

Fighting for the life of the Amukon Saltery

Scammon Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta

For 30 years, John Amukon owned and operated a saltery on Black River, just over 30 miles up the coast from Scammon Bay. Each summer he hired ten people from the village, providing vital seasonal employment in an economically depressed area of rural Alaska. The company produced a salted salmon—halves of king, chum and coho—for a specialized Hawaiian market. Unfortunately, John Amukon passed away.

The death of Amukon has left this important small business in disarray. Family members, employees and business associates have tried to provide the missing leadership.

A Bush Development Fund grant was awarded to the Scammon Bay Traditional Council to hire a business planner to work

with all concerned parties and develop a new management agreement. The aim is to insure continued income for the Amukon family while developing a business and management plan for the saltery. In addition, measures will be identified to bring the saltery into compliance with state regulations for operation.

Amukon also owned a store at Black River which generated much of the revenue to pay the saltery slimers, manager and bookkeeper. Part of the project is the development of a long range operational plan to insure that this store is continued and upgraded.

Finally, a marketing plan will be developed to examine if additional markets exist for the specialized salted salmon now sold exclusively in Hawaii.