



# Napaimute News

February, 2016

News from the Forest People



*Alukaq Mountain near Napaimute*

## Native Village of Napaimute

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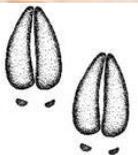
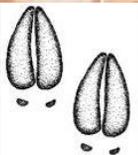
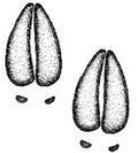
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(L-R): Devron, Marcie, Audrey, Rachelle, Shelly



**2016 Napaimute Traditional Council:**

*Delores Matter, Traditional Chief*

*Devron Hellings, President*

*Marcie Sherer, Vice President*

*Shelly Leary, Secretary*

*Rachelle Rohde, Member*

*Audrey Leary, Member*

**Administration & Key Staff:**

*Mark Leary, Director of Development & Operations*

*Dan Gillikin, Environmental Director*

*Lisa Feyereisen, Administrative Support*

*Joey Evan, Timber Harvest Manager*

*Mia Jenkins, Tabularis Bookkeeping*



**Hello Everyone!** 2015 included some dynamic changes for our tribe. Our staffing expanded with Lisa Feyerheisen of Crow Village (near Chuathbaluk and Aniak) coming onboard part-time to help with grant writing and support for Mark Leary in the office. After years of the Association of Village Council Presidents (“AVCP”) handling our Indian Child Welfare Act (“ICWA”) funds and cases, your Council decided to take back this function. We recruited and had two outstanding candidates apply from within our tribe. Brook Kristovich and I worked together to develop interview questions and a ranking system before conducting telephonic interviews. The decision was not easy; Ms. Audrey Leary is the tribe’s part-time Community Family Services Specialist. Ms. Audrey is completing her education degree requirements with a student teaching position in Aniak. While living and working in Aniak, she is reaching out to Aniak’s ICWA worker to learn and possibly help expand healthy family initiatives in the community. During the summer Miss Audrey also helped in the Napaimute office; she may have contacted many of you to encourage you to enroll your children as Napaimute members. Increasing our member rolls helps us when applying to granting agencies: our story or “ask” is stronger when we have more members that will benefit from the project we are proposing.

During 2015, Mr. Dave Cannon, our longtime Environmental Director, left our employ to pursue his passion writing about fish and the environment. Dave contributed so much and was a strong advocate for our tribe. While we miss him, we sincerely wish him every success.

We had the great fortune to learn that another highly respected biologist residing in the Middle Kuskokwim would be available. We opened recruitment and Mr. Dan Gillikan, previously a Fisheries Biologist for Kuskokwim Native Association, applied and was hired as our new Environmental Director. In his short tenure with Napaimute, his reputation, expertise and forged relationships with federal and state agencies have had a significant impact on our grant bottom line. In short, Dan has secured funding through the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management enabling our tribe to administer the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. The mission of this program is to, “strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in Federal subsistence management.” That is just one program that he has brought to us.

Our main economic enterprise continues around the harvesting of wood on land owned by our village corporation, The Kuskokwim Corporation (“TKC”). Napaimute pays to enter on TKC land along with paying a stumpage fee based on the amount harvested. After many years of working to reach a profitable status, 2015 was the year we moved into the black. We endure competition from local folks who work to gather logs and float them down to the Bethel area for sale. We suspect these enterprising individuals do not have insurance (a large expense), do not pay Bethel city tax on their sales, or pay any of the costs we do to operate legally. Still, Mark Leary finds the right people to work in our wood enterprise, and work safely, season to season. Being able to offer employment to our youth at a time when there is little else available is a source of pride for us. Each proposal we submit for funding is a way for us to sustain and grow our employment pool while being good stewards of the land and its many resources.

The proposed gold mine outside of Crooked Creek being developed by Donlin Gold is now in the Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) stage. Our Environmental Director, Director of Operations & Development, and members of your council have been actively involved in this effort. It is complex and requires focus, knowledge, and patience to understand the thousands of pages it encompasses. Join me in thanking Dan Gillikan for being our point man in this area.

This year, for communities all along the Kuskokwim River, fish was the main topic of conversation. Mark Leary and Dan Gillikan endured countless meetings, both in person and telephonic, to actively advocate for reasonable access, policy and regulations for this important cultural resource. Both men attended the recent Board of Fish meeting in Fairbanks and did a fine job articulating support for openings and escapement goals. They persevered, were calm and ultimately their voices were heard.

TKC has been traveling to all the communities that comprise its organization to share information about forming a Middle Kuskokwim Borough. This effort would help garner “payment in lieu of taxes” from the gold mine when it becomes operational and be a means for funding schools in the region while also providing money for infrastructure and basic services. Members of Napaimute living in the region support the borough formation effort. It is early in the process and you will be kept informed as this initiative moves forward.

We had the good fortune that three members submitted applications for the single Council seat that was up for election. Through a democratic process, Ms. Shelly Leary was elected to serve. I want to thank Mr. Brook Kristovich for his service on the Council, where as Secretary, he promptly transcribed and immediately sent out minutes of each meeting. I also want to thank Mr. Stanley Kelly for his interest in serving our members again. We are so fortunate to have such an engaged and caring group.

The efforts of your Council the early part of 2016 will involve working to improve the operations of AVCP by preparing language in the way of resolutions and reaching out to the other 55 villages that comprise AVCP to share and build support for change. We are also working to expand our business enterprise by forging relationships with other entities in the region.

Reflecting on 2015, the Council and I are so thankful and appreciative for the Herculean efforts of Mr. Mark Leary to grow our wood business, recruit and train a corps of employees that we rely upon, for managing and developing programs, and for being the “Face of Napaimute” year after year.

We are all connected. We all share a bond. I ask that we each remember that it is those bonds that will sustain us, and provide solace during difficult passages. It is together that we have accomplished much, and it is together that we will forge ahead in uncertain waters. Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to serve as your president.

May good health and a sense of optimism guide and follow you and yours. - *Devron Hellings, President*



## 2016 NVN Goals & Objectives:\*

### **I. TRIBE:**

#### ***A. Organizational Success through:***

- 1. A Sustainable Budget***
- 2. Well developed policies and procedures***
- 3. Audit and Financial Statements***
- 4. Indirect Cost Proposal***
- 5. Identify our exit strategy from AVCP***

#### ***B. PERSONNEL***

- 1. Identify Health Insurance Requirements (Benefits for employees)***
- 2. Further develop job descriptions for NVN positions and evaluations tools***
- 3. Employee Training Plans***
- 4. Continue capacity building for ICWA***
- 5. Develop Internship Program***

### **II. VILLAGE**

- A. Council Meeting at Napaimute***
- B. Visit Wood Harvest Site***
- C. Building Maintenance and Improvements @ Napaimute***
- D. Repair Wind Turbine***
- E. Complete Hoffman Cemetery Renovation***

### **III. REGIONAL**

- A. Actively participate in identifying solutions/options to stabilize AVCP***
- B. Active engagement in the Donlin Gold EIS Process***
- C. Active participation in and support of Middle Kuskokwim Borough formation***
- D. Continue coordinating with the Watershed Council***
- E. Continue collaboration with state and federal agencies on fisheries and wildlife management issues***
- F. Increase Outreach with Youth on Natural Resource Education***

\*Established by the Napaimute Traditional Council at their Annual Strategic Planning Work Session, January 9, 2016 at the Kuskokwim Corporation Conference Room in Anchorage.

This important time provides direction for NVN Administration & Staff throughout the upcoming year.

It is also a valuable tool for measuring performance.

**ABIG THANK YOU** to the Napaimute Traditional Council for the long hours they donate to moving Napaimute forward and also to the Kuskokwim Corporation Management and Staff for their participation and accommodation.



## Director's Report:

### Happy New Year!

If I had two words to describe the focus of our activities for the past year they would be: ***Fish & Wood.***

**Fish:** The Kuskokwim River has the largest subsistence fishery in the State of Alaska. There are over 2,000 families along our River fishing not for money or recreation but for one of the most basic human needs – ***food.***

With a rapidly growing population in the Lower Kuskokwim and a decline in the King salmon run in recent years, involvement in management of the Kuskokwim Subsistence Fishery has become more and more of a priority for the Native Village of Napaimute administration. We have worked hard to ensure that the People in the Middle/Upper Kuskokwim are informed, involved, and have reasonable, if not equitable opportunity to fish for their food as the residents further downstream.

There are 13,000 people in the first 100 miles of the Lower Kuskokwim River and adjacent coast; in the remaining 500 or so miles from Lower Kalskag to Nikolai there are barely 1,900 People. Because the Upriver People are so few and take so few fish – what's good for them (good subsistence fishing) is ultimately good for the fish. There will be good escapement to the spawning grounds. Kuskokwim salmon stocks will have a better chance to rebuild and be sustainable. What this means is that unpopular measures have to be taken that allow good numbers of fish to get past the highly populated Lower River to the Middle and Upper Kuskokwim where most of the spawning streams are located. Otherwise we are literally "eating ourselves out of house and home".

