



Subsistence Mapping in the Northwest Arctic Borough

Subsistence Mapping Conference
November 2, 2011

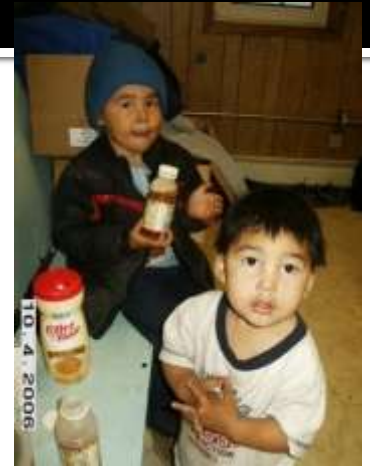
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Northwest Arctic Borough Overview

- Municipal home-rule government located in Northwest Alaska above the Arctic Circle.
 - Over 35,000 square miles of land and over 4,700 square miles of water along the Chukchi Sea, Kotzebue Sound & Noatak, Selawik & Kobuk Rivers.
- Residents 90% Iñupiaq



Northwest Arctic Borough Overview



Northwest Arctic Borough Overview

- Subsistence is key to Economy & Culture
 - Way of Life: hunting & gathering natural resources from land & water
- Human Connection to the Environment
 - Wildlife: caribou, birds, wolves, foxes, musk ox, moose
 - Fish: salmon, shee fish, trout, herring, pike, cod, smelt
 - Marine life: crab, seals, beluga whales, bowhead whales, walrus
 - Plants: blue berries, salmon berries, greens, roots, tea, leaves



Borough Comprehensive Plan Goals

- Maintain the Iñupiaq culture
- Promote & Maintain subsistence and the traditional way of life
- Protect the NWAB environment
- Support the viability of existing communities
- Support & Help develop local self-determination
- Foster appropriate economic development
- Raise the standard of living for Borough residents
- Facilitate implementation & activities & programs by villages, and regional institutions within the NWAB
 - ***Northwest Arctic Borough, Comprehensive Plan, March 1993***



Project Need

- Climate Change
- Endangered Species Listings
- Industrial Development
 - Offshore Oil and Gas Development
 - Expanded Mining Interest
 - Arctic Marine Transportation
 - Commercial Fisheries Expansion
 - Growing Sport Hunting
- Cooperation of State & Federal Government, but lack scientific data (in their eyes) for backing their decisions



Project Need



- A foundation of
 - Science,
 - Local and traditional knowledge,
 - & Planning
- are needed to ensure **economic activities** in the region will be conducted sustainably and not harm ecosystem health.
- Staff, Assembly & Planning Commissioners need additional/updated information to guide decisions with private industry on how development can be conducted sustainably, including when, where and how conducted.

Overall Project Goal



- Protect subsistence and promote compatible development by integrating traditional knowledge and western science to document and map important subsistence uses and habitats.
 - Key philosophy: traditional knowledge at the same level as western science.
 - Areas not fully understood by western science, & traditional knowledge often oral and not documented / both working together in project.

Objectives



- To create a secure place for collecting existing data, maps, traditional knowledge and studies that are incorporated into a geographic information system (GIS) database and ensure the database will be updated with most recent scientific information.



Objectives

- To engage borough communities in the documentation of traditional knowledge through community-based focus groups and incorporate it into the GIS database.



Objectives

- To complete an expert review of the GIS database layers by Elders and experienced subsistence users.



Objectives

- To identify both Important Ecological Areas (IEAs) and Potential Resource Development Areas of the region.



Objectives

- To publish an atlas of identified IEAs and supporting ecological information, and give appropriate staff training to use the atlas and GIS database to address needs of the Borough.



Project Staffing & Partners

- Elders
- Youth
- Residents
- Corporations
- State and federal agencies
- Interested organizations
- NWAB Planning Department
- Glenn Gray and Associates: 3rd party evaluation consultant to assess the effectiveness of the project.



Project Staffing & Partners

- Project Coordinator
- Traditional Knowledge Specialist
- Social Anthropologist
- Project Interns (3) based in Villages
- Managed/Organized within the Planning Department



Project Benefits

- Information used by the Borough in planning and zoning including land use permitting.
- State and federal agencies for implementation of coastal management, agency permitting & land use responsibilities.
- Overall, protect subsistence and promote compatible development.



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- Administration, Planning Commission, Borough Comprehensive Planning
- Land Use Permits under Title 9 and Special Projects

Closing / Taikuu



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