



**NATIVE  
MOVEMENT**



ALASKA  
NATIVE  
HERITAGE  
CENTER



Strengthening Communities  
Through Statewide, Innovative, and  
Indigenous Partnerships





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Birthworkers Community



# Learning Objectives

Alaska History

Alaska's First Peoples

Organizational Overviews

Healing and Who We Are

Strengthening partnerships  
through Tribal Sovereignty





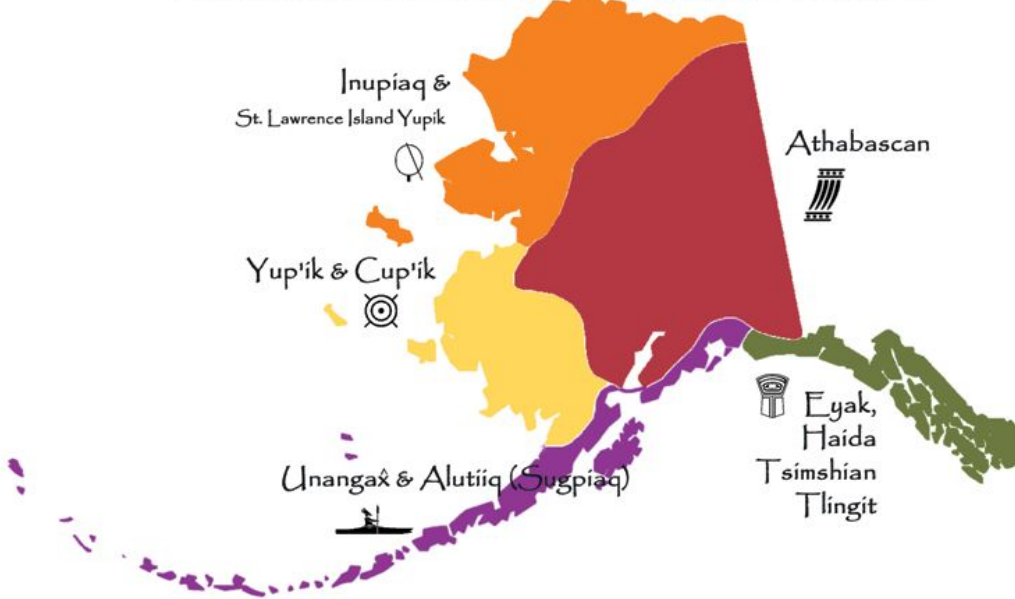
# Alaska is a Native Place

- The word Alaska derives from an Unangax word
- Alaska Native people have walked and stewarded these lands, waters, and air since time immemorial
- Alaska's landscape and environment is truly unmatched, but it is our rich cultures that set us apart from any other country
- The earliest written history came from explorers to Alaska. The Native people recorded history through our distinct oral traditions, songs, stories and dances.
- Alaska Natives have been on these lands for over 10,000 years
- Alaska always has been – and always will be – a Native place with distinct peoples and cultures
- Alaska is not the Last Frontier or a warehouse for development
- Indigenous knowledge and science is a whole knowledge system in and of itself, equal to all others

- Tribal Sovereignty is the power, authority, and right of a people to govern themselves. Tribal sovereignty ensures that any decisions about the tribes with regard to their property and citizens are made with their participation and consent.
- Inherent Rights
- 2022 Alaska Tribal Recognition



## Traditional territories of Alaska Native Cultures



# ALASKA'S FIRST PEOPLE

## Interior/Coastal Athabaskan

Dena'ina, Ahtna, Deg Hit'an, Gwich'in, Han, Holikachuk, Kolchan, Koyukon, Lower Tanana, Tanacross, Upper Tanana,

