

*Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill  
Restoration Project Annual Report

Archaeological Site Stewardship in the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Area:  
1996 Annual Report

Restoration Project 96149  
Annual Report

This annual report has been prepared for peer review as part of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council restoration program for the purpose of assessing project progress. Peer review comments have not been addressed in this annual report.

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June, 1997

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**Study History:** The Archaeological Site Stewardship program is a pilot project designed to train an cadre of local residents to monitor endangered sites. The program began with EVOS funding during 1992 for preparation of a steward manual and field notebook. After a three year hiatus in EVOS funding the program was funded for field training during FY96.

**Abstract:** The Site Stewardship program seeks to foster local support for protection of endangered archaeological sites. The intent is to train local residents in the techniques needed to record data about site status and periodically monitor sites for injury. The stewards work with a regional coordinator who also coordinates findings with local governmental agencies or other land managers. The stewards are educated about the prehistory of their area through provided literature and on site training from professional archaeologists.

**Key Words:** Archaeology, stewards, Kenai, Kachemak Bay, Kodiak, Chignik

**Citation:** Reger, D., and D. Corbett, 1997, Archaeological site stewardship in the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill area: 1996 annual report. *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Restoration Project Annual Report (Restoration Project 96149), Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage, Alaska.

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## **Archaeological Site Stewardship in the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Area: 1996 Annual Report**

### **Introduction**

Damage to archaeological sites as a result of cleanup activities after the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill has been amply documented in damage assessment studies performed since the spill. Damage from vandals has continued at sites on public lands during the past several seasons. Reports of damage at other sites continue and the level of depredation needs to be monitored as a first step in site protection.

An important key to saving Alaska's cultural heritage sites is promotion of local stewardship of historic and prehistoric sites. The idea of site stewardship is to get local people to take an interest in sites and the information they contain and to convince people to report site destruction or damage to sites. Land managers are not staffed to enable adequate monitoring and protection. The EVOS funded stewardship program involves local stewards in monitoring selected endangered sites. In return, the stewards receive schooling in the history and prehistory of their area and training in data collection. A successful site stewardship program must depend very heavily on interest, education and active involvement of the public.

An attempt was made to start a stewardship program in Southcentral Alaska during 1992, when the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council funded development of a manual and fieldbook suitable for beginning a program in the spill area. Stewardship programs in Arizona, Texas and British Columbia were reviewed for direction and ideas for structures. A first draft of the manual and fieldbook, originally written with the intent of adapting them to fit specific situations have been modified during FY 96 and training materials specific to each program area have been compiled. Sites to be monitored by the stewards were selected and the program implemented during the past year.

### **Chignik Area**

Archaeologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service met with interested residents of the Chignik area to educate local students about the value of protecting sites. Efforts in the Chignik area are being coordinated with local native groups which requires considerable time to allow group discussion. The result is a slowly developing network but one which will have strong local support.

First begun in March 1993, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service program in the Chignik area has been aimed primarily at education of local people and providing training to interested residents. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife archaeologist delivered public talks about the archaeology of the area on two occasions and advised on 1995 test excavations near the school at Chignik Lake. The site tested has been heavily damaged from construction and subjected to collector

activity.

Stewardship in the Chignik area is, as yet, mainly an educational effort. A primary focus is working with the schools to educate young people about their past. Another primary effort has been working with private landowners in Chignik Bay and Chignik Lake to protect sites on their land. All potential sites for stewardship monitoring in the area belong to the two village corporations. Both organizations are grappling with the problems of site looting and local collecting. There are people in both communities willing to be stewards. Efforts to date have been aimed at defining a program in the Chignik area. Two individuals in Chignik Bay are interested in local coordination and are working with local corporate and tribal groups to gain support for the protection efforts. Specific sites have not yet been selected.

### Kodiak Area

Resident fishermen in the areas of Uganik Bay and Uyak Bay on Kodiak Island have expressed to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service archaeologists interest in monitoring sites near their setnet locations (Figure 1). Those sites have suffered depredations from vandals and are among sites already identified for monitoring by the agency. Residents on the southeast side of Kodiak Island have also inquired about monitoring endangered sites in the Sitkalidak Straits area. As long term residents of the area, they are able to provide historic information about site injuries. Although the program on Kodiak is still developing, seven individuals have volunteered to monitor at least eight sites which have suffered vandalism.

