



Iñuit Cultural Orientation

Iñupiat Heritage Center

Patuk Glenn

Iñupiat History, Language and Culture

Tommy Nageak

Topics discussed



- Inuit in a Global Perspective
- North Slope Iñupiat
 - Location and climate
 - History
 - Major Organizations for the Region
 - Inupiat Values
 - Cultural Activities
 - Traditional Beliefs
 - Climate Change
 - Language

Iñuit People Across the Circumpolar Region



- Russia
- United States
- Canada
- Greenland

Language and Culture of the Inuit People

All speak varying dialects of the Inuit language

Inuit culture varies across the region depending on environment and country of government.



Universal themes among all Inuit

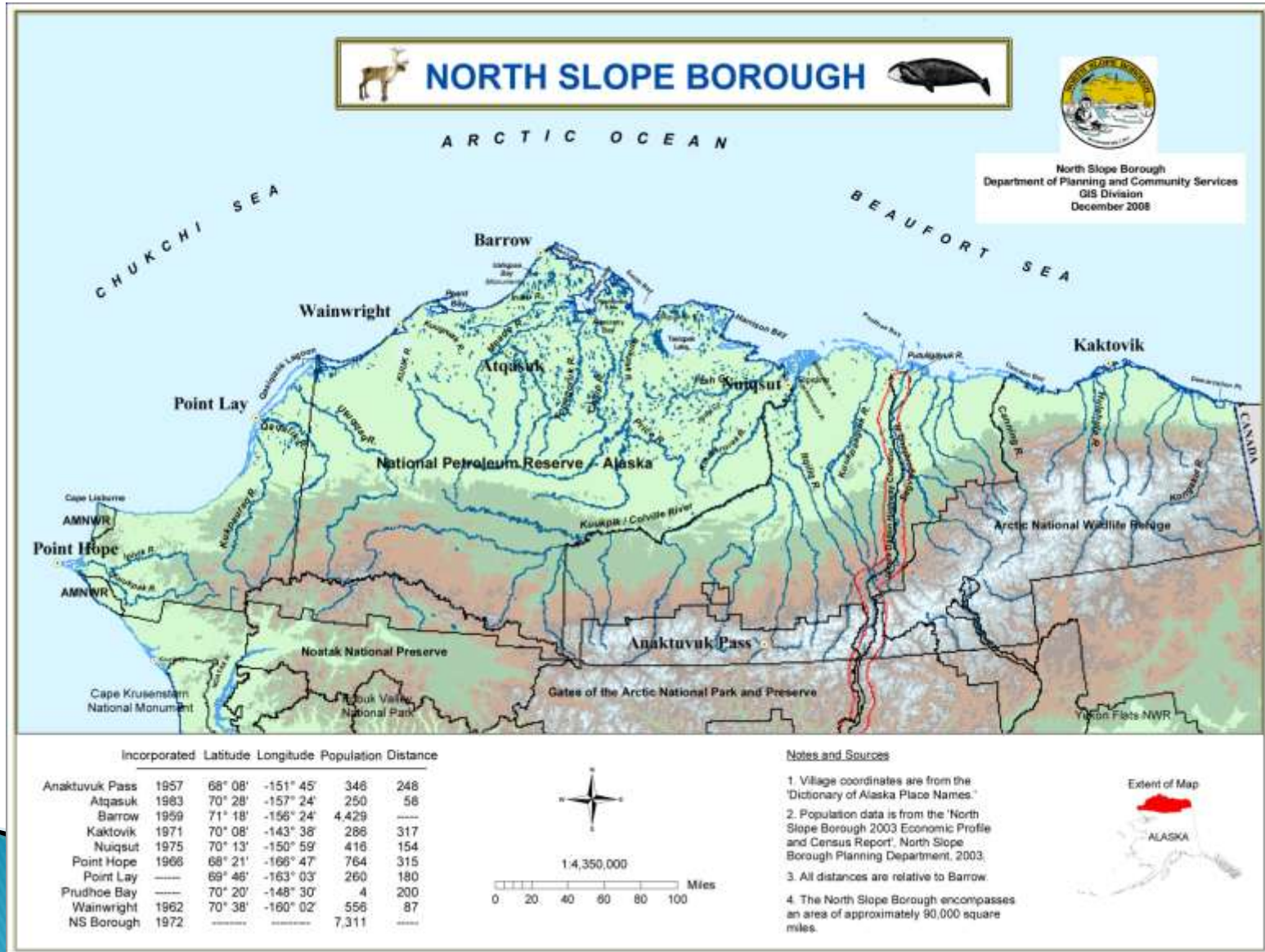
- ▶ Respect for natural environment of the Arctic
- ▶ Understanding that we are of all the same people