## Southeast Alaska

Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian,

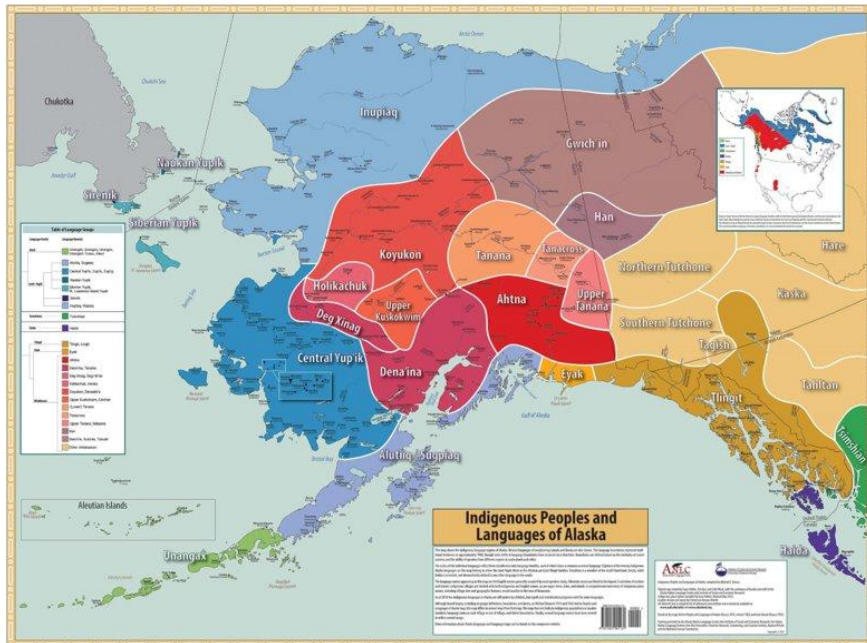
## Southwest Alaska/Aleutian Chain

Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Cup'ig, Sugpiaq, Unangax,

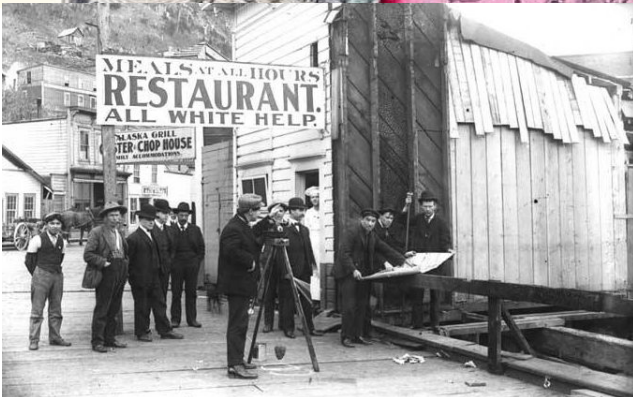
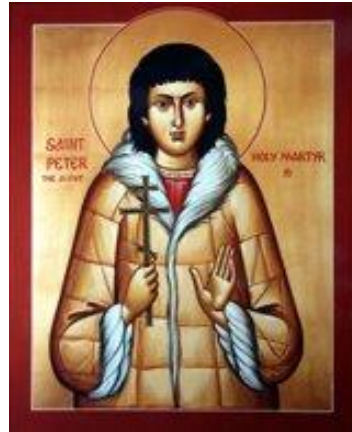
## Bering Strait/North Slope

St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Iñupiaq

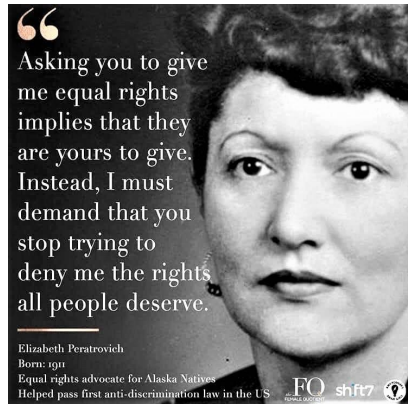
ALAXSXAX: Where the Sea Breaks its Back  
Unangam Tunuu: Unangax Language



# ALASKA HISTORY AND COLONIZATION



- Russian explorers started coming to Alaska in the 1728
- It was the fur trade that gave birth to colonization in Alaska
- 1740s-1940s Various Epidemics caused many deaths amongst the Alaska Native population
- When Alaska was sold from Russia to the US, there were ZERO Alaska Natives present.
- Missionary work increased throughout Alaska, which led to various forms of abuse throughout the territory, predominantly with Church- run Boarding Schools, Federally-run BIA Boarding Schools, Boarding-home schools, State Boarding Schools
- Russia illegitimately sold Alaska to the US in 1867
- Alaska was a Territory from 1867-1959
- 1945 The first Anti-discrimination law was passed in our country was passed in Alaska, thanks to Elizabeth Peratrovich (Tlingit)
- Alaska's Anti-Discrimination Act was signed into law on February 16, 1945, nearly 20 years before the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 1958: US government purposefully contaminates the Native peoples of Point Hope to study the effects of radiation amongst the Indigenous population
- 1959: Alaska becomes the 49th state
- 1966: Alaska Federation of Natives Established
- 1971: Alaska Claims Settlement Act Passed



“Asking you to give me equal rights implies that they are yours to give. Instead, I must demand that you stop trying to deny me the rights all people deserve.”