Sites identified as candidates for steward monitoring include the KOD-183 Site in the Noisey Islands and three sites in the Kiavak Bay area. The KOD-183 Site is a midden and house pit site where erosion has exposed cultural remains to collectors and loss to erosion. A local resident has volunteered to monitor the site for vandal activity and rate of erosion.

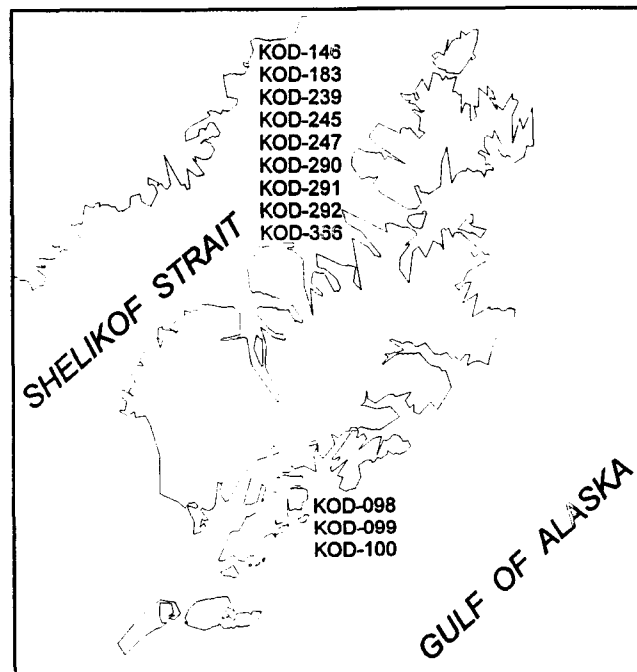


Figure 1. Sites monitored by stewards in the Kodiak area.

Kiavak Bay contains three midden sites which have experienced erosion and collector activity. Kiavak Bay #417 (KOD-098) has extensive exposures of fire cracked rocks and adjacent house depressions. Collectors have been active at the site. The Kiavak Site (KOD-099) also has exposed midden with eroding whale bone and fish remains. House depressions

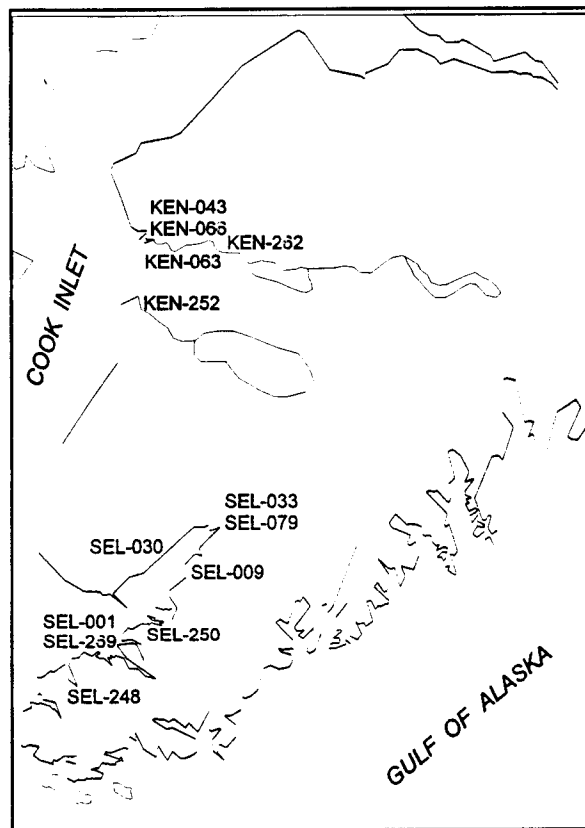
are located nearby. The site is extensively exposed to collectors. Kiavak Bay #419 (KOD-100) is located very near KOD-099 and was partly excavated during the 1960's. It too is exposed to collector activity.

