

# IÑUUNIAĻIQPUT ILILUGU NUNANNUANUN

Documenting Our  
Way of Life through Maps



NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH  
Subsistence Mapping Project  
Volume 1

OCEANA



January 28, 2016

On behalf of the Northwest Arctic Borough, I invite you to read Subsistence Mapping Project or Iñuuniafiqput Iliługu Nunaḡḡuanun (Documenting Our Way of Life with Mapping).

The Northwest Arctic Borough Subsistence Mapping Project was a five-year research project documenting local traditional knowledge and scientific information depicting subsistence use (where people hunt, fish, and gather by season) and important ecological areas (where animals feed, breed, raise young, and migrate by season) surrounding seven communities including Kivalina, Noatak, Selawik, Noorvik, Deering, Buckland, and Kotzebue.

The project produced updated and scientifically defensible maps showing subsistence use and important ecological areas surrounding these communities for use in land use planning and commenting on federal plans, including but not limited to, offshore oil exploration and oil spill response. The project was conducted in fulfillment of Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Resolution 11-04 to improve subsistence information to aid in permitting, zoning, and land use decision-making; and in support of Title 9 of the Borough code, specifically Chapter 9.28, which recognizes the importance of protecting subsistence resources critical to the quality of life of all residents in the Borough.

The project was made possible with the support of many Borough residents; tribes; cities; staff; consults; and decision makers, including the two previous administrations of Mayor Siikauraq Martha Whiting and Mayor Reggie Joule; and with funding provided by the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP), the Oak Foundation, ConocoPhillips, and Royal Dutch Shell.

Taikuu,

Clement Richards, Mayor

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Damian Satterthwaite-Phillips, Christopher Krenz, Glenn Gray, Liz Dodd

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Front cover: Taylor Kramer holding up a shiifish in Kotzebue. Photo credit: Lance Kramer

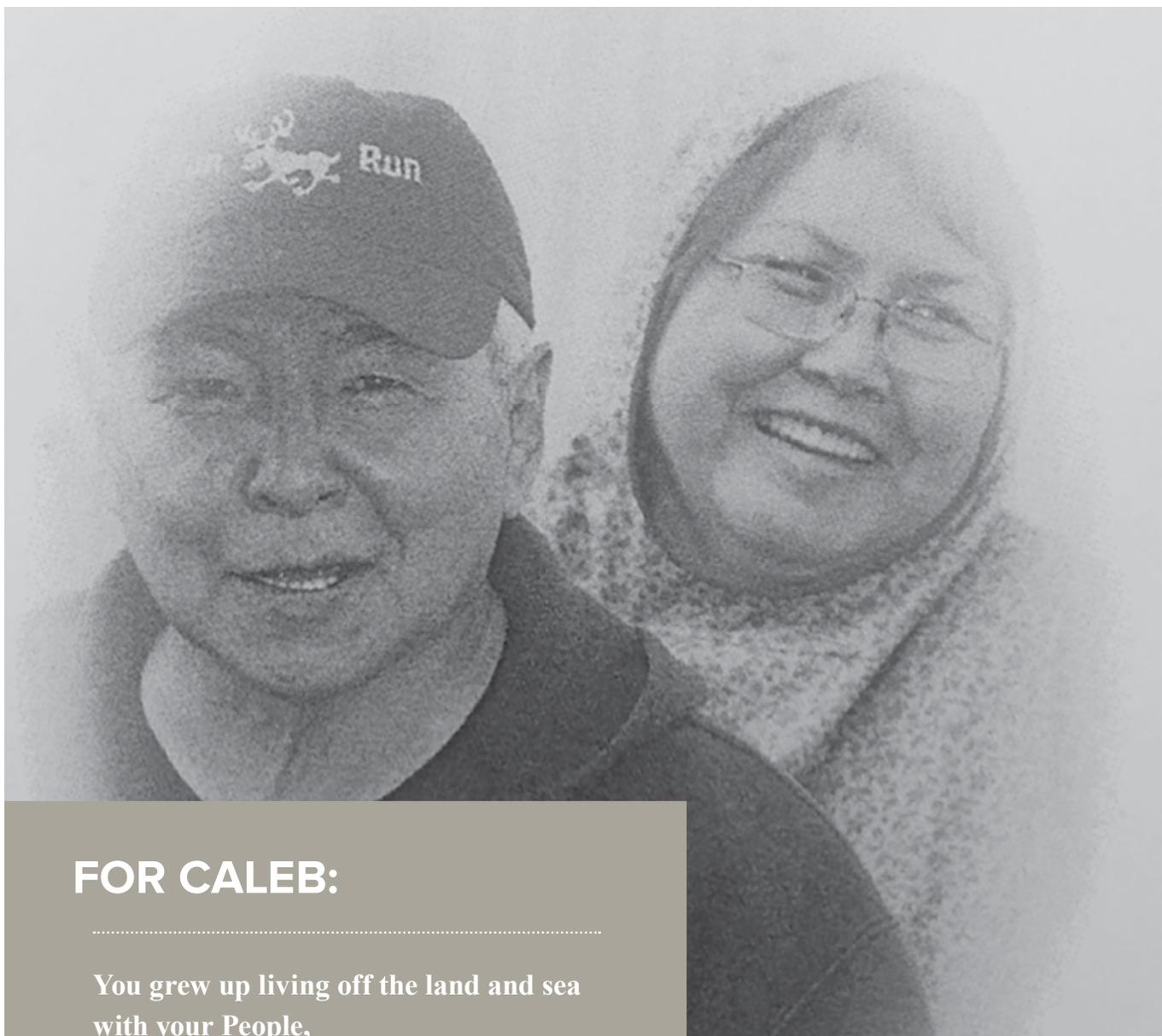
Back cover: Alan Sheldon hunting brant on the Kobuk River. Photo credit: Rebecca Wesley

