TEACHER GUIDE

STEWARDSHIP BOOKLET

OVERVIEW

Learn about stewardship and how it is integral to the Dena'ina culture. Objects and images from the Anchorage Museum's collection illustrate the Dena'ina people's strong connection to place. Activity prompts ask students to reflect on their relationship to and observations of the natural world.

This booklet was developed in partnership with **Anchorage Outdoor School**. This residential, place-based outdoor education program for 5th grade students takes place on the traditional homelands of the Dena'ina people.

CONTENT AREAS

Alaska Native cultures, culturally responsive, English language arts, history and social studies

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVELS

Grades 4-12

STUDENTS WILL

- Learn about stewardship and Dena'ina culture
- Examine and discuss primary sources including maps, photographs, and objects
- Engage in reflection about their relationship to the natural world

MATERIALS

Booklet (1 per student), writing utensil

TEACHER GUIDE TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THE STEWARDSHIP BOOKLET & TEACHER GUIDE

Students can work through this booklet independently but will benefit from teacher-guided facilitation to better understand the content and to engage more deeply with the activity prompts. This Teacher Guide shares additional information about each section and includes suggested facilitation steps to make the activities more meaningful.

Investigate: Encourage students to read carefully and look closely at the maps, photographs, and objects in this booklet. Support students to notice details, be curious, and ask questions. Students should make the booklet their own. They can draw, write, or take notes however suites them.

Ask questions: Build an inquiry-driven experience for the students. Ask students to share what they observe and what they may already know. As you share additional information, encourage students to ask questions about what more they want to know and what they do not understand.

Connect: Encourage students to reflect on their own life and experiences. The booklet activities invite students to consider their own personal connections to what they have learned. Ask students to share with each other what connections they have found. This discussion leads to greater connection and understanding.

INQUIRY BASED METHODS AT THE ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum uses an expanded inquiry-based approach based in constructivism (constructivist learning theory). Through facilitated conversations which may begin much like Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), students are encouraged to bring their knowledge to look closely at an object or image. In addition to the VTS methodology, educators at the Anchorage Museum provide context and content. This may include information about an object's artist or maker, examination of materials, processes, or uses of an object as well as relevant cultural or historical information. Examinations of objects create an open-ended dialogue. In dialogue, learner-driven questions and observations, and facilitator provided content, drive the process of meaning making between all participants.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a learning theory referring to the idea that knowledge is individually and socially constructed by the learners themselves. The learner actively constructs meaning using sensory input rather than passively accept knowledge.

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES

Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS, is an approach to teaching from visual materials, typically paintings, drawings and photographs. Developed by museum educators Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen, this approach to teaching and learning is a learner-centered methodology that seeks to support close looking and communication skills.

The VTS teaching methodology centers around three questions:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

Educators use these open-ended questions to engage students in examination of images. Content or 'answers' are not provided, rather learners construct meaning individually and together. Educators reflect back what students respond and help facilitate the conversation moving forward.

VTS has been applied across disciplines. Extensive research on the strategy has demonstrated that students participating in multi-visit programs to museums using VTS techniques generated significantly more instances of critical thinking skills, said more, and were more likely to provide evidence for their thinking.

LEARN MORE at **vtshome.org**

WHAT IS VISUAL LITERACY

We live in an increasingly visual world, and fostering skills to decode today's visual world is more critical than ever. By looking closely at visual sources and works of art, students develop visual literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Visual literacy skills equip a learner to understand and analyze the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials. A visually literate individual is both a critical consumer of visual media and a competent contributor to a body of shared knowledge and culture.

—Association of College and Research Libraries

KEY TERMS

Athabascan: refers to the Dene language family, the largest Indigenous language family in North America; this language family includes the Dena'ina culture and eight other Alaska Native cultures, but the word 'Athabascan' does not come from Indigenous languages

Colonization: the process of one culture forcibly assimilating an Indigenous culture; this usually includes imposing language, clothing, social and legal structures, and other lifeways by means of settlement

Dene: word for Indigenous peoples belonging to several cultures, including Dena'ina, whose languages belong to the Dene language family with traditional homelands in Interior Alaska and into Western Canada; the word Dene means 'people' in several Dene languages

Dena'ina: the Indigenous people of Southcentral Alaska

Environmental stewardship: the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through sustainable practices which seek to maintain and preserve the health of the environment and well-being of those that rely on it

Potlatches: ceremonial Dena'ina gatherings held to celebrate special events or to honor a person who died; other Indigenous cultures have potlatches that are unique to their cultures

Steward: a person whose responsibility it is to take care of something; in Indigenous cultures, stewardship is critical in relationship with the animals, plants, land, and waters

Stewardship: a way to care for resources such as other living things, materials, information, or services that are valued by the steward or caretaker

Subsistence: use of wild, renewable resources from the land by individuals, families and communities for food, shelter, fuel, and other essential needs that are fundamental to a way of life

Sukdu: Dena'ina word for traditional Dena'ina stories that communicate Dena'ina values and beliefs

Ye'uh Qach'dalts'iyi: the English translation of this Dena'ina phrase is "what we live on from the outdoors" and highlights the importance of the natural environment in Dena'ina culture and how stewardship is practiced within this culture

Land Acknowledgment

Take a moment to consider that wherever you are in Alaska, you are on the traditional homelands of Indigenous peoples.

The Anchorage Museum and Anchorage Outdoor School are both located on the traditional homelands of the Dena'ina people. We acknowledge the Dena'ina people and all Indigenous people of Alaska. We thank them for their past and present stewardship of the waters, plants and animals of this place.