In the spring of 1996, Debra Corbett attended a meeting of the Northwest Kodiak Setnetters Association and identified stewards for the Uganik Bay area. She visited and trained four stewards, the Myrick family, during August. They are monitoring KOD-247, KOD-239, and KOD-245. Other setnetters are monitoring KOD-366, KOD-290, KOD-291, KOD-292, and KOD-146. All of those sites are eroding and exposed to collector activity. They all contain midden and several have house pits. KOD-366 is an historic cabin.

### Kenai/Soldotna Area

During 1994, staff from the Office of History and Archaeology met with archaeologists in Homer and the Kenai-Soldotna area to develop a site monitoring program. Sites selected in the central part of the Kenai Peninsula include prehistoric sites eroding from natural and human causes and a historic cabin which has frequently been used for shelter by transient visitors. The latter attempts were developed with University of Alaska, Anchorage, Kenai campus staff and student volunteers. Representatives from a local Native organization have voiced interest in the program and negotiations with that groups are progressing.

The central Kenai Peninsula area sites are located along the Kenai River except for the historic cabin near Kasilof (Figure 2). Six stewards trained to monitor five sites. The stewards work in pairs along the Kenai River and their efforts are coordinated by Diane Thomas who teaches anthropology part-time at Kenai Peninsula College. A site stewardship and interpretative program is also being developed independently by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Service with the Kenaitze Tribe and Cook Inlet Region. That program is separate from the EVOS funded program but the two programs have benefited from cross training and experience. Injury to the sites along the Kenai River derives from vandalism, erosion and trampling by the many fishermen walking the river's edge.



**Figure 2.** Sites monitored by stewards in the Kenai and Kachemak Bay areas.

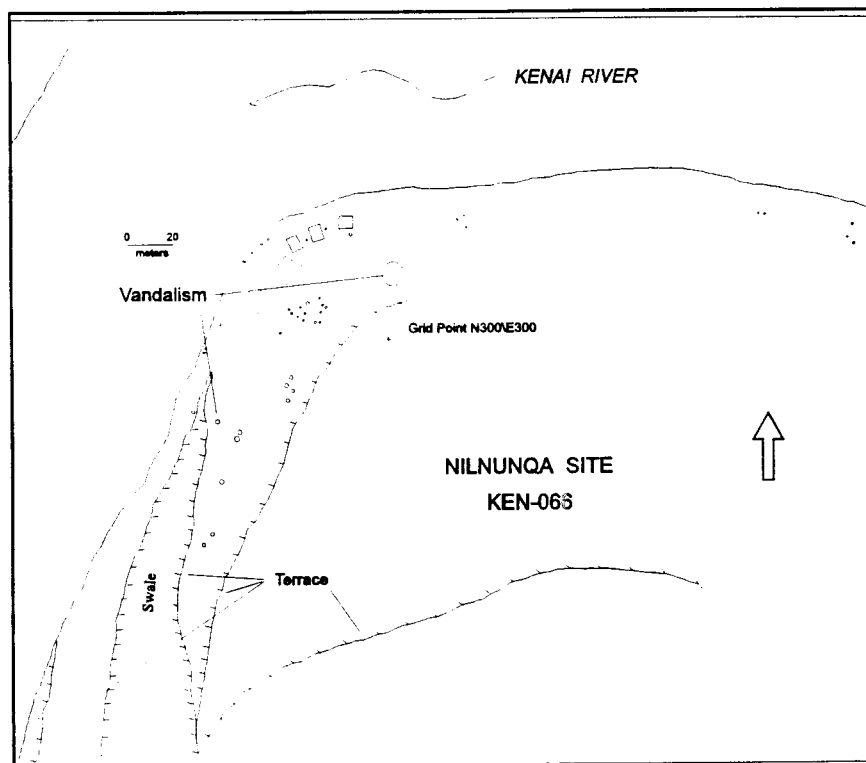


The Moose River Site (KEN-043) is located in the Izzak Walton State Recreation Site. Damage has occurred along the eroding bank of the Moose River where stone tools and moose bone have been exposed. The site is an intensively fished area and degraded by foot traffic as much as intentional vandalism. A known artifact collector has collected artifacts from the site recently. Two stewards, Terry Carter and Mary West, have agreed to monitor the site and to map the stream bank profile so that the rate of erosion can be documented.

