EKLUTNA VILLAGE NEWS

Fall 2021

NVE Offices are open to the public by appointment only. Masks are required at all times in the offices. All departments are operating normally. Please contact the main office at 907-688-6020 to schedule an appointment or for more information.

Presidents Message

Yagheli Da,

This Spring and Summer has been a busy one for me and the tribe, I am humbled to continue to serve as the president. Unfortunately, as you are all aware, shortly before the election a confidential letter was sent out to the tribal members and we have hired a private investigator to see what we can learn about who may have sent it and how we can tighten up security procedures so that this doesn't happen in the future. As I am sure you are all aware, largely due to the Delta Variant of Covid we have seen an uptick in cases with our tribal members and we are working hard with our partners at SCF and CITC to make sure that we can adequately provide the resources we have at our disposal to assist our membership.

Aaron Leggett speaking at the "Go with the Flow Event" in September.

In late May the Tribe met with the Anchorage Assembly for our first Government to Government meeting and we are looking forward to hosting them in the fall at the tribe as we continue to develop ways that our two governments can work collaboratively. We also recently successfully had our annual NVE EI meeting and we have several items to follow up on as our two organizations continue to work together.

I had the opportunity to represent the tribe by giving a welcome to the NCAI midyear meeting, providing a history of the Dena'ina for Cook Inlet Tribal Council, met the First Lady of the United States and the swearing of the first African American Police Chief in Anchorage. I am also happy that in early August we were able to dedicate first Dena'ina place marker throughout the city, this is an ongoing project that will likely take year to fully realize but it was good to have such a large turnout and media coverage of the event.

(coninued inside)

Native Village of Eklutna Tribal Council Members

Aaron Leggett, President
Maria Coleman, Vice-President
Shirley Craig, Treasurer
Dorothy Cook, Secretary
Tresia Coleman, Trustee
Dustin Lorah, Trustee
Angeleen Waskey, Trustee

Mission Statement

To empower lydlughet Qayaht'ana (Ekutna Village People) and stengthen our Nation.

This publication is funded in full or in part through grants, compacts, or contracts obtained by Native Village of Eklutna, a federally recognized Tribal Government.

Presidents Message *(Con't.)*

Another landmark event in our tribes history is the releasing of water down the entire Eklutna River, this has not happend since 1929 and is massive achievement for tribe and the hard-work over several decades by past leadership and staff. This is truly something that our entire tribe can celebrate and we will continue to push for more water to flow down the river and hopefully restore some of the salmon run to the Eklutna River.

As you all may have read in the paper recently we recieved a negative ruling by the US District court in our lawsuit with Department of the Interior. This is certainly a setback and we currently reviewing our options to determine what if any course of action will be taking.

I also would like to take moment to thank Richard Farber for his dedication to the tribe and wish him the best on his new endevours. The Tribal Council has decided to appoint Dorothy Cook as the Acting Tribal Adminstrator as she has served in this role in the past and we will be begining our search for a replacement in the near future.

And lastly, I want to let tribal members know that we still have COVID funding available for those that qualify under the guidelines set forth by the various pockets of money. If you have already applied and have not recieved feedback or you have questions please reach out to the staff or get in touch with council so that we can hopefully resolve and issues and make sure that the funding goes to those who qualify for it.

Once again its my honor to serve all of our people and want to wish everyone health and wellness as we move into the winter season.

Chin'an Gheli (Thank you, very much)

Aaron Leggett
President, Native Village of Eklutna

Welcome Tonya Gamble, NVE's New Financial O icer

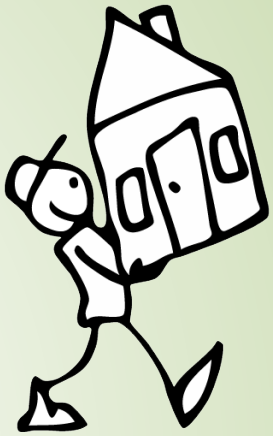
In September NVE welcomed Tonya Gamble to the staff. She has been working with the tribe for many years in accounting. A little bit about Tonya...

