



The Alutiiq Pride

THE CHUGACH REGIONAL RESOURCES COMMISSION'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025



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COVER PHOTO BY KELSEY HAWLEY



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NEW FACES

We welcomed some new faces to the Chugach
Regional Resources team during the last few months!

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, PLEASE WELCOME...



ALLIE TOLOFF
Healthy Foods
Coordinator



SIERRA LLOYD
Chemistry
Laboratory Manager



RILEY THOMAS
IGAP Environmental
Coordinator



BEKS RUMLEY
Climate Change
Coordinator



JANA WHEAT
Biology Laboratory
Technician



SYEIRA CLARK
Shellfish
Technician



DONNA TALAMANTES
Accounts Payable
& Travel Coordinator



OUR MISSION



To protect, rebuild, and conserve the Chugach environment and natural resources while promoting Tribal sovereignty and the protection of a subsistence lifestyle. We strive to assure bio-cultural restoration and conservation, sound economic development, and stewardship of the natural resources in the traditional use areas of the Chugach region while bringing Tribal voices to the forefront of natural resource management processes.

We are the leading inter-Tribal fish and wildlife commission. The CRRC is founded as a community-based, Alaska Native, natural resource management organization. Community resiliency and self-determination are central threads interwoven throughout all our activities.

NEW TRIBAL FISH & WILDLIFE DIRECTOR

TRIBAL FISH & WILDLIFE

In June, CRRC bid farewell to Raven Cunningham, our Tribal Fish & Wildlife Director, as she stepped into a new role with the Native Village of Eyak—congratulations, Raven! We're deeply grateful for the time, care, and leadership she brought to CRRC. Under her guidance, the department grew and thrived, launching new projects rooted in community values. AwA'ahdah, Raven!

While we'll miss her, we're excited to welcome Dustin Carl as the new Tribal Fish & Wildlife Director. Formerly our Tribal Wildlife Biologist, Dustin brings extensive experience in fisheries and wildlife research and a deep understanding of subsistence practices.

"I'm a Yup'ik Tribal member from the Kipnuk Native Tribe," Dustin shared. "Though there are differences between my village and the Chugach Region, we

share a deep reliance on subsistence resources. I'm excited to bring that perspective, along with years of research experience, into this role."

Dustin's top priority is a community-based approach: "We want each project to include employment opportunities for Tribal members and ensure their voices are central in decision-making processes—whether through Board of Game, Board of Fish, or Federal Subsistence Board trainings."

The department is currently gathering input from Tribal members to help guide future projects.



Please take a few minutes to share your feedback at:
tinyurl.com/5y6h5pzp



PROTECTING SALMON STREAMS IN PORT GRAHAM & NANWALEK

Recently, CRRC's Tribal Fish and Wildlife Director Dustin Carl and Tribal Fish Biologist Madeline Lee partnered with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG) biologists Nate Cathcart and Duncan Green to survey anadromous streams in Port Graham. Together, this team completed several activities to support and protect salmon streams in Port Graham and Nanwalek including: electro-fishing small roadside streams, identifying juvenile salmon, nominating new streams to the Anadromous Waters Catalog for legal protection, collecting water quality data, and documenting surrounding plant communities. This work helped identify salmon-bearing waters and evaluate habitat restoration, like culvert upgrades.

The team also held community meetings in Port Graham and Nanwalek. Our CRRC team members shared important updates from our Tribal Fish & Wildlife Department, and ADFG shared community sampling kits and job opportunities for local research assistants!

Discussions in Nanwalek included net pen removal work this summer and plans for a geotechnical survey for a small truck bridge to protect critical salmon habitat. **Thank you to both Port Graham and Nanwalek for hosting our staff and collaborating on the important work of protecting salmon habitat in the Lower Cook Inlet.**



SPAWNING SEASON UPDATE FROM MICHAEL & ANNETTE

Spring and early summer means spawning season for Alutiiq Pride!

Our APMI staff creates favorable spawning conditions for our shellfish species by mimicking natural environmental triggers such as food availability, light, and temperature. During spawning, our aquaculture team closely monitors and cares for broodstock, juvenile, and larval shellfish to support a successful spawning season. This year, our team has successfully spawned cockles, littleneck clams, and butter clams from Kake and Seldovia. Additional spawning of species from other regional locations will happen over the rest of the summer!