Through our involvement with the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (KRSMWG), the Central Kuskokwim Fish and Game Advisory Committee (CKAC), the recently formed Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC), the State Board of Fish Kuskokwim Subsistence Salmon Panel, and a few other ad-hoc groups the amount of time invested in Kuskokwim fisheries issues is significant. Fish meetings used to be mainly a summer activity – now they occur nearly all year-round.

But it has been time well spent. I think we are making a difference – see article on **pg. 19** of this newsletter.

We have been very fortunate to have Dan Gillikin join our crew. His resume is more than impressive and he is bringing NVN to a new level in Kuskokwim Salmon Fisheries Management as demonstrated in his newsletter report. Thank you very much Dan. The right People at the right time always seem to find us.

**Wood:** Napaimute's one-of-a-kind firewood business continues to take up a great deal of the Director's time, but even though it requires long hours, sometimes seven days a week, it is still enjoyable because we continue to provide meaningful employment opportunities to our Middle Kuskokwim neighbors while at the same time providing a valuable service to the People in the Lower River.

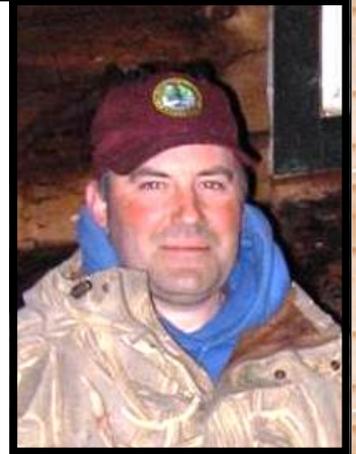
Despite some public perception, NVN isn't getting rich selling firewood. We move a lot of wood all throughout the region. What's not understood is what it takes to do this. I hope the handful of pictures in this newsletter help bring a better understanding. Sometimes I wonder how any small business can survive in rural Alaska. Expenses are so high. Just look at the pictures showing transportation to the Lower River.

Still this is a valuable service to the region worth doing even if we only break even. I see it every time we deliver wood to People in a treeless Lower River village on a cold windy day in the Tundra. Some have even cried.

The business continues to grow, we continue to build relationships with organizations that want higher volumes of wood (such as the AVCP Energy Assistance Program and Village Corporations along the Coast) and we continue to look for funding opportunities that will allow us to build the capacity necessary to meet the need.

It's been a good year for the Native Village of Napaimute and we are excited for the opportunities of the new one. I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to our leadership and employees – both full and part-time for all their work and vision for Napaimute.

**Mark Leary**  
*Director of Development and Operations*



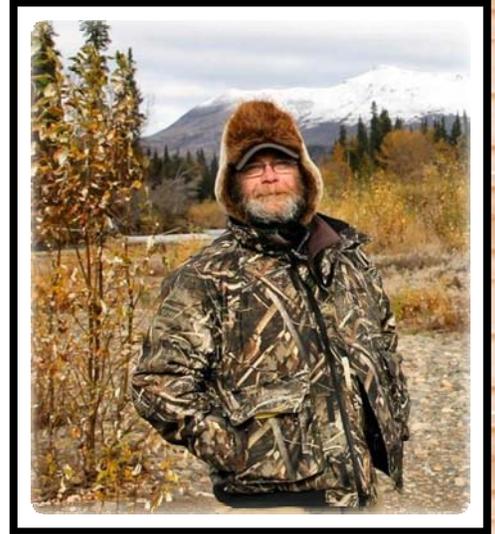


## *Environmental Director's Report:*

### **Introduction**

Hello to all the folks of the Kuskokwim and beyond, it pleases me to introduce myself as the new Environmental Director for Napaimute, and offer a snapshot of what the Environmental Department has been doing over the last year, and our plans for the future.

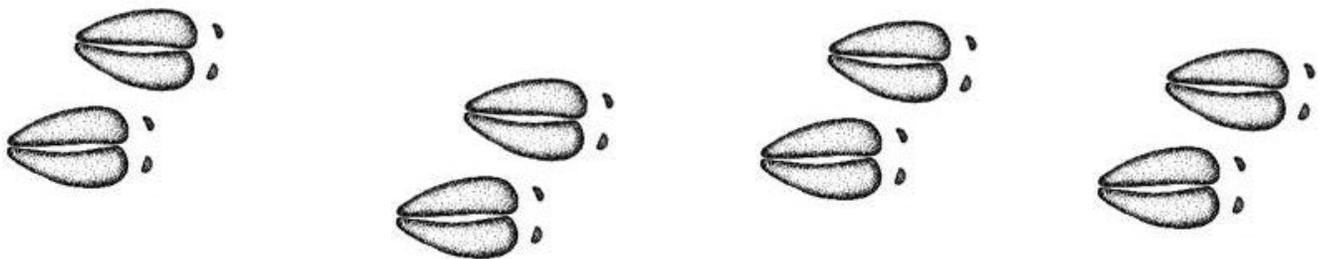
First, a little about myself - my name is Dan Gillikin: I started working full time for NVN back in April of 2015. I have been living and working in Alaska for a little over 28 years, primarily in Fisheries and aquatic habitat assessment. My previous job was with the Kuskokwim Native Association (KNA) as their Director of Fisheries, regrettably due to financial issues at KNA they were forced to dissolve as an organization. But, as they say "when one door closes... another opens", and that is how I found myself working for the Native Village of Napaimute.



Prior to working with KNA I was the Fisheries Biologist for the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, head-quarter in Bethel AK. Between these two positions I gained over 10 years of experience specific to the Kuskokwim Region, with its unique issues and challenges. I have lived and worked in many parts of the state; Homer, Portage, Yakutat, and even Anchorage for a short period of time. Ultimately however we (my wife Sharon and I) decided to call the Kuskokwim home, mostly because of its people, the remarkable pristine natural character of the river, and the abundant resources it provides.

We now call Aniak home, and were fortunate enough that when we moved here we were able to purchase a small homestead a little over a mile upstream of town situated right at the confluence of the Aniak and Kuskokwim Rivers. Sharon and I have put our hearts (and backs) into rejuvenating this old homestead and making it as self-sustainable as possible. We feel very fortunate to be where we are and hope to set an example, and assist others interested in seeking this lifestyle.

Enough about me... so what has the Environmental Department been up to this last year, in a word "plenty". In addition to our core programs, and with the support of the Traditional Council we are forging ahead in new and exciting directions, one we hope will benefit all the folks of the Kuskokwim River.