Elizabeth Peratrovich  
Born: 1901  
Equal rights advocate for Alaska Natives  
Helped pass first anti-discrimination law in the US

FO shift7

# SHELDON JACKSON & ALASKA'S BOARDING SCHOOLS

**First American Boarding School founded in 1877 in Ft. Wrangell by Sheldon Jackson** on behalf of Presbyterian Church and later, the United States Government

**Belief was to strip Native peoples of their identities (Cultural Genocide) so to gain access to resources**

*"It is cheaper to convert the Indian than it is to shoot him."*

Dehumanization through cultural identity

Resource extraction

Created the structures for the Boarding Schools that spread throughout the rest of the world

Eradication of Culture

Knowing our history and healing from this history and learning how the structures in place that harm Native peoples, means we not only bring healing to our future, but healing to those ancestors who went through it. When we know who we are, we begin to realize our potential as Indigenous Peoples!



Alaska District  
Includes all of Alaska not comprised  
in the Sitka and Juneau Districts.

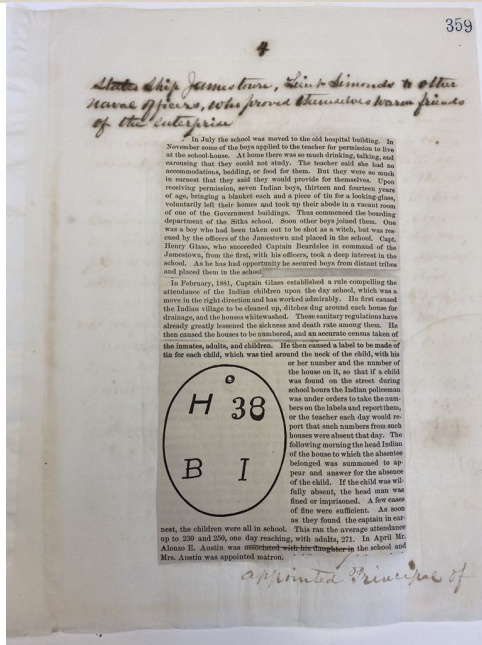
Population

Civilized Whites	187
" Aleuts	2145
" Eskimos	1526, 3808
Uncivilized	
" Inuit (Eskimo)	17617
" Tutch (Chudina)	5913 = 23530
Total	27335
Total for Alaska	34,708

Very truly yours  
Sheldon Jackson  
U.S. Govt Agent

# P. & S. Abuse Within the Boarding Schools

- Designation of Civilization Based upon People groups
  - Americanization & Nationalistic Religion
- Connection between levels of Civilization and Both Physical and Sexual Abuse
  - Belief that they would get away with the action
- Dehumanization made these forms of abuse permissible within their structures
- **Dog Collars (Primary Source)**
- De-Humanization
- Often Associated with Canada, this is the first instance seen within the context of the United States and even the world
- **Physical Abuse (Elder Testimonies)**
- Connected to the use of language
- Fighting Rings
- Inmates
- Chains



# Boarding Schools and MMIWG



*Alaska District*  
Includes all of Alaska not comprised  
in the Sitka and Juneau Districts.

Population	
Civilized Whites	137
" Aleuts	2145
" Crooks	1526, 2308
Uncivilized	
" Inuit (Eskimo)	17617
" Gwich (Chukchee)	5913 = 23530
Total	27338.
Total for Alaska	34,708.