The Nilnunqa Site (KEN-066) is the focus of Nilnunqa State Historic Park on the Kenai River and was vandalized during 1995 (Figure 3). Several holes were dug into the site and a wire screen used for sifting soil was left behind by the vandal. Stewards Shannon Kovacs and Larry Ford agreed to monitor the site during 1996.

Another site in the same area of the Kenai River is the Naptowne Rapids Site (KEN-262) which is in the Bing's Landing State Recreation Site. The site was severely damaged by flooding during 1995 and artifacts were collected

at the site by the same known collector as at other sites. Moose bones eroding from the site have been disturbed also. Terry Carter and Mary West are stewards at this site.



**Figure 3.** Nilnunqa Site map showing areas of vandalism.

The Slikok Creek Site (KEN-063) is located in the Slikok State Recreation Site and has suffered seriously from fishermen foot traffic and erosion. The site is periodically monitored by Dr. Alan Boraas of the nearby Kenai Peninsula College. The cultural deposits are exposed to vandal activity and have been visited by a known collector of artifacts.

The Kasilof Cannery Watchman's Cabin (KEN-252) has deteriorated significantly during the past few years. Vandals have defaced the building, removed structural pieces and littered modern trash both inside and around the structure. Neglect also caused some deterioration. The building was identified for attention during 1994 in an early attempt to

start a site stewardship program. Keith Nichols and Deana Kennedy volunteered to document the cabin and were joined by Catherine Cassidy during 1996. The cabin and surrounding property are owned by the State of Alaska.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service worked independently of the EVOS program with Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and the local native groups to monitor sites in the area of Russian River and the upper Kenai River. Monitors collected baseline information to be used in formulation of a long term protection plan for sites in the area.

### **Kachemak Bay Area**

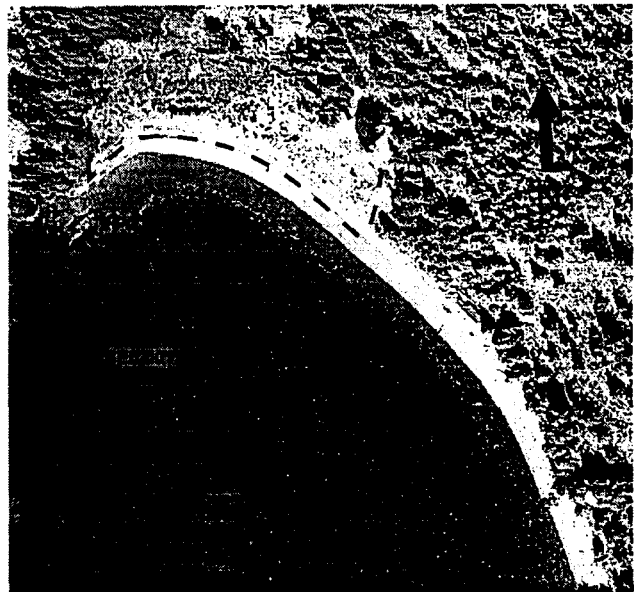
Kachemak Bay contains many sites rich in valuable artifacts and has many people interested in seeing the sites protected from vandals and erosion. Two residents of Homer trained as archaeologists have agreed to serve as regional coordinators for the program. The two, Janet Klein and Peter Zollars have long participated in University sponsored excavations around Kachemak Bay and have extensive contacts with interested local residents. Plans to coordinate the program with the Pratt Museum in Homer are also underway. Training of the Kachemak Bay stewards was conducted by the area coordinators.

Three site stewards in addition to the coordinators monitored eight sites in Kachemak Bay. Four of the sites were identified in initial screening with the other four sites added because they also were damaged and were convenient to other monitored locations. Vandalism was documented at three of the sites and erosional damage documented at all sites. Site locations are scattered from the head of the bay to near Seldovia.