Born and raised in Alaska, after graduating from Wasilla High School, Tonya went to school in Boston where she earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from MIT. She worked for a strategy consulting firm in Chicago until she realized she was homesick for Alaska and moved back. Tonya earned her CPA license while working as a Tax Accountant for BDO in Anchorage. For the past 6 years, she has been the CFO at Eklutna, Inc. and has been working with NVE for that period as well. Tonya and her husband Brad, also a lifelong Alaskan, raised two children in Eagle River and she is excited to continue her work with the tribe.

Native Village of Eklutna

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Is your address information up-to-date?



Please remember when your address changes to notify the enrollment office at NVE so that we may keep the records current. The Address Change form can be found under the forms tab on the NVE website (www.eklutna-nsn.gov/forms/) or contact the main office and a form can be emailed or mailed to you. 688-6020

Enrollment Drive

NVE Enrollment office is conducting an Enrollment Drive. If you know of someone who has not got their enrollment paperwork submitted, please have them contact 688-6020 or email nve.enrollment@eklutna.us. Enrollment applications can be found on the NVE website under the Forms tab.

NVE Food Bank

The NVE Food is open on Wednesdays from 1pm to 4pm. During this time, we are asking recipients to call the main office before they arrive to the food bank location and order a food box. Food boxes are pre-made when ordered and will be available for contactless pickup on the stairs of the food bank builiding. The food bank is located beside the main office For more information, call 688-6020

Call for Newsletter Submissions!

We are asking for the community to submit newsletter articles, artwork, poems... anything that you would like to share with everybody else. Submissions for the next newsletter are due by ***December 3rd.*** Email submissions to cbrophil@ekutna.org, snail mail to the main office, or drop it off at the main office!

An event calendar is now online! Check out the calendar at www.eklutna-nsn.gov.

Thanksgiving Turkey Baskets - The turkey baskets will be distributed to the NVE community from *November 16th through November 19th, 11am - 4pm*. These baskets will include a turkey and ingredients to make a Thanksgiving dinner. We would like thank the Alaska Commercial Company for their generous donation to the Native Village of Eklutna for the donation of the turkeys. Please call 688-6020 for more information or to pick up a basket.

NVE Job Postings can always be found online at www.eklutna-nsn.gov/jobs/

The Native Village of Eklutna is seeking a **youth representative** for the Youth and Elders conference scheduled to take place in December. Interested candidates should submit a one page letter of interest to NVE by October 15, 2021 via email at nve@

Tribal Council Support. Provide support services to the NVE Tribal Council in the areas of Enrollment Coordination, Meeting Records, and Other Governmental Services. This position will answer directly to the Tribal Council, and the supervisors for the position will be the NVE Tribal Council Vice President and Council Secretary, with oversight by the President. Remote and on-site work, 30-60 hours per month. P/T. Pay DOE. Position is open until filled. Background and Drug Test required.

Social Service Case Manager/Tribal Court Liaison. Provides advocacy, prevention, early intervention, case management, and supportive services for individuals and families impacted by a variety of social and behavioral health matters. Serves as Tribal Court Clerk and Liaison working with Tribal Judges (Rules Keepers) and Tribal Members and eligible ICWA clients to ensure timely processing of court requests, notices, orders, and other essential support. F/T. Pay DOE. Position is open until filled. Background clearance required.

On Saturday September 18, Trout Unlimited Alaska hosted an event at the Canyon Campground in Eklutna State Park. This event was to celebrate the temporary release of water from the upper dam on Eklutna Lake down the river. The release is part of ongoing studies on the Eklutna River and is designed to allow researchers a look at sediment transfer and water channels in the river basin. This is the first time this amount of water flowed in the Eklutna River for almost 70 years. NVE Land and Environment Department had a booth at the event with information about the river. The event was attended by close to 150 people.

Aaron Leggett gave a few words at the event, along with Curtis McQueen (Former CEP for Eklutna Inc.) and Eric Booton (Trout Unlimited).