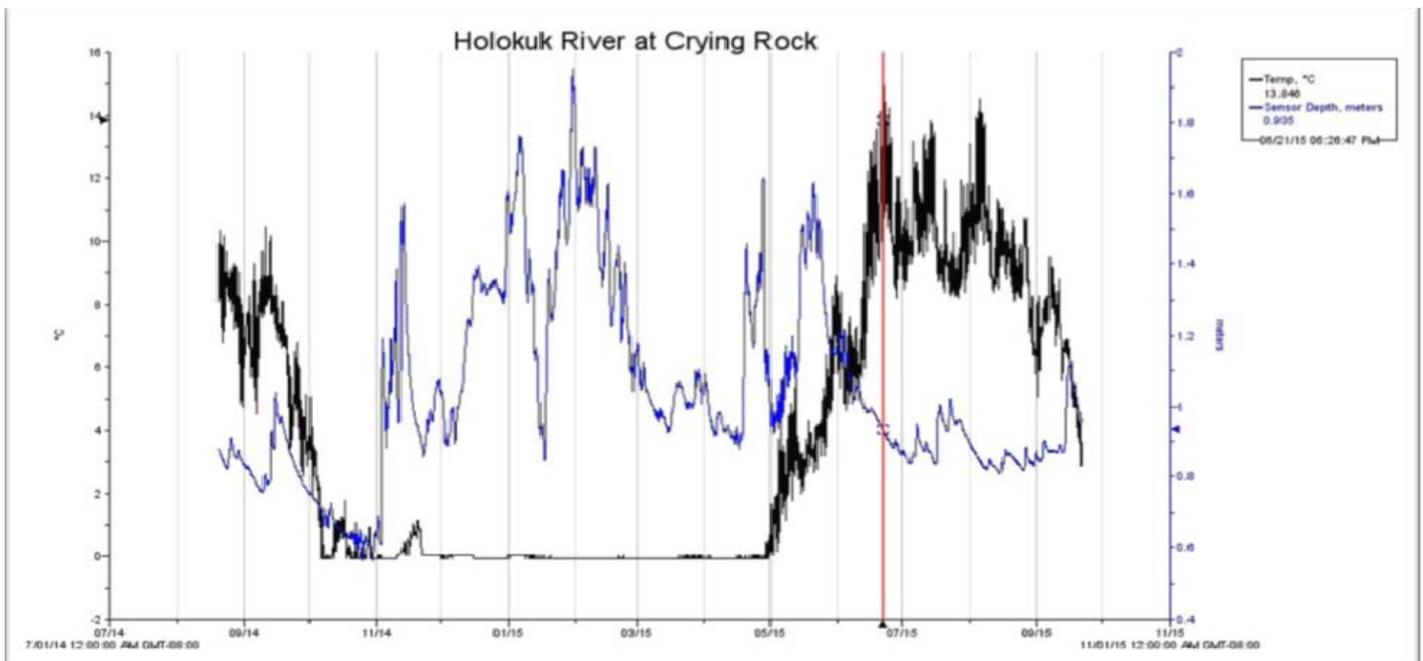


## Environmental Director's Report - cont'd

### IGAP Program

Napaimute's Environmental Department was first conceived in 2005 and has been funded through the EPA's Indian General Assistance Program (IGAP). The IGAP program covers a wide range of projects mostly aimed at collecting; baseline environmental information, management of solid waste, and sharing information with the Tribe and public on environmentally related issues.

**Water Quality** - on the Holokuk River was again monitored last year using data loggers that continuously record stream temperatures and water levels. This information is important for establishing baseline conditions and understanding the possible effects to salmon that use the river for as spawning and rearing habitat.



The chart above clearly shows unusually high water levels (blue line) in the middle of winter on the Holokuk. Normally this would be suspicious data but as everybody that lives on the Kuskokwim knows we saw one of the warmest and wettest winters ever in 2014: which even caused a mid-winter breakup of the river. This is a wonderful example of how local knowledge can and does compliment contemporary science. The effects of such high water in the middle of winter on incubating salmon eggs and rearing juvenile salmon are unknown.

Water temperatures (black line) for the Holokuk River looks good and within a healthy range for salmon: generally below 14 C. for incubation and rearing. Temperature is one piece of information that bears close monitoring in the future based on projections from climate change models. Only with many years of continuous data collection (like the chart below) will we be able to identify abnormal conditions that could affect our fisheries resources.

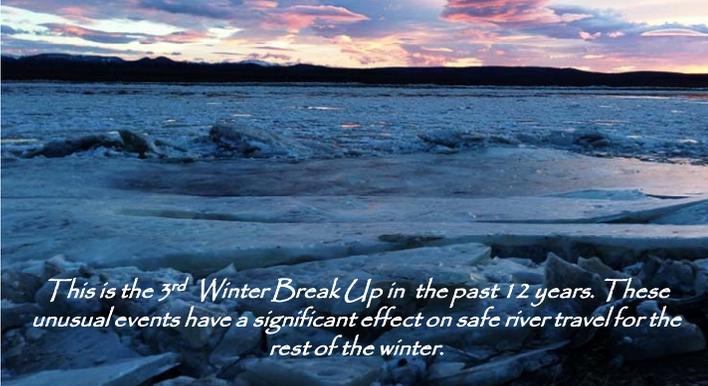




## Environmental Director's Report - cont'd

*November 13, 2014 – the second break up of the year on the Kuskokwim*

*November 29, 2015 it happened again*



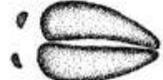
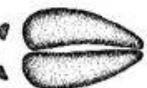
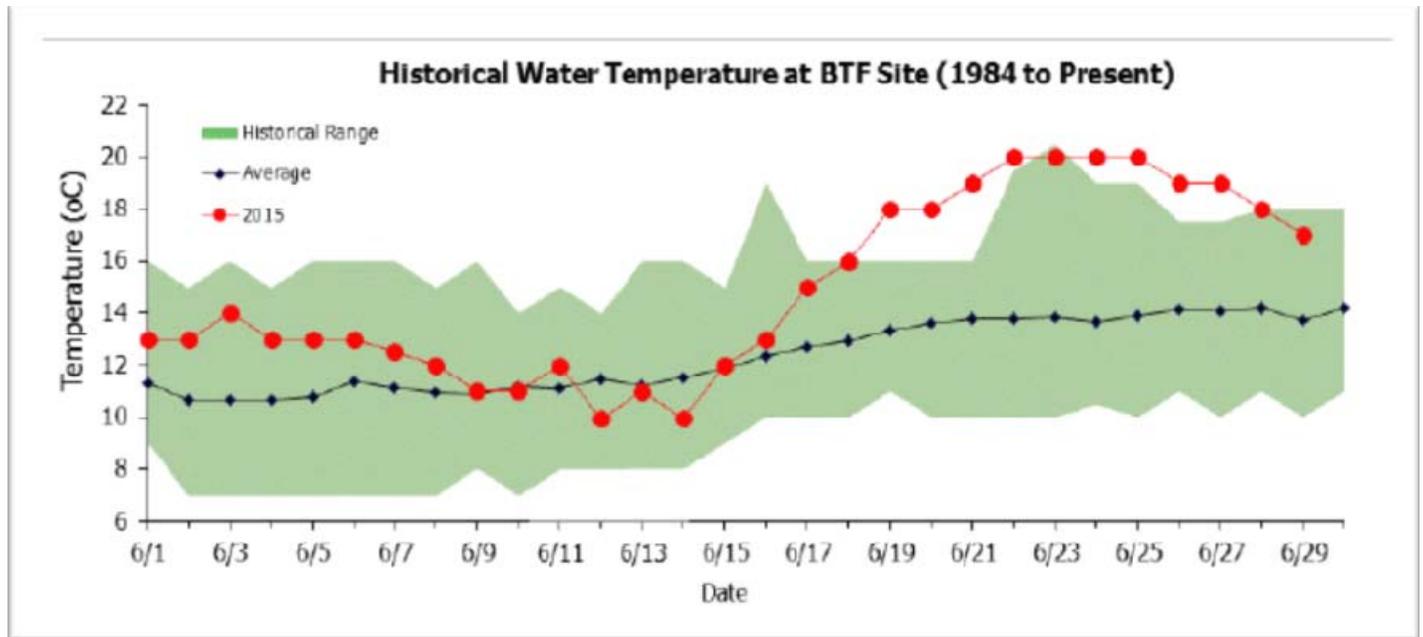
*This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Winter Break Up in the past 12 years. These unusual events have a significant effect on safe river travel for the rest of the winter.*

*Climate Change?*

*Will these unusual winter break ups become "normal"?*



**Climate:** The month of May, 2015 was the warmest on record for Alaska. That along with low snow pack produced new record warm water temperatures in the Kuskokwim in mid-June, see chart below. These warm temperatures can have serious consequences for migrating salmon; 21 C has been known to block upstream migration of Chinook, and is unhealthy for rearing juvenile salmon.





## *Environmental Director's Report - cont'd*

**Solid Waste** – an inspection of the solid waste transfer site (SWTS), i.e. the dump showed it to be in very good condition and well maintained. Folks have been doing a good job of sorting refuse and NVN Staff has been keeping up on incinerating the trash. Please keep it up so that we can avoid problems like we see in many of the surrounding Villages.

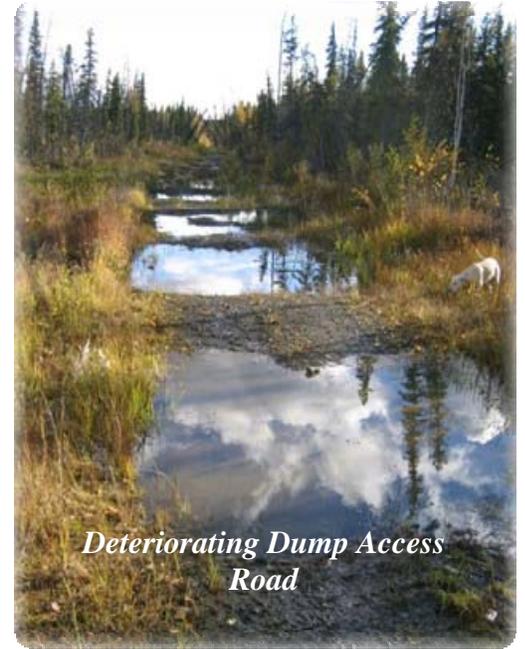
Unfortunately, what was not in good condition was the access road to the dump, as many of you may know. What I saw is a classic case of subsidence as a result of constructing the road over permafrost soils, which is slowly melting over time. In all likelihood this situation will only continue to get worse, unless addressed.

