



ANCC NEWS

CULTURE — ANNOUNCEMENTS — UPDATES

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR — WHITNEY KELLIE

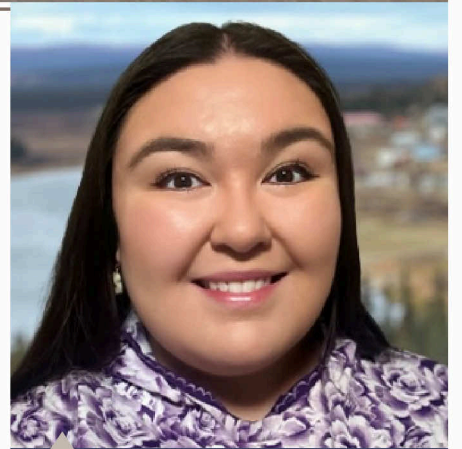
Paġlagivsi! Uvaŋa Whitney Kellie, Iñupiaqsiñiga Pituk. Ulġunigmiut, Kisagvigmiuguruŋa.

I'm happy, and honored, to serve as the new Executive Director for Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council (ANCC). I am Iñupiaq and based in Anchorage, but my family, the Tagarook and James/Angashuk families, are from Wainwright on the North Slope. I am a member of the Native Village of Wainwright.

I joined ANCC at the end of November 2023 and have spent the last several months working with our Governance Board, partners, and communities working to further ANCC's outreach, capacity building, and programmatic efforts. I'm so grateful to work to further

ANCC's mission and have appreciated the support of ANCC's Chairman and Governance Board as I've transitioned into this role.

There are so many important projects and partnerships on ANCC's horizon, including hiring for a Program & Admin Specialist and continuing our work advocating for Indigenous-led polar bear co-management. I look forward to seeing these projects and partnerships develop, and to share our milestones with you. Please keep an eye out in future newsletters for more updates and developments. If you have any questions, or any information you'd like to share with ANCC for future newsletters, please feel free to reach out.



WHITNEY KELLIE

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO ME AT:
✉ info@nannut.org

ANCC IS HIRING!

ANCC IS HIRING FOR A PROGRAM & ADMIN SPECIALIST BASED IN NOME, ALASKA!

The Program & Admin Specialist position is a part-time position (20-30 hours per week), with an hourly pay of \$28-\$33/hr., depending on experience. The position is located at ANCC's office in Nome and would provide staff support for ANCC's programmatic functions and day-to-day office management, outreach and communication, capacity building, and meeting support.



A full job description and application form is available on ANCC's website at www.nannut.org or available by scanning the QR code on the left. Please help us spread the word that the application is available. Please send completed applications to info@nannut.org. Alaska Native hiring preference.





ADDRESSING HUMAN-POLAR BEAR SAFETY IN THE CHUKCHI SEA REGION



The World Wildlife Fund US Arctic Program (WWF) has been an engaged and active partner to ANCC and its member communities for years. Together, ANCC and WWF have been working on building and improving human-polar bear safety within Chukchi Sea communities. That work has allowed WWF to secure grant funding for the communities of Shishmaref, Wales, and Diomedede to fund human-polar bear safety efforts.

Together, ANCC (Rhonda Sparks, Program Specialist), WWF (Elisabeth Kruger, Manager, Arctic Wildlife), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Polar Bear Program (David Gustine, Program Lead and Lindsey Mangipane, Wildlife Biologist) visited Shishmaref and Wales in December 2023 to host a series of meetings to identify community needs to improve human-polar bear safety and reduce unwanted human-polar bear interactions. Handouts and flyers were distributed to share information on

deterrence tools, polar bear safety, and harvest reporting guidelines.

With the guidance of ANCC Governance Board Members Tommy Obruk (Shishmaref) and Gerald Oxereok (Wales), there was amazing participation and meeting turnout. In both Wales and Shishmaref, tri-lateral meetings were held with the respective Cities, Tribes, Village Corporations, and community members. Teachers and staff from the Bering Strait School District (BSSD) attended and actively participated in both public meetings.

WWF and ANCC continued efforts to address human-polar bear safety and visited Little Diomedede in March 2024, holding a successful community meeting at the Diomedede school. Samantha Menadelook, ANCC Governance Board Member for Diomedede, was instrumental in coordinating the meeting, which saw community, Tribal council members, and BSSD teachers and staff participating.

Each community shared concerns specific to their unique layout and capacity. The following concerns were identified and consistent in all three communities:

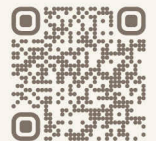
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- Poor lighting within and surrounding the community was the initial identified concern, followed by the concern in December-February surrounding the early morning commute to school for kids and BSSD staff.
- The need for some type of patrol or bear watch prior to the start of school day and at departure.
- The lack of an operational community-wide alarm alert system was identified. The two larger communities, Shishmaref and Wales, identified the current alarm system is not heard throughout the community. Diomedede indicated recent power outages have disabled their city siren.

Discussions were held surrounding community-wide alert systems, identifying best practices and establishing an initial protocol for mass notification tools, and capacity to conduct and operate patrol programs and hire bear-watch personnel with routes specific to each community. A series of deterrence tools used in the Arctic and throughout polar bear country was provided. City, Corporation, and Tribal officials all came together to identify the lead organization to operate the patrol and vote to approve the resources to be utilized during the 2023-2024 winter/spring season.

