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**Communities Served**

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Alakanuk       | Nightmute       |
| Ambler         | Noatak          |
| Andreafsky     | Noorvik         |
| Anvik          | Nulato          |
| Brevig Mission | Nunapitchuk     |
| Chevak         | Old Harbor      |
| Eek            | Pilot Station   |
| Elim           | Pitkas Point    |
| Emmonak        | Quinhagak       |
| Gambell        | Russian Mission |
| Goodnews Bay   | St. Mary's      |
| Grayling       | St. Michael     |
| Holy Cross     | Savoonga        |
| Hooper Bay     | Scammon Bay     |
| Huslia         | Selawik         |
| Kaltag         | Shageluk        |
| Kasigluk       | Shaktolik       |
| Kiana          | Shishmaref      |
| Kivalina       | Shungnak        |
| Kotlik         | Stebbins        |
| Koyuk          | Teller          |
| Lower Kalskag  | Togiak          |
| Marshall       | Toksook Bay     |
| Mekoryuk       | Tununak         |
| Minto          | Upper Kalskag   |
| Mt. Village    | Wales           |
| New Stuyahok   |                 |



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## Treasures From the Past

I was in Point Hope for a couple of days last month attending the Northwest Arctic Economic Summit, along with a couple of hundred other visitors. More than half were from the North Slope and NANA communities, and the others were folks like me—who worked with and for the communities.

It was a productive and enjoyable time for all. We all shared with each other our plans, projects and aspirations, and we all came away with a better appreciation for each other's efforts and a renewed energy to do what's best for all Alaskans.

A highlight for me on this trip was an opportunity to view about an hour of video that was absolutely stunning. Anthropologist Valene Smith was visiting from Southern California. She and her husband had spent many years in the Arctic North in the 1970s and recorded many hours of 16 mm film.

In 1976, an Elders Summit was convened in Kotzebue. Some 40-plus Elders participated from throughout the North Slope and Northwest Arctic region. Valene and her husband set up their cameras and recorded the workshop. During this time, Elders recounted the lessons of their lives and what had been handed down to them by their ancestors. There were stories, songs, dancing, games of skill, instructions in the arts of qayak construction, sod house building and so on.

All of this was recorded. After a short period of some discomfort at being filmed, it was as if the cameras had disappeared and everyone was completely comfortable with just being themselves—sharing with each other the invaluable lessons they had learned—lessons passed down through hundreds of generations of indigenous people who were part of the oldest culture in the world.

Getting to see these recordings aired for the first time before an audience of the descendents of the participants was an honor that surpassed anything I have experienced. I have a renewed admiration for the extraordinary strength, talent and intelligence of Alaska's First People.

It is my hope that Valene will continue the extraordinary work she has been doing, and that the treasures she has compiled will be made available to every Alaskan so that they, too, may know the value of the extraordinary state they live in. It would be wonderful for every schoolchild in Alaska to experience this glimpse into the lives and lessons of their forefathers because this is what has made Alaskans strong and has enabled them to flourish for thousands of years!

Until next time,

**Meera Kohler**  
President and CEO