More information on the work that Trout Unlimited or NVE is doing on the river, go to www.eklutnariver.org.

The flow will be halted by October 6th, and the next step will continue on the Eklutna River project.

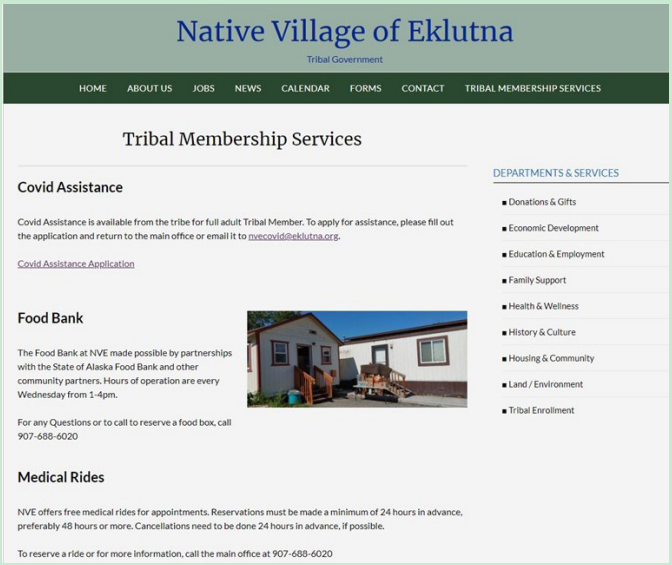
Above: Elklutna River flowing through a previously dry riverbed on September 18, 2021. Photo Credit: NVE LE Dept.

Left: A group picture taken at the end of the event. Photo Credit: Wesley Early/Alaksa Public Media

www.eklutna-nsn.gov

We have added a new page to the website: a Tribal Member Services Page. This page will have information on services provided to the tribal members.

Don't forget to check out the Forms page. All the forms are fillable and are able to be emailed or printed.



Native Village of Eklutna

Tribal Government

HOME ABOUT US JOBS NEWS CALENDAR FORMS CONTACT TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Tribal Membership Services

Covid Assistance

Covid Assistance is available from the tribe for full adult Tribal Member. To apply for assistance, please fill out the application and return to the main office or email it to nvecovid@eklutna.org.

Covid Assistance Application

Food Bank

The Food Bank at NVE made possible by partnerships with the State of Alaska Food Bank and other community partners. Hours of operation are every Wednesday from 1-4pm.

For any Questions or to call to reserve a food box, call 907-688-6020

Medical Rides

NVE offers free medical rides for appointments. Reservations must be made a minimum of 24 hours in advance, preferably 48 hours or more. Cancellations need to be done 24 hours in advance, if possible.

To reserve a ride or for more information, call the main office at 907-688-6020

DEPARTMENTS & SERVICES

- Donations & Gifts
- Economic Development
- Education & Employment
- Family Support
- Health & Wellness
- History & Culture
- Housing & Community
- Land / Environment
- Tribal Enrollment

NVE COVID Assistance Applications

The Native Village of Eklutna continues to provide Covid assistance to Full Tribal and Adpotive Tribal members and families. Applications for 2021 are being accepted. While the limit is for $500, the Council authorized additional assistance for those with very low income and limited resources. This is the same application form that was mailed out to Tribal Members in 2020 and can be used for household bills, Internet and Electronic devices for communication, phones, sanitation supplies, etc. Help for filling out the form is avaliable upon request. It is imperative that we have all supporting documents in order to process your application. Please ensure that we have your updated contact information when applying for assistance.

For an application and more information go to our website at *www.eklutna.nsn.gov* or email **nvecovid@eklutna.org**. The applications for Covid and Covid Emergency rental assistance can be downloaded from the NVE website or you may call the Tribal office at 688-6020 and we can have one mailed to you.

NEW COVID-19 RELIEF FOR HOUSING. An application for up to 3-months of housing relief is being finalized. This will be able to cover arrearages as well for rent/lease and utilities. PLEASE WATCH FOR UPDATES.

