



**NACA**

Native American Contractors Association

# **Photo Journal: Small Business Administration's Rural Alaska Native Village Trip**

**Photos provided by Will Anderson & Sarah Lukin**

**Native Village of Port Lions  
June 21, 2010**

On June 21<sup>st</sup> the Native American Contractors Association (NACA), the Small Business Administration (SBA), Afognak Native Corporation, and Koniag, Inc. traveled to Kodiak Island to tour the Native Village of Port Lions and see first-hand the benefits of Alaska Native Corporation participation in the SBA 8(a) Program.



L to R (Back Row):

Clara Pratte, *National Director of Office of Native American Affairs, SBA*; Calvin Goings, *Regional Administrator, SBA*; Joe Jordan, *Associate Administrator, SBA*; Tom Panamaroff, *President & CEO, Koniag Development Corporation*

L to R (Front Row):

Shauna Hegna, *Vice President Shareholder Services, Afognak Native Corporation*; Virginia Ward, *Chairwoman, Afognak Native Corporation*; Sarah Lukin, *Executive Director, NACA*; Karen Mills, *Administrator, SBA*; Butch Frey, *Administrator's Assistant, SBA*; Haley Matz, *Administrator's Press Secretary, SBA*; Karen Forsland, *Alaska District Director, SBA*; Will Anderson, *President & CEO, Koniag, Inc. & President, ANCSA Regional Association*

The Native Village of Port Lions is a remote community of 200+ people located on Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska.

Afognak Native Corporation is the Village corporation serving approximately 790 Native shareholders and their descendants, and Koniag, Inc. is the regional corporation serving approximately 3,400 Native shareholders and their descendants. Both are active participants in the SBA 8(a) Program.

The Alaska Native people of the Kodiak Archipelago are Alutiiq. They have inhabited their traditional lands for over 7,500 years.





L to R: Clara Pratte, Karen Mills, Melissa Borton, *Administrator, Native Village of Afognak*; Will Anderson; Joe Jordan.

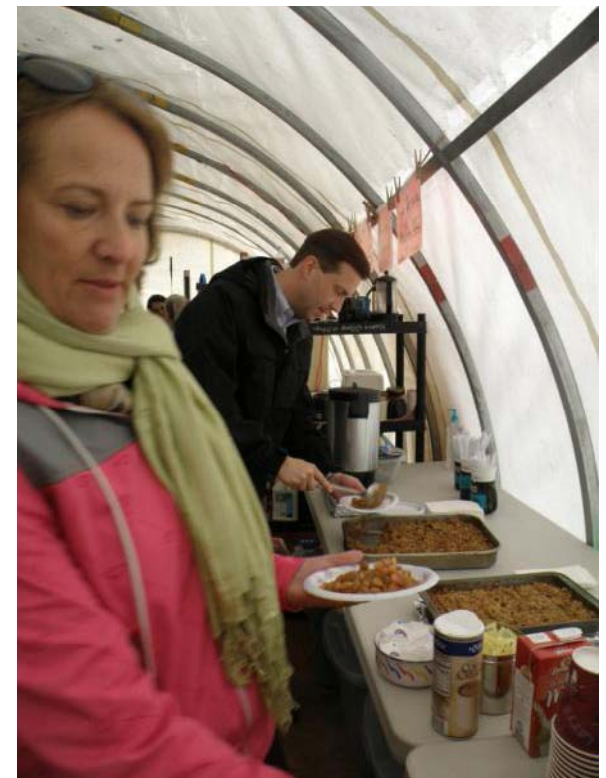
We traveled on two boats. One was the *Alutiiq Pride*, a boat purchased by Afognak using profits from Native 8(a). The *Alutiiq Pride* is operated by Andy Christopherson, an Afognak shareholder and Senior Security Officer, to navigate around Afognak lands to patrol and protect Afognak's resources for its shareholders use. The second boat we used is owned and operated by Willis Garner, a small business boat charter owner and Koniag shareholder.



Native Village of Afognak Administrator Melissa Borton describes the logistics of maintaining a rural Alaska culture camp. It costs approximately \$260,000 to operate the Camp for 6 weeks in the summer. The Camp relies solely on contributions from the Native corporations, individuals and grants to fund the camp.