Words from the Dena'ina language in this book are *italicized* and followed by their English translation.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

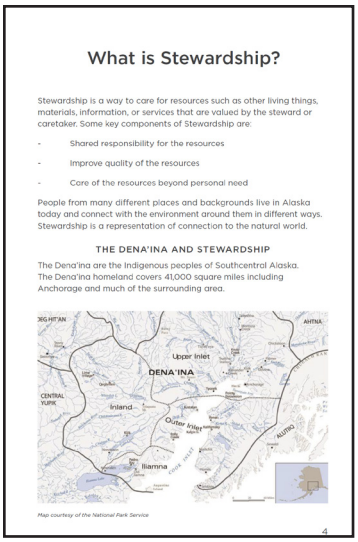
This is Dena'ina ełnena. Anchorage is Dena'ina homeland. Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement recognizing the Indigenous people of a place. It is a public gesture of appreciation for the past and present Indigenous stewardship of the lands that we now occupy. Land Acknowledgment opens a space with gratefulness and respect for the contributions, innovations, and contemporary perspective of Indigenous peoples. It is an actionable statement that marks our collective movement towards decolonization and equity.

LEARN MORE: About Indigenous land and land acknowledgment

Watch: **Anchorage Museum SEED Lab production Ełnena**

Investigate: **Interactive map showcasing traditional homelands across North America**

Read: **Guide to crafting land acknowledgements from US Department of Arts and Culture**



What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is a way to care for resources such as other living things, materials, information, or services that are valued by the steward or caretaker. Some key components of Stewardship are:

- Shared responsibility for the resources
- Improve quality of the resources
- Care of the resources beyond personal need

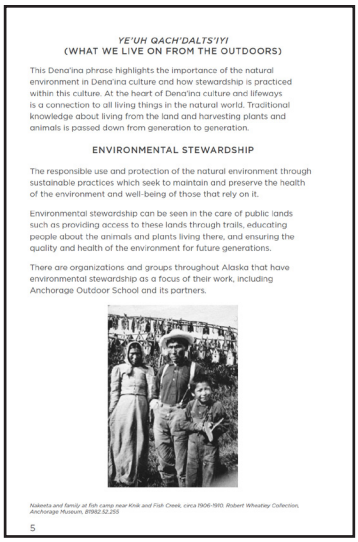
People from many different places and backgrounds live in Alaska today and connect with the environment around them in different ways. Stewardship is a representation of connection to the natural world.

THE DENA'INA AND STEWARDSHIP

The Dena'ina are the Indigenous peoples of Southcentral Alaska. The Dena'ina homeland covers 41,000 square miles including Anchorage and much of the surrounding area.

Map courtesy of the National Park Service

4



YE'UH QACH'DALTS'IYI
(WHAT WE LIVE ON FROM THE OUTDOORS)

This Dena'ina phrase highlights the importance of the natural environment in Dena'ina culture and how stewardship is practiced within this culture. At the heart of Dena'ina culture and lifeways is a connection to all living things in the natural world. Traditional knowledge about living from the land and harvesting plants and animals is passed down from generation to generation.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The responsible use and protection of the natural environment through sustainable practices which seek to maintain and preserve the health of the environment and well-being of those that rely on it.

Environmental stewardship can be seen in the care of public lands such as providing access to these lands through trails, educating people about the animals and plants living there, and ensuring the quality and health of the environment for future generations.

There are organizations and groups throughout Alaska that have environmental stewardship as a focus of their work, including Anchorage Outdoor School and its partners.

Nakeeta and family at fish camp near Knik and Fish Creek, circa 1906-1910. Robert Wheatley Collection, Anchorage Museum, B1982.52.255

5

STEWARDSHIP

From booklet:

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is a way to care for resources such as other living things, materials, information, or services that are valued by the steward or caretaker. Some key components of Stewardship are:

- Shared responsibility for the resources
- Improve quality of the resources
- Care of the resources beyond personal need

People from many different places and backgrounds live in Alaska today and connect with the environment around them in different ways. Stewardship is a representation of connection to the natural world.

The Dena'ina and Stewardship

The Dena'ina are the Indigenous peoples of Southcentral Alaska. The Dena'ina homeland covers 41,000 square miles including Anchorage and much of the surrounding area.

***Ye'uh Qach'dalts'iyi* (What We Live on from the Outdoors)**

This Dena'ina phrase highlights the importance of the natural environment in Dena'ina culture and how stewardship is practiced within this culture. At the heart of Dena'ina culture and lifeways is a connection to all living things in the natural world. Traditional knowledge about living from the land and harvesting plants and animals is passed down from generation to generation.

Environmental Stewardship

The responsible use and protection of the natural environment through sustainable practices which seek to maintain and preserve the health of the environment and well-being of those that rely on it.

Environmental stewardship can be seen in the care of public lands such as providing access to these lands through trails, educating people about the animals and plants living there, and ensuring the quality and health of the environment for future generations.

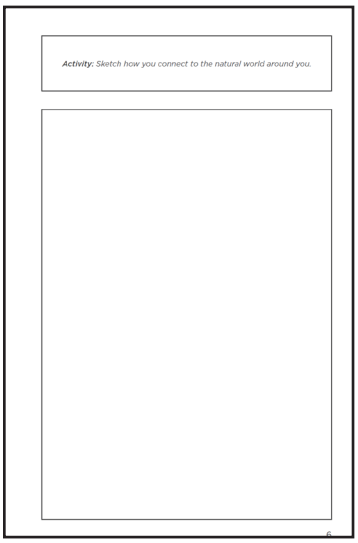
There are organizations and groups throughout Alaska that have environmental stewardship as a focus of their work, including Anchorage Outdoor School and its partners.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The English translation of the Dena'ina phrase *Ye'uh Qach'dalts'iyi* is "what we live on from the outdoors" and captures the essence of how stewardship is integrated in the Dena'ina culture. Stewardship is not perceived as a separate act or focus. Instead, it is inherently integrated into Dena'ina lifeways. Traditional values of living with the land are passed down through the generations.