Westchester Lagoon - August 3, 2021
Dena'ina Plave Names Marker Opening
Chanshtnu (Grass Creek)

After years of NVE requests and Aaron Leggett working for the Anchorage Museum, Dena'ina signage has gotten backing from numerous organizations, including the Anchorage Parks.

With short notice, Ida'ina K'eljeshna (Friendship Dancers) and many other peoples gathered to celebrate the first step in many installations to be placed throughout Anchorage.

Aaron reported to Indian Country Today, "In 2006, the Dena'ina Center opened, and it was kind of a shocker for most people because they'd never heard the name Dena'ina. They Didn't think about Anchorage being an Indigenous place.

"Leggett said the growing awareness prompted the Eklutna tribe to do more to build Anchorage's identity as an Indigenous place." (Anchorage Daily News, August 12, 2021)

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS LOG IN

Aaron Leggett, president of Native Village of Eklutna, gives remarks. (Marc Lester / Anchorage Daily News)

A youngster from the Ida'ina K'eljeshna group dances. (Marc Lester / Anchorage Daily News)

NVE Enrollment Drive

The Tribal Council is requesting everyone's assistance in getting Tribal Member information up-to date. In late 2019 the main computer that housed this data crashed. We let the Members know at the Annual Meetings in both 2020 and 2021. We worked to retrieve as much information as we could. This included calling people we had numbers for, and talking with many Tribal Members, especially this past winter prior to the annual meeting.

We still need at least 72 addresses updated. There are numerous "Return to Sender" envelopes from the post office. And, since we have not mailed items to children, there may be many more addresses and other contact information that has not been updated. Please tell your Eklutna relatives and friends. We thank sincerely thank all those who helped by sending us their information to date.

To update your address, please fill out an address update form.

To enroll a person as a Tribal Member, please fill out the Enrollment Form.

Both forms can be found online at www.eklutna-nsn.gov/forms/, by calling the main office at 688-6020, or emailing nve.enrollment@eklutna.us and requesting a form.

Compleated forms and other documentation can be emailed to nve.enrollment@eklutna.us or mailed to

Attn: Enrollment Office
26339 Eklutna Village Rd
Chugiak, AK 99567

Address and other contact information must be documented with your signature. Parents or Guardians should include minor dependents living with you.

Healthy Eating

It has been requested that we share some recipes to use either traditonally harvested food or vegetables harvested from local gardens in our newsletters. The staff have shared some recipes, but we would like the communtiy to submit their favorites. Our first recipe was submitted by a staff member as a delicous way to used harvested blueberries.

Gega Layered Dessert (blueberry)

Crust:
1 C. four
1 stick of butter
1 C. chopped walnuts
Mix flour and room temp butter. Add walnuts. Press on bottom of 9x13' pan. Bake at 350 for 10 mins, cool

Blueberry Layer:
1 C. Sugar 3 Tbsp. dry blackberry jello
3 Tbsp. cornstarch 1 Qt. blueberries, fresh or frozen
1 C hot water
Heat sugar, cornstarch and hot water. Stir constantly until clear and thick. Add jello; stir until dissolved. Add blueberries; cool and then drop spoonfuls on crust and spread evenly over crust. Chill well.

Cream cheese layer:
1 (8oz) pkg of cream cheese 1(8oz) cool whip cream
1 C. powdered sugar
Whip the cream cheese and sugar with mixer until light and fluffy. Fold in whipped cream. Place topping on the cooled blueberries and spread evenly; chill well

Carbon Monoxide

Colorless	Tasteless	Odorless

- **Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can lead to poisoning**
- **It is generated when fuels are burned (heating oil, gas, wood, etc.)**
- **Common household sources are fuel burning appliances, fireplaces, grills/BBQs, and vehicles**
- **Carbon monoxide poisoning is responsible for about 50 deaths and 15,000 emergency room visits nationally every year, according to the CDC**

Symptoms

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Tiredness
- Shortness of Breath
- Headache
- Confusion

***If you experience these symptoms and think it could be from CO poisoning, or if your CO detector sounds, **get to fresh air immediately and call 911!** Open windows to ventilate the area, turn off combustion appliances, and leave the house.

