

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
Restoration Project Annual Report

Archaeological Site Stewardship, 1997

Restoration Project 97149
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 this annual report.

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Study History: The Archaeological Site Stewardship program was first funded in 1992 for program design and development of field manuals and notebooks. Funding was again provided by the EVOS Trustee Council beginning in 1996 for implementation of a program. Site stewards were identified and trained during 1996 (EVOS Project 96149) and 1997 (EVOS Project 97149). Funding for the third and final year of the project is under EVOS Project 98149.

Abstract: Training of site stewards and monitoring of endangered sites by the stewards continues. Stewards are located in the Kenai, Homer, Seldovia, Kodiak Island, and Chignik areas. Continuity of steward involvement in the program is problematic due to poor economics in some areas and the seasonality of the fieldwork. Interest remains high however and with more local direction the program has the potential for continuing beyond the EVOS funded period.

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

Project Data: Project data are accounts of steward activities and will be summarized in the final report.

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Archaeological Site Stewardship, 1997

INTRODUCTION

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.

The Archaeological Site Stewardship Program began during 1992 when the EVOS Trustees funded a study of programs in other states and development of a manual for steward training. The EVOS Trustees funded the pilot steward program during 1995 for a proposed three year period. 1997 was the second of the three years. Steward recruitment, training, and site documentation were the foci of 1997 activities. Coordination with non-EVOS funded programs were also a high priority during the second year of the program.

CHIGNIK

The Chignik region program got its start in 1993 when a resident of Chignik Bay called the Alaska State Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) to report a site being damaged by erosion and artifact collectors. USFWS archaeologist Debra Corbett was invited to Chignik Bay to look at the site. Several people expressed an interest in knowing more about local prehistoric sites. As a result of this interest the Chignik area was identified as one on the locations to establish a pilot stewardship program.

In the fall of 1994, Corbett visited Chignik Lake for the first time and made contact with local historian Mitchell Lind. In May 1995, Lind and school teacher Lynn Clark arranged a small excavation project at the Chignik Lake school which involved virtually every student in digging a prehistoric village site. The students have analyzed the materials they excavated, focussing on resource use and stone tool technology, and on developing exhibits for the school.

The abysmal fishing season of 1997 seriously impacted the Stewardship effort. People were preoccupied with earning a living and extraneous interests suffered. Several interested people have temporarily left the region to find work. However, the long term outlook is optimistic. A key contact, Orville Lind, the former Chignik area Refuge Information Technician is now working for the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge in King Salmon. His support will be critical in the future of any educational efforts. The Alaska Peninsula NWR has hired a new Refuge Information Technician for Chignik, Charles Odomin. He is interested in developing cultural resources programs for the schools. The best hope for the continuation and development of Stewardship on the Peninsula is to work with these interested local individuals who have an organizational base, the Refuge, to assist and support their efforts. Another important element would be to develop a cooperative effort

with the National Park Service which manages lands adjacent to all the refuge units on the Peninsula.

Interest in archaeology and cultural heritage, during normal economic times, is high. City and corporation officials, elders, the school district and local historians are interested in fostering an appreciation of the heritage of the region. The Refuge and the National Park Service could be powerful catalysts for encouraging the development of Stewardship in the area.

KODIAK

Kodiak was one of the initial areas targeted for a pilot project in Stewardship when the program was being planned in 1992 (Figure 1). In 1994, the Refuge sent information on Stewardship to all setnet and hunting guide permit holders. Response has been limited but with a more direct presence, local interest could easily support a thriving Stewardship effort.