"*Ye'uh Qach'dalts'iyi* encompasses spirituality, language, history, traditions and the foundation of the Dena'ina people." (Jones et al., 2013)

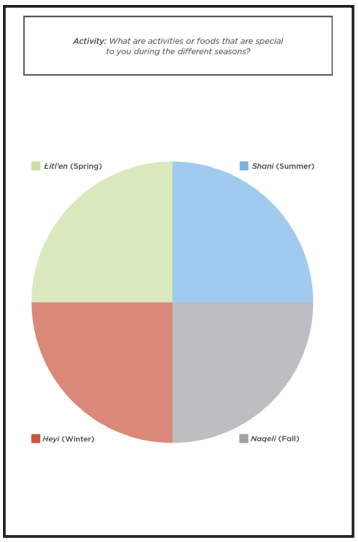
The connection to food sources of key importance is central to the idea of *Ye'uh Qach'dalts'iyi* as it highlights the cycle of life. Prior to western contact, food was a focus of daily life: hunting and harvesting from the land was done throughout the year and was shaped by the seasonal availability of resources.



ACTIVITY 1: *Sketch how you connect to the natural world around you.*

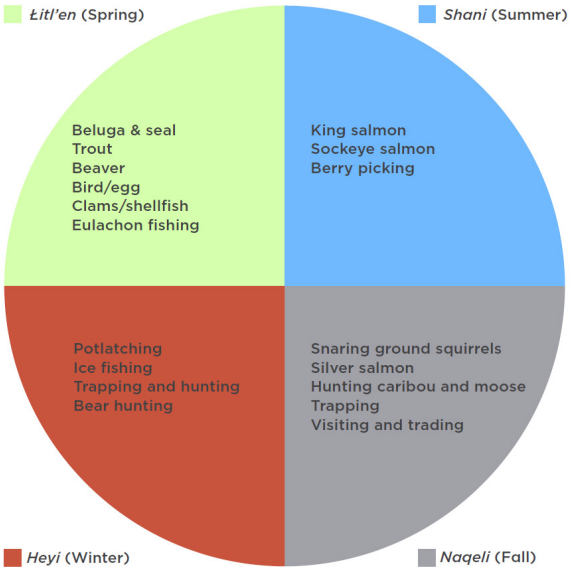
SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Ask students what "the natural world" means to them. Provide additional prompts such as: What activities do you do outside? What part of nature do you see while doing them? Do you do the same activities all year or do they change with the seasons?
- Have students share with a partner what activities they like to do outside, who they do them with, and why they are important to them.
- If time or format allows, create a group list of activities everyone likes to do.
- Ask students to think about how the natural world is a part of the activities they do.
- Give time for students to sketch and then share with each other.
- Explain that one way Dena'ina connect to the natural world is through activities focused on finding and harvesting food. Knowing where and how to successfully harvest food requires a strong understanding of the cycles and seasons of the natural world.



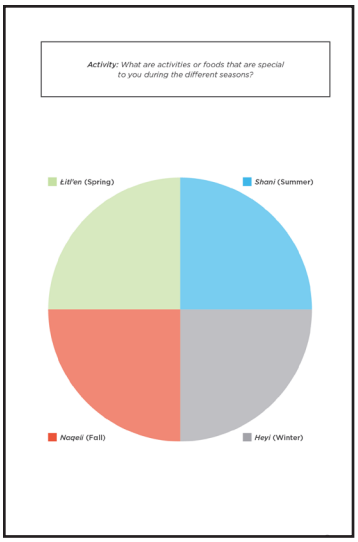
HOW SEASONS SHAPE ACTIVITIES

From booklet: Seasonal availability of food resources shapes Dena'ina culture. The daily focus of harvesting food requires a deep spiritual relationship and understanding of the land and animals. Seasons mark a shift in harvest, with each season offering different animals and plants to hunt and gather.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

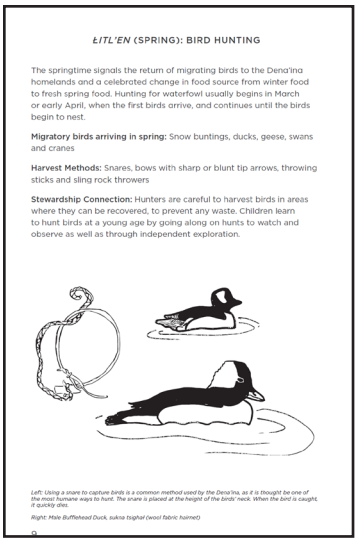
This seasonal wheel shows the traditional Dena'ina harvesting calendar before the population sustained significant losses from colonization in the nineteenth century, drastically changing how and where the Dena'ina lived. The wheel highlights the seasonality of resource availability and indicates how daily life was structured around subsistence activities. Subsistence is often understood as harvesting food from the land, but the Dena'ina relationship to subsistence is more than just meeting one's caloric requirements: it is about the connection to the land, which is seen in the extensive traditional knowledge of the animals, plants, and fish that are harvested. Traditional knowledge within the Dena'ina culture is based not only on an understanding of how and when to harvest but also on fostering a deep spiritual connection to the resources being harvested.



ACTIVITY 2: *What are activities or foods that are special to you during the different seasons?*

SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Ask students to brainstorm some of their favorite foods or activities and consider if they are connected to a certain time of year or event. Do they like to ski or skate during the winter or camp during the summer? What events do they celebrate at certain times of the year, such as birthdays or holidays? Are there any special foods or activities connected to that event?
- Have students complete their wheel and share with each other.
- Discuss how Dena'ina daily activities focused on finding and harvesting food and how the types of food changed with each season.
- Have students compare their seasonal wheels to the Dena'ina seasonal wheel. Are there any foods or activities that are similar between the wheels?