Our first stop was Dig Afognak Culture Camp, operated by the Native Village of Afognak, which teaches traditional Alutiiq ways, language, and culture to Alutiiq youth. The Culture Camp is situated on 5 acres on Afognak Island leased for free to the Native Village of Afognak by Afognak Native Corporation. Afognak Native Corporation and Koniag are significant annual contributors to the Culture Camp.

Calvin Goings and Karen Mills try rhubarb pie, made with local rhubarb harvested at Dig Afognak. Gathering and eating traditional subsistence foods is an important component of Camp life.





Dig Afognak Culture Camp participants learn how to successfully fill out college scholarship applications from Koniag Education Foundation volunteers. Koniag Education Foundation is the educational non-profit of Koniag, Inc. The Education Foundation focuses on awarding post secondary education funding to Koniag shareholders and their descendants. To date, Koniag has donated approximately \$7 million to the Education Foundation.

We visited with a group of Alutiiq teenagers participating in “Leadership Camp,” a program designed to build leadership skills and self-esteem in Alutiiq youth through culture and academic activities. Other camps focus on traditional dance, environmental issues, subsistence, and survival skills. Alutiiq Elders and leaders participate in each camp, providing relevant positive role models for Alutiiq youth.



Will Anderson chalks in Alutiiq petroglyphs in a rock near the Old Afognak Village.

Alutiiq petroglyphs, like those carved in this rock near Afognak Village, are located throughout the Kodiak Archipelago. They are the oldest representation of Alutiiq culture, dating back 3,000-4,000 years. They represent the identity, strength, culture, and resilience of the Alutiiq people.

Virginia Ward tells Karen Mills of her family's struggle and survival through the 1964 earthquake and tsunami and the damage sustained by their community.

The Afognak Alutiiq people lived in the Native Village of Afognak Village until 1964 when their traditional home was destroyed by a devastating earthquake and tsunami. The Villagers relocated to higher safer ground and named their new home Port Lions, after the Lions Club that helped rebuild their community.



A rookery of sea otters.



On the boat ride from the Afognak Village to Port Lions, we were greeted by sea otters and fin whales.

Whales held significant spiritual meaning in traditional Alutiiq life and were hunted for food.

Sea otter pelts were highly prized by Russians. During the Russian occupation of Alaska, Alutiiq people were enslaved by Russian fur traders and forced to hunt the sea otters for their pelts.



Excitement on the boat as we watch a pod of fin whales.



Native Village of Port Lions.

The Port Lions village site was chosen by a team of six Afognak Elders after the 1964 earthquake and tsunamis destroyed Afognak village. Prior to relocating to Port Lions, Settler's Cove was a traditional subsistence area for the villagers. Today, Port Lions is home to 200+ people and is the only village on Kodiak Island with regular ferry service.

The group takes a break from a robust tour schedule to enjoy lunch at Kodiak Paradise lodge.



Kodiak Paradise Lodge is owned and operated by Melvin Squartsoff, a Koniag Shareholder. Melvin's daughter, Sara, went fishing the day before to catch lunch. She prepared seafood chowder, *Alatiqs* (fried bread), and fresh *Iqalluk* (salmon) for the group. Participants enjoyed watching eagles fly around the bay while villagers used subsistence nets to catch *Iqalluk*.



Respected Alutiiq Elder, Helen Nelson, and Afognak Native Corporation board members Robert Nelson and Abner Nelson joined the group for lunch.

“Some have had to leave our community in order to support their families, but it [Native Corporation dividends] sure has helped me and I am so grateful that I don’t have to worry about how to pay my electric, water & sewer and phone bill. It isn’t always easy getting groceries here in Port Lions, but with the fuel money from our dividends we can fly or take the ferry to Kodiak to shop for our groceries and other needed items. The peace of mind that comes from having this income has helped me so much and others who only source of income are these dividends. We are so grateful for the 8(a) program.”

- Helen Nelson, Alutiiq Elder

Alaska Natives set subsistence nets in the Native Village of Port Lions.



