. That is not a good value in our culture.

- The lack of a coordinator to gather all the info on our culture, someone have classes, funding for arts and crafts people, a quarterly gathering celebrating the culture, a weekly newsletter highlighting sections of the culture and language.
- Language is the highest priority - least coordination, least funding, and most likely to be lost.
- We are dealing with climate change we are seeing huge changes. 1931 they had permafrost when they took our ancestors.
- Documentation that could be a resource for the kids to go back to. The adults need to pass the knowledge to the younger generation.
- For Pedro Bay it would be the language and subsistence. If Pebble goes through there goes our subsistence.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

- High schools should offer local language and not just foreign language classes.
- Money is our greatest need. If we don't have a set allocated budget to get this done then it won't get done. Unless we have people that are dedicated to this (volunteering etc.) we need to have dedicated sources of funds. Money is the biggest barrier, our unmet need. If we could hire staff to do it, we would, but don't have the money for it. And space. And time - we have to do this before the Elders we have are gone.
- I think they have to understand it and share it. Some people know a lot, but some people don't like to share what they know. The people in the Naknek area are very independent and they rely on themselves, this comes from commercial fishing and competition.
- Need more supports for projects, people helping. We need help. I think what needs to happen is building a connection with people in the community. They had classes for kids during school and the day and then the evening classes for adults.
- We need to make it exciting for kids. Our way of knowing is a better way of teaching math. Make new ways of teaching and tribal schools.
- I think the willing people to start and stick with things. Someone willing to do the work. The value of our culture seems to be lost with each generation.
- We need to really focus on the language, because the language ties directly into the heritage of the people. Because if you don't understand the language - the English translation is watered down and doesn't have the full meaning, so much is lost in translation.
- Native dancing, making sure to keep up our harvesting/subsistence.
- I go to Chugachmiut's Heritage Preservation website for curriculum and purchasing drum making kits, clothing, recipes, climate change. We need one place to get stuff for Yup'ik classes. It's so much work gathering the information. Also funding, we need funding to get the supplies we need in class, this isn't something that is budgeted in like standard western needs.
- Teach the teachers; have teachers for our young people, because it's going away.
- Capturing of Elders and those that are still alive - somehow capturing the knowledge - whether it's in classes or interviews. Our Elders are the most valuable resources and they are impermanent.

- If we had a staff person who could organize activities and events that would be the biggest help. Since I work with environmental stuff some of what I do is geared toward culture, so I am trying to incorporate more. But aside from that, we could use the help from another person who could organize and set up those learning opportunities.
 - It starts with family and parents passing down to their children. The school will be great if they had more cultural programs and youth can interact with peers. The whole community should be involved but there is always a need for funding, but our community is resilient and they need to want to do it for maintaining culture.
 - Arts, crafts, and our language are things that are needed most for preserving our culture.
 - Showing the younger generation on how to harvest and subsist.
 - I think people need to get involved and step up and volunteer.
 - Practicing language, arts and crafts, local medicine and knowledge. Learning about subsistence and hunting.
 - Kaigatekluku agayutmun ikayumaciqukut - give it to our Lord and he will provide.
 - I think there is a lapse in multi-generational living.
 - The greatest need is to want it for ourselves and go back to our way of survival and this is how our ancestors lived and this is the way of cycle of life. Take only what you need and share and help others. Alaska Natives are the healthiest people in the world but the public store is affecting our people.
 - Language.
 - We need someone to organize and get it going so children can remember and learn.
- Families are not showing how to do a lot of the traditions or activities.
- I think our problem is with no funds right now. The funds our tribe gets has to be used a certain way, and we don't have the funding to help preserve our culture.
 - Finding people who are willing to teach it and do it. Like example - weekly meets on Saturday, we need reliable Yup'ik translator. There is only one reliable reader. When BBNC has checks many people are busy drinking their money away.
 - I really think we need to go back to the teachings of the Bible such as respecting marriage, children and each other to just do it, we are getting preoccupied with other things, too much drugs, lack of knowledge and family values, certain activities are relying on store bought except for food.
 - I hope that language is encouraged and is taught to kids. We need to keep talking to our children. Language is important, and we have speakers but we need to encourage the use so we don't lose it so that our language will continue on as our speakers pass.
 - Documenting everything, have it written down, passing down knowledge from generation to generation.
 - I think the greatest need is going back to being proud of who we are because if we view our culture as irrelevant or something to be ashamed of, we won't work to save it. Because of COVID we have worked hard on making sure we have enough subsistence foods and traditional medicines. Just knowing that our culture and way of life is valuable and necessary and even better for us and having that pride and having it reinforced will help us to save it; our knowledge is irreplaceable. We have been told for too long that our way of life and who we are is subpar. If we think that our language is not important, we won't learn it

and pass it on. I think this is healing too.