Iñuit of Alaska



Iñupiat of the North Slope



Location and Climate

- ▶ Farthest North Municipal Government in the US.
 - ▶ Extreme cold weather climate
 - Average winter temperature -20 below, average summer temperature 40 above
 - ▶ Above the Arctic Circle
 - 24 hour day light in the summer, 24 hour darkness in the winter (no sun, but twilight during the day)
 - Months in between are transition months where we gain or lose daylight
- 



Summer in Barrow >>



Winter in Barrow >>


History of the North Slope

»» Short video clip

Notable mentions

- ▶ U.S. Navy heavy presence in Northern Alaska mid 1940s through 1950s
 - Sole purpose of oil exploration
- ▶ Established the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL) lasting throughout the 1960s and 1970s, (which has now been converted into Iḷisaḡvik College)

Major Organizations on the North Slope

- ▶ North Slope Borough– Municipal Government
 - ▶ Arctic Slope Regional Corporation– Regional Native Corporation
 - ▶ Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope– Regional Tribal Organization
 - ▶ Arctic Slope Native Association– Regional Health and Social Services Organization
 - ▶ Every community has tribal organization, village corporation and city government.
- 

Iñupiat Values

- » The Iñupiaq people have identified with 12 major values that guide their way of life.



Respect for Nature >>

Essential for survival



Family and Kinship >>

We are communities of large extended families



Avoidance of Conflict >>

We must live in peace with one another



Cooperation >>

Working together we can accomplish great things



Humility >>

Remaining humble will bring you wisdom



Hunting Traditions >>

The tradition of hunting has been passed down for thousands of years, keeping us alive



Sharing >>

Sharing brings joy



Compassion >>

Caring for one another makes our communities stronger



Humor >>

Laughter is the best medicine



Knowledge of Our Language >>

Language is what connects us to our heritage



Love and Respect for Elders and One Another >>

Greeting an Elder– Sign of respect
Remember to be humble, kind, and listen



Spirituality >>

We believe in a higher power


General Information of Interest

- ▶ Our way of life is very important to us
 - Our local organizations are supportive of values
- ▶ People are very friendly on the North Slope
 - Locals may be wary of outsiders
 - It is appropriate to practice these values in respects to the people


North Slope Culture

»» Way of Life
People of Whaling

Way of Life

- ▶ Our culture and livelihood depend upon our environment and how we survive
 - ▶ Whaling a major source of sustenance and is the foundation of our social structure
 - ▶ Inland Inupiaqs traveled to coastal whaling communities to take part in whaling and traveled back home after the season.
 - ▶ Cultural Calendar based on seasonal activities
- 

Social Structure

- Umialik– Whaling Captain
Usually the leaders in the community and historically those who were successful in providing sustenance for a community.
 - Men and Women Equal
Men typically the hunters
Women typically prepare food, materials
 - An umialik has the financial responsibility of a whaling crew and is also responsible for the safety of the whaling crew.
- 




Whaling Crews >>

Over 50 whaling crews in Barrow alone
Crews made up of large extended families
Captains are leaders in the communities, now and throughout history

The Tradition of Whaling

There is a cycle of events that happen throughout the year that perpetuate our livelihood:

- ▶ Adaptability through change and technology
 - ▶ Preparation
 - ▶ Actual Hunt
 - ▶ Celebrations throughout the year
 - ▶ Governing agencies – BWCA, AEWC and IWC
- 

Preparation Activities

- » Bearded Seal Hunting
- Caribou Hunting
- Sewing Parkas
- Maintaining Snow machines
- Sewing Skin Boat
- Cleaning out Ice Cellar
- Breaking trail on ice
- Whaling time!