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## FOR CALEB:

.....  
 You grew up living off the land and sea  
 with your People,  
 A student of everything they taught you.  
 With humility and respect,  
 You returned the favor,  
 And taught so many others.  
 May we now,  
 Bring this full-circle,  
 To protect and partake in,  
 What you found was so beautiful.  
 Quyaana.  
 .....

**Caleb Pungowiyi with his wife, Gladys.**  
*This atlas began as his vision.*  
 .....





## **GIS Specialists**

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**Brianne Mecum**, GIS Analyst  
Oceana

Brianne Mecum digitized many of the geo-referenced data for the project. She generated all the maps that contain the Oceana logo. Working with Chris Krenz, Ms. Mecum prepared portions of the Methods Part 2 section of chapter 1 and Appendix H explanations for how data were processed for the analysis maps in chapter 4.

**Kristie Livingston**, GIS Analyst  
Oceana

Ms. Livingston digitized many of the geo-referenced data for the project, including data compiled for the project on subsistence use areas and place names.

## **Photographers**

---

**Sarah Betcher**, Photographer/Videographer  
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Sarah Betcher visited the seven villages in the study over a period of two years. She conducted the interviews that became the “Voices” sections in chapter 2, prepared summaries of demographic and other data that informed the village history sections, and took many of the photos in the atlas. She also prepared a video for the Borough, titled “The Effects of Weather and Climate on Subsistence Communities,” as part of this project.

Local photographers who submitted images for the atlas included Wendie Schaeffer, Lance Kramer, Maija Katak Lukin, Karmen Monigold, Rebecca Wesley, Leanne Viveiros, Polly Agnik Schaeffer, Elizabeth Ferguson, Jaime IkaaQ Lambert, Leanne Schaeffer, Damian Satterthwaite-Phillips, Alysha Nanouk, Dolly Sheidt, Myra Wesley, John Chase, Myra Upicksoun, Martha Whiting, Ray Schaeffer, Norma Ballot, Roberta Moto, Iva Smith, Kelly Soxie, Claude Wilson, Zach Stevenson, Stephen Schaeffer, Molly Sheldon, Marceline Lee, Qutan Lambert, Lena Ferguson, and others.

## **Graphic Designer**

---

**Strategies 360**

Strategies 360, an Anchorage-based graphic design and public relations firm, designed the atlas, often under intense time constraints. The design team, led by Bryan Cox, worked extensively with Damian, Zach, and Liz to correct map legends and design map layout throughout the atlas.

