

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
Restoration Project Final Report

Native Village of Eyak Youth/Elders Conference on Subsistence

Restoration Project 98286
Final Report

Native Village of Eyak Traditional Council

For:

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
3601 C Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

December 2001

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Native Village of Eyak Youth/Elder Conference on Subsistence

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Study History: 98286 was initiated to address the use of traditional ecological knowledge in the EVOS research and provide community outreach by EVOS researchers and Trustee Council staff on the status of species important for subsistence use and the restoration program.

Abstract: This project brought together elders and other traditional knowledge bearers, youth and principal investigators for EVOS-sponsored research projects in an effort to facilitate the exchange of information between western scientific ways and traditional knowledge. Researchers from projects that have investigated important subsistence resources such as harbor seals, harlequin ducks, herring, salmon, and clams were invited and encouraged to interact with those elders and other traditional knowledge bearers who possess TEK that address the injured species. Collaboration between the two parties was encouraged.

Additionally, the conference provided a forum for sharing of information by EVOS researchers and Trustee Council staff regarding the status of injured species and the restoration program.

Over seventy youth and elders attended from 20 communities throughout the oil spill region. The conference was videotaped for use as an educational tool. It was also transcribed for future reference.

Key Words: Alaska Peninsula, community participation, Exxon Valdez oil spill, Kodiak Island, Lower Cook Inlet/Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, subsistence resources, traditional ecological knowledge, TEK

Project Data: Transcripts of the conference are on file at the Anchorage Restoration Office, 441 W. 5th Ave., Suite 500, Anchorage, AK 99501-2340, phone (907)278-8012.

Citation: Native Village of Eyak Traditional Council. 2001. Native Village of Eyak youth/elders conference on subsistence, *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Restoration Project Final Report (Restoration Project 98286), U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage, Alaska.

Summary of 1998 Native Village of Eyak Elders/Youth Subsistence Conference

Welcoming Potlatch: August 19, 1998

The conference opened with a welcoming potlatch on August 19. Community members, tribal representatives, and all invited guests from out of town were invited to the informal event.

August 20, 1998 Day 2

Welcoming Remarks - The first day was moderated by Monica Riedel, the Executive Director of the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission. She introduced Mr. Bob Henrichs, President of the Eyak Tribal Council and Community Facilitator for the community of Cordova with the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council. He talked of the need for this type of conference, with the battle throughout the state for subsistence hunting and fishing rights. He also encouraged anyone with anything to say to feel free to speak during the conference. Finally, he said that commercial fishing processors need to be held accountable for the by-catch that they waste.

Molly McCammon, Executive Director of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council welcomed everyone to the conference on behalf of the state and federal trustees. She came to Alaska 25 years ago and worked in Allakaket for a while. She has also lived in Amber and Fairbanks. When the oil spill occurred ten years ago, she was working for Sen. John Binkley in Juneau. The spill was important, but they were removed from the pain and suffering that took place in the communities affected by the oil. She began working for the Trustee Council five years ago and started working with communities. The \$5,000,000 Criminal Settlement for spill affected communities for subsistence related projects were one of her priorities coming into the process. She worked on getting the money spent on important community projects. Molly concluded by saying she would sit back and listen and learn during the conference and is excited to be there.

Senator Georgianna Lincoln, was introduced next. She spoke of her interpretation of subsistence as more than just hunting, fishing and gathering, but the true *chuitsuun* that one needs to have to practice subsistence (the inner, true love and appreciation for nature around you). Sports and recreational users cannot appreciate that dependence and interdependent relationship that a subsistence user has. She also encouraged the participants to become actively involved in the decision-making processes and not to sit back and let things happen.

Father Michael Oleksa was next and was asked to give a discussion on the cultural and religious aspects of subsistence. He told a story of how he came to Alaska in the 1970's and was assigned to Old Harbor as a missionary. The dependence and connection by rural Alaska on subsistence resources is much closer. The relationship between nature and the people, by necessity is closer and must be respected. Whereas, when living in a city, you

have technology, safety, and assurances that weather and other natural occurrences will not threaten you life. He went on to talk about differences and the need to maintain and protect a subsistence way of life. People don't own land, they belong to the land, Oleksa went on to say.