Prevention

Do

- **Do** use a carbon monoxide detector with backup battery power
- **Do** have fuel burning appliances vented properly and inspected annually
- **Do** follow manufacturer instructions on proper use of fuel-burning appliances

Don't

- **Don't** idle cars in garage
- **Don't** use grills/BBQs inside
- **Don't** sleep in a room with unvented gas/kerosene heaters
- **Don't** use gas powered engines indoors
- **Don't** ignore the symptoms

- If you need assistance obtaining a carbon monoxide detector, please contact the Land and Environment Department @ (907)688-8522
- For more information about Carbon Monoxide poisoning and it's prevention, please visit **https://www.cdc.gov/co/default.htm**

MTA is closing the **digital** divide.

Access to a reliable internet connection is more important than ever. You may qualify for assistance with your phone or internet bill through the Lifeline and/or Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP). Both programs are available to new and existing MTA customers.

Call **907-745-3211** or visit
mtasolutions.com/discount-programs

"Life with Eklutna River" - Interviews & Artwork

PURPOSE: To Document the historical use of salmon by the Eklutna tribe to quantify the true cultural cost of the loss of salmon in the Eklutna River and communicate the need for strong mitigation efforts to recover these losses through the development of a written TEK Assessment lead by Native Village of Eklutna.

INTERVIEWS: An interview form was finalized to collect your Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) – your memories and stories about life around Eklutna River (including the lake and lands nearby). The first interviews will be from the Tribal Council and Eklutna River Committee. We will then ask for Tribal Member participation. Interviews can be done by filling out the form or by having someone interview you (in person, by phone, or thru a Zoom meeting). Those who are not normally paid by NVE may opt for gift cards as compensation. If you would like to be interviewed, please email maria.nve@eklutna.us or call the NVE Land & Environment Department to forward a message.

East Fork Eklutna River, Spring 2021

ARTWORK: Another way to document history and the emotional connection is thru Artwork -"a picture is worth 1000 words." The Tribal Council has authorized collecting data from all Tribal Members, Children thru Elders. We will be working out the details. PLEASE WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN CREATE THAT TELLS THE STORY OF "LIFE

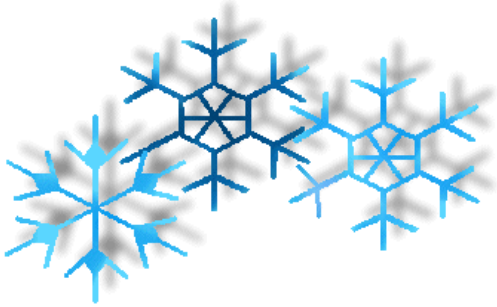
ETCD News

In early September, demolition of an old greenhouse structure near the new Tribal Member Services Building was undertaken by the Eklutna Tribal Conservation District (ETCD) in partnership with Alaska Villages Initiatives (AVI). The greenhouse is being deconstructed, and any suitable materials are being salvaged for reuse. The site is being cleared and prepped for the installation of a new greenhouse, demonstration garden, and hydroponic growing facility. The new facility will help Eklutna address food security issues and provide a location to provide education events for our community focused on food production.

The greenhouse site as of 9/8/2021.

As the cold weather is dropping down on us and snow is in the near future, here are some Dena'ina words for snow:

Cold Weather – edli'i
Snow Clouds – chitl' q'es
Snow (on the ground) – chitl'
Falling snow – nudahi
Frost – shagh



And don't forget to dress warm!

Ear muffs – jig'e ch'elyi
Stocking cap – stl'ini kit'un
Gloves (with fingers) – beyinch'dalnigi
Mittens (fur lined) – dghuni gech'
Parka – kinutquni or ukinuk'nutquni

NVE Staff

NVE has updated the phones and staff members now have direct lines. The department direct lines and emails are listed below. For general information contact the main office at 907-688-6020 or nve@eklutna.org.