The issue is not only one of inconvenience but that water is being channeled in the direction of the dump: potentially causing flooding and contamination of surface and ground water.

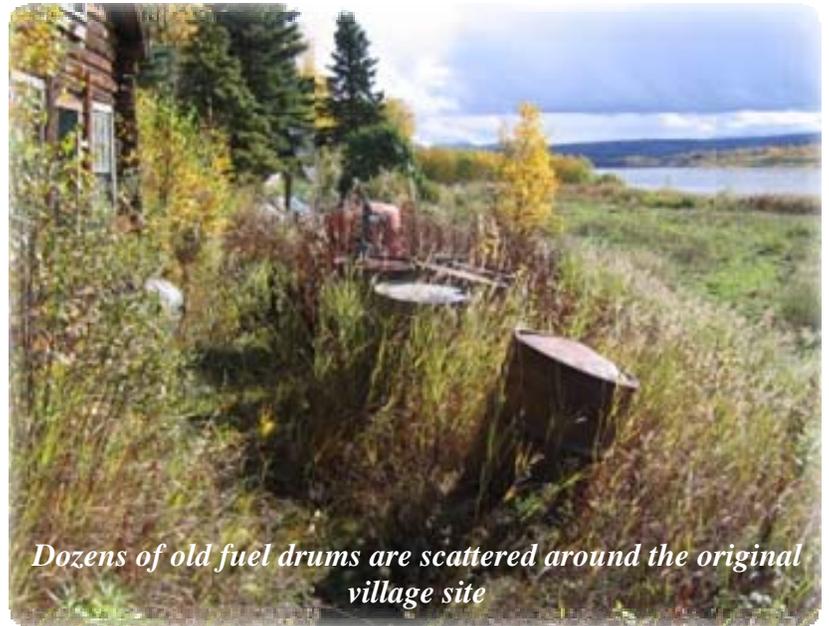
Future project proposals are in the works to assist Napaimute with addressing this and other climate change related issues.

**Hazardous Waste** – another area of concern noted in my “walk - about” through the Village was the accumulation of hazardous waste, mostly waste oil and old batteries. Some of these items are obviously “legacy” materials that have been around a long time, others however are not. This is nothing unique to Napaimute and our situation is not nearly as bad compared to many other Villages I have seen, but it needs addressing.

The Environmental Department with the Council's support has approved submitting a proposal to the EPA to fund what's known as a Brownfield Program at Napaimute. Some of the objectives of the Program are to inventory, identify and develop a plan, and the technical expertise to properly dispose of these materials. In the mean time we would ask that folks continue to take advantage of the waste oil collection barrels at the dump and properly dispose of any old batteries, so as not to compound the problem.



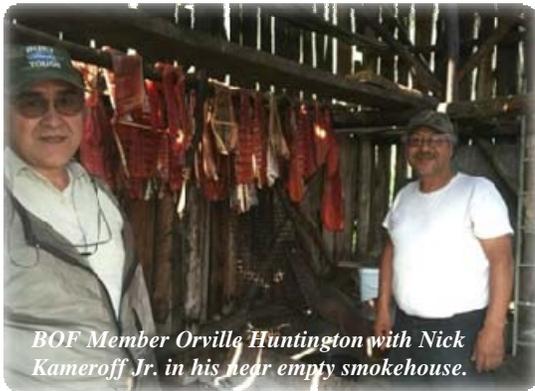
*Deteriorating Dump Access Road*



*Dozens of old fuel drums are scattered around the original village site*



## *Environmental Director's Report—Outreach & Donlin EIS*



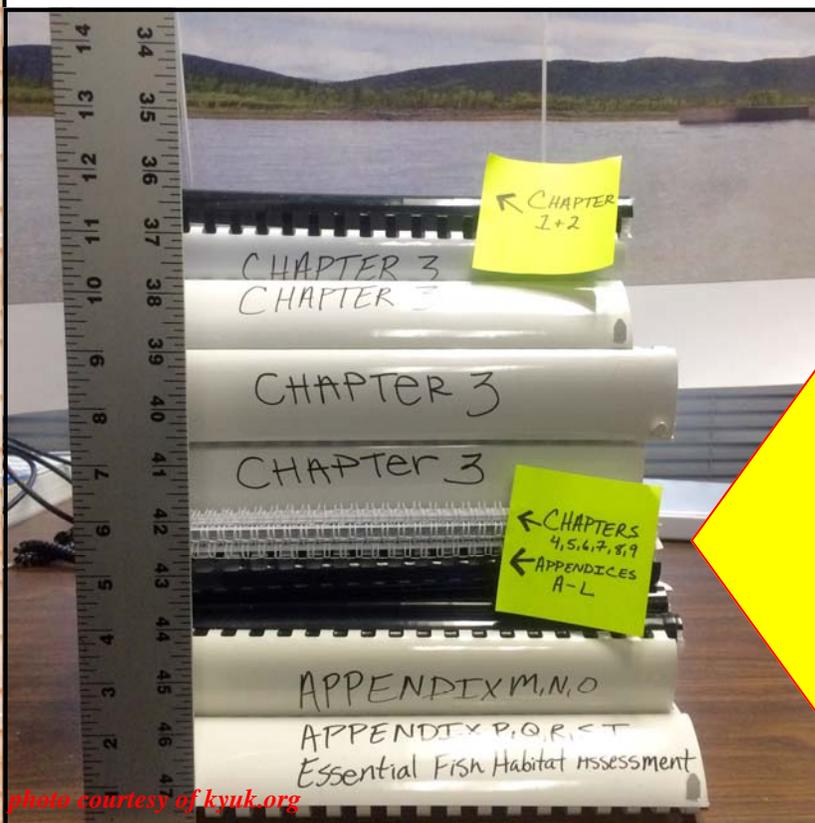
*BOF Member Orville Huntington with Nick Kameroff Jr. in his near empty smokehouse.*

**Outreach** – the exchange of information with Kuskokwim Folks took many different forms this last year; our website and Facebook pages, participation in various fish and wildlife Advisory Group discussions, facilitating workshops, meetings with Federal and State Managers and even a visit to Aniak by members of the State Board of Fish (BOF).

Another critically important outreach effort Napaimute has been involved in has been the review of Fisheries Proposal to the BOF, which we plan to comment on at their Board meeting in January. (*see related article*)

**Donlin Gold** – over the last year Napaimute, as a Cooperating Agency (along with other Tribal Organizations) has been involved in review of the issues and information needs to be evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS has now been completed and is out for public review and comment, available at: <http://www.donlingoldeis.com/>. A schedule of public meetings planned to be held throughout the region is also available at the website. The public comment period is open until April 30<sup>th</sup>, information on how to comment can also be found at their website.

Due to the scale of this project and scope of issues the DEIS has swelled to over 5,000 pages and is very technical in nature. Because of this, one good way for folks to participate in the process and voice their concerns would be to attend the public meetings. The impact of this project to the region, should it happen cannot be overstated, we urge everybody to get informed and involved.



***This is what the full Draft Donlin Environmental Impact Statement looks like:  
12" of very technical information!***



## Environment Report - Fisheries:

### Fisheries

As a result of low Chinook salmon returns since 2011 and in order to achieve escapement objectives early season subsistence fishing restriction and tributary closures were jointly recommended by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group also supported these necessary actions.

In May, a Federal Special Action closed the Kuskokwim Chinook salmon fishery to non-Federally qualified users within the boundary of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Subsistence fishing in the Kuskokwim River was restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh to three days per week within the NWR boundaries beginning May 21<sup>st</sup>.

This restriction was also implemented by ADF&G upstream of Aniak in State managed waters, beginning June 4<sup>th</sup>. Fishing for Chinook salmon with hook and line gear was closed drainage wide, for all fishermen beginning June 4. The FWS also enacted a community harvest permit program starting June 10<sup>th</sup> that allowed for the harvest of up to 7,000 Chinook salmon within the NWR boundaries.

Beginning June 1, ADF&G implemented a test fishery in cooperation with the Native Village of Napaimute near Aniak to provide an assessment of species ratios and run timing of salmon. As chum and sockeye salmon abundance exceeded Chinook salmon abundance, as indicated by Bethel and Aniak Test Fishery, limited subsistence fishing opportunity with 6-inch mesh gillnet gear was provided in both state and federal waters. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> ADF&G resumed management of the entire Kuskokwim River. Restrictions limiting fishing continued until August 4<sup>th</sup>, after which all fishing restrictions were lifted.

The preceding description of the 2015 fishery only partially describes all of the management actions taken last season: illustrating just how complex management of the Kuskokwim subsistence salmon fishery has become. Kuskokwim fishermen have been making great sacrifices in recent years for the conservation of Chinook salmon, and it's paying off. Last season all of the weirs met or exceed their escapement goals, and while the final numbers are not yet available the basin wide goal was in all likelihood met. If past patterns of returning Chinook hold true, we may soon be out of "conservation mode" for Chinook salmon, let's hope so.