Ted Coney and the Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) presentation - The SEA presentation studies the factors controlling the production of pink salmon and herring in the Prince William Sound. This project determined that herring population was weak and salmon production was low. A study of the early stages of pink salmon and herring was conducted. Three major ideas were identified: the river-lake premise, prey switching, and over-wintering.

Identified river-lake idea is one in which the circulation of the Sound concentrate the forage for juvenile stages. The prey switching idea was an idea in which the forage for all consumers in the system modified the way in which large fish would prey upon small fish. Finally, the over winter idea was developed for herring primarily because it's the herring that store energy to get through a period in the winter when food is not available.

The conclusions of the project regarding the river-lake idea is that plankton distributions and their carbon isotope signatures suggest that seeding from the Gulf rather than flushing from the Sound is a more important variable modifying the local stocks of plankton each year. Their combination of seeding and flushing is what is really going on.

The prey switching hypothesis confirms that alternative prey for fry predators modifies the losses of fry each year.

Finally, the over-wintering hypothesis confirms regional differences and energetic condition of juvenile herring sampled at the onset of winter suggest that summer and fall growth is an important determinant of survival patterns observed after the winter fast.

Rita Miraglia and the Project Jukebox - The Project Jukebox is a project that is putting oral histories on PC-based programs. You can put in photographs, documents, and organize them on a CD-ROM in such a way that you can interact with them, call up different things, and use it to do research and learn more about your communities. Nanwalek, Port Graham, Tatitlek, and Chenega Bay are the communities in the Chugach Region that will be involved. The Nanwalek and Port Graham are a combination of old oral history tapes that were recorded, some of them as much as 20 years ago with some new material that was collected just for the jukebox. They both are in Alutiiq and English.

The Tatitlek Jukebox is going to be more new interviews. High school students did all the interviews. They interviewed elders, adults, and themselves. The Chenega Bay Jukebox is mostly new interviews and one older one.

Panel Discussion on Ways to Assist the Recovery Effort -Monica Riedel, Walter Meganack, Jr., , Robert Henrichs, Pete Kompkoff, Jr., Nancy Yeaton, Paul Panamariof, Don Kompkoff

Pete Kompkoff - Need to keep sending in public comments. Without our involvement decisions will be made without us. We must realize that submitting proposals will have a long-term affect and prepare and enter into the process knowing that.

Walter Meganack, Jr. - We go further to get our subsistence resources in Port Graham to relieve the pressures on our local stocks. We have a pink salmon project funded by the Trustees that raises fish in the hatchery and releases them in the bay. We have a salmon stream enhancement project that will allow for greater natural returns of salmon to local streams for subsistence use. We need to make sure our streams continue to have habitats that encourage natural runs of salmon. We need to gather and collect our own data on what we harvest in order to self-manage our uses of resources. Elders need to be involved and relied upon to assist with that. Younger generations need to learn to conserve and use resources properly.

Robert Henrichs - The road to Whittier should not be built. It will only cause the western side of the Sound to get flooded with people. We had a small project funded with the Forest Service, but politics made it difficult for us to participate in to restore some streams on the eastern side of the Sound here. You can only fish the flats for subsistence during a commercial opener - that don't sound right. They're trying to put a bike trail down there and that would be a forerunner to a road to Cordova. That would change everything. I'd like to see more of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council money go toward actual restoration instead of buying Native lands.

Pete Kompkoff - Mary Kompkoff would like me to mention that back in the old days when subsistence food was caught it was shared with the whole village. Nowadays, it doesn't quite happen like that. They bring it home and don't share it with the community. We got a grant from EVOS for harvesting, but I wish people went back to the way it used to be.