*Very truly yours*  
Arthur J. Cook  
U.S. Gen'l Agent

- **Destruction of Identity, inward and outward**

- Boarding Schools were meant to destroy the ways Native peoples not only see ourselves, but how society sees us as “less than” or “sub-human”

- **S.A. as Institutional**

- Levels of civilization of Alaska Native children (societal worth) made sexual abuse permissible, leading to a high percentage of abuse within these schools
- Boarding Schools also were a means for resource extraction, which led to a large amount of sexual abuse of Native Women

- **Lasting Effects**

- According several studies, the children of a parent who has been sexually abused are more likely to be the target for abuse, becoming a cycle that has become genetically embedded\*
- The factors of continued negative societal identity and resource extraction within Native communities with the study above, reveals how one of the many continued legacies of these institutions can be seen in the MMIWG crisis,
- These factors can also explain why it has continued to be allowed by governmental entities which do not see Native peoples on the same level of personhood, leaving way for abuse to be unchecked

# Alaska History by the Numbers

- Alaska has been stewarded by Indigenous communities for at least **10,000** years
- First contact from Russians happening in the early **1700s**
- Alaska was illegitimately sold from the Russian Government to the United States Government in **1867**
- Alaska Natives were not citizens between 1867 and 1924, so we could not stake mining claims, own land, or vote. Correction – you could vote if you totally abandoned your culture and were verified by White people.
- Not **ONE** single Alaska Native person was present for the establishment of the terms of the sale in 1867.
- Alaska passed a bill for Statehood in **1959**, which jump-started a long process of determining land claims for Indigenous communities.
- The result of this process was the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which passed in **1971**.

# Alaska History by the Numbers

- ANCSA essentially established a unique model of self-determination that combined several elements of the models used for Native Americans in the **Lower 48**, with several key differences.
- ANCSA extinguished aboriginal title to 365 million acres, leaving only **44 million** acres of land to Alaska Native communities.
- In addition to ANCSA, this process resulted in the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which when passed in **1980**, stipulated the designation of wilderness, subsistence management, transportation in and across parklands, use of cabins, mining, archaeological sites, scientific research studies, and more.
- ANILCA designated **157 million** acres of land under the control the National Park Service, including over 48 million acres of national parklands.

# Alaska's Unique Model of Self-Determination

- Alaska only has **1** reservation that functions akin to the reservation model that is in place for the Native American communities in the **Lower 48**.
- For all other Indigenous communities, Alaska has a unique model of tribal governance through Tribal Councils, Alaska Native Regional Corporations, Alaska Native Village Corporations, and Alaska Native Non-Profit Organizations.
  - **12 Regional Corporations**
  - **170 Village Corporations**
  - Several Dozen Alaska Native Non-Profits including ANHC which serves as the only statewide cultural center.



## ALASKA NATIVES BY THE NUMBERS

- Today, Alaska Natives make up more than 20% of the state's population
- Alaska has the largest number of tribes of any other state (229 of the 574)
- Alaska Natives Corporations have consistently been the top corporations in the state.
- ANCs not only have western financial responsibilities to their shareholders, they also have social-cultural responsibilities.
- Although Alaska Natives make up a large percentage of the state, our tribes were just state recognized.
- There is a cultural revitalization of languages, arts, and ceremony happening across Alaska Native Cultures throughout the state.

# ABOUT ANHC

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) is a living cultural center located in Anchorage, Alaska that promotes active observance of Alaska Native culture and traditions. As the only statewide cultural and education center dedicated to celebrating all cultures and heritages, ANHC serves as a statewide resource for Alaska Natives from birth until Elder, and we support and celebrate Alaska Natives from all of Alaska's Native cultures, including Iñupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Athabascan, Eyak, Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit, Unangax, Alutiiq, Yup'ik, and Cup'ik.

Through permanent collections, life-sized village sites, and immersive educational programs, ANHC works to provide tourists and non-Natives a framework in which to engage with Alaska Native culture. We understand that we are uniquely positioned to create meaningful engagement, authentic exhibits, and dynamic opportunities that generate compassion for and understanding of our people's lived experiences.



## LETTERS

# land: Voters to decide

## Against the Alaska Native Heritage Park

By WALT PARKER

Proposition A on the Nov. 3 ballot represents a danger to our park system. In addition, there is the chance of a real drain on future state and local budgets.

If this proposition passes, the lease by the Alaska Native Heritage Park Corp. on 62 prime acres of parkland is canceled. If it fails the lease is restored and the way is opened for a major tourist attraction to be opened in the Far North Bicentennial Park.