Year	Chinook Salmon Escapement					Salmon
	Kwethluk	Tuhsak	George	Kogrukuk	Tatlawiksuk	
2005	<sup>a</sup>	2,653	3,845	21,819	2,864	<sup>a</sup>
2006	17,619	1,043	4,355	20,205	1,700	7,075
2007	12,927	374	4,011	<sup>a</sup>	2,032	6,255
2008	5,276	701	2,563	9,750	1,075	2,376
2009	5,744	362	3,663	9,528	1,071	1,656
2010	1,667	201	1,498	5,812	546	<sup>a</sup>
2011	4,079	288	1,547	6,731	992	<sup>a</sup>
2012	<sup>a</sup>	555	2,201	<sup>a</sup>	1,116	<sup>a</sup>
2013	<sup>a</sup>	193	1,292	1,819	495	625
2014	3,187	320	2,993	3,732	1,904	1,757
2015 <sup>b</sup>	8,163	709	2,281	7,639	2,095	2,285
SEG	4,100– 7,500		1,800– 3,300	4,800– 8,800		
Average 2005–2014	7,214	669	2,797	9,925	1,380	3,291

Weir did not operate or counts were incomplete.  
Preliminary numbers subject to change.





## *Environmental Director's Report: New Projects*

### **New Projects**

In an effort to be more actively involved in the management of our natural resources Napaimute is collaborating with state and federal agencies to conduct monitoring, natural resource education, and outreach activities. These partnerships are not only providing employment for local residents but also opportunities for them to be more engaged with the agencies in management, and promote local perspectives on the issues. One of our goals is to build a highly skilled local workforce and the operational capacity to allow us to capitalize on future opportunities: of which, there are many.



**Aniak Test Fishery 2015** – this project was funded by ADF&G and operated from June 1<sup>st</sup> - July 15<sup>th</sup>. The Aniak Test Fishery methods were similar to those already in use in the Test Fishery near Bethel. A two person crew deployed a 6 inch gill net at 3 sites perpendicular to shore at 9:00 am and then again at 5:00 pm. At the end of each drift the total time and catch from each drift was recorded to allow for calculation of catch per unit effort (CPUE) for each species of salmon. The catch was distributed to the communities of Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Kalskag.

All reports from ADFG Staff were favorable related to our execution of the project, and they have expressed their thanks to NVN for taking the lead on this critical project. The information collected by this project proved invaluable for making sound management decisions that conserved Chinook salmon, while providing opportunity for harvest of other species, which may not have been possible without the data we provided.

ADF&G plans to conduct this project in 2016 and has contacted Napaimute to see if we are again interested in cooperating on the project.

**Fish Wheel Demonstration Project** – this project was a direct grant from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, in response to the 2012 Kuskokwim Fisheries Disaster Declaration. The goal is to provide for the oversight, materials, logistics and traditional teachings related to the construction and operation of fish wheels. The project intent is to support subsistence fishermen of the Middle and Upper Kuskokwim River to provide for their subsistence needs that also promotes the conservation of Chinook. Last year we completed/assisted on the construction of two wheels, and acquired materials for the construction of three more wheels, to be deployed in 2016. During the freeze up of 2015 our employees harvested additional timber to be milled into lumber for additional fish wheels.

Middle Kuskokwim villages interested in acquiring a community fish wheel should contact the NVN Environmental Department.





## *Environmental Director's Report: New Projects—cont'd*

**Partners Program** – the Partners in Fisheries Monitoring Project (PFMP) is an exciting new addition to our program here at Napaimute. Starting in 2016 the project is funded for four years through the FWS Office of Subsistence Management. It has several components to it, all primarily aimed at building capacity for local involvement in fisheries management.

Napaimute's goals for the Partners Project are:

- ◆ *Improve the effectiveness of local outreach;*
- ◆ *Provide opportunities in natural resources education for local youth;*
- ◆ *Build capacity through strategic program development;*
- ◆ *Prepare and execute a plan for program sustainability beyond the PFMP.*

In addition to much of the outreach we already do we will be hiring local residents in several of the Middle Kuskokwim River Villages to act as Fisheries Resource Information Technicians (FRIT). Their main role will be to share and exchange in-season fisheries information with other fishermen in their villages and with Fisheries Managers.

Another exciting component of the project is that youth education opportunities will be provided through forming a partnership with the Kuspuk School District (KSD) on their already highly successful Math Science Expedition (MSE) and post-expedition classroom follow-up. The MSE is a 9 to 10 day raft trip down the Salmon and Aniak rivers in late summer during which approximately 30 middle and high school students, are in the company of several adult mentors. The students participate in a variety of hands-on math and science activities as well as events to develop leadership and team building skills.



With support from the Partners Program Napaimute will be striving to become more involved in a variety of monitoring projects, funded through various means. Our hope is to provide for more local hire opportunities and promote careers in the area of natural resources management.

***If you are interested in a job related to fisheries management in the Middle Kuskokwim, please contact us.***





## *Environmental Director's Report: Projects In The Works & Final Thoughts*

### **Projects In The Works**

The following projects are ones that are currently in development (with a high likelihood of being funded), or are awaiting funding approval in 2016 from the funding sources.

**George River Internship Project 2016** – this project would be funded by ADF&G through a cooperative agreement with Napaimute, and in partnership with the KSD. The project can best be described as an advanced MSE project, focused on collecting detailed biological and physical data in the George River watershed. Not only will it collect valuable baseline data but it would also provide an opportunity for interested students to gain advanced work experience in the area of biological science.

**Salmon River Weir Technician 2016** – this is also a cooperative agreement being discussed with ADF&G to provide a Local Technician to assist with the operation of the Salmon River weir.

**Tribal Wildlife Grant 2016** – this is a proposal submitted to the FWS in 2015 to extend the operational period of the Aniak Test Fishery and the Salmon River weir. The objective is to provide additional information on Chinook and Coho salmon run timing and abundance, and to continue to build Napaimute's operational capacity.

**In-Season Monitoring 2016** - this project funded through the FWS in collaboration with ADF&G proposes to establish an in-season subsistence salmon harvest monitoring program in the middle Kuskokwim River. The project would hire local surveyors to collect harvest information during the fishery and then provide it to State and Federal Managers to be used for making in-season management decisions.

**Brownfield 2016** - this is a non-competitive proposal being submitted to the EPA to establish and enhance programs that address the assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields (contaminated) sites. One goal of the funding is to provide funds for activities that increase the number of actions conducted or overseen, by a state or tribal response program. This funding is intended to supplement other funding to increase our cleanup capacity. This project, if funded will require the addition of one full time position to our staff.

### **Final Thoughts...**

Hopefully from this brief snapshot of the work we accomplished last year and the plans for next you can see that Napaimute's Environmental Department has been making headway at addressing some of the important issues facing us throughout the Region. The people of the Kuskokwim have had some challenging times over the last few years and will probably face even more in the future, so do your best to stay informed and engaged, for all our benefit. If you wish to contact me about any of our projects please feel free to do so at:

[dangillikin@gmail.com](mailto:dangillikin@gmail.com).

*"If you're not at the table,*

*You're on the menu."*

Devron Hellings, Napaimute Traditional Council President

Original author unknown.



## Administrative Support Report:

### 2015 Summary:

My name is Lisa Carmel Feyereisen. I grew up on a small farm in rural Wisconsin. After completing graduate school and working four years in education, I decided it was time to change things up a bit.

Hence, I set off up the Alaskan highway with an education and 500 dollars in my pocket. At first I camped for a time in Northern Alaska, but eventually Rob Clift tracked me down and I ended up in Chuathbaluk where I was employed through Kuspuk School District as both a Specialist for Upriver Villages and a Generalist (K-12) in Chuathbaluk. This is where I met my husband, David A. Phillips. David and I got married in 1992 and afterwards we received permission from David's Uncle Bobby to re-establish Crow Village. For the next several years, in between teaching in Fairbanks and David completing his Bachelorette, we disassembled David's childhood log house in Chuathbaluk, built log rafts, floated it 17 miles downriver, and re-built our home in Crow Village. We have lived there ever since.



*Lisa & her sister-in-law Margaret Pohjola cutting fish at her home in Crow Village*

Throughout the last three decades I have worked in a variety of capacities to serve the middle river. In January 2015, I began working for the Native Village of Napaimute in the area of Administrative Support. This has been a nice mesh between my interests and abilities, and Napaimute's goals and direction. The majority of the work I perform is in the area of seeking funding to enable Napaimute to actualize and implement the tribal/community development goals outlined by the Council, the Director of Development & Operations, and the 2004 Napaimute Community Plan.