Nancy Yeaton - The Trustee Council has funded a few projects for the village. The Clam Restoration project is reviving clams in our areas. The harbor seal biosampling project is has revived a lot of the youth participation in the community. Three young ladies are biosample in the community. I was so proud of them when they were doing a biosample on a seal last spring. I was overwhelmed with emotion watching them because there was a lot of confidence in the way they were handling the sample. We did a petition for the Trustee Council and the whole community signed the letter. I'm involved in many things like that with the community.

Don Kompkoff - I sit on the Federal Subsistence Board, Southcentral Subsistence Advisory Council. We deal with many subsistence issues. Of those, catching moose is a large one. We got the residents of Chenega Bay and Tatitlek a season to hunt from August 2e to September 2& for a 50-inch or three brow tine moose. We are also working

on other issues that are important to Prince William Sound, Cordova, Kenai, and the Kenai Peninsula.

Gary Kompkoff - The village of Tatitlek doesn't agree with the word "subsistence." It was created to try to define or describe the traditional way of life that we have lived for generations in our village, so we try to stay away from the word "subsistence." First, villages do not have to rely on the Trustee Council strictly for funding. Second, the subsistence survey that is going to happen this winter will show that we have to travel much further and for longer periods of time. We are not using the same resources that we were using before the oil spill either. Third, the human aspect of the oil spill has not been paid enough attention. Subsistence is not just hunting, it's sharing and everything involved with the way we live. Fourth, a lot of villages are still concerned with the safety of food we eat. Lesions in herring and other things. Fifth, there needs to be more interaction between researchers, scientists, and the Native community.

Friday, August 21, 1998 - Day 3

Glenn Ujoika - I'd like to thank everyone for attending this workshop. It's a very important conference, especially to have the youth and elders together. I'm the vice president of the Native Village of Eyak. I also sit as the present Chair of the Nunagpet, which is the Chugach Region environmental protection consortium. I'd like to stress a few points. Individual and tribal participation are very important. We must empower tribal governments and respect the sovereign nature of their status. We have a government-to-government relationship with the federal government. The outer continental shelf is the last place that we have not had an act of Congress that's removed our rights, our tribal rights. Nunagput has an Memorandum of Agreement with the Minerals Management Service. The State and Feds had a meeting for the Water Protection Act, and it was very limited tribal notification. They just wanted to include us as the public process level.

David Irons - Fish and Wildlife Services have studied seabirds and marine birds since 1980. Dave spoke of the bio ecosystem projects funded through Trustees Council, relationship between seabirds and forage fish, herring capelin, and sandlace-known as the APEX (Alaska Predator Ecosystem Experiment) project. An ecosystem shift or a regime shift occurred in the late 1970's. Since the 70's and 80's people have observed shrimp and capelin and pacific sandlace declined while pollock, cod, and flat fish increased. Birds in Prince William Sound have not been studied with an exception of a few-like the pigeon guillemet-these diets changed in the 1970's. The sandlace declined rapidly.

The marled murrelets are the most abundant in PWS, their diets have changed. In the late 70's they were eating sandlace and not much pollock, in the late 80's the sandlace dropped and they eat pollock. The shift is something that needs to be kept in mind while studying the species during the oil spill. Some of the birds declined from 50% to 90% during the shift.

The APEX project focused on a couple of species, asking if food limiting the recovery of species that were injured by the spill. Because of the regime shift, some of the food items birds eat were lower in numbers. Some murrelets were radio tagged to study the eating pattern. Don Kompkoff observed that in Chenega Bay the marbled murrelets are declining since the spill and after the spill he maybe seeing a few more now.

Break Out Session, Black Duck Session - Dan Rosenberg: Through satellite technology the project is linking traditional knowledge with western science. Black ducks are also known as scoters and there are three species. These birds have been historically hunted for thousands of years. The black ducks are known as white winged scoters, but surf scoters-are more of abundant of the three. The black scoter, all black with yellow bill, are less abundant of the three.

The project started by studying nesting, molting, wintering areas and migration routes. Population of black ducks are declining. Studies show these birds are declining in numbers and that they are the least studied.

