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and Alagnak Wild River  
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**Winter/Spring 2026 Updates for Katmai National Park and Preserve/ Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve/ Alagnak Wild River**

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**SUBSISTENCE DIVISION, MALLORY ZHAROFF AND EVGUENIA ANICHTCHENKO**

**Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission**

- Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission met via video conference on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026 for the Secretarial Programmatic Review of the Federal Subsistence Program. The Aniakchak Subsistence Resource Commission did not meet quorum which resulted in no formal recommendations being made. The next meeting is scheduled to be held via video conference on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 1 pm.

**Caribou Subsistence Hunt for Kokhanok and Igiugig in Katmai Preserve Unit 9C**

- The superintendent of Katmai National Park and Preserve has issued a limited subsistence caribou hunt for the residents of Kokhanok and Igiugig. Eight caribou per community may be harvested in the 2025/2026 regulatory year, for a total of sixteen caribou. An Emergency Special Action opened the 2025 caribou subsistence hunt in Katmai National Preserve from September 14, 2025 to September 30, 2025. The caribou hunt is extended with a Temporary Special Action from January 1, 2026 to March 31, 2026. The in-season manager will continue to monitor and assess population trends over time using minimum counts to make informed decisions on any future caribou subsistence hunts. Furthermore, Katmai National Park and Preserve is working collaboratively with the communities of Igiugig and Kokhanok to incorporate local and Indigenous knowledge in the management and stewardship of these caribou. This effort is ongoing and is still being developed.

## **2025 Chignik Community Harvest Survey (Update)**

- In April of 2025 a joint team of the ADF&G Division of Subsistence employees and Katmai staff conducted comprehensive subsistence harvest surveys in Chignik Bay, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, and Perryville. The team surveyed 70 households collecting data about subsistence activities on state and federal lands. ADF&G will compile and share comprehensive report.

## NATURAL RESOURCE DIVISION, SUZANNE SANDERS AND LESLIE SKORA

### **Katmai Preserve ORV Access: Pre-NEPA**

- Katmai is working to authorize a subsistence ORV trail system within the Preserve to provide Kokhanok and Igiugig subsistence users with an access to the authorized Kukaklek Caribou Herd hunt. Development of the Katmai Preserve ORV trail system is currently in the pre-NEPA phase. The NPS has contracted with a firm to lead this process, with scheduled tasks to include a three-day planning workshop in mid-April and a site visit in June 2026. Goals of the workshop include developing a proposed action and a preliminary range of alternatives. This workshop will include sessions with both communities.

### **Katmai Preserve ORV Access Trail Project Funded by Subsistence Advisory Council**

- As part of our effort to develop a subsistence ORV trail in Katmai, we applied for and were awarded funding to hire a professional trail designer to provide input on possible routes through the Preserve. Katmai staff will be working with both Igiugig and Kokhanok Village to identify potential routes. Due to the terrain throughout much of the Preserve, these will traverse through and adjacent to wet tundra with numerous seeps and kettle lakes.

### **Aerial Caribou Surveys in and Around Katmai National Preserve**

- This year Katmai staff conducted aerial surveys counting caribou in and around Katmai National Preserve. Katmai staff began conducting spring minimum counts of caribou in 2021, 2022, and 2024 finding 306, 312, and 425 caribou. Surveys have been conducted during early spring when fresh snowfall can help staff locate groups of caribou. This year staff counted 821 caribou during surveys conducted on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Staff also conducted summer surveys to identify habitat use and aggregation patterns throughout the year.

## **Brown Bear Aerial Stream Surveys**

- July through October, Katmai staff conduct aerial surveys counting bears while they congregate along salmon spawning streams. These surveys are used to monitor brown bear abundance and seasonal use and timing of food resources. In 2024 and 2025 staff conducted repeat aerial stream surveys. The replicate surveys are done over a short period of time while the population can be considered closed to movement. Differences between the replicate surveys will be used to understand how many individuals are typically missed during a survey. Results will help biologists understand total bear use and how the population of bears using salmon spawning streams is changing through time. In 2025, these counts of bears were near the 20-year average.

## **Moose Trend Area Surveys**

- This fall Katmai staff completed fall trend area moose surveys in coordination with local state and refuge biologists. Trend area surveys allow staff to monitor moose abundance and composition across years. Total counts, bull: cow, and calf: cow metrics help alert biologists to population level changes that may occur. Surveys are typically conducted during late fall between November and December while bulls still have their antlers. Ideally surveys are conducted after fresh snowfall, so moose are easier to spot. Detection rates can vary across years as conditions change. During 2025 Katmai staff completed surveys in the Branch River and Angle/Takayofu trend areas. Counts and composition ratios in these 2 areas were near their 10-year averages. Counts in the Branch River trend area were slightly above average while the calf: cow ratio in the Angle/Takayofu trend area was a little below average.

