

Aleutian students learn about archeological studies, culture

Twenty Aleutian Region School District students in grades 7, 8 and 9 from Akutan, Atka, False Pass and Nelson Lagoon flew to Nikolski Sept. 28 for a week-long extended classroom experience of archaeological investigation and Aleut culture.

They were joined by the Nikolski students and four instructors from around the district. They worked in Chaluka Mound, a designated National Historic Site in the community of Nikolski. The site contains 5,000 years of artifacts from Aleut ancestors who made their living from the bountiful sea that surrounded them.

From Chaluka Mound Anangula Island can be seen six miles out in Nikolski Bay. It was the terminus of the Bering Land Bridge where the predecessors of the Aleuts first settled 9,000 years ago.

Foremost authority on Aleut history, Dr. Bill Laughlin from the University of Connecticut, led the expedition. He has conducted studies in Nikolski since 1938.

The project was funded through the Indian Education program. Students learned how to do a scientific excavation, as well as how to identify various bone and stone tools. They also met with elders in the community, examined an old Barabra which is now used for a steam bath and had a tour of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Another highlight for the students was a chance to ride horses from the sheep ranch in the community. Several of the kids had never seen a real live horse.

The students returned to their home community to share their experiences with the other students and their communities.



Raymond Meredith stands in the deepest part of the excavation at Nikolski in Chaluka Mound, a designated National Historic Site

Photo by Dr. Bill Laughlin