The Yukon Island Main Site (SEL-001) is the best known site of those selected in Kachemak Bay for monitoring by site stewards. The site was the primary focus of Frederica de Laguna's pioneering research into the prehistory of Cook Inlet.

Excavations at the site provided the chronological framework which has guided archaeological interpretations of Cook Inlet for the past 60 years. The importance of the site was nationally recognized in 1962 with inclusion on the list of National Historic Landmarks. It is partly privately owned and partly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Alaska Earthquake of March 27, 1964, caused subsidence of the site and escalated exposure of the midden to looters. Artifacts are being collected from the intertidal beach now. A resident on Yukon Island, Findlay

Abbott, has agreed to cooperate with the Site Stewardship Program in tracking changes to the site. He has (with other relatives) tracked changes to the site for a number of years and has



Air Photo Date: 6-23-63

**Figure 4.** Location of steward monitored sites SEL-001 and SEL-269.

now begun documenting his observations.

Adjacent to the Yukon Island Main Site is another area of past occupation, a site designated SEL-269 on the State site inventory. The current status of the site was documented by area steward coordinators Klein and Zollars during 1996. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife managed site is exposed to collector activity by storm erosion. The site is important because it contains evidence of several periods of occupation from the historic to pre-Kachemak times.

Another of the sites investigated by de Laguna during the 1930's, the Cottonwood Creek Site (SEL-030), was visited by Klein and Zollars during 1996. The site is eroding and has been recently been vandalized. A birch bark basket was illegally taken from the site and turned in to the Pratt Museum in Homer. The site is one of the few sites where both Kachemak Culture and later Denaina Athapaskan occupations have been unearthed. The site is within Kachemak Bay State Park.

The Aurora Spit Site (SEL-009) was selected for monitoring by Klein and Zollars during 1996. The site is partially within Kachemak Bay State Park and partly on private land. It is heavily eroded and vandalized.

The Chugachik Island Site (SEL-033), also in Kachemak Bay State Park, is visited each year by vandals. The rich site has eroded considerably but has also been the focus of research excavations during the 1970's by William Workman of the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Vandals have reportedly used water hoses to wash for artifacts at the site in the past.

The Seal Beach Site (SEL-079), also located on Chugachik Island, was excavated and rehabilitated during 1980 by Karen Wood Workman. The site is located on a favorite camping beach and a candidate for vandalism. The site is in Kachemak Bay State Park and is being monitored by Klein and Zollars.

The Island Creek Site (SEL-250) is an isolated site which has yielded Ocean Bay II artifacts and is exposed to vandal activity. Within Kachemak Bay State Park because of the Seldovia Land Trade, the site was tested during 1995. Vandals have moved rocks left on the site and removed reference stakes left on the site as semi-permanent datum points. The volunteer steward monitoring this site Gerry Haughey, resides and works at a lodge a short distance from the site.

A site on the road system near Seldovia, SEL-248, is eroding and subject to vandalism. The site was found from shell midden eroding into a road cut through the site. The site, radiocarbon dated to about 500 years old, contains Late Prehistoric artifacts and is rich in faunal remains. It is being monitored by Susan Springer of Seldovia and is located on property owned by the City of Seldovia.

## Steward Training

Training for the stewards has proceeded at differing rates and to various levels of intensity. Some stewards have worked with archaeologists in the past and already are familiar with the important issues. Most stewards in the Kenai/Soldotna area participated in a 1994 attempt to start a field program.

A package of information about each site was assembled and distributed to stewards assigned to each site. Package content varied but ideally contained a map or air photo of the site, available information about the site, and literature describing the archaeology of the area.

Literature distributed in the Kodiak area included copies of an article titled *Perspectives in the Prehistory of Kodiak Island, Alaska*, (Clark 1966:358-371). Kachemak Bay area literature included copies of the article *Archaeology of the Point West of Halibut Cove, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska*, (Boraas and Klein, 1992:183-204). Site stewards in the Kachemak Bay area were also provided with a good non-technical book about the archaeology of the area written by site steward and area coordinator Janet Klein (Klein 1996). No good summary article or paper describing representative collections for the Kenai area exists in the literature. An illustrated summary manuscript was therefore prepared in draft and distributed to Kenai area stewards.