KOD-146

KOD-203

KOD-239

KOD-245

KOD-290

KOD-291

KOD-292

During the summer of 1996 several setnetters monitored sites in a lagoon system at the southern end of Uganik Island. One family located several sites around the lagoons and plotted them more accurately on maps. One site, KOD-203 (or KOD-245) is eroding badly and was extensively photographed, as was another site they believe is being vandalized. The Stewards also recorded a site they believe to have been previously unrecorded. Other sites being monitored include KOD-203, KOD-239, and

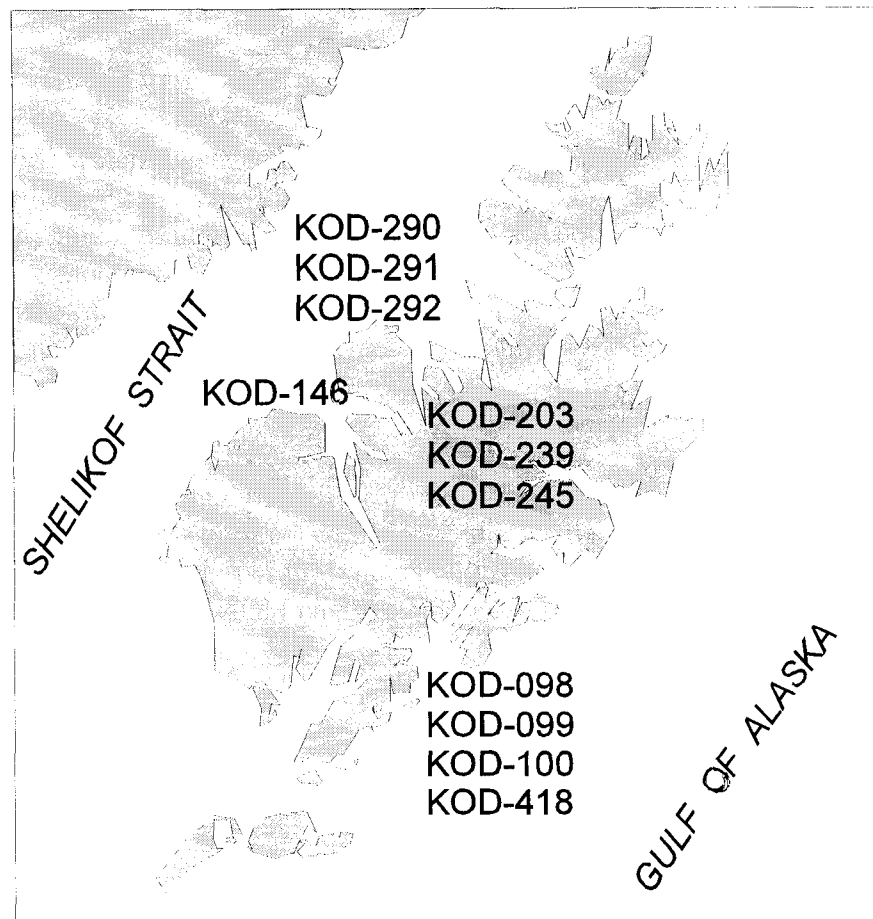


Figure 1. Sites in the Kodiak area monitored under the site steward program.

KOD-245. A cluster of three sites, KOD-290, KOD-291, and KOD-292, at Broken Point at the west mouth of Uganik Bay was also monitored. Baseline photographs were taken. We still need to visit the site with the steward to prepare maps. One site, KOD-146, at a setnet site in Uyak Bay was covered. The site is well documented by the setnetters and has been actively protected from damage by collectors.

KOD-098

KOD-099

KOD-100

KOD-418

In the fall of 1995, the Service was approached by two bear guides concerned about sites in Kiavak Bay on southeastern Kodiak. The sites are on lands recently acquired by the Kodiak NWR as a habitat acquisition project by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustees. The guides, based out of Kiavak Bay, had watched the sites erode for years. They were provided with notebooks and some guidance on recording sites and last summer drew sketch maps and photographed four sites, KOD-098, KOD-099, KOD-100, and KOD-418, in and around Kiavak Bay. They reported a site in the inner portion of the bay which had not been previously reported. We sent the information to Dr. Don Clark and have received additional photos and information from him. In 1997 there was a follow up report on the sites condition. Several artifacts were salvaged from the eroding sites and a carbon sample collected. More photo documentation of the erosion shows clearly that at least one site is in danger of being totally lost.