## **Northwest Arctic Borough Administrators**

---

**Clement Richards, Sr.**, Borough Mayor

**Reggie Joule**, Former Borough Mayor

**Fred Smith**, Former Planning Director

**Noah Naylor**, Former Director, Science Department, and Current Planning Director

**Ukallaysaaq Tom Okleasik**, Former Planning Director

**Siikauraq Martha Whiting**, Former Borough Mayor



## Village Coordinators

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The Village Coordinators were responsible for assisting in recruiting participants in their villages, scheduling interviews and meetings, aiding in the interviews, and communicating project updates to the local city and tribal governments. Beyond the content provided in this atlas, village coordinators also organized and led subsistence-related educational activities in their villages.

**Raymond Lee, Jr.**

Village Coordinator for Deering and Buckland

**Alvin Ashby, Sr.**

Village Coordinator for Noatak and Kivalina

**Ellenore Sunii Jackson**

Village Coordinator for Noorvik and Selawik

**Lee Ballot, Sr.**

Village Coordinator for Noorvik and Selawik

## Village Contributors

---

Residents of the Northwest Arctic Borough who contributed data:

### Buckland

*Advisory Group Members—*

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*Individuals—*

Anita Ballot, Percy Ballot, Sr., David C. Barr, Calvin D. Brown, Sr., Timothy Gavin, John Geary, Gary Hadley, Nathan Hadley, Jr., Dennis A. Jones, Sr., Tony Jones, David Lee, Raymond Lee, Jr., Shannon Melton, Louis Parrish, Jr., Delbert Thomas, Edward Thomas, Tony Thomas, Thomas Washington, Sr., York Wilson III

### Deering

*Advisory Group Members—*

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*Individuals—*

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### Kivalina

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*Individuals—*

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**Kotzebue***Advisory Group Members—*

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**Noorvik***Advisory Group Members—*

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*Individuals—*

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James G. Allen, Jimmy Ballot, Jonas Ballot, Norma Ballot, Tommy P. Ballot, Sr., Louise Clark, John Cleveland, Artemus Coffin, Jackie A. Commack, Daniel Davis, Doris Davis, Lenora Davis, Sherry Davis, Daniel S. Foster, Sr., Daniel Foster, Jr., Tillman Foster, Willard Foster, Clayton Greist, Sr., Franklin G. Greist, Greg Hanshaw, Shannon Henry, Ellenore Jackson, Lawrence K. Larkin, Sr., Edward Loon, Sr., Della McCoy, Alice Mitchell, Delbert Mitchell, Sr., Freddierica Norton, Herbert Nazuruk, Brenda Oviok, Jack C. Snyder, Timothy J. Snyder, Sr., Frank Starbuck, Kristy Walton

. . . and many others who wished to remain anonymous or whom we were unable to contact to obtain consent to share their names.

## Other Contributors

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**Jim Magdanz**, Subsistence Specialist  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Jim Magdanz provided the bibliography that will accompany the online portion of this project—a comprehensive listing of research articles pertinent to subsistence in Northwest Alaska. He also provided a data gap analysis for the project.

**Nicole Braem**, Arctic Area Subsistence Resource Specialist  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Ms. Braem provided guidance in developing the methods and essential feedback to the team throughout the course of the project.

**John Chase**, Community Development and Flood Program Specialist for the Northwest Arctic Borough

**Chad Nordlum**, former Deputy Director of Planning for the Northwest Arctic Borough

## Project Timeline<sup>1</sup>

### 2009 – 2011

Oceana advisor Caleb Pungowiyi approaches Borough with project idea. CIAP and Oak Foundation funding secured, agreements with ADF&G, Oceana, and Project Evaluator signed, Project Coordinator hired, and project team assembled.

### Spring 2011

First Traditional Knowledge Specialist, Social Anthropologist, and Village Coordinators hired; project team meets for the first time in Kotzebue and project evaluation and monitoring plan adopted.

### Summer 2011

Project staff and researchers meet with tribal councils and villagers to solicit nominations for advisory group members. Flyers and radio announcements invite participation.

### Fall 2011

Local advisory groups assembled; the Project Coordinator and Anthropologist work with Oceana staff to establish regions and scales on base maps; first Subsistence Mapping Conference held in Kotzebue in November.