Copies of a published article describing archaeological dating, *An Overview of the Radiocarbon Chronology in Cook Inlet Prehistory* (Reger and Boraas, 1996: 155-171) were distributed to stewards as well. Disposable cameras were provided to stewards with minimal instructions for note taking to create photo logs.

In the Kenai area, site stewards were taken to the sites by Reger and Corbett and salient features were noted. Several site visits included documentation of the current condition of the site as that information did not exist. Packages of information about the Kachemak Bay area sites were provided to the regional coordinators, Klein and Zollars, for distribution to the stewards. Site visits have progressed as opportunities occurred. Several sites have been monitored without the training but that will occur this spring or summer. The same situation exists in the Kodiak area where the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is taking a lead role in the training. The stewards have been contacted and in the Uganik Bay and Uyak Bay areas are monitoring the sites while training is not yet complete.

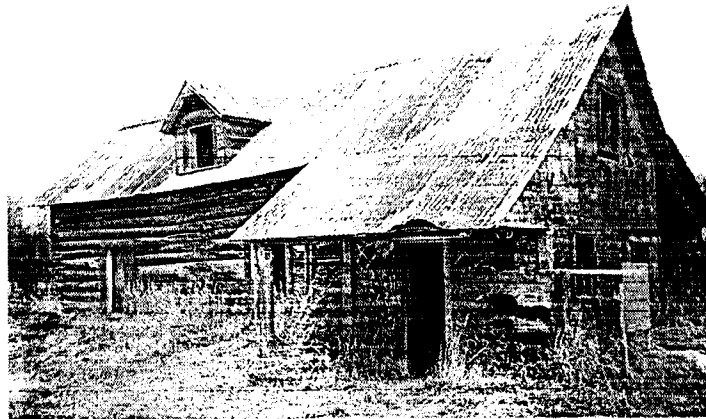
## 1996 Findings\Activities

Reports of activities been submitted by some Kachemak Bay area stewards and some Kenai/Soldotna area stewards. No reports have been received to date from Kodiak or Chignik area stewards.

### Kasilof Cannery Watchman's Cabin

Articles in the Anchorage Daily News (June 28, 1996, p. B5) and the Peninsula Clarion (June 26, 1996, p. 1) drew public attention to the vandalized state of the historic

cabin near the mouth of the Kasilof River (Figure 5). The cabin, identified under an initial stewardship program in 1994 as a historic property to be documented and monitored, has suffered considerable damage in the past few years. During 1995, site steward Keith Nichols cleared much of the accumulated trash from around the cabin including trashed shed remains, automobile parts and general garbage. He also cleared dead grass and brush which presented a wild fire hazard to the cabin. Signs were placed at the front of the building announcing its historic value and requesting that visitors refrain from further damaging the building. Unfortunately, the newspaper articles demonstrate the damage done by vandals. An automobile engine block was abandoned in the cabin and graffiti was spray painted throughout the cabin.



**Figure 5.** Southern exposure of the Cannery Watchman's Cabin, KEN-252.

The cabin is constructed of spruce logs with unique corner notching featuring interlocking dove-tailed joints. It was built over 100 years ago to house a watchman for the nearby Alaska Packers Association cannery in the off season. It was partially roofed and the sides covered with tin reportedly salvaged from the wreck of the cannery ship COREA. The Watchman's Cabin is on State land which is currently being transferred to management by the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Ideas about ways to stabilize the cabin deterioration and protect it from further degradation are under discussion with help of the site stewards.

Reger and Corbett visited the Nilnunqa Site with stewards Shannon Kovacs and Larry Ford to familiarize them with the site and photograph the current conditions. Vandal disturbed areas of the site, mainly cache pits near the back of the site, were partly re-vegetated. The river bank at the front of the site where fishing activities trampled and exposed the cultural deposits also was re-vegetating. Damage done by high water during the Fall 1995 flood was restricted to deposition of sand and gravel in scattered bar deposits at the west (downstream) margin of the site. No significant erosion or vandalism apparently occurred at the site.

