



Bering Land Bridge National Preserve Park Update Fall 2026

NPS Subsistence Preservation Funding

In 2024–2025, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve received Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to support collaborative subsistence-focused programs with associated Tribes. With the funds, the National Park Service entered into a PL 93-638 Multi-Year Funding Agreement (MFA) with Kawerak, Inc. in the amount of \$148,000 to carry out subsistence preservation activities.

Under this agreement, Kawerak partnered with the Native Village of Shishmaref to plan and implement a subsistence summer youth camp, which took place the week of July 28, 2025. Kawerak coordinated with community partners in Gambell to develop and host a subsistence summer youth day camp designed to introduce local youth to traditional practices, support intergenerational knowledge sharing, and strengthen community subsistence capacity. This camp occurred in July 2026 with over 60 youth in attendance.

BELA Park Film

The first-ever Bering Land Bridge National Preserve film is steadily progressing. Recent work included multiple helicopter-based landscape shoots using a red Robinson R44. Shoots were timed around optimal light and weather to capture key features such as maar lakes, lava beds, tundra, river systems, and coastal areas. The helicopter film crew were briefed to avoid disturbance to wildlife and subsistence activities; and film locations and access routes were coordinated to stay within preserve boundaries. The film shoots occurred between August 11–18, 2026, and focused on internationally significant volcanic features and lava fields near Imuruk and Kuzitrin Lakes. The preserve aims to share the completed film in early 2027, pending remaining fieldwork, voiceover recording, and review timelines.

Cottonwood Creek Shelter Cabin

The Cottonwood Creek Shelter Cabin—an eligible historic structure (BEN-00134)—was moved back from the rapidly eroding creek bank in late July/early August 2026. The cabin is currently stabilized on temporary runners approximately five feet from the cutbank. This work follows earlier plans and compliance documented in the park’s categorical exclusion and Section 106 material. These documents confirm the cabin’s historic significance and the need to relocate it within the same oxbow location to prevent historic loss.



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The cabin will be winterized in place and secured with tie-downs until a crew returns in 2027 to move it to its new nearby location. Moving it will involve sled tracks and snowmachine tow methods outlined in the project plans. The historic barrel stove collapsed during stabilization work and will be removed for safety. A new heating stove is planned for installation in 2027. The cabin currently does not have heat but still functions as an emergency shelter if necessary.

Roof Repair at Serpentine Hot Springs

Roof repair of the Serpentine Hot Springs bunkhouse was completed in April 2026 by the Kawerak Transportation Program under the PL 93-638 Multi-Year Funding Agreement. The repairs were carried out by a Shishmaref-based crew who traveled by snowmachine. The roof repair was necessary due to structural deterioration, and was completed by installed braces rather than a new roof. The bunkhouse is now open to the public, and the repairs will help protect the building and support continued safe visitor use.

Cape Espenberg Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA)

A precursor NAGPRA meeting was held in Nome on August 18, 2026 with tribal representatives from Deering, Shishmaref and partners from Kawerak, Inc to continue discussions on cultural items and human remains from the Cape Espenberg archaeological sites. In November 2026, tribal representatives will travel to the NPS Alaska Regional Curation Center in Anchorage to review human remains, funerary objects, structural wood, whalebone pieces, and other artifacts requiring Tribal evaluation under NAGPRA. The park has finalized the errata to the NAGPRA summary and is preparing printed consultation packets for Shishmaref and Deering ahead of the collections review.