ŁITL'EN (SPRING): BIRD HUNTING

The springtime signals the return of migrating birds to the Dena'ina homelands and a celebrated change in food source from winter food to fresh spring food. Hunting for waterfowl usually begins in March or early April, when the first birds arrive, and continues until the birds begin to nest.

Migratory birds arriving in spring: Snow buntings, ducks, geese, swans and cranes

Harvest Methods: Snares, bows with sharp or blunt tip arrows, throwing sticks and sling rock throwers

Stewardship Connection: Hunters are careful to harvest birds in areas where they can be recovered, to prevent any waste. Children learn to hunt birds at a young age by going along on hunts to watch and observe as well as through independent exploration.

Left: Using a snare to capture birds is a common method used by the Dena'ina, as it is thought be one of the most humane ways to hunt. The snare is placed at the height of the birds' neck. When the bird is caught, it quickly dies.

Right: Male Bufflehead Duck, suksa tsghat (wool fabric hoimet)

ŁITL'EN (SPRING): BIRD HUNTING

FROM BOOKLET: The springtime signals the return of migrating birds to the Dena'ina homelands and a celebrated change in food source from winter food to fresh spring food. Hunting for waterfowl usually begins in March or early April, when the first birds arrive, and continues until the birds begin to nest.

Migratory birds arriving in spring: Snow buntings, ducks, geese, swans and cranes

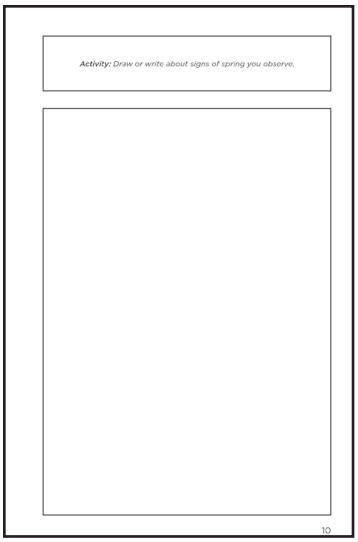
Harvest Methods: Snares, bows with sharp or blunt tip arrows, throwing sticks and sling rock throwers

Stewardship Connection: Hunters are careful to harvest birds in areas where they can be recovered, to prevent any waste. Children learn to hunt birds at a young age by going along on hunts to watch and observe as well as through independent exploration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Spring brings relief from the cold and dark winter months as well as new resources for harvest. For thousands of years, Dena'ina moved from their winter villages to their spring camps in pursuit of new food sources. Read more about the use of Den'ina snares and hunting practices in this **National Park Service article**.

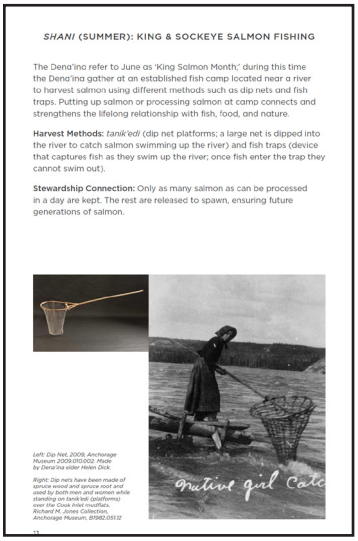
Migratory birds and waterfowl are important spring resources. Dena'ina names for birds are based off behavior and sound which John Morton, a wildlife biologist at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, examines in his essay **"Dena'ina names for birds of the Kenai Peninsula."**



ACTIVITY 3: *Draw or write about signs of spring you observe.*

SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Give students time to brainstorm responses to this prompt and then have them share with a partner.
- Ask students to consider the current season and what signs help define this season and how these signs are similar or different to spring. If it is spring, highlight specific events that are happening and how they connect to this time of year (i.e. school events, athletic events, or holidays).
- Discuss how spring was a time when Dena'ina moved from their winter villages to spring camps to harvest new resources. Compare other animal migrations, such as spring bird migrations, to the movement of the Dena'ina to their spring camps. Ask students: What changes in the environment in spring invite or encourage movement to different places? (i.e. warmer weather, longer days, following migrating food sources)
- Ask: Are any of these changes similar to the signs of spring they first brainstormed?



SHANI (SUMMER): KING & SOCKEYE SALMON FISHING

FROM BOOKLET: The Dena'ina refer to June as 'King Salmon Month;' during this time the Dena'ina gather at an established fish camp located near a river to harvest salmon using different methods such as dip nets and fish traps. Putting up salmon or processing salmon at camp connects and strengthens the lifelong relationship with fish, food, and nature.

Harvest Methods: *tanik'edi* (dip net platforms; a large net is dipped into the river to catch salmon swimming up the river) and fish traps (device that captures fish as they swim up the river; once fish enter the trap they cannot swim out).

Stewardship Connection: Only as many salmon as can be processed in a day are kept. The rest are released to spawn, ensuring future generations of salmon.

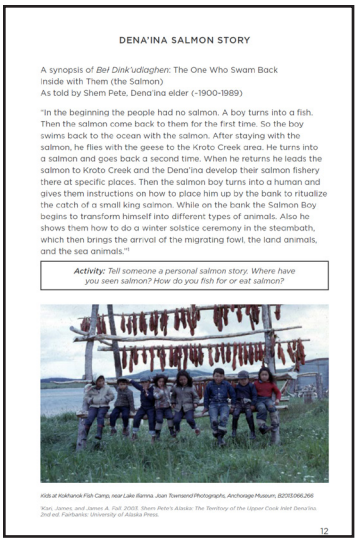
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Dgheyaytnu (Stickleback Creek), now commonly refered to as Ship Creek, is located in downtown Anchorage and was an important spring and early summer location for harvesting king salmon and other fish. This creek is marked on the Dena'ina Place Names map in this booklet.