KENAI PENINSULA

Stewards and the Alaska State Parks field personnel are enthusiastic and the program is sure to grow rapidly (Figure 2). The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is interested in

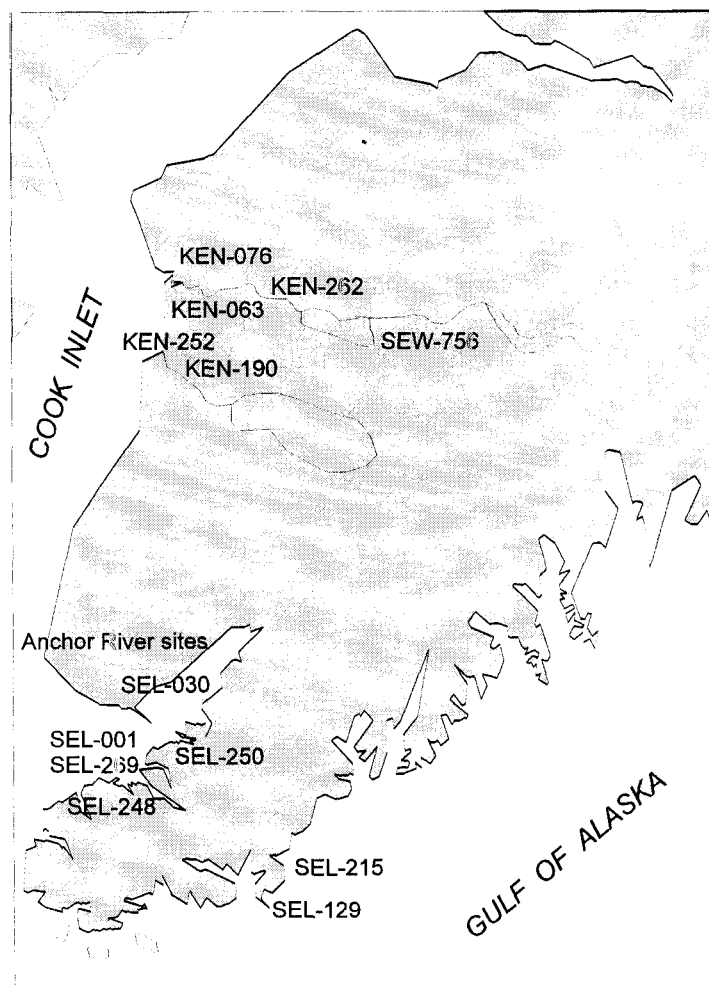


Figure 2. Sites in the Kenai Peninsula area monitored under the site steward program.

participating in an expanded effort focused on the Stepanka Tract on the lower Kenai River. Another site, Hidden Creek, at the mouth of Hidden Creek and the Kenai River on Skilak Lake, was monitored by a volunteer in 1997 (Figure 3). With assistance from the Refuge, a plan has been developed to mitigate collateral damage caused by people camping and picnicking on the site.



Figure 3. Area of the Hidden Creek Site monitored by a site steward sponsored by Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (Photo by Debra Corbett, USFWS, 1997)

KEN-756

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has begun a cooperative

program with the Kenaitze Tribe in providing a training in investigating their cultural heritage. A part of the program is training students to become stewards of their sites. The site on which field work focused is at the confluence of the Russian River and the Kenai River, KEN-756. The site is a village settlement with occupations dating to the Denaina

period during the past 1,000 years and an earlier occupation of Riverine Kachemak. The older occupation dates to about A.D. 60 and A.D. 250 (Corbett 1997).

The students excavated for two weeks on the site and received training from both tribal elders on traditional



Figure 4. Kenaitze site stewards excavating at KEN-756. (Photo by Debra Corbett, USFWS, 1997)

culture and archaeologists on excavation and reconstruction methods.

