

First Alaskans Institute

Community Engagement Update
Week of July 1, 2020

As a statewide Native nonprofit, our FAI team is very connected to our home communities, regions, and our statewide Native family. During one of our weekly virtual team meetings, we share community engagement updates on various happenings in our communities to help guide our work. In an effort to share our knowledge harvest - recognizing this is not a comprehensive overview of all current Alaska Native news - here are some of the updates that were shared about what our communities are experiencing:

Community Updates - 7/01/2020:

Many of our communities still have restrictions in place and updates on cases

Some of our communities are starting to see some positive COVID-19 cases, so they are reinstating travel bans and increasing safety protocols to prevent the spread. Some Tribes have been sharing resources to prevent the spread and address its impacts to their communities. The Native Village of Unalakleet handed out cleaning supplies and mental health fun kits to Alaska Native and American Indian community members.

Tribes continue hiring COVID-19 coordinators and other positions to implement, manage and navigate all adopted procedures in regard to the pandemic.

- The Sitka Tribe seeks a COVID-19 Coordinator:
https://www.facebook.com/sitkatribeposts/3048173378612219?_tn=-R
- The Native Village of Unalakleet has two openings for a Travel Committee Administrative Assistant:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/241218712573141/permalink/3635794153115563/>

Kodiak reported two new positive COVID-19 cases on June 24. One was a Coast Guard service member who had traveled from out-of-state to Kodiak and was required to be tested prior to entering Alaska. The other was determined to have been contracted through community spread from close contact with a previously confirmed case:
http://www.kodiakdailymirror.com/extra/article_2fa711f4-bb44-11ea-8746-6703d84f00fc.html

An emergency order was issued mandating the use of cloth face coverings or masks in the Municipality of Anchorage. It remains in effect until July 31, 2020:

- Anchorage businesses notice more people are using masks, though not everyone:
<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2020/06/29/anchorage-businesses-report-an-uptick-in-masks-following-mandate-though-compliance-isnt-universal/>

If you have any questions, updates or suggestions, please send them to info@firstalaskans.org. Quyanapqak!

- Conflicting state, municipality stances on Anchorage mandatory mask order cause confusion:
<https://www.ktva.com/story/42305924/alaska-attorney-general-anchorage-mayor-spar-over-mandatory-mask-order>

The city of Bethel is offering free hotel quarantine for travelers going to the village from Anchorage. With some residents unable to travel back to their village until they show a negative test result, the layover in Bethel has become necessary: <https://www.kyuk.org/post/bethel-offering-free-hotel-quarantine-travelers-going-village-anchorage>

With an increase of COVID-19 in their community, Seward canceled its Fourth of July activities and instituted emergency regulations that require face coverings in indoor public spaces, banned large gatherings and limited capacity in businesses and churches. The city is also limiting recreational camping capacity at the popular Resurrection Bay campgrounds to half: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/07/02/seward-requires-face-coverings-and-limits-camping-amid-covid-19-outbreak/>

Our Native ways of life as we know it continues – always has, always will – as our peoples harvest from the lands and waters

The weather has been beautiful and people are fishing in Kodiak. Folks are also rod and reel fishing for king salmon in Shaktoolik.

The lower Kuskokwim River will remain closed to gillnets until more red and chum salmon arrive. King salmon numbers are low, but are expected to meet the lower end of the state's Kuskokwim River drainage-wide spawning escapement goal: <https://www.kyuk.org/post/plan-when-gillnets-can-return-lower-kuskokwim>

Racial equity topics continue to be raised around the state

As people are examining controversial statues and monuments across the nation in terms of racial equity, Alaskans are having more conversations about local statues:

- Sitka residents gather to demand the relocation of the Baranov Statue: <https://www.ktoo.org/2020/06/25/sitkans-gather-to-demand-the-relocation-of-controversial-baranov-statue/>
- Last week, Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz announced that the Native Village of Eklutna should decide the fate of the Captain James Cook statue in Anchorage. This week, the conversation continues within the Alaska Native community about the opportunity this presents for re-education about history and the long-lasting effects of colonialism: <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2020/06/29/most-agree-on-the-story-of-captain-cooks-time-in-cook-inlet-they-differ-on-how-to-tell-it/>

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Community leaders are calling open dialogue with Anchorage Police Department leadership, increased transparency in policing and the type of data available to citizens, expanded independent oversight and significant structural and budgetary shifts:

<https://www.ktva.com/story/42317420/community-leaders-call-for-increased-transparency-and-accountability-from-apd>

Many of our regions have come up with creative ways to keep us connected while maintaining the physical distancing necessary to keep our people and communities safe

As the first whaling crews celebrated Nalukataq in Utqiagvik, some crews handed out masks while others livestreamed the gathering for those who couldn't attend or are reducing their attendance because of the COVID-19 pandemic:

http://www.thearcticsounder.com/article/2026first_whaling_crews_celebrate_nalukataq_with