Learn more about the salmon fishing near Anchorage:

- **"Dena'ina camps and culture adapted to founding of Anchorage" - Alaska Public Media**
- **"Kings in cycle: Salmon follow boom and bust pattern" - Alaska Journal of Commerce**
- **"Preparing Fish in the Summer" - Dena'ina Qenaga**
- **"The Use of Fish and Wildlife Resources in Tyonek, Alaska" - Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

State of Alaska's Salmon and People - Project that aims to make available and accessible the information needed to continue and strengthen Alaska's legacy of science-based management of Alaska's salmon.



DENA'INA SALMON STORY

A synopsis of *Beł Dink'udlaghen*: The One Who Swam Back Inside with Them (the Salmon)
As told by Shem Pete, Dena'ina elder (~1900–1989)

"In the beginning the people had no salmon. A boy turns into a fish. Then the salmon come back to them for the first time. So the boy swims back to the ocean with the salmon. After staying with the salmon, he flies with the geese to the Kroto Creek area. He turns into a salmon and goes back a second time. When he returns he leads the salmon to Kroto Creek and the Dena'ina develop their salmon fishery there at specific places. Then the salmon boy turns into a human and gives them instructions on how to place him up by the bank to ritualize the catch of a small king salmon. While on the bank the Salmon Boy begins to transform himself into different types of animals. Also he shows them how to do a winter solstice ceremony in the steambath, which then brings the arrival of the migrating fowl, the land animals, and the sea animals."[1]

Activity: *Tell someone a personal salmon story. Where have you seen salmon? How do you fish for or eat salmon?*

Kids at Kokhanok Fish Camp, near Lake Iliamna. Joan Townsend Photographs, Anchorage Museum, B2013.066.266

1Kari, James, and James A. Fall. 2003. *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina*. 2nd ed. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

12

DENA'INA SALMON STORY

FROM BOOKLET:
A synopsis of Beł Dink'udlaghen: The One Who Swam Back Inside with Them (the Salmon)
As told by Shem Pete, Dena'ina elder (~1900-1989)

"In the beginning the people had no salmon. A boy turns into a fish. Then the salmon come back to them for the first time. So the boy swims back to the ocean with the salmon. After staying with the salmon, he flies with the geese to the Kroto Creek area. He turns into a salmon and goes back a second time. When he returns he leads the salmon to Kroto Creek and the Dena'ina develop their salmon fishery there at specific places. Then the salmon boy turns into a human and gives them instructions on how to place him up by the bank to ritualize the catch of a small king salmon. While on the bank the Salmon Boy begins to transform himself into different types of animals. Also he shows them how to do a winter solstice ceremony in the steambath, which then brings the arrival of the migrating fowl, the land animals, and the sea animals."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

In Dena'ina culture, stories are an important way of providing meaning and spiritual connection to harvesting practices, such as showing respect for the animals being harvested. Dena'ina believe that all animals are equal to humans and must be respected. They also believe animals are aware of human thoughts, words, and actions. If respect is shown to animals, people will be rewarded with good harvests, health, and prosperity. If animals are disrespected, people may experience punishments such as poor harvests or sickness.

Many Dena'ina stories are characterized by the idea of cause-and-effect relationships to the natural world and highlight how stewardship is connected through spiritual respect for the animals and environment.

Explore these resources that highlight these important relationships:

- **Stories about the history and culture in Lake Clark National Park**, traditional homelands of the Dena'ina
- **Project Jukebox** - a collection of photographs and oral histories about Indigenous life in the Lake Clark region

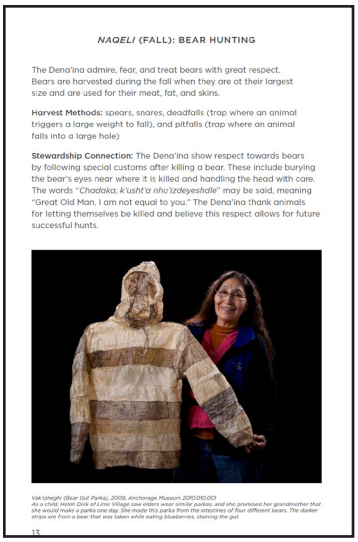
The Dena'ina connection to and respect of food sources is a practice that is being revitalized today within the broader Alaskan community. Visit **Salmon Life** to learn about Alaska's important connection to salmon through stories.

ACTIVITY 4: *Tell someone a personal salmon story. Where have you seen salmon? How do you fish for or eat salmon?*

Note: Be sensitive to students who may not have any experience related to salmon or fishing. Have them consider another type of food or activity that is important to them instead. They can tell a story about this food or activity.

SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Discuss how Dena'ina use stories as ways to pass on knowledge to younger generations and how stories are an important way of connecting spiritual beliefs to daily activities such as fishing.
- Ask students if they have a favorite story that has been shared with them by friends or family. How was that story shared? Do they share the story with anyone?
- Have students brainstorm and share personal salmon stories. These stories can be stories they have heard, or they can share their own stories from personal experiences.



NAQELI (FALL): BEAR HUNTING

FROM BOOKLET: The Dena'ina admire, fear, and treat bears with great respect. Bears are harvested during the fall when they are at their largest size and are used for their meat, fat, and skins.

Harvest Methods: spears, snares, deadfalls (trap where an animal triggers a large weight to fall), and pitfalls (trap where an animal falls into a large hole)

Stewardship Connection: The Dena'ina show respect towards bears by following special customs after killing a bear. These include burying the bear's eyes near where it is killed and handling the head with care. The words "*Chadaka, k'usht'a nhu'izdeyeshdle*" may be said, meaning "Great Old Man, I am not equal to you." The Dena'ina thank animals for letting themselves be killed and believe this respect allows for future successful hunts.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The Dena'ina believe all living things should be respected and that this respect leads to successful harvests because the animals "allow" themselves to be hunted by those who treat them honorably. Traditional Dena'ina stories, or *sukdu*, teach these values and connect the Dena'ina spiritually to the animals they harvest.