The Native Village of Napaimute has played and continues to play a key role in the rich and colorful history of the Kuskokwim River. Throughout 2015 the areas we have focused on repairing, stabilizing, and/or expanding are: Landfill Road, cemetery, youth/elder culture program, media services, fisheries, environmental, economic development, subsistence, transportation safety, and access to emergency/rescue services. Listed below are the specific programs/funding we have pursued (or are currently) along with a brief summary of the particular application or program goals.

### **Over the last year the Native Village of Napaimute submitted the following funding proposals\*:**

**State of Alaska Capital Projects, CAPSIS:** Napaimute Landfill Access Road Reparation and Maintenance Project. The Native Village of Napaimute applied for matching funds to complete the reparation and maintenance of the .5mile Landfill Access Road, Route 2035. This road connects the Village of Napaimute to the Landfill. Over the last couple of decades the lane of the road has become pitted, and narrowed due to drainage and permafrost conditions. Safety has become a critical factor on this route due to its current condition status. Immediate remedies are needed to prevent further degradation of the route and to enhance vehicle and passenger safety.





## *Administrative Support Report—cont'd:*

### **State of Alaska Capital Projects, CAPSIS: Restoration of Napaimute's Historical Cemeteries**

The Native Village of Napaimute applied for restoration funds. Hundreds of people, including many of today's regional leaders serving our state can trace their roots to the village. Currently, two of our State Legislators have direct ancestral ties to Napaimute. Napaimute's two cemeteries contain the final resting place for several of the Mid-Kuskokwim's prominent historical leaders. People from throughout the State return annually to visit these grave sites, and throughout the decades have attempted to maintain the integrity of both cemeteries. Occasionally private individuals will donate time and/or money for this work, but over the years the need for major maintenance/renovation has outrun the limited amount of time and funds available for this important work. They have waged a losing battle. Without an immediate concentrated effort, these historic sites will shortly lose the war due to the steady growth of grasses, small shrubbery, and trees.

### **Social and Economic Development Strategies for Alaska-SEDS-AK, Administration for Children and Families - ANA: Protect Title: *People of the Forest Warming the People of the Tundra***

This was a proposal to continue employing local people in the harvesting of renewable resources in order to providing an affordable energy alternative to the Lower Kuskokwim Region. We were seeking funding to also replace outdated and worn equipment which hamper the current timber harvesting operation's effectiveness and secure seed moneys to expand the distribution aspect of the business.

**USDA, Rural Business Development Grant, RBDG:** The Native Village of Napaimute sought matching funding from for the purchase a loader. The primary use of this piece of equipment will be to lease the loader to Napaimute Enterprises, LLC., in order to assist in the expansion of a small and emerging firewood distribution business, and facilitate in the creation and support of jobs in our impoverished region.

**Native American Library Services Basic Grants Program Institute of Museum and Library Services:** Provide quality materials and services to the community in a welcoming and respectful atmosphere to meet community educational, information, cultural, health, and recreational needs through a combination of conventional library materials and public Internet access.

**USDA, Value Added Producer Grant, Business and Cooperative Programs:** The Native Village of Napaimute sought working capital in the amount of \$250,000.00 to expand and stabilize its Napaimute Enterprises Firewood Distribution business, Value-Added Product of Split Bundled Firewood. This business is the first organized firewood distribution business in our region that includes 55 other villages. The demand for firewood as both an affordable energy alternative for home heating and as a cultural tradition for "steam bathing" (Maqivuk) is huge. With our growing population and changing climate, personal wood gathering cannot nearly meet the current or future need for firewood. Napaimute Enterprises' goal is to promote and distribute the value-added product of split and bundled firewood, stimulate job growth and create sustainable employment opportunities within our region. We wanted to provide additional employment, professional training, and develop vocational skills for Tribal members and residents of nearby villages.

**AVCP Elder/Youth Cultural:** The focus of this project is support programs that promote prevention programs that involve Elder and Youth culturally.

**Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program for Indian, US Department of Housing and Urban Development:** Napaimute, *People of the Forest*, sought funding to purchase a local sawmill, Nelson Brother Enterprises, LLC.; disassemble the mill/support buildings; relocate the sawmill from Chuathbaluk 43 miles down the Kuskokwim River to our Lower Kalskag Timber Harvest Site where it will increase our timber harvesting and production capacity. Harvested timber will be milled into truss lumber; then cured, stored, and inspected; before being transported by river barge to the Association of Village Council Presidents Truss Manufacturing Plant located 93 miles downstream at the regional hub city of Bethel. The *Timber to Truss Project* is the foundation of future economic sustainability for the Native Village of Napaimute and will positively impact other Tribes within our region through employment and training opportunities where none currently exist.

**EPA/State Tribal Response Programs /Brownfields:** This Tribal Response Program is our opportunity to inventory, assess, and clean up our environment. Existing toxic waste is known to be in and around our village and 14(c) 3 re-conveyed lands. Napaimute is potentially the repository of toxic material weathered and eroded from numerous mining sites along the Kuskokwim River Watershed, particularly from the poorly environmentally documented Mid-Kuskokwim River Basin, Holokuk River Basin, Komakofsky River Basin, New York Creek, Crooked Creek, Oskwalik River, Victoria Creek, Sue Creek, and George River Basin. These watersheds are major tributaries of the Kuskokwim River and are dotted with derelict mines, mining interests, abandoned villages, and historic harbor



## Administrative Support Report - cont'd.

**Tribal Transportation Safety Plan:** The Native Village of Napaimute Traditional Council is committed to reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries related to transportation, therefore, improving the overall safety of the tribal transportation system. As part of the ongoing effort to make safety improvements, this Tribal Safety Plan has been developed with input from our local community and tribal members. The plan identifies current issues and priorities which upon implementation, are intended to further improve transportation safety for the Native Village of Napaimute's residents and others visiting their traditional lands.

**Tribal Transportation Safety Funding (Trail Marking and Maintenance):** The *Napaimute Tribal Transportation Safety Project: Arrive Alive* is a winter trail marking project consisting of: Assess ice thickness throughout the corridor; marking hazards as well as marking a designated "safe" trail; and removing impassable ice jams/berms, for the most frequently traveled transportation corridors (IRR Inventory Routes #2033, #2032, #2037, #2038, and #2039) between the remote Middle Kuskokwim River villages of Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Napaimute and Crooked Creek. This project is a direct result of the highest transportation safety priority highlighted in the Napaimute Transportation Safety Plan in the TTPSF categories of emergency response and engineering improvements.

**Tribal Youth Program Grant:** The monies for Tribal Youth Programs Grant are funded from a Department of Justice Prevention Grant. The Grant's goal is looking to prevent suicide, crime, drug use, alcohol use, and truancy in youth. The funds Napaimute applied for will be used primarily for camping equipment, but additionally may be used for participation in subsistence and community service activities, sponsoring social gatherings, and activities associated with the annual tribal gathering.

### In Process

**Draft Revised Integrated Solid Waste Plan:** The plan outlines current issues with our waste management system and identified potential future area for improvement. Napaimute's present solid waste pollution is both a human health risk and environmentally destructive. One of our largest current issues is the village landfill and condition of the road access to it.

**Special Project EPA/IGAP:** (See Dan Gillikin's IGAP Report)

### Completed and Not Submitted

**Indirect Rate:** Napaimute has prepared a *DRAFT* Indirect Cost Rate Proposal. An **indirect cost rate** is a tool for determining the proportion of **indirect costs** each program should bear. It is the ratio (expressed as a percentage) of the **indirect costs** to a direct **cost** base. At this time, we have reviewed our *DRAFT* proposal and are building capacity regarding the ramification and benefits for negotiating such a rate.

If there are any questions, need for clarification and/or concerns about any of the programs mentioned above, please feel free to contact me at: [crowvillage@gmail.com](mailto:crowvillage@gmail.com) or by phone, (907) 676-0599. It is usually easier by email as my cell phone does not get reception in Crow Village and sometimes GCI eats my phone messages.

*"Lisa has been a true asset to our organization. We appreciate the knowledge, experience and professionalism she has brought to NVN. Thank you Lisa"*

- NVN Council & Administration





## *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Community Family Specialist Report:*

Cama-i Tribal Members of Napaimute!