The Moose River Site was visited during the spring low water stage of the Moose River and Kenai River (Figure 6). Eroding site areas exposed to vandals were examined and disturbance documented near the eroding scarp. ATV tracks were evident on the exposed beach documenting the unregulated access and use of the site area. Artifacts lay exposed on the beach at low water. During summer months a campground host is present to monitor area

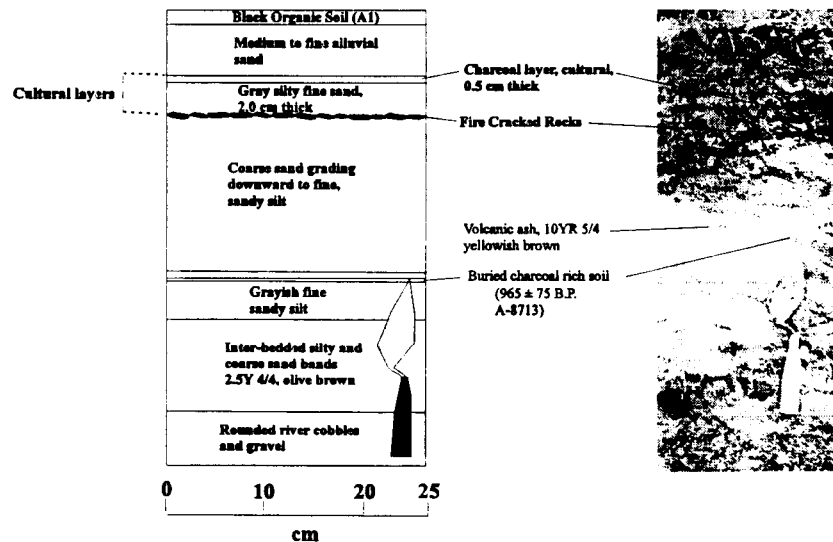
usage.

Stewards Terry Carter and Mary West accompanied Reger and Corbett to the Naptowne Rapids Site along with State Park Rangers to familiarize them with the site and provide some steward training. Trails and barriers are being developed in the area to protect the site locii and habitat along the river. The 1995 flood accelerated the erosion of the sites and further exposed remains to disturbance by vandals and sport fishermen. Distribution of exposed cultural debris was mapped and photographed.

The Slikok Creek Site was mapped and tested to find site limits. Several artifacts were recovered from an exposed hearth and charcoal collected to date the site. Students, some of whom are interested in the stewardship program, helped map and test the site. Charcoal from Test Pit 3, at a depth of 0.5 meter, provided an age of  $480 \pm 60$  years old. Calibrated, it gives a date of A.D. 1436. Two ground slate point bases



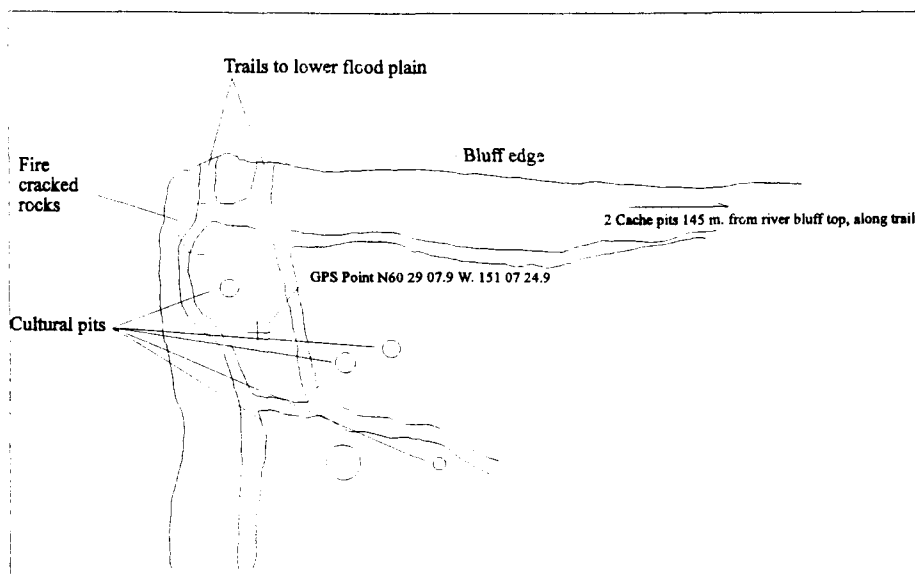
**Figure 6.** ATV tracks on the beach at the eroding site face of the Moose River Site.