- It is important that we pass down the knowledge soon by in-person experience. Sharing knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation rather than learning from a book.
- For Pedro Bay it would be the language and subsistence. If Pebble goes through there goes our subsistence.
- It would have to be someone actually work on it and it's hard because the Port Alsworth Improvement Corporation focuses on community needs, such as getting a landfill, maintaining waste management, roads, trails, that it makes it difficult to focus on cultural activities when there are other community needs.
- I think it would be so cool for the BBNCEF to offer language classes. In summers have them offer language classes for free.
- Kenaitze has discretionary tribal scholarships for those who are pursuing going to school.
- Always give land recognition. Give land recognition, to its people and in their language - the CEO Kenai Peninsula College.
- Not sure. I think people are doing ok. People still continue to do hunting. One thing that isn't practiced as much would be trapping.
- I think our language is being lost. It would be awesome if we could have a program that involves the whole community - teaching everyone from adults to youth.
- How can you pick just one? It is all in need. I feel like it is impossible to revive language and dance. Subsistence is very important because so many people are unemployed. There aren't any job opportunities so keeping subsistence puts food on the table.

What activities are not offered in your community that you would like to see offered?

Alutiq Key Informant Quotes

- I would like to see kids learning how to seine.
- More cultural activities we used to do in the past like beading, grass baskets.
- More language classes. More dance classes. How to dress a seal.
- We would love to have arts and crafts. We have some talented artists.
- Loads of things. All the things that are offered in Anchorage area, I'd love to see be able to be accessed in Washington and Oregon. There are so many people.
- I like the idea of a regional culture camp. The thing that I'd think about the most in sending kids is safety. I like the idea of a family camp model, and multi-generations together.
- Virtual offerings with the kits are nice. June Purdue sent out the medicine kits through First Alaskans.
- We would like to have a language familiarity course.
- We want to have a historical video and photo archive.
- We would love to have a community smoke house and community subsistence event. Kanatak has their community come during the fish run and have everyone down there harvest together.

- I love to see more song and dance, drum making.
- Finding the help once the grant is received.
- Give more and expect less.
- I would like to see more crafting activities.
- I would like to see more ivory carving, sculpture making, I feel like we are heading in to that direction where we have a statement piece like the stone lady in Togiak. So, people can say, "That is from Port Heiden" and have it be related to Port Heiden.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

- Getting together for the winter time when there is less to do. Having activities where the men carve and teach the boys, uncle/dad/boy roll. The women and girls need that too. It really brings community together when you do that.
- We need more activities that more boys would be doing.

Language, beading, skin sewing, all things related to the culture.

- Language classes, arts and crafts, dancing, sled building, boat building, snowshoe making, net mending

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

- Net mending class (which used to be offered at the school, no longer is). Lots of other activities that we talked about in all the other sections. Family history and family knowledge learning that - family trees and demonstrating community web and how we are all connected.
- Language for the students, we need strong relationships between generations and sometimes that is lacking, things are not simple anymore where people can enjoy things, people are on their phones and tv.

- Emma Hildebrand came and taught us cultural stuff and I asked her if she was ever afraid of sharing your talent? She said, "No, I share because if someone can learn from me and then 20 years later, they are teaching someone else, then I am doing my part. We have to each do our part to preserve. I was taught at school to not do what my grandparents were doing."
- I think our Native people are quite and laid back and white people are more dominating and can dominate conversations.
- It can be hard at schools because not all kids can do cultural activities. For example, white kids cannot carve ivory and work with marine mammals like our Native kids.
- Manokotak - I don't know if they are doing Yup'ik dancing, Dana Bartman used to do it. It would be fun to see it come back.
- Everything regarding subsistence, hunting, gathering, plants. All three of the camps we run are doing really well. Culture week is last week in April. Quktazun Month in June, two weeks. Culture Camp in August at fish camp across the lake. Cultural Heritage Activities at school is for a week.
- Community craft nights, being able to get together and talk about how it used to be, why we did things certain ways. The community needs to work together on stuff, they need to gain that sense of community again. Too much looking for money.
- At the community level I would like to see an arts and crafts building where people could engage, a building where you could engage in your traditional cultural practices and stories. It would be a place where you could view videos in Yugtun - so it's not just coming from the school it's coming from the community. It could even incorporate modern kinds of arts like, drawings and paintings.
- Stories behind how things are named, i.e.,

understanding how different birds got their names. Stories behind our songs. Have a studio where we could create little stories on our legends.