As many are aware, an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Community Family Services Specialist position became available for the Native Village of Napaimute in the late summer months of this year. After a tough interview against a highly qualified and good component, I was hired as our villages new Community Family Services Specialist. I have been an employee in this position since September of 2015, and would like to extend my hand out to our tribal members and provide insight into the services Napaimute now offers with this new position. This is an exciting step of growth for our village, and I find myself privileged to be an employee for our People of Napaimute.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is a federal law passed in 1978 that seeks to keep American Indian and Alaska Native children with Native families. The intent of Congress under ICWA was to “protect the best interests of Indian (and Eskimo) children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families.” ICWA sets federal requirements that apply to state child custody proceedings involving an Indian child who is a member of or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe. As an ICWA worker I am a representative for the Native Village of Napaimute in areas such as preventing the break up of Native families, promoting outreach and awareness, and ensuring the safety of the relocation of our children. I work closely with the Office of Children Services, as well as with the Association of Village Council Presidents, and am here to provide the finest services to our tribal members where needed.

In the previous month of December, I had the privilege of attending the BIA Providers Conference held in Anchorage as a beginning ICWA worker for the Native Village of Napaimute. The sessions I attended primarily focused on ICWA topics, and taught me much about the importance of having an ICWA worker for each of our recognized tribes. From these sessions I was also made aware about the Office of Children Services and how they are currently working on increasing ICWA compliance and tribal partnership, strengthening OCS regions, and are attending to the Confidentiality Agreements needed from each tribe. In one particular session I attended, a film was presented highlighting the reality of children and how there are always underlying issues to a child or young adult’s behavior, which habitually stems from the home environment they are living in. I was reminded that traumas are a natural part of life, and in the same reflection, is also the resiliency and glue that holds life together. As an ICWA worker, watching this film provided the foundation for what my job truly is: making sure the wellbeing of our children is taken care of and safeguarding our children into homes where their identity as a Native person can be enriched. The film educated me on how the health and prosperity of a child encompasses areas such as equality, education, poverty, global warming, and pushing children towards success.

In December I also participated in my first Basic ICWA Training held in Anchorage. While attending this training I was introduced to ICWA workers from all across Alaska, and was provided a line of support for the work I do as an ICWA worker. Diane Payne and many others trained us on how to be a voice for our tribe, provided an in-depth overview of ICWA law and policy, and gave a synopsis of Alaska’s Child in Need of Aid case process. I was also trained on the ICWA guidelines. I completed the 3-day training with a deeper understanding of why there is an Indian Child Welfare Act and what my job does for our People.

I am currently in my last semester as an undergraduate student at the University of Alaska Anchorage where I am pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Education with a minor in Alaska Native Studies with a policy emphasis. I recently relocated back to the Kuskokwim River where I am living in Aniak to fulfill my student teaching. At this time, my office is also located in Aniak. I can always be reached by email at [audrey\\_leary@hotmail.com](mailto:audrey_leary@hotmail.com), through phone at (907) 538.9428, or by mail at PO Box 226 Aniak, Alaska 99557. Please don’t hesitate to contact me!

Best wishes for a good year ahead,

***Audrey Leary, Community Family Services Specialist  
The Native Village of Napaimute***



*Certificate of Participation for completing the Basic ICWA Training*



## Alaska Board of Fish Weighs in on Regulatory Proposals:

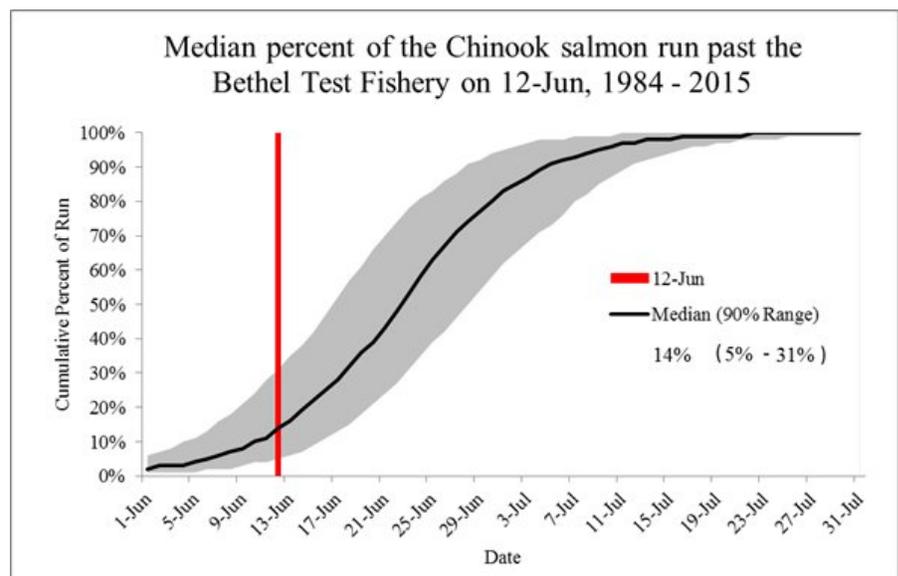
At the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in Fairbanks the Board of Fish reviewed 16 proposals to change regulations in how Fisheries are managed on the Kuskokwim River. The Board listened to hours of public testimony, reviewed recommendations from ADF&G Advisory Committees, the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group, Tribal Councils, their own Staff, and even an “ad-hoc” BOF Kuskokwim Committee formed at the meeting: before reaching any decisions.

At the meeting, I was impressed by not only the level of representation from Kuskokwim stakeholders, but also by their thoughtful comments, and willingness to find solutions to the problems facing us.

We have provide background on each of these proposal over the last few months so I won't go into detail here, and instead just provide the results of the meeting on the key proposals we have been discussing.

For Proposals – 92, 93, 94, and 96 the Board found a common solution in RC-83 (RC stands for record copy) to address the “intent” of each of these proposals; which was to pass more Chinook salmon through the Bethel area: thereby providing greater escapement into headwater tributaries, and more reasonable fishing opportunity for folks in the Middle and Upper River. The seemingly simple change to the Departments Kuskokwim Salmon Management Plan identified in RC-83 (see attached); to not allow subsistence salmon fishing to begin until June 12<sup>th</sup> could potentially make all the difference for conservation, and fishermen up-river with the least amount of impact on all subsistence fishermen.

The graphic to the right (prepared by ADF&G) shows the June 12<sup>th</sup> opening date relative to Chinook passage at the Bethel Test Fishery. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, in an average run timing year approximately 14% of the run has passed; on a late year only 5%; and on an early year as much as 31%. This closure protects those early run fish that we now know are migrating to headwater tributaries to spawn, and may be contributing more to the total run than previously thought.



On the issue of permits (Proposal 95 and 222) – the Board chose to table the two proposals, to be taken up at a later date. The Board recognized the lack of agreement between the various Advisory Groups and in the public testimony regarding the need for, and if necessary the type of permit system that would work best for everybody. The Board requested that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division work with stakeholders throughout the region in the coming months to see if any agreement could be reached. So...stay tuned there will be more discussions on this matter in the near future.

Personally, from this observers perspective the meeting was a success for everybody up and down the river. With the biggest beneficiary being the remarkable resource we have in Chinook salmon: one that with only sound, conservative management will be available for future generations.

*Dan Gillikin*



## *Other Napaimute News & Projects: Timber Harvest & Firewood Business*



*Joey Evan, Project Manager & Chief Harvester Operator*



*Good Crew of Young Men In Charge of the Summer Bagging Operation*



## Moving Firewood Products to the Lower River Market:



*A lot of logistics are involved to get our wood down the River to where it's needed*

**The U.S. Army likes Napaimute's wood!**



## *NVN Trail Marking Project: Working to Improve Winter Travel Safety in the Middle Kuskokwim\**



**WARNING**  
TRAIL CONDITIONS  
CHANGE  
TRAVEL AT YOUR  
OWN RISK  
TO REPORT TRAIL CONDITIONS  
CALL 545-2877

Lower Kalskag, Napaimute, & Crow Village Crew at Mile Post 0 of Upriver Route 1 near the mouth of the Tuluksak River L-R: Joe Simeon, Ludwig White, Ben Leary, Andrew Kameroff, Jr., Nikolai Savage, Mike Evan, Jr., Nick Levi, & Dakota Phillips

### *A big thank you to:*

◆ *The Federal High Ways Administration, Indian Reservation Roads Program*

◆ *The State of Alaska  
Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
Recreational Trails Program*

◆ *The city and tribal governments of Chuathbaluk, Aniak, Kalskag, and Lower Kalskag*