Therefore, you must vote YES to save the park.

I am opposed to this lease for these reasons:

- Intensive commercial uses are an inappropriate use of public parklands, especially when the use overwhelms the primary purpose of the park;

- This area is an important watershed for Anchorage, and this highly intensive use offers a real chance for pollution of the watershed;

- This is a poor site for a major tourist attraction even if parklands were not at question;

- And, this is a poor site for an Alaska Native cultural center, one of the uses proposed, when the development is not serving as a tourist destination.

The cost of the project was estimated at \$27 million in 1987 dollars, which translates to \$47 million in 1992. The great bulk of these dollars will be sought from the state and local tax base.

There are many more important priorities than a project which is not likely to increase tourist numbers in Alaska and has a small chance of achieving one of its objectives, to lengthen the stay of tourists in Alaska.

The areas abutting the Bicentennial Park are almost totally residential in nature. The traffic that will

*There are many more important priorities than a project which is not likely to increase tourist numbers in Alaska.*

occur as a result of this attraction, if it is successful, will severely impact Tudor Road. We will see the same traffic jams at Tudor and Boniface that we now see at Tudor and Lake Otis.

This will spur the drive to extend Boniface and Bragaw through the park, effectively destroying at least half of it for its present recreational uses. It will certainly not improve life for the area's residents.

Anchorage has relied upon the Campbell Creek watershed for an important part of its municipal supply since World War II. This intensive use will certainly not benefit the watershed.

Currently, tourism in Anchorage is focused on downtown Anchorage, which has largely changed its business patterns to accommodate tourists. Success of the new project must detract from existing downtown attractions.

The theme park is supposed to represent Alaska Native lifestyles as they once were. This site has no major adjacent water bodies. Alaska Native villages number some 206. Only two of these are not on the seacoast or a major river. They plan to replicate this with three tiny ponds on the site. It will not even remotely resemble an Alaska Native village of any era.

Finally, when it is in use as a cultural center, the theme park will be about as far from the bulk of Alaska Natives living in Anchorage as you can get in the Anchorage Bowl.

Most elderly Alaska Natives and most young ones, two of the target groups, do

not have easy access to automobiles. They are principal users of the bus system. Our bus system is doing a lousy job of meeting its present needs because of underfunding and lack of support by local government. How will it meet this new need?

There is a great deal of Alaska Native cultural activity constantly under way in Anchorage at the present, using the museum and other public buildings. A center to serve local Alaska Natives and the constant flow of visitors from the villages should be at least as accessible as the present buildings that are used.

I have long supported an Alaska Native cultural center, if the concept was one whose primary focus was on Alaska Natives and their needs.

If these coincided with the needs of the tourist industry or other promoters, fine, but this proposed theme park is obviously designed to primarily meet the needs of the tourist industry and is a thinly concealed subsidy of that industry.

This industry is receiving enough state subsidies now for an industry that pays an annual wage averaging \$14,000, compared to \$64,000 for oil, \$46,000 for logging and \$34,000 for fishing. Other than its low wages, I have no quarrel with the industry, but I do not want to support it any more from the tax base.

□ Walt Parker is former chairman of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Council.

