



National Park Service

Western Arctic National Parklands

Kobuk Valley National Park, Noatak National Preserve, and Cape
Krusenstern National Monument



October 2025, Park Update

Staffing

In early August, Siikauraq Whiting, Superintendent of Western Arctic National Parklands (WEAR), announced her resignation. Currently the three park units which make up WEAR are without a Superintendent. The NPS Regional Office is working to find an acting replacement for the Superintendent, and the announcement will be shared when someone has been appointed. We want to thank Siikauraq for her contributions to WEAR, and we wish her the best in her next steps.

We enjoyed having three amazing summer seasonal employees: two returning Interpretation Rangers, Audrey Paul and Finnian Sweeney, and one Archeological Technician, Alex Diaz.

Throughout the past year, several of our permanent staff have moved on: Administrative Officer Ken Andrews, Education Specialist Dana Sharp, Maintenance Worker Brad Walton, and District Ranger Joe Dallemolle. Quyanna for your excellent work and dedication!

Integrated Resources Program Manager Annie Carlson is on a 3-month detail at Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Cultural Anthropologist and Subsistence Coordinator Emily Creek is currently the Acting Resources Manager.



NPS Photo/Annie Carlson - pollinator survey on Noatak River

Summer projects:

- Staff completed an 11-day float of the Noatak River assisting with a pollinator survey.
- NPS hosted 1 hunter success meeting held in the Native Village of Noatak in coordination with Maniilaq, NANA, ADFG, and FWS.
- Upper Kobuk Placenames collaboration included 2 boat trips with elders from Shungnak and Kobuk with NANA, Aqqaluk Trust, Kobuk Valley National Park, and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve documenting Iñupiaq placenames.
- NPS supported FWS with the Aleutian tern survey in Cape Krusenstern.
- The Archeology program worked on a historic structures survey, coastal archeological site condition assessments, and a survey of sites along the Kobuk River.
- NPS supported the Native Village of Kotzebue's Camp Sisualik with subsistence-based activities and an oral history/film of the Sisualik area, with interviews conducted. Shoutout to RAC member Mike Kramer for participating! A preview of the film will be shown during the RAC meeting.
- Throughout the year, NPS staff provided public messaging via KOTZ and Facebook on subsistence activities and reminders about regulations.
- The Interpretation and Education program partnered with Selawik Refuge staff to host a spring migratory bird contest and several birding activities. This multi-year contest has expanded migratory bird observations by adding citizen science data to the E-bird App.
- We had another successful year of work at the wolf den site in Noatak as part of the wolf population study by Dr. Raime Fronstin.
- We issued three permits for the federal muskoxen hunts.
- And finally, we are completing the *Kiana Traditional Use Study*, a 420-page ethnography on the ties between Kiana and other Kobuk communities and Kobuk Valley National Park. We have initiated the publishing process.



NPS Photos/Annie Carlson - wolf population study and den site

Fires in Kobuk Valley

There were several large fires in Kobuk Valley National Park in July. These fires were 'complexed' and fought by a Type III crew from Wyoming, who based operations out of the Ambler School. Thanks to quick efforts of the Alaska fire crews, the team from the Lower 48, and locals, there were no allotments or camps harmed. Point protection measures were placed around the historic Giddings Cabin. Shoutout to RAC member Tristen Pattee for his efforts in transporting crews up and down the Kobuk River!



Photo courtesy of Member Tristen Pattee of his boat loaded with fire gear on the Kobuk River

NPS Facilities in Kotzebue and Cape Krusenstern

- The new housing project at 5th and Mission in Kotzebue is still underway. Compliance will be completed this winter to supplement the original Environmental Assessment that was done for development of the site.
- Anigaaq Ranger station cabins continue to get updates with new paint and bunk beds, a new outhouse, and more!

NPS Products

- We have initiated a new unigrid (NPS brochure) for Kobuk Valley National Park. More details in the coming months!

We are proud to share that one of our staff members won a **national** award!

The National Park Service has named Sisualik-grown Edwin “Ed” Talaq Viglione as the *2025 Frontline Hero of the Year*, recognizing his exceptional dedication to public service and his steady leadership within Western Arctic National Parklands.

“This national award celebrates NPS facility staff who embody the spirit of service through reliability, problem solving, and mentorship. Ed exemplifies these qualities every day. For more than 20 years, Ed has served as a trusted presence in the maintenance division, ensuring that the infrastructure supporting Kobuk Valley National Park, Noatak National Preserve, and Cape Krusenstern National Monument continues to function safely and efficiently in a challenging Arctic environment. Known for his humility and dependability, Ed consistently steps up to support both his team and the broader mission of the National Park Service. His work often happens behind the scenes, but his impact is deeply felt across the parks, offices, and communities he serves.”

Congratulations and thank you to Ed!



Photo by Rachel Heckerman, Ed Viglione sits for an interview about Sisualik

Finally, this year’s *Eileen Devinney Award* from the NPS to a member of the community is awarded to Cyrus Harris of Kotzebue for his years of collaboration with the NPS on the CAKR SRC, through his work with Maniilaq, and more! Happy retirement, Cyrus — we’ll see you at camp.

How to reach us!

In person in Kotzebue: Northwest Arctic Heritage Center, 171 Third Ave.
Starting October 1, our hours are Monday-Friday 10:00am-4:30pm.

Phone: 907-442-3890; Caribou non-FQSU closure is still in effect. Please call our tip line if you suspect sport hunting in Noatak National Preserve above mean high water.
800-478-2724.

Parklands online: We update our websites frequently with new stories and info.

www.nps.gov/kova

www.nps.gov/cakr

www.nps.gov/noat

Facebook: [Northwest Arctic Heritage Center | Kotzebue AK | Facebook](#)

Instagram: @kobukvalleynps

Current Points-of-Contact for subsistence related matters:

Emily Creek, Acting Integrated Resources Program Manager emily_creek@nps.gov

Raime Fronstin, PhD. Wildlife Biologist raime_fronstin@nps.gov



Team Photo in new atiktuks made by Emma Synder of Kotzebue