Administration

Dorothy Cook,
Acting Tribal Administrator
dcook@eklutna.org
907-688-6020

Faith Rukovishnikoff
faithr@eklutna.org
907-688-1801

Sharron Munson
nvereceptionist@eklutna.org
907-688-6020

Social Serives

Dawn Harris
dharris@eklutna.org
907-688-1803

Enrollment

Dorothy Cook
907-688-6020

Maintenance/Roads Dept.

Walter Ondola
wondola@eklutna.org
907-688-1806

FoodBank

Lewis Stephan
907-688-6020

Land and Environment

Marc Lamoreaux
marcl@eklutna.org
907-242-6967

Carrie Ann Brophil
cbrophil@eklutna.org
907-691-4843

Kyle Robillard
krobillard@ekutna.org
907-390-9003

Office 907-688-8522

Seasonal LE Staff

907-688-8522

Offices are staffed from 9am - 5pm
Monday - Friday

Land and Environment News

The Land and Environment has been very busy this spring and summer. Field season for all the grants was underway and we have been busy working in the field, attending seminars and meetings, and the day to day operations of managing the LE Dept. Some of the broader accomplishments are:

- NVE completed the first part of the current NALEMP survey this May. The section surveyed area surrounding the village. This fall we plan to survey a second area that crosses the Eklutna River. We are looking for buried drums that may have contaminated substances in them. We found no drums this spring.
- The Tribal Wildlife Grant work startred in June. We are working on a habitat characterization study on the tributaries that lead into Eklutna Lake. Fish counts and minnow trapping in the lower river are also part of this study.
- Emergency management hazard mitigation planning has started. This plan is for the village and surrounding area in preparedness for natural or man-made disasters. The village area does fall under the Municipality of Anchorage's plan, but it is suggested that each village/town complete its own plan on the smaller scale. A draft will be posted for public review before being completed (as per FEMA). Look for this at the end of summer. If you have any considerations for a plan, please contact the LE office. We are open to all suggestions.
- The Tribal Response Program is going strong. We are asking for suggestions of sites that are of interest to the Tribal Community to add to our list of NVE Prioritized Contaminated Sites List. If you have an interest in a site of concern, please let us know so that we may add it to our list. Submissions can be sent in via our website or by emailing krobillard@eklutna.org. Sites on the list are given priority for the LE Department to research and discuss with ADEC.
- The LE Department has been part of a board that is working on restoration efforts for the Eklutna River. This board is comprised of members from the USFWS, NOAH, Trout Unlimited, Conservation Fund, ADF&G, DNR, Chugiak Electric, AWWU, and McMillian Associates. The board is working on research studies and solutions to restore the flow to the Eklutna River.

Scan the QR code to go to the NVE L&E Webpage.

- The LE Department has also been part of discussions with the US Department of Energy and an Alaska group called ALICE on a Pumped Hydro Storage alternative to replace the current electrical turbines for the power generation from Eklutna Lake. This alternative has the possibility of letting the Eklutna watershed behave naturally, which will help with the restoration of the river. The project is still in the feasibility phase. More information will be provided as it becomes available.
- NVE has a seat on the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission (AHPC). AHPC developed a Local Landmark Ordinance (LLO) that was approved by the Anchorage Assembly. The LLO allows entities to nominate historical sites for a registry so they can be recognized for their historical significance. NVE Council decided the old railroad section house that was moved to the village from out toward Girdwood, the Eklutna knobs, and the Peters Creek ancient Dena'ina village should be nominated for their historical significance.
- A press release was released this summer with the title "Alaska Federation of Natives Endorses Restoration of Eklutna River". This press release has been distributed nationally and the whole press release is at the end of this newsletter.
- NVE LE Dept is handing out free bumperstickers to help show your support for more water in the Eklutna River. To request a sticker, please go to the NVE website or scan the QR code below.