### Winter 2011

Local advisory group nominees reviewed and approved by tribes, cities, and the Borough.

### Spring 2012

Advisory groups meet to 1) identify local hunters, fishers, and gatherers to interview, and 2) review study methods; Borough assembly approves Oceana contract for scientific review of studies on coastal and marine subsistence species.

### Summer–Fall 2012

Advisory groups meet; second Subsistence Mapping Conference held in Kotzebue in October.

### Winter 2012

Advisory groups meet; Iñupiaq place names mapping project gets underway.

### Spring 2013

Dr. Damian Satterthwaite-Phillips replaces Dr. Brandon Chapman as project's social scientist and refines methods for gathering and analyzing data; study participants recruited in villages; Lance Kramer takes over from John Goodwin as Traditional Knowledge Specialist; Oceana approves mapping methodology; scientific review panel approves data gathering and analysis methods.

### Summer 2013

Dr. Satterthwaite-Phillips interviews study participants in seven villages.

### Fall–Winter 2013

Interim analysis of data conducted to determine representativeness and completeness of study sample. Buckland test sample conducted to verify methods.

### Spring–Summer 2014

Additional village participants interviewed to expand sample; youth education and outreach activities conducted in the project's seven participating communities; analysis of participants' subsistence patterns by age, gender, and location performed.

### Fall–Winter 2014

Interview data digitized and initial maps prepared; Oceana finishes marine and coastal literature review, analysis, and maps; with ConocoPhillips funding, project sponsors photo contest, Sarah Betcher completes film *Effects of Weather and Climate on Subsistence Communities* (gathering information used for "Voices" sections in ch. 2), and project supports U.S. Coast Guard "six-pack" license training for 10 borough residents; 2-day expert workshop held in Kotzebue in October.

1. A comprehensive summary of project activities and publications is provided at Appendix K.

## TIMELINE

### **Spring 2015**

Atlas editor and graphic design team hired; village subsistence histories drafted; first atlas draft presented to assembly in June; project sponsors student subsistence essay contest.

### **Summer 2015**

Borough stakeholders review atlas draft; major revision prepared. Youth essay contest winners travel to Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia; President Obama visits borough region in early September.

### **Fall 2015 –Winter 2016**

Online GIS database of mapped study data launched; writers' and stakeholders' feedback incorporated into major atlas revision; final edits checked and atlas sent to printer.

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## FOREWORD

### Traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering:

*“Deeply entrenched in the mind, heart, and spirit”*

The people native to Alaska’s northern regions have been finding, gathering, and eating food from the land and water around them for longer than anyone can remember. The acts of going out to get food, of cutting it up, preserving and sharing it, and eating it embody the spiritual, ethical, and organizing principles of northern cultures.

When the term “subsistence” came into use among Alaska’s policymakers sometime in the 20th Century, many Natives from across the state were reluctant to incorporate it into their speech. Many thought, and still think, it wrong to try to reduce an entire way of life to one word, especially a word almost synonymous with “food” or “physical health”—as though the ongoing struggle of Alaska’s first people to protect long-treasured hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering areas was simply about getting an Omega-rich diet.

As can be heard in the local voices that speak through these pages, what a person eats matters a lot. This atlas maps the locations local people in the Borough’s seven westernmost villages told researchers they go to get food. But the story told here is about culture, in that word’s most encompassing sense. The areas identified in this atlas are not just important to Iñupiat bellies but to *Iñupiat Iḡitqusiāt*—“The Iñupiat Spirit” described by Willie Iḡḡiāruk Hensley as “the bonds of language, shared cultural ties, and common understanding of geography and flora and fauna . . . –still defining qualities of our people.” When encountering the word “subsistence” in this volume, readers are invited to keep in mind Iḡḡiāruk’s words: “Iñupiat values are not material; they are deeply entrenched in the mind and heart and spirit . . . When these qualities disappear, we as a people begin to disappear.”<sup>1</sup>



Bertha Greist cutting fish with her *taata* Bill Sheldon, Jr. Photo credit: Molly Sheldon.

1. Hensley, Iḡḡiāruk William. 2009. *Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: A Memoir of Alaska and the Real People*. New York: Picador.