LEARNING FROM KAKE

Our Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute Director, Jeff, and our Mariculture Director, Annette, traveled to the Tribal community of Kake to collect shellfish broodstock and connect with employees and Tribal members of the Organized Village of Kake. The visit included two days of hands-on field work focused on butter clam broodstock collection and maintenance at several subsistence clam garden sites. Community members of all ages came out to help “fluff” the beach—a technique that aerates the sediment and improves habitat conditions for clams. It was a great opportunity to support local stewardship efforts and strengthen partnerships through shared work and knowledge.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

SHELLFISH CONNECTIVITY STUDY

We are excited to partner with the University of Alaska Fairbanks on a new shellfish research project!

Our Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute staff, alongside UAF’s Dr. Jessica Glass and PhD candidate, Rachel Lekanoff, are looking at clam population connectivity in the Gulf of Alaska. In the photos (check it out!) you can see the butter clams separated into individual containers so the project team can collect samples at different spawn times. The goal is to collect sperm, eggs, and fertilized larvae at a couple different stages so that these genetic materials can be sequenced in our lab which allows us to identify the unique order of building blocks that make up a clam’s genetic makeup. Eventually the project team can use this information to identify clams in the wild using environmental DNA (eDNA). eDNA consists of any genetic material found in the environment (cells, blood, tissue- you get it!). After spawning samples are collected, the broodstock (the parent shellfish) will be dissected and the tissue derived from this sampling will be incorporated into the DNA analysis.

In the future, we can take eDNA samples from seawater all over the region and compare the results to the samples collected and sequenced in this project. What does this mean? This process will streamline our shellfish survey process and create a more comprehensive understanding of clam populations across the region. This will provide our team with a greater overall understanding of how these important subsistence species are doing in the Chugach!



BIRDS CONNECT US CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND SHARED STORIES FROM ALASKA AND HAWAI'I

This spring brought together Indigenous knowledge holders, Elders, youth, and cultural practitioners from Moloka'i in Hawai'i and the Chugach region for a powerful exchange rooted in relationships, land, and story. What emerged was more than dialogue—it was a celebration of shared knowledge, ecological connection, and cultural continuity.

BIRDS CONNECT US

From the Pacific Golden-Plover (Kolea) to the Bristle-thighed Curlew (Kioea), migratory birds are more than travelers—they are messengers, navigators, and spiritual beings. In Hawaiian and Chugach traditions, they mark seasons, warn of storms, signal harvests, and appear in song, dance, and regalia.

Ocean currents, winds, and weather systems—like the “Pineapple Express”—connect Alaska and Hawai'i. Events like the 1964 earthquake show we share not just ecosystems, but resilience.

Cultural ties reflect this too—Hawaiian lomi salmon, made with Alaskan fish, shows how foods and stories travel between regions.

SUBSISTENCE, SUSTAINABILITY, AND STORY

Traditional food practices like egging, fishing, and hunting are passed down through careful observation of nature—bird behavior, plant blooms, and animal arrivals signal seasonal changes. Participants noted how cues like Kolea turning black or geese circling mark times of readiness and renewal.

But shifting seasons are causing concern: birds staying longer, hummingbirds moving north, and rising temperatures bringing mosquitoes—and avian malaria—into higher forests in Hawai'i. In Alaska, less snow and stronger winds are changing migration patterns too. Still, communities adapt through deep knowledge and connection to place.



ART, DANCE, AND CEREMONY: BIRDS AS SYMBOLS

Birds guide our hands and inspire our hearts. In kapa patterns, woven hats, dances, and chants, they appear as messengers of hope, renewal, and connection. In Hawaiian tradition, the Kolea marks time; in Chugach regalia, feathers honor transformation and responsibility.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS: A GATHERING OF EQUALS

The gathering felt more like a family talk than a lecture. Elders asked with genuine curiosity, and knowledge flowed both ways. Despite cultural differences, there was deep resonance—laughter, stories, learning, and a shared sense that we're not alone in protecting our places and practices.

LOOKING AHEAD: RIPPLES OF CONNECTION

The gathering is over, but its ripple effects remain. It strengthened ties—between Moloka'i and the Chugach Region, across generations, and between people, land, science, and story.

CRRC thanks the Native Village of Eyak, Sustainable Moloka'i, and Pacific Birds of the National Estuary Research Reserves.



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

All the work that we do at CRRC comes back to the food we eat!