## CULTURAL RESOURCE DIVISION, EVGUENIA ANICHTCHENKO

### **LiDAR Survey in Katmai Preserve**

- In spring-summer 2026, Katmai NPS will conduct a LiDAR survey of the proposed area to better understand cultural and natural resources. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Park Service will work together to obtain high-resolution digital elevation data from airborne lidar for around 46 square miles in the Area of Interest (AOI). This data will generate Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) for cultural and natural resource assessments and ATV trail planning and design. If necessary, acquisition may continue into later flying seasons based on discussions between the USGS, partner, and contractor.

## **Culture Camps**

- Save a date for 2026 culture camp! Katmai is collaborating with the Bristol Bay Foundation, Native Corporation, Native Association, and Igiugig Village Council to organize a 5-day float on the Alagnak River. Campers will practice their inflatable kayak skills, learn about natural and cultural history of Alagnak River and Nonvianuk Lake, and earn a college credit. For more details contact Jenya Anichtchenko [Evguenia\\_anichtchenko@nps.gov](mailto:Evguenia_anichtchenko@nps.gov)

## **2025 Chignik Outreach**

- In August of 2025 Chignik Lake and Chignik Bay students spent two days travelling to the distant and not so distant past with archaeologist Brian Hoffman (Hamline University) and NPS staff. Youth 3-16 learned about dinosaurs who roamed in their homelands million years ago and about archaeological sites in Aniakchak National Monument, practiced troughing spears with throwing board, and earned junior paleontologist and junior archaeologist badge. In the evenings, Dr. Hoffman shared insights from his excavation at the Aniakchak Village site. The audience had a chance to look at the archaeological artifacts and to share their knowledge of traditional lifestyle and old village sites. This information will be incorporated into the final draft of the Aniakchak Village Site report.

## **University of Oregon Collection Move Update**

- From 1953-1974, the University of Oregon excavated and tested over 30 archeological sites in Katmai National Monument; now Katmai National Park and Preserve (KATM). The excavations fell under a series of permits and contracts (Memoranda of Agreement), all of which specified the University of Oregon Museum as the permanent repository. All of the artifacts and associated records are currently curated for KATM by the University of Oregon Museum of Cultural and Natural History in Eugene, Oregon.

The KATM collections at MNCH consist of more than 144,000 archaeological artifacts, including objects subject to NAGPRA. The MNCH mission is to care for cultural heritage from the state of Oregon. Alaskan collections fall out of this scope. For this reason, as well as the considerable costs associated with continued storage of these collections at MNCH, KATM have determined that it would be best to move all of KATM's collections stored at the MNCH to the NPS Alaska Regional Curatorial Center in Anchorage.

In 2025 our priority was to return the ancestral remains and associated funerary objects. In all there are at least 24 individuals from multiple sites. Most of the sites were from Brooks Camp, but some are from Kukak, Mink Island, Chiniak Lagoon, Takli Island and Hook Point. Tribes with immediate affiliation to these sites are: Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor, Native Village of Karluk, Native Village of Larsen Bay, Native Village of Ouzinkie, Native Village of Perryville, Native Village of Port Lions, Chignik Bay Tribal Council, Chignik Lake Village, Native Village of Chignik Lagoon, Native Village of Perryville, Ivanof Bay Tribe, King Salmon Tribe, Naknek Native Village, South Naknek Village.

KATM Cultural resource Manager Evguenia Anichtchenko and Curator Kathryn Myers, and two members of the Council of Katmai Descendants (CKD) Anishia Elbie and Andrea Agli traveled to Eugene, Oregon on August 18, reviewed the collections, prepared ancestral remains for travel and arranged for Gold Streak shipment to Anchorage. Per CKD's request, upon the arrival to Anchorage, the ancestral remains were blessed by the Russian Orthodox priest and moved to the NPS Regional Museum facility.

## **Celebrating Indigenous Heritage Month: Sugpiaq Qayak Model Workshop**

- Katmai National Park, in partnership with Katmai Conservancy, is hosting a traditional Sugpiaq qayak model building class for the communities of King Salmon and Naknek towards the end of February. Andrew Abyo, a Sugpiaq artist from Pilot Point, preserves cultural traditions by teaching those that want to learn. In this workshop, Abyo will be focusing on teaching how to construct a 1/6 scale qayak model that was designed more than 5000 years ago by the Sugpiaq People.