Łiq'a nagh qinqtudeł

We are hopeful the salmon will return to us

NVE 2021 Culture Camp

The 2021 Culture Camp was held August 2 through the 6th. The camp was held at the NVE pow wow grounds and had 51 participants throughout the week. The camp was not reserved just for youth, all ages were encouraged to attend. We had a good mix of adults, elders and youth. The youth ages ranged from under a year to 18. This camp was designed to be a day camp with one night with the fish net. Port-a-potties were rented, a water buffalo was onsite with non-potable water, and hand sanitizers were scattered around the main table area.

Some hiccups were experienced through the coordination of the camp earlier this summer, but these were overcome and the camp went off without any issues. Some of the activities completed at the camp was a plant walk, nature walk with young kids with animal track id, berry identification, language and storytelling, fish spear making, fish net setting and fish processing, and the main event – cache making. The youth and adults that participated had a good time. Some suggestions were made for next summers camp as items to add, such as beading, archery, and native games. The fish net was set on Tuesday of the culture

Above: *Nature walk with the kids*
Right: *John Ross singing a song in Dena'ina for the group.*
Below: *Peeling bark from the spruce poles for the cache.*

Setting of the Educational Fish Net

The culture camp set out the net during the week. A different crew set the net than the crew that pulled it back in, but all learned and had fun. Elder Lewis Stephan helped teach the setting of the net while the Doone Family, Garcia Family and Wasksy family were there to help pull in the net. In total, 8 fish were caught.

The fish net was set on Tuesday of the culture camp week. The intention was to spend the evening with the net and anyone who wanted to camp was more than welcome to. The tide went out early and we were able to process the 8 fish caught earlier than expected. The participants learned how to cut the fish, set and pull the net, and check the net for any damages. An eagle pair decided to come watch us process the fish and took off with some scrap. The fish were grilled the next day for lunch.

Above: *Teaching the processing of the fish. Dawn Harris demonstrated how a ulu is used.*
Top right: *kids playing around*
Bottom right: *cutting the dorsal fin off the fish.*

Dena'ina language scholar was able talk with us on Tuesday afternoon about language, stories, and songs. He shared resources that have some stories written from Dena'ina around the Cook Inlet.

NVE elder Laura Chilligan was able to help teach how to make a cache. The participants of the camp made a cache replica that will be housed at the one of the tribal buildings in the village. It took two days to complete the cache, and there were many participants involved in the whole process, from gathering the small trees, pealing the bark, and constructing the cache.

The camp was made possible by a BIA grant and a small grant through the Association on American Indian Affairs.

NVE will be looking to again hire a seasonal coordinator for next summer's camp and to have some volunteers to make the next camp even better.

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES ENDORSES RESTORATION OF EKLUTNA RIVER

Calls for Release of Water to Support Salmon and Eklutna Dena'ina

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (March 17, 2021) — The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) recently endorsed the restoration of the Eklutna River near Anchorage, Alaska. AFN, the largest Native organization in Alaska, passed a resolution at their annual gathering calling for a free-flowing Eklutna River to support the recovery of Pacific salmon and benefit Dena'ina Athabaskans from the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE).

"Alaska's rivers and streams have provided nutritional and cultural benefit to Alaska Native people throughout time immemorial, and the Eklutna River is no exception," said Ben Mallott, AFN vice president. "Through Resolution 20-17 AFN expresses our support of efforts to restore traditional rivers and streams for fish and wildlife habitat, traditional subsistence uses, and sustainable natural resource development, and in particular, the efforts of tribes like the Native Village of Eklutna." The Alaska Federation of Natives represents 168 federally recognized tribes, 166 village corporations, 8 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums. The annual gathering is the largest within Indian country in the United States.

"We are grateful to the Alaska Federation of Natives for their support," said Aaron Leggett, Chief of the Native Village of Eklutna, "and to the many Alaskans and Americans from across the country who have followed this story." The Native Village of Eklutna is the only traditional village within the Municipality of Anchorage. "We have supported the growth of Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska," said Leggett, "but now it's our turn. Salmon are part of our culture, they make us who we are. But without a free-flowing Eklutna River, the salmon struggle and we struggle."