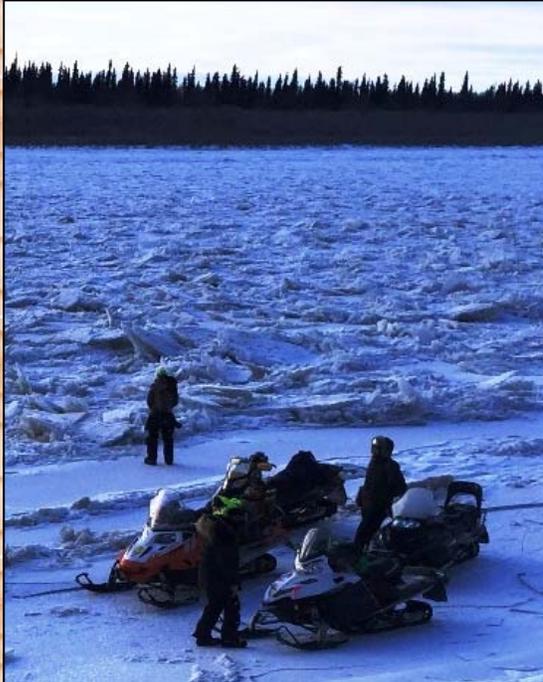
*For their support of safe winter travel in the Middle Kuskokwim*



*Trail Marking – cont'd:*



*“Mad Max” NVN’s 50 year old plow truck breaks trail on the Kuskokwim River*





## A Big Thank You to Our 2015-16 Employees and...



Dakota



Dakota, Ben, & Josh



Stiffa & Walter



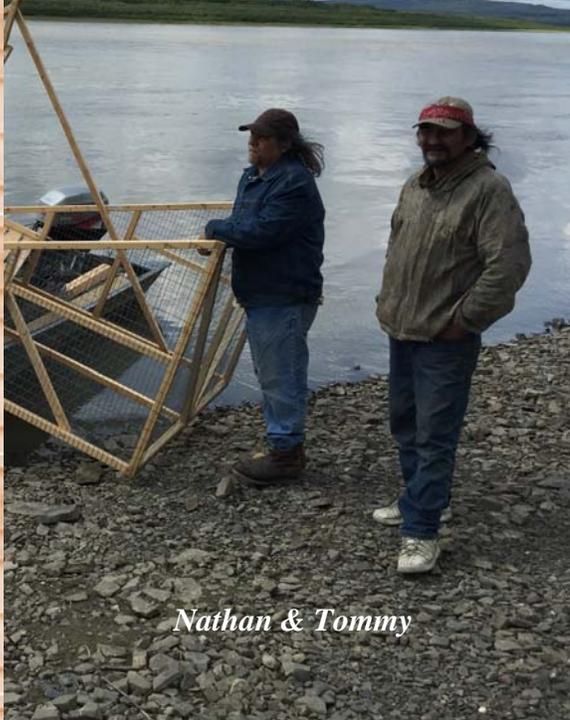
Audrey



Tim



Tommy & Jared



Nathan & Tommy



Nickolai



DJ & Kyle



Joey

...and a Happy New Year! (sorry we don't have everyone pictured)



# Napaimute Photo Album:

*Bull moose in the twilight watching travelers passing by*

All sports fishing for King Salmon on the Kuskokwim was closed in 2013



*Napaimute lit up for Christmas*





*Aniak Fire*



*Chapel on Christmas Eve*



*2nd Chief of the AVCP Region*



*Bagging Firewood*



*Blessing the graves before rebuilding them*

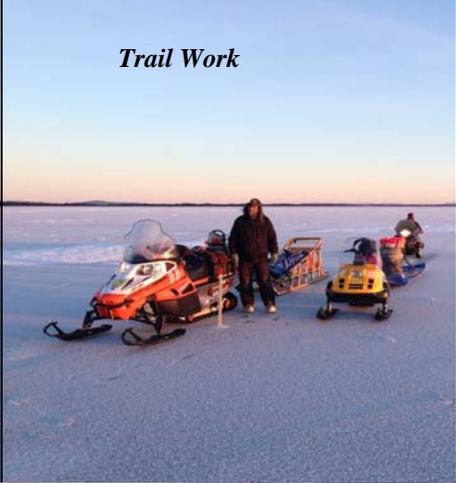




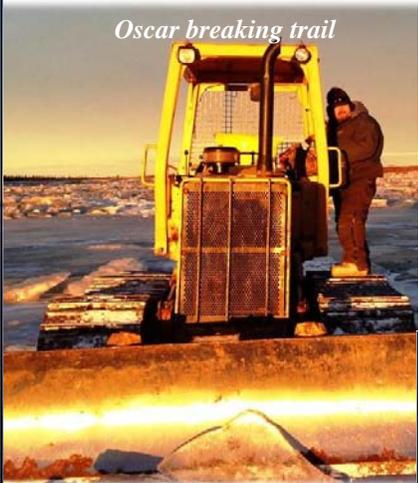
*Napaimute Photo Album:*



*Eric's moose*



*Trail Work*



*Oscar breaking trail*



*More trail work*



*Jarring Fish*



*Wassilie Kameroff*



*Cutting meat*



*"Willie Grouse"*



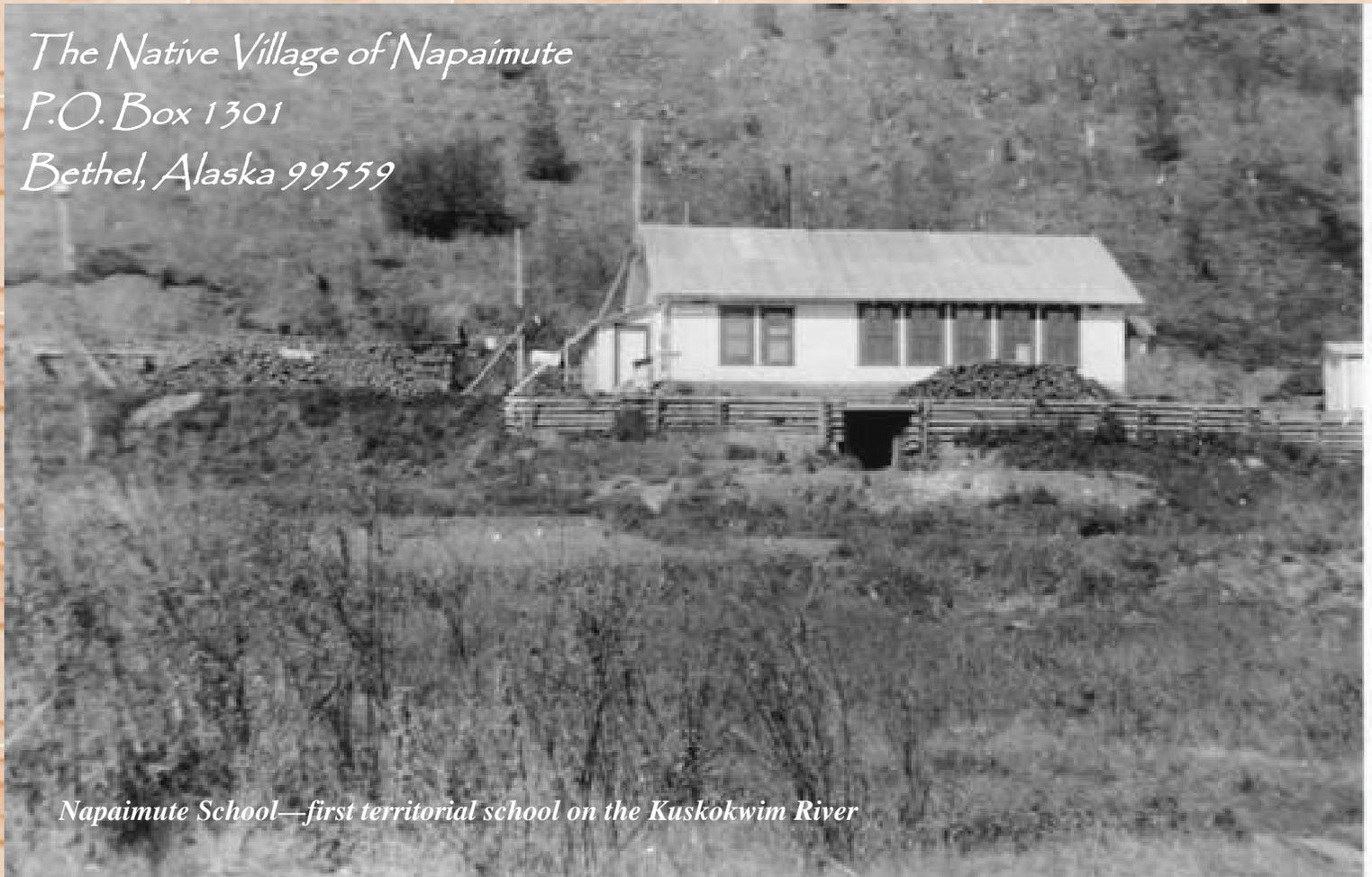
Napaimute News

February, 2016

News from the Forest People

# Annual Newsletter

*The Native Village of Napaimute  
P.O. Box 1301  
Bethel, Alaska 99559*



*Napaimute School—first territorial school on the Kuskokwim River*