



## UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

31 March, 2010

Ms. Laurel Jennings  
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council  
441 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 500  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Exxon Valdez Trustee Council Members,

It has come to my attention that Old Harbor Native Corporation has nominated Sitkalidak Island for habitat protection within the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Plan, and that the EVOS Trustee Council is seeking comments as part of a Supplement Environmental Impact Statement.

As archaeological resources are included in assessments of environmental impact, I provide the following information that may be relevant to your deliberations. Please understand that I am an archaeologist and faculty member at the University of Washington. My interest in Sitkalidak Island is strictly intellectual. I do not have a specific stake in the outcome of the deliberations other than that of a professional interest in the preservation of archaeological resources for future research and as a tangible source of information about the cultural heritage of contemporary residents of the region.

From eight years worth of archaeological research there, I can report that Sitkalidak Island contains a rich and irreplaceable cultural resource in the form of an archaeological record covering more than 7000 years of human settlement history distributed between more than 100 archaeological sites that encircle the island at almost every reasonable boat landing as well as along the interior streams and ponds. Collectively these sites document the earliest known evidence for the human colonization on the Kodiak archipelago roughly 7500 years ago, the emergence of salmon intensification roughly 4000 years ago, and the development of organizationally complex hunter-gatherer societies over the past 2500 years, culminating in the site of the Russian conquest of the Alutiiq people at the Awa'uq refuge rock site not far from the earliest permanent settlement in Russian Alaska (at Three Saints Bay).

Sitkalidak also contains important recent archaeological evidence for population declines following initial Russian colonization and the introduction of European diseases, one of the few land-based whale oil processing facilities of the 19th century "whale rush" (Port Hobron), and the location of a pioneering cattle ranch with historical significance in the transition from Alaska

from a U.S. Territory to a State (McCord's Ranch, including old fence lines, the main ranch compound and outbuildings).

Finally Sitkalidak Island contains evidence of enduring use of the island by Alutiiq residents of the region for subsistence and recreation (e.g., Christiansen's fish camp out on Nuckin's Spit just north of the entrance to Newman Bay - where the Mary Haakanson and the other Christiansen children spent their summers as kids in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century), as well as evidence of generations of picnicking at the beach on Ocean Bay. Less archaeologically concrete, but no less real are the uses of the island for drift-wood collection and subsistence hunting and fishing.

You can find additional information about the archaeology of Sitkalidak Island in the publications listed below, and a full inventory of archaeological sites found on Sitkalidak Island can be obtained through the Alaska State Office of History and Archaeology in Anchorage. They can be reached at the following address

Office of History and Archaeology  
Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1310  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

Thank you for considering these observations about the cultural values found on Sitkalidak Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ben Fitzhugh". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Ben Fitzhugh, PhD  
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Please see following page for reference list for Sitkalidak Island archaeology

## Publications on the archaeological Heritage of Sitkalidak Island

Clark, Donald W.

1974 *Koniag Prehistory: Archaeological Investigations at Late Prehistoric Sites on Kodiak Island, Alaska*. Tubinger Monographien Sur Urgeschichte, vol. 1. Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart.

1979 *Ocean Bay: An Early North Pacific Maritime Culture*. National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper No. 86. Ottawa.

Fitzhugh, Ben

2004 Colonizing the Kodiak Archipelago: Trends in raw material use and lithic technologies at the Tanginak Spring site. *Arctic Anthropology* 41(1):14-40.

2003 *The Evolution of Complex Hunter-Gatherers: Archaeological Evidence from the North Pacific*. Kluwer Academic- Plenum Publishers.

2003 The Evolution of Complex Hunter-Gatherers on the Kodiak Archipelago. In *Hunter-Gatherers of the North Pacific Rim*, edited by J. Habu, J. Savelle, S. Koyama, and H. Hongo. SENRI Ethnological Studies no. 63. National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan. Pp. 13-48.

2001 Risk and Invention in Human Technological Evolution. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 20:125-167

2001 Community Archaeology, Old Harbor Style. In, *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People*, edited by Aron Crowell and Amy Steffian. University of Alaska Press. P. 132

2002 Residential and logistical strategies in the evolution of complex hunter-gatherers on the Kodiak Archipelago. In *Beyond Foragers and Collectors: Evolutionary change in Hunter-Gatherer Settlement Systems*, edited by Ben Fitzhugh and Junko Habu. Kluwer-Plenum Press, New York. Pp. 257-304.

2002 The Origins of Maritime Hunter-Gatherers in the North Pacific: A View from Kodiak Island. [Kita-Taiheiyo ni okeru kaiyo shuryo-saishu-min no kigen: Kodiak-to no jirei kara]. In *New Perspectives on the Study of Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherer Cultures* [Senshi Shuryo-Saishu Bunka Kenkyu no Atarashii Shiya], edited by Siro Sasaki. Senri Ethnological Report 33. National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan (in Japanese). Pp. 49-82.

Knecht, Richard, Sven Haakanson, Jr. and Shawn Dickenson

2003 Awa'uq: Discovery and Excavation of an 18th Century Refuge Rock in the Kodiak Archipelago. In: *To The Aleutians and Beyond: The Anthropology of William S. Laughlin*, pp. 177-191. Publications of the National Museum Ethnographical Series, Vol. 20. Edited by Bruno Frohlich, A. Harper, and R. Gilberg. National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.