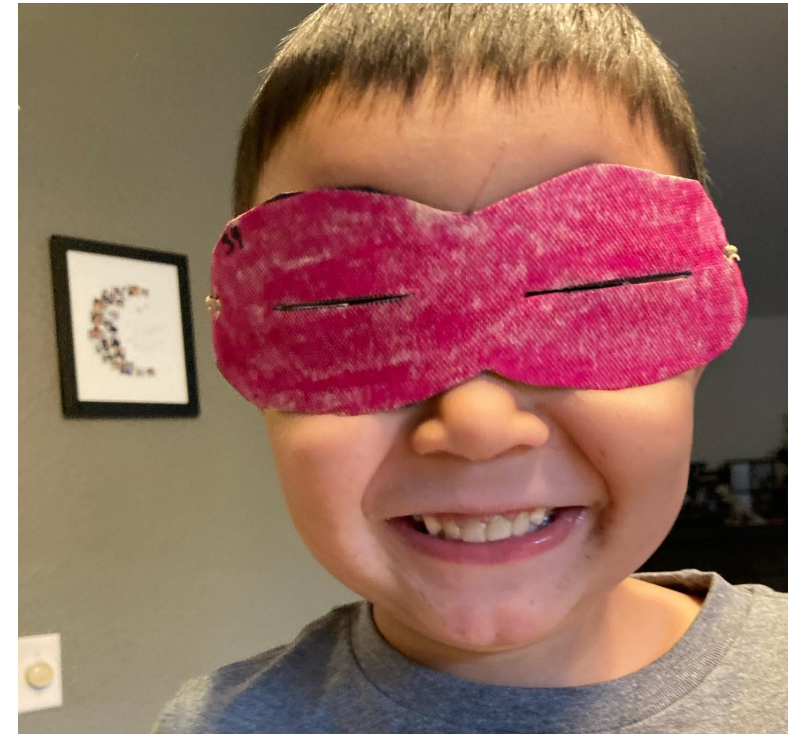
# OUR HISTORY

- The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) was created by a unanimous vote of the Alaska Federation of Natives in 1987, which called for the establishment of a statewide Alaska Native culture center.
- Two years later, ANHC was officially an incorporated 501(c)(3) non-profit.
- Initial plan for ANHC was to be located where the Native Hospital is currently located, but the ballot that was put forward failed.
- Anchorage Voters at the time decided they didn't want "Natives in their backyard."
- ANHC opened its doors to the public in May of 1999, and we celebrated our 20th Anniversary in 2019.
- We sit on 26 acres of CIRI land in Northeast Anchorage, ten miles from Downtown.
- We are in a long-term lease between the Municipality of Anchorage, ANHC, and

CIRI.

# OPERATING TRUTHS & PRINCIPLES

- Culture is Medicine
- Culture is Our Greatest Form of Strength
- In absence of culture, what grows?
- Everyone – no matter where they live – should have access to their culture
- Access to culture, knowledge, and traditions should be free
- Rather than looping arts, culture, and language on the back end, we ground all we do in our worldviews, Ways of Knowing, and Ways of Being
- Exemplify the genius of our people
- Normalize not knowing our cultures and languages.
- Normalize healing – telling the good with the bad.
- Welcome people home. We are all on a journey.
- Building Future Leaders: <https://vimeo.com/608879177>



## Haida Healing Totem & Potlatch

- Totem Pole dedicated to boarding school survivors, their descendants, and those who never came back
- Dena'ina/Haida Potlatch & Pole Raising
- While being a Dena'ina/Haida Potlatch, this event was for all Alaska Natives
- Community led and the opportunity to heal in our own traditional ways
- Largest Potlatch in history with close to 1,000 in attendance
- Bringing cultural programming and healing together for all Alaska Native peoples



# Native Movement

Native Movement envisions a society that embraces Indigenous values of reciprocity and respect with all beings. Our actions are grounded in ceremony, justice, and love in support of regenerative communities.



Native Movement is dedicated to building people power, rooted in an Indigenized worldview, toward healthy, sustainable, & just communities for ALL.

Native Movement supports grassroots-led projects that align with our vision, that endeavor to ensure social justice, Indigenous Peoples' rights, and the rights of Mother Earth.