Notes from each community meeting were captured and provided to the respective Cities, Tribes, and Village Corporations, as well as ANCC Governance Board Members from each community, and Kawerak VP and ANCC Regional Manager Brandon Ahmasuk. ANCC, WWF, and USFWS utilize these notes to seek additional funding to address human-polar bear interactions in communities within the Chukchi Sea Polar Bear Population.

ANCC, WWF, and USFWS like to extend our deepest gratitude and acknowledgements to ANCC Governance Board Members Samatha Menadelook (Diomedede), Gerald Oxereok (Wales), and Tommy Obruk (Shishmaref), for their knowledge and support, the Wales City Mayor Shawna Keyes, Shishmaref City Mayor Amber Fernandez, and Diomedede City Mayor Robert Soolook for managing the grants to facilitate human polar bear safety efforts in their communities, and sincere thanks to the communities of Shishmaref, Wales, and Diomedede for their hospitality, dedication, and continued support to improve human-polar bear interactions surrounding identified safety needs.

Current efforts to improve and address human-polar bear safety needs are ongoing. Discussions to expand similar community visits and meetings within the Chukchi Sea have continued, and together, we will work to address the list of identified safety needs surrounding human-polar bear interactions. To stay up to date with our efforts, please follow the QR on the right or visit our website <https://nannut.org/resources/polar-bear-patrols/>.





BUILDING CAPACITY - ANCC AWARDED PRESCOTT GRANT

In March, ANCC worked with our partners at U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and World Wildlife Fund’s Arctic Wildlife Program (WWF) to apply for a Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant. The grant, awarded through the US Department of the Interior, was awarded to ANCC in August 2024 for our project titled “Building Capacity to Prevent and Respond to Unwanted Human-Polar Bear Interactions”.

This project builds on the work ANCC, USFWS, and WWF started in 2023, working with the communities of Diomedea, Shishmaref, and Wales to respond to and mitigate unwanted human-polar bear interactions in the communities and promote public safety. ANCC is pleased to have been awarded this grant and looks forward to continuing this important community-driven work.

ANCC ATTENDS INUVIALUIT - IÑUPIAT (I-I) JOINT COMMISSION MEETING

In August, ANCC’s Chairman Benjamin Payenna and Executive Director Whitney Kellie (Pituk) attended the Inuvialuit-Iñupiat (I-I) Joint Commission Meeting in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. ANCC works to share information with and participate in meetings of the I-I Joint Commission and serves as a Technical Advisor to the Commission.

At the August meeting, ANCC provided the Commission with an update on ANCC’s activities over the last two years, including our efforts with partners on human-polar bear interactions and deterrence and updates on ANCC’s Harvest Management Plan (HMP) and Co-Management Agreement (CMA).

ANCC’s CMA addresses co-management of both the Chukchi Sea and Southern Beaufort Sea stock of polar bears. While ANCC’s co-management of Chukchi Sea polar bears is robust, its role with Southern Beaufort Sea polar bears is meant to assist and compliment the ongoing, successful bilateral management of polar bears conducted by the I-I Joint Commission.

The Southern Beaufort Sea stock of polar bears is successfully co-managed by the North Slope Borough (NSB) Department of Wildlife Management and Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) under the I-I Agreement, a Native-to-Native voluntary agreement.

For more information about I-I and harvest information related to the Southern Beaufort Sea stock, visit: <https://www.north-slope.org/departments/wildlife-management/studies-research-projects/polar-bears/>.



TAGGING YOUR HARVESTS

Hunters must report any polar bear harvest to the US Fish & Wildlife Service Marking, Tagging, and Reporting (MTRP) program. Hunters must tag the skull and hide of a harvested polar bear within 30 days of harvest.



To report a harvest or find a tagger in your community, visit: <https://www.fws.gov/node/265230>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ UPCOMING MEETINGS

Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Annual Convention

October 17-19, 2024

Anchorage, AK

ANCC Governance Board Meeting

December 9-10, 2024

BP Energy Center in Anchorage, AK

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

ANCC is seeking donations of photos that illustrate the cultural connections between Alaska Native peoples and polar bears. Photos of polar bears, hunting, dancing, and artwork would be featured in ANCC publications. Email your photos to:

info@nannut.org.





POLAR BEARS UP CLOSE MEET KOVA

In July, ANCC was invited by its partners at the USFWS to visit Kova, an orphaned polar bear cub found on the North Slope and brought to The Alaska Zoo in 2022.

The trip was part of a project aimed at validating photo-based methods for estimating bear body weight by working with zoo bears that can easily step on a scale without being handled. Bears are photographed from a known distance and weight is estimated using the pixel count in the photograph. Data collection is still ongoing, but early results suggest that these methods may be a fairly reliable way to estimate body weight. Body weight is a valuable metric for understanding a bear's body condition and overall health.

As part of this study, The Alaska Zoo allowed USFWS and ANCC behind the scenes while Lindsey Mangipane and Susannah Woodruff, Wildlife Biologists with the USFWS Polar Bear Program, photographed Kova from a safe distance.

ANCC is grateful to have had the opportunity to learn more about the USFWS's upcoming field work and appreciate The Alaska Zoo's hospitality in allowing us to view this work, and their care for Kova, behind the scenes.



Kova at the zoo