- Lack of volunteers to do these activities. Dance groups would be great.
- I would like to see basket weaving, grass baskets, more Native dancing, skin fish sewing, quilt making, knitting, sewing, crocheting, beading.
- Native Dance.
- Yeah, continued regular programming that are accessible and affordable to people. I think getting people outdoors to learn so it is not just having classes in a classroom. Survival classes - getting out on the land. Learning with our eyes and hands outdoors.
- Yeah, basically everything that we talked about today would be helpful to be offered. With the exception of subsistence, because that is already a strong activity.
- Arts, crafts, and traditional medicine. Been thinking about building own Qayaq and drum - those are the things that I think about a lot. Don't have the capacity to implement though.
- More culture programs such as dog mushing community would be good to bring back especially for younger children to learn.
- Dancing, arts and crafts, and language classes. The schools would offer songs to sing but nothing more.
- Survival skills. Somehow get these young kids motivated.
- More community and school efforts in cultural arts like grass basket making, more language in schools offered.
- We are seeing activities but continuing on will be good.
- We want everything.
- Yupik language, create a Native dance group, traditional teacher teaching our way of life.
- Language and dancing.
- Everything cultural, speaking, Yup'ik dancing.
- Yeah, Yup'ik language, traditional songs and dances, and learning to make new songs and dances.
- I would like to see a person teaching our youth Yup'ik songs, reading, and writing.
- Village used to celebrate the new year with games and activities. Even throughout the year there used to be games for adults and children. It would get the family together, gave kids some adult time together.
- Everything, we need to restoke the spirits of our people to gather, the men continue to hunt. Community activities need to start again to motivate people, telling stories.
- I don't know if they are doing Yup'ik dancing anymore back home. It would be fun to see it come back.
- New Year celebration activities, Elders participating in ice fishing competition, and dog mushing that I could think of now.
- Language immersion, go outside to look at plants and berries and learn that way - had positive feedback with experience before, beading, sewing, having the entire community involved from youth to Elders in these activities.
- Language, singing and dancing are needed in our community.
- Yup'ik language, how to make traditional clothes, utensils, uluaqs, head dresses, and the stories behind our culture. Traditionally gaspeqs were parka covers, now it's fashion. There was a reason/story behind everything in our culture; we need to know those.
- Financing is always a problem, if there was

more financing for others to come in to teach of our culture that would be great, it is always a financial issue.

- Nothing - the National Park Service runs information sessions every week, which include everything from wood working to how our communities were formed. The National Park Service does this for community and for tourists. The community is not prioritizing this because the Park Service is fulfilling this role. The community has a great relationship with the Park Service and coordinates events together.
- Right now, the most important is language. Right now, we can subsist. We still have our art. Our language is at stake. Even if it wasn't at stake our language isn't spoken like they used to. At AFN they used to get up and speak in their languages now it is all in English, even if it spoken at the very start. The young people - you don't see them speaking it.
- And then culture - I am glad we still have our dance, people still make the tools, subsistence activities, berries but I think the language is more important than the ones you had mentioned. It's fun to learn to do this but include the languages.
- I think we need more seasonal year-round activities. They used to have Elders come from different communities and have gatherings and teach from different areas. Everybody has their own way of doing things - maybe have more cultural sharing from different communities.
- Like I said the language. We only have a handful of Elders. And I know the Elders know more than they're saying. Listening from Elders. Dancing. I remember seeing Elders dance when younger, but we were never taught.
- I would like to see activities for arts and crafts. Teach the language. The Elders are all speaking in Yup'ik but most of us don't know what they are saying.

What areas of our cultural heritage do you view as most endangered?

Alutiiq Key Informant Quotes

- I think subsistence harvesting because kids aren't using them anymore. If we brought it back, they could feed themselves.
- The language is already extinct. Our local dialect is gone.
- The salmon are not coming back. Half our village are commercial fisherman. With no fish we aren't able to get money or subsistence fish and need more money for store bought foods.
- Language. I think they that there are only 33 fluent Alutiiq speakers left in the Kodiak region. I don't know if that includes Cordova and Alaska Peninsula. It's just a handful of people who can speak fluently. I think when you think in a different language, then you can know that culture better –when you lose the language, you lose the fundamental building blocks of that culture. There are all kinds of things inside it. Example from Susu (African language) Reflection/Mirror/Moon –the same word is used for those two things – when you know that they knew the world was round, it reflected the sun, that they had deeper science knowledge.
- Scholarship idea for language learning. SHI offers weeklong language intensives in Seattle, in partnership with the Burke Museum in southeast languages. Several hours a day.
- I think the language is almost lost already. I also think the dance and songs are lost. The art is also endangered. I know of one 19-year-old interested in beading.

- I came from a really strong culture and this community isn't very strong in their culture. The kids are really hungry for culture activities. And you have to have special people who are willing to participate but they don't want to do the work to host classes.
- Our language because we can hold onto subsistence and drumming but the language is so important.
- I don't know.
- The language. The children rely so heavily on parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents so it is up to all of us to tell them, "Don't forget who you are or where you came from." You don't need to say it directly just speak to them.
- Give more and expect less.