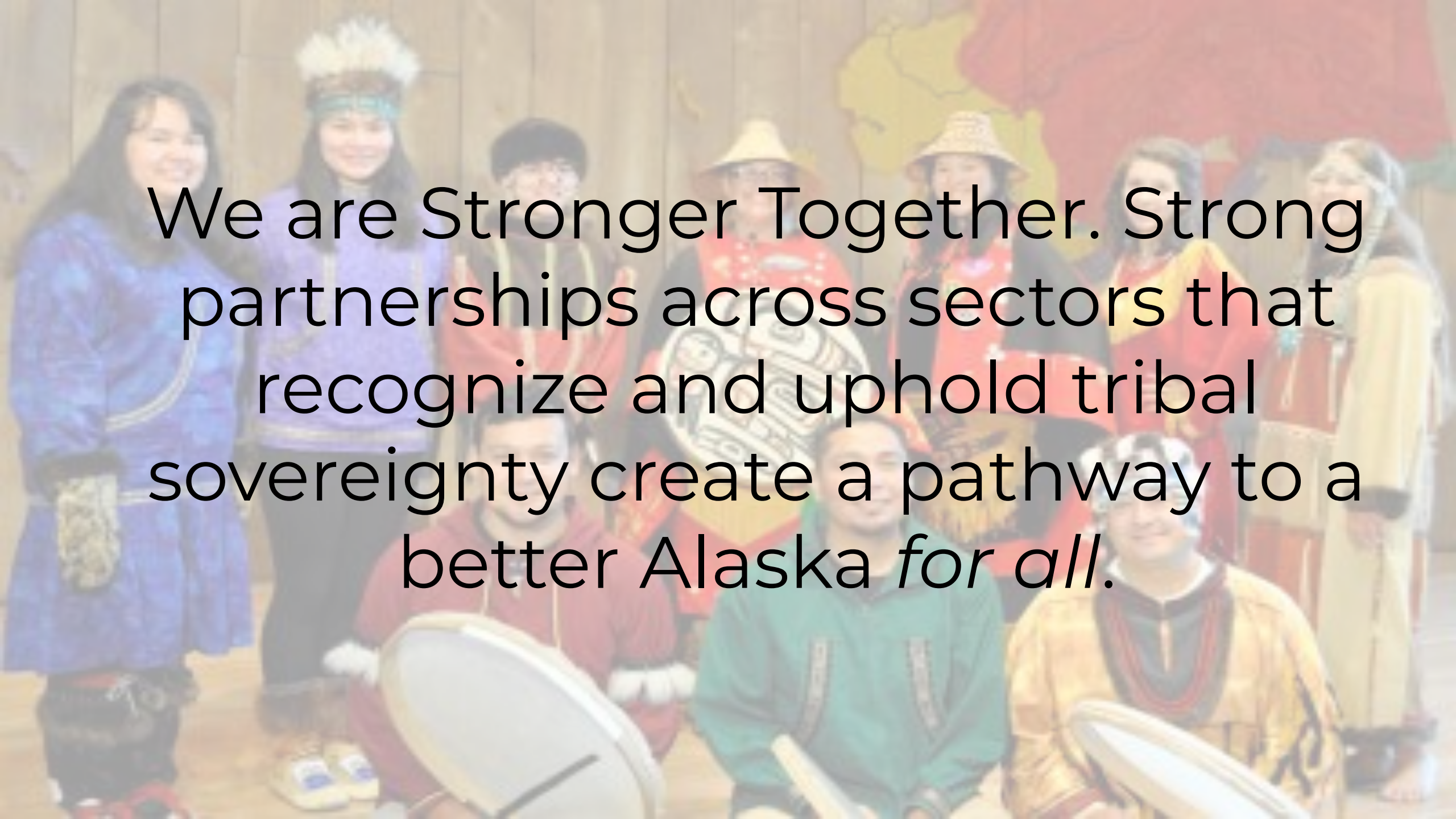


We strive to carry out our work based on a commitment to the Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing and the Defend the Sacred AK Principles.



# Historical Healing

- The more we understand, the easier it is to bring healing to the next generation
- Recognizing how this has continued and how it has hurt our families, our people, make us more understanding and willing to help others who experience this pain and fight against these injustices
- Building up and taking back what our ancestors passed down to us, our identity
- Knowing that we our loved and that colonization is not what defines us
- Our cultural identity is proof that we are never alone
- When we know who we are, we begin to realize our purpose as Native peoples

A group of approximately ten Alaska Natives, including men and women, are posed in two rows. They are wearing traditional clothing such as parkas, tunics, and hats. Some individuals are holding large, round drums. In the background, a large map of Alaska is visible, with different regions highlighted in various colors like red, yellow, and green. The overall scene suggests a cultural celebration or a formal gathering.

We are Stronger Together. Strong partnerships across sectors that recognize and uphold tribal sovereignty create a pathway to a better Alaska *for all*.



SAMENG

AAPSAGHQIITSILLU

PIYAGHQIITSI?

Questions or Comments?





**NATIVE  
MOVEMENT**



ALASKA  
NATIVE  
HERITAGE  
CENTER

CHIN'AN

QUYANAQPAK

QUYANA

HÁW'AA

GUNALCHÉESH

TAIKUU

MAHSI' CHOO

QAGAASAKUNG