An exciting aspect of Archaeological Site Stewardship on the Kenai Peninsula for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the interest shown by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) in the program. In a stewardship effort unrelated to the Trustee funded effort, the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and CIRI are cooperating on monitoring sites in the Russian River area (Figure 4). The monitors are collecting baseline information to be used in devising a long term protective strategy for the sites. Stewards are collecting all the information and will continue to monitor sites for change. It is very likely Stewards can become involved in stabilizing sites and mitigating damage. The upper River stewards have volunteered to produce a newsletter covering all Steward groups. They only need input from the other areas. A newsletter can play a tremendous role in disseminating information of use to the Stewards.

The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology concentrated program activities in the Kenai and Kachemak Bay areas. Activities included training of interested local people about the archaeology of the area and in excavation techniques. Training in excavation is aimed at showing participants how archaeological data is collected for interpretation. Additionally, site documentation and monitoring sites in the Kachemak Bay area continued with site stewards.

KEN-076, Russian Orthodox Church Rectory

The training of stewards in the Kenai area featured testing for archaeological remains around the foundation of the historic Russian Orthodox Church Rectory in Kenai. Testing around the historic building was a project of the Office of History and Archaeology which was performed in cooperation with the Stewardship Program.

Construction began on the Russian Orthodox Church Rectory during 1881 and it was first occupied in 1894 (Smith 1985). The Rectory is one of three buildings comprising the National Historic Landmark in Kenai, the Church of the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The vicinity of the Church and Rectory is the focus of various private and City of Kenai developments and is suffering from encroachment on the associated lots.

The local participants were recruited and assembled by Dr. Alan Boraas. He teaches archaeology at the Kenai Peninsula College, a local branch of the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Nine local people were trained in excavation and field note taking techniques. Four of the excavators were stewards during the prior year and five were first time participants. Two stewards from the historic building project later monitored a road building project adjacent to the building and reported to the OHA when buried cultural deposits were uncovered by construction activities.

KEN-190, Coal Creek Site

The Coal Creek Site was re-visited during 1997 to refine the site map begun during earlier mapping efforts. Two site stewards were trained in site mapping and helped excavate test pits in an attempt to determine cultural affiliation of features at the site. Archival research suggests that the site may contain remains of early Russian occupatio (ca. late 18th Century) as well as a Late Prehistoric Denaina occupation. Public use of a road across the site and visits by local residents have resulted in some degradation of the site. The site is on property recently acquired by the EVOS Trustees for habitat protection.

KEN-262, Naptown Rapids Site

Monitoring continued at the Naptown Rapids Site where erosion has exposed

additional bone on the trail along the river. The agent of erosion is no doubt people walking along and scuffing the trail surface. Some of the larger pieces of moose bone have been moved from their original position but remain on site. The midden deposit near the upstream area of the site has eroded significantly into the high water zone but no evidence can be seen for digging at the site.

KEN-063, Slikok Creek Site

Fishermen continue to be the main cause for damage to the Slikok Creek Site. The downstream area of the site has been almost totally destroyed by foot traffic. A shoreline rehabilitation project is scheduled for construction during 1998 and will include a component of archaeological salvage. In the mean time site stewards monitor the site periodically.

KEN-252, Kaslof Cannery Watchman's Cabin

The stewards monitoring the Kaslof Cannery Watchman's Cabin continue to keep watch over campers, local packing plant workers, and other site users. The site stewards also keep the brush and grass cut away from the cabin to minimize fire danger. They erected a sign which notifies visitors of the historic value of the cabin and warns them not to vandalize the property. The cabin belongs to the State of Alaska and is managed by the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

KACHEMAK BAY

SEL-248

During May, 1997, Reger and Corbett traveled to Homer to meet with regional site steward coordinators Janet Klein and Peter Zollars. Plans for the summer activities were discussed and the group flew to Seldovia to meet with site stewards there. Susan Springer has been monitoring

SEL-248 on City of Seldovia land (Figure 5). The Late Prehistoric age site was identified for site steward monitoring during 1995 and has been tracked since that time.