"The Mouse Story" (included below) is one *sukdu* example that reinforces respect for all living things. There are different versions, but all bring hardship to a young man's village when he harms a mouse and reward the young man's village when he helps the mouse.

The Dena'ina also believe everything has a spirit and that harvesting an animal does not kill its spirit. The proper treatment of unusable animal parts allows the animal's spirt to be reborn as an animal again. Bones from water animals, like fish, are returned to streams, and bones of land animals are returned to land. This ritual has the ecological benefit of returning nutrients from the decomposing animals to the earth.

"The Mouse Story"
Peter Kalifornsky, *A Dena'ina Legacy – K'tl'egh'i Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky* (Fairbanks, 1991), 155-157.

Long ago this is the way the Dena'ina lived. They drove poles for a fish weir where they fished with a dip net. They brought in fish with a dip net and they made ready for winter.

One man only walked around, and he was lazy. He wasn't preparing for winter at all. Then a little mouse was going in the brush with a fish egg in its mouth, but it couldn't get over a windfall. The man lifted the

little mouse over the windfall.

Then winter came to them and sickness struck. Bad weather came and they couldn't find any animals to hunt and what they had stored for winter was gone. They were hungry. Sickness struck them.

The young man who had helped the little mouse over the windfall went out walking without hope. He went to the foothills. There he walked, and walked, and walked, and came to a big brush shelter. Smoke was coming out. There was no door, but from inside he heard a voice, "Yes, we were expecting you. Turn around the way the sun goes [clockwise] and come in," someone said. He turned around the way the sun goes and, as he turned, a door opened. He went in. A big old lady was sitting inside. A fire was burning in the center of the room. "My husband is coming back. Sit here. We [were] expecting you," she said to him. She fed him. "I know why you are here. We know you," she said. "When my husband returns he'll explain it to you," she said.

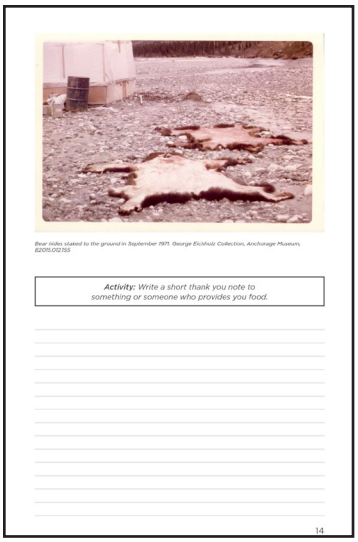
Not long after it hailed. The earth shook. "Yes, my husband is coming back," she said. From outside, a giant came in.

"Hello," he said. "I know why you are here. Your relatives are all hungry. Sickness has struck them. You are going about to try to save your relatives. Good, I'll help you," he said, "because you have helped me."

The giant put all kinds of small little fish eggs and little meats and dry fish into a little skin a pinch at a time. Pinch after pinch he put in and then he wrapped it up. It didn't come to much of a pack. He put down feathers in the pack.

The giant said, "Take this to your village. Before you arrive put down the pack and spread out the food. Then sprinkle the down feathers over it. Turn around the way the sun goes and, when you touch it, it will turn into a large pile of food. Then go to your village and tell your relatives to come with you. They will help you bring the food the rest of the way to your village. With this food you will save your relatives. You will feed them and before it is all gone, they will regain their strength. They will go to the woods and they will kill game. You will be saved," the giant said.

"The mouse you saved was getting ready for winter like everything else. But no one took pity on it when it needed help," the giant said. "You were lazy. You were walking about when you should have been helping. But you lifted me over that windfall when I had that fish egg. You helped me. That is why it has turned out this way," he said. "My name is mouse's relative, but really my name is Gujun. Gujun is related to all of the animals."



ACTIVITY 5: *Write a short thank you note to something or someone who provides you food.*

Note: Be sensitive to students who experience food insecurity or prepare food without adult assistance.

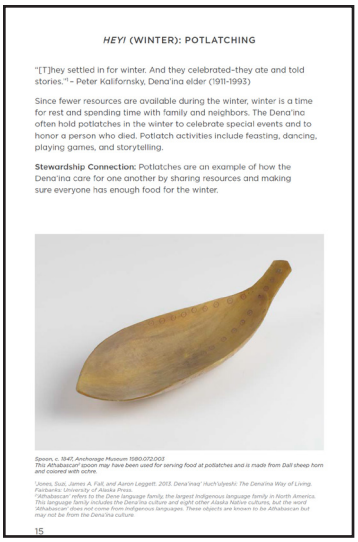
SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Brainstorm where different kinds of food come from (e.g. grown, gathered, hunted, bought at grocery stores, prepared by a family member, etc.).
- Remind students of the Dena'ina phrase *Ye'uh Qach'dalts'iyi* (what we live on from the outdoors), respect for living things, and practice of thanking animals for letting themselves be killed.
- Ask if students do anything to say thanks for their food (examples might include thanking the cook, saying grace, doing something special when hunting or gathering).
- Discuss how to write a thank you note (e.g. how to address and sign it).
- Give students time to write their thank you notes.
- Have students share their completed notes with each other.
- Ask students how they can express appreciation for where their food comes in the future (e.g. taking time to think about where their food comes from, not wasting food, buying locally).