Our organization is dedicated to ensuring food sovereignty in the Chugach region. Our departments promote subsistence lifeways and advocate for subsistence rights while also exploring novel pathways to food security, including mariculture and growing our own foods. We know that access to Traditional and healthy foods is vital to community wellbeing. Check out some of the ongoing projects and programs that support access to healthy foods in our region!

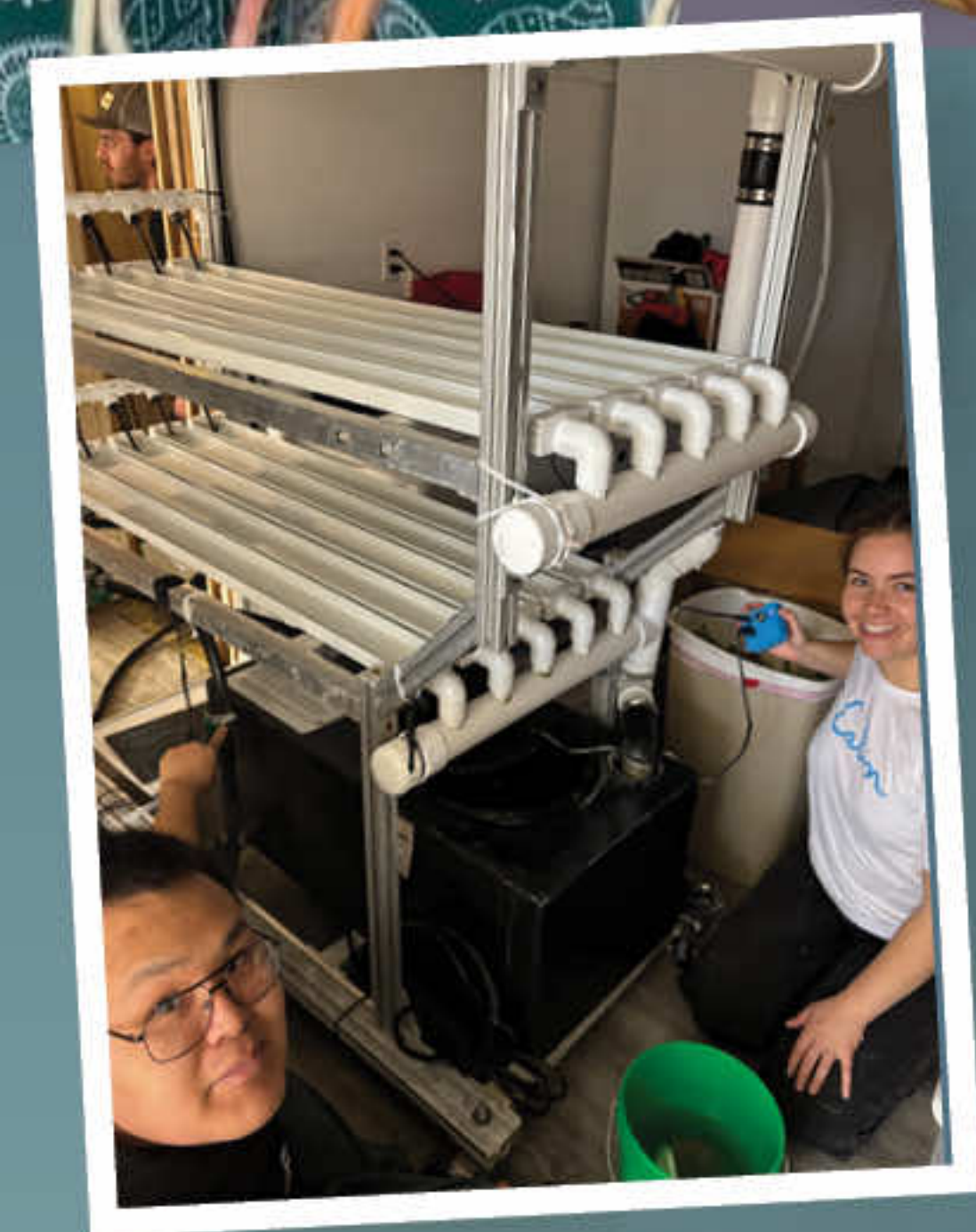


COMMUNITY VISITS

Our Healthy Foods Coordinator, Allie Toloff, and Education & Outreach Director, Carol Conant recently visited Nanwalk and Port Graham with our partners from Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute (KALI). In each community, our CRRC staff, KALI staff, and Hydroponic Trainees set up hydroponic cabinets. These cabinets will support the growth of fresh greens that can be harvested all year round. Already, basil is being harvested from the grow cabinets in both Port Graham and Nanwalek!