SEL-248 was visited and photographed as part of the site documentation process. The margin eroding out of the sea bluff displays a thin clam shell midden and some cultural debris has slumped on to the beach.

Springer and a second interested



Figure 5. Site SEL-248 near Seldovia. (OHA photo, 1997)

resident, Susan J. Mumma, also showed a previously unreported site in the residential boundaries of the City of Seldovia (Figure 6). The small midden remanent is located on an isolated rock near the north limit of town. The site is of unknown cultural affiliation, age, and ownership. It has not yet been assigned a number on the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey.

During the Seldovia visit, the opportunity was taken to meet with a representative of the Seldovia Native Association, Fred Elvsaas. The stewardship program was explained and inquiries were made about monitoring Native owned sites in the area. No suitable sites were identified although interest in the program was evident.

SEL-001

SEL-250

During the charter flight to Seldovia, the opportunity was taken to fly over two of the sites monitored by Klein and Zollars during the past year. SEL-250 does not appear to have suffered any depredation from vandals as seen from the air. Oblique aerial photos were taken to document any erosion. The flight continued to pass over the Yukon Island Main Site, SEL-001. Local steward, Finley Abbott, had identified the location of excavation trenches made by Frederica de Laguna during 1930 and 1931. He marked those on the beach with panels and we photographed them from the air to provide additional site documentation.

SEL-030

The Cottonwood Creek Site, SEL-030, was the object of planning for a recreation access trail to Alaska State Park land in the surrounding area. Site steward and regional coordinator Janet Klein identified the potential conflict with the midden and worked with trail planners to avoid the deposit. The trail project was ultimately cancelled for other reasons.

The collector of the birch bark basket from SEL-030, noted in the report of 1996 activities, is currently under prosecution for other vandalism activities and is cooperating with authorities in identifying site locations and turning in collections.

Anchor River sites

Several late historic cabin remains were identified in the Anchor Point area during



Figure 6. Site stewards Susan Springer and Pete Zollars investigating midden site near Seldovia. (OHA photo, 1997)

1997 and are in the vicinity of a State Parks development project. Although the project will not damage the remains, they are a concern of local residents. Reports about the existence of the cabin remains have been forwarded through the regions site steward coordinator to the Office of History and Archaeology. Although the person reporting the remains is not a formal site steward, the report reflects continued interest in historic properties and the utility of maintaining a site steward program locally.

SEL-129, Gore Point Isthmus Site

The Gore Point Isthmus Site was visited during 1997 EVOS archaeological monitoring and Dr. Alan Boraas from Kenai Peninsula College accompanied the trip. Dr. Boraas recruits site stewards from among his students and made the trip to familiarize him with sites on the Outer Coast of the Kenai Peninsula. The training site stewards receive include archaeology courses he teaches in Soldotna and Homer. The courses are not a formal part of the training given site stewards but participation in the courses generates much of the local interest in protecting sites. The monitoring trip also visited the Port Dick Cabin Site, SEL-178, and the SEL-215 Site on Nuka Island. Dr. Boraas helped document current status and collect sediment samples at SEL-215.

COMMENTS

The archaeological site stewardship program continues to be of interest to many local people but continuity of local involvement is a problem. People are genuinely interested however, the lack of ability of the land managing agencies to allocate resources to the program does not feed that interest. A fundamental problem in maintaining continuity is the seasonal nature of the program. The short field season dictates intense activity during the summer and no activity during the long winter. There are many summer conflicts and few opportunities during the winter.

Continued interest in stewardship will require activity through the winter season which actively involves stewards. They could help analyze collections from the sites they monitor and contribute to report preparation. They could photograph artifacts, draw maps, and prepare report layouts. The key is that activities must be locally based and directed whether by agency personnel or not.

Vandalism and site destruction through other agencies will continue to be a problem in some areas of the state. The Kodiak area and Kachemak Bay, with large midden sites and attractive bone and ivory artifacts, will remain the most seriously endangered areas of the oil spill region.

REFERENCES CITED

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