The project implanted satellite transmitters while the ducks were feeding on herring spawn. They were attracted by decoys and eventually caught in mist nets. Transmitters were put in eight male ducks and two females. Veterinarians surgically implanted transmitters which were the size of thin fig newtons. Transmitters cost \$3,000. They send a signal from the bird to a satellite, which relays the movements of the birds in four day intervals. The birds will carry the transmitters for the rest of their lives.

The birds are diving ducks so putting it externally would interfere with diving and feeding ability. This is still in an experimental stage so only a few birds were implanted, although it has worked with other species.

Out of the ten transmitters, four were successful and several of the birds only lived a few weeks. Some of this is attributed to malfunctioning radio transmitters, while others because of the surgery. The first bird traveled 900 miles from Sheep bay into the Northwest Territory; moved a little out of the Northwest Territory and it is believed to have nested there, as it did not move much. A factor of studying the birds is to study the body temperature. It is believed that one bird has died as they do not have a healthy temperature and there is no more information from this bird. The Gwit'chins around Invik have seen a decline in the black ducks and every spring the return of the black ducks.

The second bird started around Graveyard Point on May 4, then went to the mouth of the Copper River to Graveyard Point for a week. He then went around Orca Inlet for a little while, passing on to the Passage Canal to Whittier bray 25, then to Kachemak Bay for a short period. Afterwards, he went to Kamishak Bay where there is herring spawn, to north of Dillingham to the mouth of the Kuskokwim, and to Nelson Island and back and forth as it molted off the Kuskokwim with several thousand scoter males.

Bird three went from the Prince William Sound area to Port San Juan to the southern part of the sound, east coast of Montague around Patton Bay, to east coast of Montague around May 25 was last seen around Prince William Sound then to Kachemak Bay to Kamishak for a week or two to Nushagak in Bristol Bay south of Dillingham, molted off mouth of Kuskokwim and Kuskokwim Shoals area.

Bird Four started at Prince William Sound and was believed to be an impaired male. He went to southeast of Montague by McCloud Harbor, to south end of Bainbridge Island, then to Procession Rocks. He then went to Orca Inlet for a while, to Crafton Island, Montague at east end of Hinchinbrook until mid-June. He finally went straight to the mouth of the Kuskokwim.

The males molted off the mouth of the Kuskokwim and the females are nested around the Northwest Territory.

Future plans include continuing to put more transmitters in birds next spring. I will work with Tatitlek, Port Graham and Nanwalek to gather Traditional Ecological Knowledge and to work with the Youth Area Watch as well.

Jody Seitz - The herring project encompasses 36 interviews which were conducted to find out where the herring were traditionally abundant. The people interviewed included residents of the Prince William Sound and Kachemak Bay area.

Herring fishermen know if they are looking at juvenile or adult school and this helps to predict next years fishing season. The Prince William Sound Science Center put four drift buoys around Port Gravina to see where herring larvae drift. They concluded that when herring turn to adult, they may get stuck in Port Gravina. Additionally, people have seen herring in the Tatitlek Narrows as early as 1934.

SEA Project also studied Eaglet Bay-information overlaps between 1970-1996. In 1993 and 1996 pilots landed to test herring and determined that they had seen the same school of herring before.

In the 1970's fisherman were traveling for bait herring and plugged their trawls with juvenile herring. They decided to stay away from the head of those bays. They were not sure if there was more than one stock of herring and where they go when spawned.

Cordova fishermen observed the herring fish entering the Sound from the Gulf of Alaska. A Tatitlek couple in the 40's observed the herring being so abundant all year round that they would get chopped up by the kicker of the boat. Also remember other mammals like seals, whales, and winter kings following the herring.

The Tatitlek Chief during territorial days, had the Federal Government close the narrows for herring fishing use and now the fish only come in the spring to spawn. Residents of Tatitlek commented that this is the first time that they have ever seen herring with

diseases and they cannot recall the herring being at such a low point in the Tatitlek Narrows.