EXAMPLES

Dear Soil,
Thank you for growing fruits like apples and strawberries that I love to eat.
From, Sally

Dear Mom,
Thank you for cooking delicious meals for our family.
Love, Tom



HEYI (WINTER): POTLATCHING

"[T]hey settled in for winter. And they celebrated–they ate and told stories."1 – Peter Kalifornsky, Dena'ina elder (1911-1993)

Since fewer resources are available during the winter, winter is a time for rest and spending time with family and neighbors. The Dena'ina often hold potlatches in the winter to celebrate special events and to honor a person who died. Potlatch activities include feasting, dancing, playing games, and storytelling.

Stewardship Connection: Potlatches are an example of how the Dena'ina care for one another by sharing resources and making sure everyone has enough food for the winter.

Spoon, c. 1847, Anchorage Museum 1980.072.003
This Athabascan1 spoon may have been used for serving food at potlatches and is made from Dall sheep horn and colored with ochre.

1Jones, Suzi, James A. Fall, and Aaron Leggett. 2013. Dena'inag' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.
"Athabascan" refers to the Dene language family, the largest Indigenous language family in North America. This language family includes the Dena'ina culture and eight other Alaska Native cultures, but the word "Athabascan" does not come from Indigenous languages. These objects are known to be Athabascan but may not be from the Dena'ina culture.

15

HEYI (WINTER): POTLATCHING

FROM BOOKLET: "[T]hey settled in for winter. And they celebrated–they ate and told stories." – Peter Kalifornsky, Dena'ina elder (1911-1993)

Since fewer resources are available during the winter, winter is a time for rest and spending time with family and neighbors. The Dena'ina often hold potlatches in the winter to celebrate special events and to honor a person who died. Potlatch activities include feasting, dancing, playing games, and storytelling.

Stewardship Connection: Potlatches are an example of how the Dena'ina care for one another by sharing resources and making sure everyone has enough food for the winter.

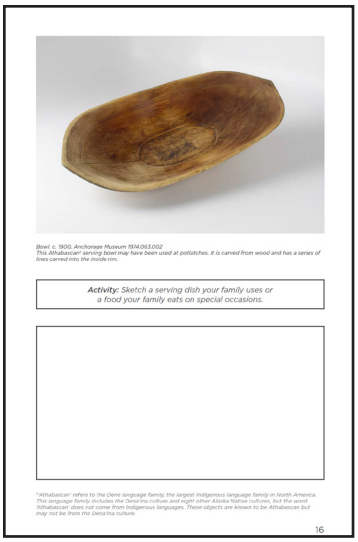
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Potlatches are major community events held for a variety of occasions. "Little potlatches" are held to celebrate significant events such as the first animal killed. The "big potlatch", or memorial potlatch, is held to honor someone who dies. These are the most elaborate potlatches and take years of preparation. People from other villages attend these potlatches. The host family shares food and gifts with guests and gains prestige for hosting a successful potlatch.

The arrival of outsiders impacted traditional cultural practices traditions, including potlatches. Dena'ina elder Shem Pete recalled the last potlatch held at Tak'at, a fish camp on Cook Inlet between the mouth of Ship Creek and Eagle River, occurred over three days in 1929 or 1930. Efforts to revive potlatch traditions in the 1970s-1980s helped renew Dena'ina elder Peter Kalifornsky's interest in engaging with his culture.

Peter Kalifornsky (1911-1993) was from the Kenai Peninsula and made significant contributions to revitalizing and documenting the Dena'ina culture towards the end of his life. He was one of the last native speakers of the Outer Inlet Dena'ina dialect and helped develop a written form for the language. His Dena'ina writings include invaluable traditional stories that were otherwise suppressed and then forgotten under colonization. Read **Kalifornsky's obituary** published in the Anchorage Daily News.

Dena'ina carry on the tradition of potlatches today. Reach about the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's 2018 **First Fish Potlatch**. The Kenaitze are the Dena'ina of the Kenai Peninsula.



Bowl, c. 1900, Anchorage Museum 1914.063.002
This Athabascan* serving bowl may have been used at potlatches. It is carved from wood and has a series of lines carved into the inside rim.

Activity: Sketch a serving dish your family uses or a food your family eats on special occasions.

*"Athabascan" refers to the Dene language family, the largest Indigenous language family in North America. This language family includes the Dena'ina culture and eight other Alaska Native cultures, but the word "Athabascan" does not come from Indigenous languages. These objects are known to be Athabascan but may not be from the Dena'ina culture.

16

ACTIVITY 6: *Sketch a serving dish your family uses or a food your family eats on special occasions.*

Note: Be sensitive to students who experience food insecurity, prepare food without adult assistance, or are unable to celebrate special occasions with family.

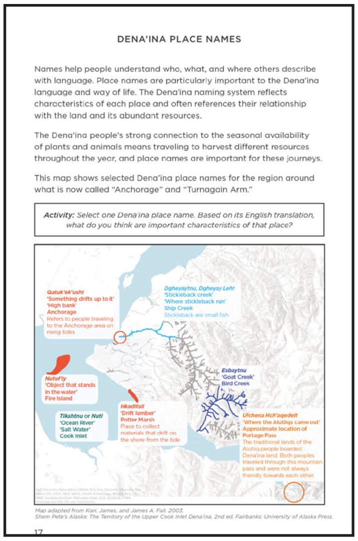
SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Students look closely at the photographs of the Athabascan sheep horn spoon and wooden bowl. Ask: what do you notice about these objects? What do you notice about the materials in these objects? What do these objects remind you of? What more can you find?
- Explain how Dena'ina hold potlatches in the winter to celebrate special events and to honor a person who died. Potlatch activities include feasting, dancing, playing games, and storytelling.
- Ask students if they have any traditions they do on special occasions, especially related to food or dining.
- Give students time to sketch a serving dish their family uses or a food their family eats on special occasions.
- Students share their completed sketches with each other. Discuss what students drew and why the serving dish or food is important to their family.