**Archaeological Site KEN-262,  
Naptowne Rapids Site**

**Figure 7.** Exposure at the Naptowne Rapids Site showing Late Prehistoric cultural level and 480 year old volcanic ash.

associated with another part of the site presumably date to a similar age. The age of the points remains to be confirmed.



**Figure 8.** Features on the bluff top at the Slikok Creek Site, KEN-063.

Cultural features are also located on top of the bluff overlooking the creek and the Kenai River. A fishermen worn path meanders between the pits and has exposed a fire cracked rock deposit near the bluff edge.

The Yukon Island Main Site was visited by Klein and Zollars who documented exposed portions of the site. Exposed historic deposits were sampled to determine

the significance of that component and identify the period of occupation. During documentation of the site an additional area was found to contain other cultural levels. The area was assigned a new site number on the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey, SEL-269. The more recent levels of SEL-269 contain gravel tempered pottery similar to pottery found in nearby sites from the Late Prehistoric period. An occupation at the base of the site contains stone tools very similar to Arctic Small Tool collections elsewhere in the Bay. Radiocarbon dates obtained during documentation of the site have yielded an age of 3000 to 3500 years ago for the older limits of the site.

The Cottonwood Creek Site was visited by Klein and Zollars during September 1996 to establish a current status for future monitoring. The midden deposits continue to suffer tidal erosion. The two stewards noted a hole cut into a slope of the site but no midden was exposed. A trail has been established below the exposed midden bluff facing the beach.

Equipment used by a set net fisherman at the site is stored on the site for use during the late silver salmon run. Klein and Zollars noted tracks of free ranging cattle impressed on the site surface but they did not appear to damage the subsurface midden.

The SEL-009 Site on Aurora Spit was briefly visited by Klein and Zollars accompanying an Alaska State Parks ranger. Continued and considerable erosion was noted with animal burrows impacting the deposits. A stone flake was found eroding from a sediment layer below the shell midden of the site.

The Chugachik Island Site was visited by Klein and Zollars who noted recent digging and an animal burrow in the site. Recent natural erosion has exposed new areas of midden along the southern margin of the site. A State Park ranger provided the stewards transportation and was provided education about the site.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The basis of a site stewardship program is effective creation of a partnership between interested individuals of the general public, professional archaeologists and historians, and government responsible for protecting those resources. Successful stewardship depends on close cooperation and identifiable benefit to all participants. Because of the remote location of many Alaskan sites and lack of funding to protect them, education of the public and recruitment of their help may be the best chance to protect Alaska's heritage in the future.

Several observations can be made after the past year experience. The first is that most of the people who have shown interest in the site stewardship program are not interested in being told what to do by bureaucrats but are interested in working with them. Second, less structure is better to get the program started in an area. Strong personal trust between stewards, archaeologists, and land managers is absolutely necessary to begin a program. More formal structure should be introduced later to insure program continuity despite personell changes. Third, reports from individual stewards will vary widely in detail and completeness. A standard format is not likely to be followed nor should be expected. Interest in archaeological site stewardship is wide spread in Alaska and we have had inquiries from people throughout Alaska about such programs.

Many of the sites selected for steward monitoring need that attention not just to combat vandalism, but also to document physical changes such as from erosion. Evidence of injury over time allows managers to observe rates of degradation and more realistically devise means to deal with it. Involvement of stewards familiar with local archaeology and local interest has identified several instances of illegal artifact collection and purchase or attempted sale of illegal artifacts. As a result, one local merchant knows more about the legality of selling artifacts and one site vandal has left the state.

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