Ugruliaq – Bearded seal hunting >>

Takes place in June and July



Caribou Hunting Year Round >>

Gathering tendons to make Ivalu



Creating or mending fur clothing >>

Needed for warmth



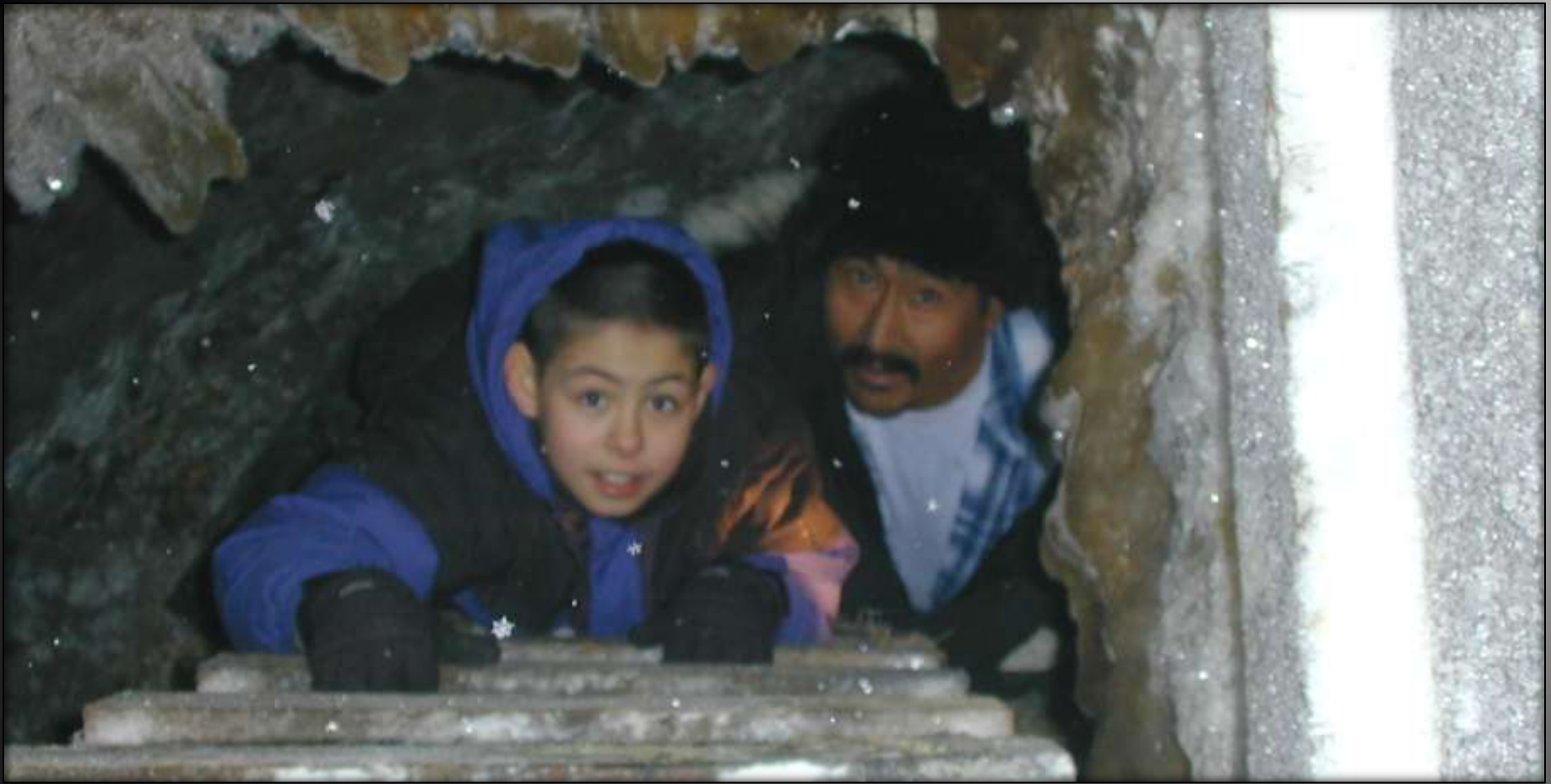
Amiq Season >>

Usually done in February



Amiq Season >>

Us Whalers have great respect and pride in our skin sewers who work hard to keep us afloat.