A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

The two museum objects in the Potlatching section of the booklet, the sheep horn spoon and wooden bowl, are identified as 'Athabascan.'

Athabascan refers to the Dene language family, the largest Indigenous language family in North America. This language family includes the Dena'ina culture and eight other Alaska Native cultures, but the word 'Athabascan' does not come from Indigenous languages. These objects are known to be Dene (Athabascan) but may not be from the Dena'ina culture.



DENA'INA PLACE NAMES

Names help people understand who, what, and where others describe with language. Place names are particularly important to the Dena'ina language and way of life. The Dena'ina naming system reflects characteristics of each place and often references their relationship with the land and its abundant resources.

The Dena'ina people's strong connection to the seasonal availability of plants and animals means traveling to harvest different resources throughout the year, and place names are important for these journeys.

This map shows selected Dena'ina place names for the region around what is now called "Anchorage" and "Turnagain Arm."

Activity: Select one Dena'ina place name. Based on its English translation, what do you think are important characteristics of that place?

Map adapted from Kari, James, and James A. Fall. 2003. Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina. 2nd ed. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

17

DENA'INA PLACE NAMES

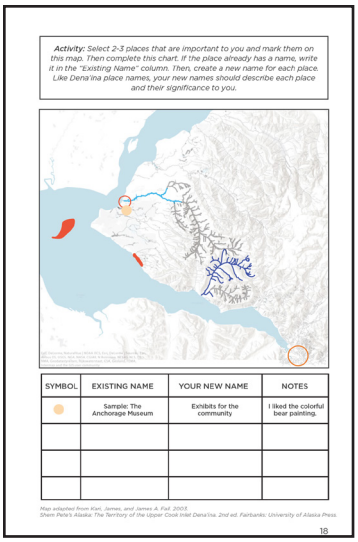
FROM BOOKLET: Names help people understand who, what, and where others describe with language. Place names are particularly important to the Dena'ina language and way of life. The Dena'ina naming system reflects characteristics of each place and often references their relationship with the land and its abundant resources. The Dena'ina people's strong connection to the seasonal availability of plants and animals means traveling to harvest different resources throughout the year, and place names are important for these journeys. This map shows selected Dena'ina place names for the region around what is now called "Anchorage" and "Turnagain Arm."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

In Shem Pete's Alaska, linguist James Kari categorizes Dena'ina place names and finds the vast majority describe the natural environment. The next most common category are names that describe human activities. Very few places are named after people or after historical or mythological events.

Place names reveal how people refer to, relate to, and know a landscape. Alaska Native place names are highly descriptive and communicate observed characteristics of the land and its inhabitants with succinct insight. As outsiders arrived in Alaska, they displaced and marginalized Alaska Native peoples, including by renaming places.

Today, efforts are underway to make Indigenous place names visible again. Watch this **Anchorage Park Foundation video** to learn about the Indigenous Place Names Project.



Activity: Select 2-3 places that are important to you and mark them on this map. Then complete this chart. If the place already has a name, write it in the "Existing Name" column. Then, create a new name for each place. Like Dena'ina place names, your new names should describe each place and their significance to you.

SYMBOL	EXISTING NAME	YOUR NEW NAME	NOTES
	Sample: The Anchorage Museum	Exhibits for the community	I liked the colorful bear painting.

Map adapted from Kari, James, and James A. Fall. 2003. Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina. 2nd ed. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

18

ACTIVITY 7a: *Select one Dena'ina place name. Based on its English translation, what do you think are important characteristics of that place?*

SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Students look closely at the Dena'ina place names map for the region around what is now called "Anchorage" and "Turnagain Arm".
- Practice basic map reading skills. Ask: what is this map showing? Where can you find examples of Dena'ina names? Where can you find the English translations of these Dena'ina names?
- Orient students to Anchorage, the Seward Highway, Portage, and any other relevant landmarks.
- Discuss the Dena'ina names and their translations. Ask: What do you notice about the names?
- Go through each Dena'ina name and have students identify important characteristics of that place using its English translation. For example, *Dgheyaytnu* or *Dgheyay Leht* translates to 'Stickleback creek' or 'Where stickleback run' and indicates stickleback are found in the creek now referred to Ship Creek.

ACTIVITY 7b: *Select 2-3 places that are important to you and mark them on this map. Then complete this chart. If the place already has a name, write it in the "Existing Name" column. Then, create a new name for each place. Like Dena'ina place names, your new names should describe each place and their significance to you.*

Note: Facilitate Activity 7a before doing this activity.

SUGGESTED FACILITATION

- Ask students to brainstorm places in and around Anchorage that are important in their lives (e.g. school, place of worship, hiking trail, fishing spot, etc)
- Help students identify the approximate location of 2-3 of these places and mark them on the map with different symbols.
- Remind students how Den'ina place names reflects characteristics of each place. For example, *Dgheyaytnu* or *Dgheyay Leht* translates to 'Stickleback creek' or 'Where stickleback run' and indicates stickleback are found in the creek now referred to Ship Creek.
- Help students complete this chart for each of the places they marked on the map. Each new place name should describe the place and its significance to each student. See the Anchorage Museum example.
- Students share their new names with each other and why they selected those names.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ABOUT DENA'INA CULTURE

Jones, Suzi, James A. Fall, and Aaron Leggett. 2013. *Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

Kalifornsky, Peter, Alan Boraas, and James M. Kari. 1991. *A Dena'ina Legacy – K'tl'egh'i Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Kari, James, and James A. Fall. 2003. S*hem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina*. 2nd ed. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

Athabascan Objects from the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center

The Athabascan Peoples and Their Culture - Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center Learning Lab

RELATED ANCHORAGE MUSEUM TEACHING RESOURCES

Anchorage: Maps and Place Names lesson plan

Dena'ina Word of the Week

Dena'ina Plant Deck