"The Eklutna River and the salmon it provides are vital to the Native Village of Eklutna. For generations, members of the Native Village have been committed stewards of this precious resource," said Congressman Don Young. "I have been involved in this process for quite some time, and was one of the strongest proponents of removing the Lower Eklutna River dam to allow salmon to move upstream once again."

The Eklutna River was the focus of a five-year, $7.5 million dam removal project completed in 2018 by the Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc. and The Conservation Fund. The Lower Eklutna River dam was built in 1929 to provide Anchorage with its first major power source. The lower dam was abandoned in the 1950's when a larger power project at Eklutna Lake diverted all the water out of the Eklutna River.

The effort to remove the lower dam involved a vast array of funders, including the Rasmuson Foundation, Resources Legacy Fund, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership, Orvis, Patagonia, and the Alaska Community Foundation. Curtis McQueen, former CEO of Eklutna Inc. and current board member of the Rasmuson Foundation, said "This is such an exciting story that everyone wants to be in on. Just as we have seen with dam removals elsewhere, like the Elwha River, when you let the river run free the fish come roaring back."

Diane Kaplan, President and CEO of the Rasmuson Foundation, a financial supporter of the dam removal project, said "When you talk to elders and learn the historic connection between Eklutna River and the Dena'ina people, you begin to understand how important this project is. The Dena'ina people of Eklutna have never stopped fighting to have their river restored, and this dogged determination, reminiscent of the salmon they fight for, has brought them one step closer. It was an honor to support their efforts."

Despite the success of the dam removal project, the Eklutna River is still largely devoid of water because of diversions for hydropower generation. "It's one step at a time," said Brad Meiklejohn of The Conservation Fund. "Now it's all about getting water back to the fish and the fish to the Eklutna people. It's been a long road but we are going in the right direction."

Under an agreement signed in 1991, local electric utilities are now engaged with NVE and state and federal regulators in a mitigation process to remedy the impacts of hydropower operations on the Eklutna River. That process, begun in 2020, is slated for completion by 2027; ultimately, the Governor of Alaska will have final approval of the recovery plan. "All the talk now in the meetings is about how much, when and how to get water back into the Eklutna River to benefit salmon," said Marc Lamoreaux, Environmental Coordinator for NVE. "The salmon are still there, all five species, including the mighty King salmon, and we hope they hang on just a little longer as we work through this process."

"The tribe is grateful to the utilities that our concerns have been recognized and that progress is being made," said Richard Farber, Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Eklutna. "We have a screaming need to restore the identity of our people and that begins with restoring the salmon."

"Removing the dam was only part of the solution; we now need to secure greater water resources to bring salmon back and finish the job," said Congressman Young. "I am pleased to see that the Native Village of Eklutna has entered a new restoration phase, and I wish them continued success as they work to improve the river's ability to support wild salmon. I will continue working at the federal level should resources or legislation be needed, and I look forward to the day when the river is fully restored and becomes home to a healthy salmon population."

Alaska Federation of Natives
The mission of Alaska Federation of Natives is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community. The protection of Native food security and subsistence rights and uses is one of its highest priorities of AFN. For more information: www.nativefederation.org

Native Village of Eklutna
The Native Village of Eklutna is located on the banks of the Eklutna River in Southcentral Alaska. This federally-recognized Dena'ina tribe is the only Native community in the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska. The mission of NVE is to empower Eklutna Village Dena'ina by promoting history, culture and identity of our sovereign nation, and to assist in the education and well-being of our Tribe. For more information: Eklutna-nsn.gov

The Conservation Fund
The Conservation Fund is a national non-profit organization dedicated to creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense. Founded in 1985, The Conservation Fund has maintained an office in Alaska since 1994 and has worked across the entire state from Ketchikan to Barrow. For more information: www.conservationfund.org

For more information: www.eklutnariver.org

Lower Eklutna River Dam Removal Video: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=c9G06pR4WiA

AFN Resolution: https://theconservationfund-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/vkeefer_conservationfund_org/EVgrOF-KsVZLlhsLnA9yqYABz0BWV_i9P75eJE9DHAE0mA?e=FmTyeh

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NVE Newsletter

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