Subsistence fishing and hunting continues to be integral to the Alutiiq people, as with all Alaska Native cultures. Still today, multiple generations of families work together to catch fish and other subsistence foods for storage during Alaska's long, cold winter months. Pictured here are a few setting nets to catch the abundant red salmon near Port Lions. We were excited to watch them bring in their catch.



Representatives from the Native Village of Port Lions Tribal Council shared with the SBA some of the struggles they face in their small community. One of the greatest concerns the community currently faces is the disrepair of their ferry dock. Without the dock, the community will lose their seasonal ferry service making the village only accessible by small plane and private boats. Lack of housing and jobs also plague the community.

Karen Mills meets with Native Village of Port Lions Tribal Council representatives. Pictured left to right: Susan Boskofsky, Tribal Administrator, and Arnold Kewan, President.



Three young Alutiiq youth share some of the Alutiiq dances they have learned.



Through an Alutiiq language revitalization program supported by Afognak Native Corporation and Koniag, Inc., Alutiiq language and dance are now taught by volunteers in Port Lions school and other schools throughout the region. Three young girls shared some of the dances that they learned through the program.



Afognak and Koniag Shareholder Bruce Nelson, gives a tour of the Port Lions Clinic.



Karen Mills meets Andy Tueber, President/CEO of Kodiak Area Native Association.

Port Lions clinic is situated on land that was given to the community by Afognak Native Corporation. The village is visited once every few months by doctors and twice a year by a dentist. The Community Health Aids are responsible for providing all other health care in the community during the rest of the year.

Kodiak Area Native Association is the regional non-profit that is responsible for providing health care to Alaska Natives in the Kodiak Archipelago. This year, KANA received substantial support from Koniag, Inc. when they jointly built a new facility in Kodiak City. This new facility houses Koniag's headquarters and several KANA departments.



Left: SBA representatives snap a group photo in front of the favorite swimming hole in the village.

Below: Will Anderson, Tom Panamaroff, Shauna Hegna, Virginia Ward, and Sarah Lukin, pause for a picture at the culvert in Port Lions.

Port Lions is a beautiful community situated on the northern most rain forest in the world. Like much of southern Alaska, it rains often in the village , where lush trees, shrubs, and plants grow. Many of these resources are harvested by villagers for subsistence foods and medicinal purposes.





Ivan Lukin, Afognak and Koniag shareholder, used dividends he received from Native corporations 8(a) profits to purchase a charter boat and start his own small fishing charter and bed and breakfast business. He was awarded scholarships from Afognak to fund Coast Guard training and certifications required of charter boat operators. He prides himself on hiring local Alaska Native youth to serve as deckhands and help out with the B&B. The profits he makes from his small business enable him to continue his subsistence way of life in the village.



Right: Afognak and Koniag shareholder Ivan Lukin, still makes smoke salmon using the same recipe his grandmother used in Afognak years ago.

Left: Karen Mills and Sarah Lukin visit with Ivan Lukin.

Will Anderson takes his hand at  
captaining the Alutiiq Pride.



Will Anderson is not only the President of Koniag, Inc., he is also an Alutiiq mask carver. He has traveled around the world to hunt down ancient Alutiiq masks that were taken from the region hundreds of years ago and has studied their design. His unwavering commitment to his culture is helping to revive this ancient art. Koniag has funded two books on Alutiiq art, providing free copies to Koniag shareholders in an effort to rebuild Alutiiq cultural knowledge.



Dr. Sven Haakanson, Koniag Shareholder and Alutiiq Museum Executive Director, provides a tour of the Alutiiq Museum.

The Alutiiq Museum is nationally recognized, community-based museum that is financially supported by all of the Native Corporations in the Kodiak Archipelago. The museum has led Alutiiq language revitalization efforts in the region and stores and studies thousands of artifacts gathered from Native Corporation lands.



A group picture before we board the plane back to Anchorage, Alaska.



The SBA left Kodiak with a better understanding of Native 8(a) benefits, Alaska Native Corporations, and village political structure and services. NACA is hopeful they will tour another village in the near future. Any trip to rural Alaska, especially of this size, is a significant logistical feat. A huge thank you goes to Afognak and Koniag for their participation in and assistance with coordinating the trip. We could not have done it without them.