Dena'ina Key Informant Quotes

- Language. The number one. I think traditional foods, but we don't use a lot of the traditional foods. When I was growing up, we gathered plants and used all winter.
- There were all kinds of traditions that aren't being practiced anymore such as sharing first catches.
- Language because there is no one interested in learning it.
- Subsistence and Pebble.
- The language. We only have five fluent speakers in Nondalton and there are a couple more Elders that speak but they are in a home in Anchorage. The dialect for Dena'ina in Nondalton is very different than the other areas.
- Language and dancing; actually, just about everything.
- Language dancing arts and crafts how to preserve stuff.

Yup'ik Key Informant Quotes

- Another Elder died in Togiak this week -Robert Nicholai- he had a gift of music. I feel like there is more and more limited speakers. Even though we are the second language, in terms of numbers of speakers, with Navajo being first and Yup'ik second. But right in Bristol Bay there isn't as many speakers like Kuskokwim area. But Ester Ilutsik, with Southwest Region School District, says there are less and less speakers. There are more urban members and people are moving out of our region. Maybe less instructional programs at village level. Most of what we are taught is translation and not our core meaning of language.
- Language. I think our traditional clothing and regalia is now a relic – not used anymore. Our language is at a critical point though, we don't have enough fluent speakers on our own to get through this.
- Language.
- Language. The number one. I think traditional foods, but we don't use a lot of the traditional foods. When I was growing-up we gathered plants and used all winter.
- There are all kinds of traditions that aren't being practiced anymore such as sharing first catches.
- Language.
- I really think language is. It is scary. Like the Aleuts, their language is almost gone, and I don't want that to happen to happen to the Yup'ik language. I look at Manokotak and Togiak, at least they keep it alive. I just hope that the community starts to look at their culture so they can start reliving it again. We have subsistence and food gathering but our language needs to come back.
- Language. Yugtun language. We're Yup'ik, we should speak Yup'ik. An Elder had told me this. Why don't we speak Yup'ik? We

need to know our own world before we can go forth. And I think the people in the village need to know their kinship, our kinship system, how to interact, the values of our traditional people - they need to be reinforced. The importance of having Yugtun names and being named in the traditional practices. Our old celebrations, five-year feasts, etc. Our place names are also very import and they're not being taught.

- We're going to lose the language, once we lose the last speaker. Traditional arts and crafts. I don't think we'll ever lose subsistence or harvesting.
- The language is already lost in our area, in Dillingham. I don't know how it could ever get back.
- Language and what that encompasses, because language is not just words. Knowledge is embedded in it (referred back to learning traditional skills, arts/crafts through the language).
- How would our Elders have spoken?
- We might learn the words, but might not learn how our Elders spoke.
- Maybe song and dance, maybe storytelling, language too of course.
- Arts and crafts, dances, language.
- Language and arts and crafts.
- Language - the fact that people don't speak it fluently. Nowadays the age group of 60+ speak it but the kids and young adults don't speak it fluently. They may know the basics. The conversations every day is done in English not Yup'ik.
- Language, hunting, arts and craft making.
- I think language is most at risk.
- Language, if we lose our language, we will lose everything else is what an Elder once told me.
- Everything about the culture, the language.
- The language. It's hard to learn Yup'ik because all of the printed materials are from Bethel, Kuskokwim and not traditionally from Bristol Bay. We need some of our own materials. We can't learn our language. We need to do our own translating and writing. It would be nice if financially that could help provide financial help to be successful. If we do it region wide it would be stronger. If we did it by radio, television, I think it would be a much stronger way of doing it, people will respect it, if it is something good, they would copy it. We could do a Yup'ik word of the day and make it fun people will want to do it.
- Language because it invokes our understanding and fulfilling our needs
- Language.
- Language, we don't want to lose it, it's our way of communicating. Our way of life.
- I feel like it is our spirituality and our language. They go together, hand and hand. They are not tangible things. But understanding how we see the world; our spirituality and our language go hand in hand. A lot of people are Russian Orthodox, if you don't have a cross yourself to the east - the east is the traditional beliefs. Face the east in the sun, thank you, bless yourself and wash yourself clean. We teach traditional spirituality some of the Elders get uncomfortable if it goes against the church.
- Language (Yup'ik), sharing knowledge from generation to generation (it is in process of being lost, trying to revitalize the tradition), we think the youth are getting too connected to technology (like phones) I want them to be more family-oriented again.
- Subsistence and Pebble.
- Language because there is no one interested in learning it.



BBNCEF's core purpose is to build and maintain "connections to our past and invest in our future."

Mission: To provide support for and encourage shareholders to pursue educational opportunities and to promote and preserve cultural heritage.

Supporting shareholder education since 1986, the Foundation has awarded over 4,000 higher education and vocational education scholarships worth more than \$6.3 million and awarded 91 Cultural Heritage and Native Place Name Grants totaling \$385,503."