Cleaning out Ice Cellars >>


Always done before spring whaling

Whaling

▶ Spring

- Happens in April/May
- Traditional seal skin boat used
- Crews camp on the ice, near open lead
- Harvested whales pulled onto the ice by block and tackle
- Whales are butchered on the ice, meat hauled in

▶ Fall

- Happens in October
 - Modern ocean boat with outboard motor
 - Boats used on the open ocean, no ice
 - Boats tow in the whale, loaders bring it to location of butchering
- 

Piuqtuq – Pursuing the Bowhead





Happiness is always after giving Thanks



Strength in Numbers >>

Takes a community to pull up a giant



Agviuq – Butchering >>

Diving and Sharing the Whale



Fall Whaling >>


Modern ways



Fall Whaling >>

Modern ways

After the whale is caught

- ▶ Brought back to the captains house and a portion is cut into serving sized pieces
 - ▶ Whole whaling crew works together to process whale
 - ▶ Cooked, served to the community
 - ▶ A portion is put into the underground ice cellar for storage until celebration
- 



Serving plate >>

Celebrations

▶ Feasts

- Apugauti
- Nalukataq (June)– Celebrating successful spring hunt
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

▶ Kivgiq

- Major regional Eskimo dance festival (every 2 yrs)

▶ Eskimo Games

- Christmas
- July 4th
- Piuraagiaqta (spring festival)



Nalukataq >>

Spring Whaling Festival



Nalukataq >>

Blanket toss



Kalukaq >>

Box dance drum



Eskimo Dance >>



Eskimo games– Qitik >>

Games of strength and agility

Climate Change

»» A very real issue

Climate Change effects

- ▶ Coastal Erosion
 - Home site threat
 - Archaeological threat
- ▶ Changing ice
 - Open water in the Arctic Ocean
 - Unstable ice conditions for subsistence hunting

Kivalina, Alaska



Coastal Erosion



Climate Change and us


- ▶ The end of the Iñupiaq Eskimo...?
- ▶ We have endured change for thousands of years, and will remain resilient.




The Iñupiaq Language

- » General Information
- Language Facts
- Common Easy Phrases


General Information

- ▶ 30% of Inupiaq people are fluent speakers
 - ▶ Language is endangered due to western culture and government
 - ▶ Dramatic changes in lifestyle resulting from oil development may be a major factor
 - ▶ Inupiaq language is more prevalent in certain communities
 - ▶ Efforts in language revival successful
- 

Interesting Facts of the Language

- ▶ Over 67 words for ice
 - Piqaluyak– chunk of freshwater ice
 - ▶ Over 46 words for snow
 - Auksalaq– rapidly melting snow
 - ▶ Over 70 words for ‘over there’
 - Amani– located over there (not visible)
 - Aptumani– located with that one over there (not visible)
 - Avuuna– via, by way of over there (visible)
- 

Quick and Easy Phrases

- ▶ Quyanaq – Thank you
 - ▶ Uvlaaluataq – Good Morning
 - ▶ Paglaḡivsi – Greetings
 - ▶ Suviñ/Suvat? – What's up?
 - ▶ Alappaa! – I'm cold!
 - ▶ Hauk – I'm tired
 - ▶ Qanuḡitpiñ? – How are you?
 - ▶ Nakuuruna – I am fine
 - ▶ Aasi ilviñ? – And you?
 - ▶ Uvlaakulu – See you tomorrow
- 

Available Resources for Learning Iñupiaq

- ▶ Iñupiaq wordfinder available on the App Store and the Play Store (iPhone and Android)
- ▶ Online licenses for Iñupiaq language learning program available free by request, please call 907-852-0422 for more information



TAVRA! – DONE! >>

Quyanaqpak, or thank you for having us, now we'll be on our way.