POTATO GARDENS

With support from the Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation, our APMI staff are officially potato farmers. You read that right- potatoes! The Stewardship Foundation generously donated hundreds of seed potatoes to CRRC and supported the construction and planting of four garden beds at our facility in Seward. In the fall, our team will harvest the potatoes and donate the harvest to communities in our region. Thank you, Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation, for supporting this fun summer project.



HYDROPONIC TRAINEES

This quarter, our Asisqat neq'rkak - Healthy Foods program gained two new team members! Meet Severan, from Nanwalek, and Keynon, from Seward, our Tribal Hydroponics Trainees. Severan and Keynon manage the Nanwalek and Qutekcak hydroponic systems, which grow plants without soil, relying on water-based nutrients to support growth. The hydroponic units in their communities are housed in a cabinet (Nanwalek) and Conex (Seward) which allows for fresh greens such as lettuce, kale, and herbs to be grown year-round. With training from CRRC staff and our partners at the Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute, Sev and Keynon have learned how to implement and provide technical support for their communities' hydroponics.



SEWARD FARMERS MARKET

We are excited to team up with the Qutekcak Native Tribe for Seward's Farmers Market this summer! We will be selling fresh greens, grown in Qutekcak's hydroponic Conex at Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute. The Tribe will also be selling Native made and Native designed jewelry and handicrafts. We are looking forward to sharing the delicious and nutritious result of hard work from our Healthy Foods team. Every Saturday from 10am-2pm in downtown Seward - stop by if you're in town!

QUTEKCAK NATIVE TRIBE ANNUAL HEALTHY LIFESTYLES PICNIC



Qutekcak Native Tribe hosted its Annual Healthy Lifestyles Picnic on June 14th. This event is a celebration of wellness, community, and culture.

CRRC, alongside Chugachmiut, hosted a table at the event. Our team had an incredible time talking with Tribal members and folks from around town, watching the amazing Mt. Susitna Sleeping Lady Drum, Singers, & Dancers, and sharing delicious food. There were also games and outdoor activities, health resources, and fun giveaways and raffles. Taking time to gather, laugh, and share stories was a great way to kick off summer!

We are honored to have supported and attended the Qutekcak's 2025 Healthy Lifestyles Picnic.

**And those fry bread tacos?
Yeah, they were amazing!**

Quyana to those who helped out with this event, including local sponsors and volunteers. Quyana to the talented Mt. Susitna Sleeping Lady Drum group and Keeper of the Drum, Michael Rico. Quyana to Qutekcak for hosting a wonderful gathering and bringing the Seward community together.



WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS EDITION OF *The Alutiiq Pride*

In future editions, we hope this page can be a space for our communities to share photos, artwork, stories, recipes and more. After all, this is your newsletter! CRRC works on behalf of the Chugach region Tribes to support our subsistence way of life and promote community wellbeing. We want to hear from you!

Have something you'd like to share?

Contact our Education & Outreach Specialist, Robin, at robin@crrcalaska.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



•JULY•
23
Native Village of Eyak Annual
Tribal Member Picnic
NVE Admin Building Back Lot

•JULY• •JULY•
23 THROUGH **24**
Federal Subsistence Board
Summer Work Session

•JULY• •AUG•
30 THROUGH **1**
Arctic Encounter 2025
Anchorage, Alaska

•AUG•
2
Comments due on the proposed
update of the Prince William
Sound Area Plan Public Review

•AUG•
**EVERY
SATURDAY!**
Seward Farmer's Market 10^{am}-2^{pm}
Downtown Seward, Alaska

•SEPT•
16
Purchase Ceremony at
Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute 10^{am}-2^{pm}
101 Railway Ave • Seward, Alaska 99664

Have an event coming up in your community?

Let us know so we can add it to our next newsletter! Email Robin at robin@crrcalaska.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP, KNOWLEDGE, AND GUIDANCE

AWA'ANDAH • QUWANAKCUC • QUYANA • LUNALCHÉESH • THANK YOU

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



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Chairman
Port Graham



BOYD SELANOFF
Chairman
Chenega IRA Council



NANCI LEE ROBART
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For feedback or questions regarding the newsletter, please reach out to our Education & Outreach Specialist directly at robin@crrcalaska.org. For any other inquiries, contact us at admin@crrcalaska.org.