

## THE AFOGNAK ALUTIIQ PEOPLE OUR HISTORY & CULTURE

The Alutiiq people are the indigenous people of the Kodiak Island Archipelago. We, the Alutiiq people, have inhabited our traditional lands for over 7,500 years. Afognak Native Corporation represents 1,000 Native Shareholders, which are descended specifically from the Village of Afognak, on Afognak Island, in the northern part of the Archipelago. Afognak's wholly-owned subsidiary, Alutiiq, is named after our people.

### LOCATION



The Kodiak Archipelago is located 252 air miles south of Anchorage in the Gulf of Alaska. Kodiak is a temperate rain forest with a mild climate. Afognak Island, our Shareholders traditional home, is the second largest island of the Archipelago.

### HISTORY & CULTURE OF THE ALUTIIQ PEOPLE



The Alutiiq people traditionally carved petroglyphs into rocks all over the Kodiak Archipelago. These petroglyphs are among the oldest representations of our culture and some of them have become our company logo.

Alutiiq people have a strong cultural connection to land and sea. Traditionally, Alutiiq people lived in villages. The houses, called *ciqlluat*, were sod-covered structures built partially underground. Each person held a position within the community and was responsible for some aspect of life, be it hunting, fishing, healing, cooking, sewing or gathering. Everyone was important and had a role in the village's survival.

Traditionally the Alutiiq people's primary food sources were marine mammals, fish, and migratory birds. These were hunted from kayaks with *atlatts* (throwing boards) and spears or fishing hooks. Subsistence activities were, and continue to be, the fundamental foundation of Alaska Native cultures.

At Russian contact, the Alutiiq people's population was between 15,000 and 18,500 living in over 65 villages. After 50 years of resistance to invasions by Russian fur traders, on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1784, Gregorii Shelikof and his men bombed hundreds of men, women and children at Refuge Rock to gain control. Shelikof took the survivors at nearby, Three Saints Bay. At the new capital he built the first school in Alaska as a tool for colonizing the newly enslaved workforce. In Alutiiq, 'Refuge Rock' is known as *Awa'uq* (to become numb). The final battle at Refuge Rock represents a dramatic change in lives of the Alutiiq people. During Russian control of the Kodiak Archipelago, Alutiiq people were forced to hunt and gather resources for Russian use.



*Petroglyphs carved in rock near the Village of Afognak*

The rapid conquest of their homeland by Russian traders led to early and profoundly disruptive cultural change. Loss of political sovereignty, economic self-sufficiency, and mass death due to epidemics suppressed the transmission of cultural knowledge. Many traditions were lost, others were hidden from view and rarely shared. Cultural suppression has made it difficult to access Alutiiq history and traditions. Information on the Alutiiq world is preserved in relatively inaccessible places—the memories of Elders, archaeological sites, the shelves of European museums, and academic publications. This has made it hard for the Alutiiq to know and share their history. It has also led to misconceptions, omitted Alutiiq heritage from local history, and created feelings of shame about a remarkable culture. Despite this challenging history Alutiiq people persevered.

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## HISTORY & CULTURE OF THE ALUTIIQ PEOPLE



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In 1867, the United States purchased Alaska for \$0.02 an acre from Russia. Under American rule, the Alutiiq nearly lost their indigenous language, *Sugt'stun*, as the Bureau of Indian School System's "English-Only" policy sought to extinguish it. Self-determination is a relatively new opportunity for the Alutiiq. In fact Alaska Native people were not allowed to vote until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, and it was not until January 3, 1959 that President Eisenhower signed the proclamation admitting Alaska as the forty-ninth state.

On March 7, 1964, one of the largest natural disasters in U.S. history, the "Good Friday" earthquake and tsunami, destroyed our traditional home of Afognak. Following the destruction of our village, many chose to relocate and build a new village on Kodiak Island. Our new village was named Port Lions after the philanthropic "Kodiak Island Lions Club," that helped build our community. Others moved to the city of Kodiak and other parts of Alaska and the lower 48.

Today the *Ag'wanermiut* (People of Afognak) live in Port Lions, Kodiak City, other parts of Alaska, the Lower 48, and other countries, but our ties to our traditional homeland, the Alutiiq language (*Sugt'stun*), subsistence way of life and culture continue no matter where they may live today. Today, Afognak Alutiiq traditions are passed on to new generations through a number of innovative programs and initiatives.

## ALASKA NATIVE CLAIM SETTLEMENT ACT



After oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay in 1967, Congress realized indigenous land claims had to be addressed before any developments could occur. This led to the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. ANCSA made a settlement of 44 million acres of land (making Alaska Natives the largest private land owner in the U.S.) and \$962.5 million in cash to 12 regional and 200 village corporations. Native corporation enrollees were those Alaska Natives who were alive or born on or before December 18, 1971, and proved their lineage to their respective region and village. Congress termed Native corporation enrollees as "Shareholders" — it is a lifetime enrollment that cannot be bought or sold.

Most Alaska Natives enrolled in both a regional and village corporation. ANCSA, although not perfect, provided Alaska Natives with an avenue of economic development and self-sufficiency. Some Native corporations have succeeded, while many others have struggled. Congress amended ANCSA to help Alaska Natives overcome barriers to economic development in rural Alaska by making Alaska Native Corporations eligible to participate in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Program. This change made it clear that the government is obligated to promote a long-term revenue stream as part of the original ANCSA economic settlement.



*Village of Port Lions, located on Kodiak Island, Alaska*

## AFOGNAK NATIVE CORPORATION



Afognak Native Corporation was organized in 1977 through the merger of two ANCSA village corporations: Port Lions Native Corporation and Natives of Afognak, Inc. Afognak Native Corporation is governed by a nine member Board of Directors. All Board Members are Native Shareholders elected by their fellow shareholders, serving 3 year terms.

Afognak owns 160,000 acres of land in the Kodiak Archipelago, primarily on Afognak Island. Our lands represent our most valuable asset, have formed the core of our financial success as a corporation, and demonstrate value through Shareholder use for culture, subsistence, and recreation activities as well as the opportunity for economic development.

For 18 years Afognak participated in, and profited from, timber development ventures on Afognak Island. Then, in 1999, as Afognak's timber development opportunities began to wane, we launched our 8(a) business. Afognak continues to grow our key competencies as we learn to compete in government and commercial contracting arenas. Today we employ over 4,000 people in nearly every state, and several foreign countries with operations in security services, logistics/operations & maintenance, training, technical services, leasing and construction. All profits earned from our business operations go to benefit our Shareholders.



*Afognak village home destroyed from the 1964 tsunami*

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