Observations around Port Dick indicated that there were herring in some span between 1960 and 1995. In Resurrection Bay area, more forage fish than herring have traditionally been observed. In 1989 Prince William Sound had the largest amount of herring spawn ever and the following four years had huge commercial fisheries on herring.

Craig Mischler - Craig has worked nine years with the villages on Kodiak Island. "Whiskers in Development" is a collection of local knowledge about marine mammals, concentrating on harbor seal and Steller sea lions. This project was funded in 1992 and surveyed 60 coastal communities. Cooperative agreements with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence were entered into. Local surveyors worked with elders and hunters to document their knowledge.

Bristol Bay, Aleutians and Pribilofs, Southeast Alaska, The Alaska Peninsula, North Pacific Rim and Kodiak were the six regions of study. He would like this program to be distributed to Alaskan schools so they may learn about marine mammals in their communities and other communities. George Inga has been his mentor and teacher for 8 years. He has taught Craig the body parts of a seal and sea lion in Alutiiq and some parts in Tlingit. Scientist should realize that Alaska Natives have thorough knowledge of anatomy of animals, organs, and body parts. A presentation on how Whiskers Project works was demonstrated.

Hugh Short - Community Involvement Project is funded through *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustees Council. The project has 10 community Facilitators which are: Ouzinkie, Paul Panamarioff; Bob Henrichs, Eyak; Gary Kompkoff Tatitlek; Walter Meganack Jr., Port Graham; Pete Kompkoff, Chenega Bay; Nancy Yeaton, Nanwalek; Charlie Hughey, Valdez; Virginia Aleck, Chignik Lake; Edgar Blatchford, Seward; Lillian Elvsaa, Seldovia.

The Community Involvement Project began in 1995 and Martha Vlasoff was an instrumental person in getting it funded. The main goal is to work with the Trustee Council involving community residents in the scientific research, giving the communities technical assistance, and finding out what is important to the communities and projects that should be funded through EVOS. Projects funded include the Lower Cook Inlet Waste Management Plans, which helps Port Graham with their marine pollution, used oil, household waste materials, and different pollutants. The Youth Area Watch is another project funded and will be expanded to the Lower Cook Inlet Area. Paul Panamarioff has been working with the whole Kodiak region to have an internship for high school students to work with the Trustee Council. The interns will work with Alaska Science and Technology Foundation to test for PSP. Funding for the criminal settlement monies was under this program and some projects include the Port Graham Float Dock and coho project, Tatitlek Mariculture Project, Alaska Peninsula archaeological display equipment, just to name a few.

Henry Huntington - Traditional Ecological Project as a TEK specialist, there are two basic points can benefit the communities as well as scientists and managers and works with strong local involvement and commitment. This came about, as a desire for greater community involvement and the elders know they had a lot to offer and wanted to get involved. The trustee council was willing to do it!

The Black Duck project was one of the projects, Dan was able to find out what Tatitlek wanted and develop a relationship with them. In September a TEK workshop will be held in Chenega Bay. Also Dept. of Fish and Game will be developing a manual describing documenting TEK. A rough version of a database directory describing what TEK is. TEK is a way in which elders can work with youth to document some of the knowledge that is stored with people. A beluga whale study was done in Norton Bay area, the elders did not want to share where subsistence fishing was abundant, and there are ways to get around this to respect their wishes. This is a way in which communities can play a greater role in research management. Communities provide the leadership and direction on the way TEK will go, Hugh gave two stories, which described how TEK works.

Dr. Laura Johnson - Culture and Heritage-Department of Tribal Development and Operations with Chugachmiut. Projects: archeological: doing surveys at Nuchek: found 54 artifacts which are hoping to be put in a regional museum. Development of a repository and display facilities in communities: look at new building a and repositories display facilities. Cultural preservation: language, traditions, this is the Department of Education grant-a 3 year project. Involves the communities in the development of a curriculum that incorporates Native heritage and culture into the school curriculum. First-year is developing an overall curriculum that focuses on the history and heritage of the Chugach region. Year two focuses on history and heritage. Year-three works on development of curriculum that can also be used other places.

Sharing Their Knowledge Panel

Alice Moonin - the Health Service Coordinator: introduced the panel "sharing their knowledge" George Inga from Old Harbor, Albert Wilson from Seldovia, Don Kompkoff from Valdez, Feona Sawden Port Graham, Elizabeth Randall from Seward.

George Inga - Dragners are taking away some of the subsistence, lost the ability to subsistence for bears: also bears eat the fish.

Don Kompkoff- Lived off the land when he was younger had like cockles, king crab, fish, seal, bear and goat. A lot of bears are around Chenega Bay; he kills them so that they do not hurt the kids.

Ms Feona Sawden - Remembers cockles, bidarkas, and fishing in the creek tell the youth not to be afraid to try everything.

Ms. Randall - Remembers digging clams, preserving things, blowing up the seal stomach, ducks, and fish. We need to teach the children the real meaning of subsistence. living off the land-grew up in Unalaska

August 22, 1998 – Day 4

Youth Panel

Jim LaBelle Jr. - Port Graham Local Curriculum Coordinator: moderator of the youth panel. He talked about their involvement in restoration efforts or subsistence activities and Youth Area Watch

Senafont Shugak III - Ivanoff Bay fish everyday caribou and clams give to the elders brought them to Perryville elders.

Teresa Evans - Nanwalek people paying more attention to money instead of creatures God gave us, money will not do nothing for us if there are no more fish

Michelle Vlasoff - Tatitlek Youth Area Watch, didn't care for science until Youth Area Watch

Ms. Tanya Totemoff - Tatitlek, it is our way of life, depends on subsistence

Ms. Nancy Kompkoff - Elders respecting subsistence the most, youth seem not to be into subsistence, and not respecting it the way it should be respected.

Ms. Christine Lind - Chignik Lake: youth learn from the elders

Mr. Andrew Lind - Chignik Lake: Taught traditional way of quartering a caribou, a bear, berries and how to prepare fish, have to go further to get caribou.

After the youth panel, questions were asked on the panel regarding the Youth Area Watch program. The youth from the Chugach region were very enthusiastic about the program and thought it was very rewarding. Other youth from the Kodiak Island and Alaska Peninsula regions were not involved in the program. Kodiak was just developing their program and recruiting had not yet began. No program was expected from the Alaska Peninsula region, but it was clear that the youth were very interested in the concept. Many from the audience asked questions regarding their use of subsistence resources, whether they thought there has been a difference between now and before the oil spill, and what they feel is necessary to ensure the continuation of the culture. The answers were articulate and gave insight into what the values and concerns of the younger generation are today.

Closing Remarks

An open mike session was held at the end of the workshop to allow for people to express any feeling they may have about information presented, or any other comments that pertain to the issue of subsistence. Many were very thankful to the Native Village of

Eyak, Chugach Regional Resources Commission, and the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council for funding and organizing this event. They commented that for many, this was the first time they have seen old friends in years, and having access to all the information in one conference was very important to them. Comments regarding programs such as the Youth Area Watch and Community Involvement Project were very important to continue the subsistence way of life and continue involving youth with elders and in science programs was also exhibited.

Conclusion

This report was put together by summarizing the comments made by participants in the conference. Summaries are not always accurate or reflect the intent of the speaker. If there is a certain aspect of this report that interests you, I would point you toward the complete final proceedings available at the ARLIS library in Anchorage.

Additionally, the a videotape of the conference will be made available at ARLIS and the Native Village of Eyak Council Office is Cordova, Alaska.

We thank a number of people who greatly assisted with the conference. The *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council, Chugach Regional Resources Commission, staff of the Native Village of Eyak, all the volunteers who worked during the conference, all the principle investigators who gave presentations, all the elders and youth who attended, and everyone else who we may have forgotten. Thank you all.