



# U.S. ARMY GARRISON ALASKA QUARTERLY UPDATE FOR ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES

August 2007, Issue 11

This is a quarterly update on U.S. Army Garrison Alaska activities and issues that might be of interest to federally recognized tribes in Alaska

## Meeting at Healy Lake Village with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On July 9-10, 2007, Angela Matz, Ph.D, and Mitch Osborne of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), along with Amanda Shearer, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska (USAG Alaska), traveled to Healy Lake Village to discuss an upcoming project with the tribal council. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce a new project and to listen to input from the tribe.

Chief JoAnn Polston, Healy Lake Traditional Council, was instrumental in planning the meeting logistics and ensuring that the full Tribal Council was in attendance. The Council graciously provided boat transportation to the village, a meeting facility and place to stay, and a delicious evening meal. The meeting was held in late afternoon and lasted throughout the early evening.

The project discussed is a fish and wildlife survey to be conducted on the Gerstle River Training Area (GRTA), which is funded by USAG Alaska and will be conducted by the USFWS. The project was originally developed by Gary Larsen, USAG Alaska, in response to Healy Lake's concerns regarding possible contamination of subsistence resources that travel through the GRTA. Other villages, including Dot Lake, have also voiced such concerns in past government-to-government meetings.

The goals of the project are to build a partnership with the community while conducting baseline fish and wildlife surveys and investigating fish and wildlife

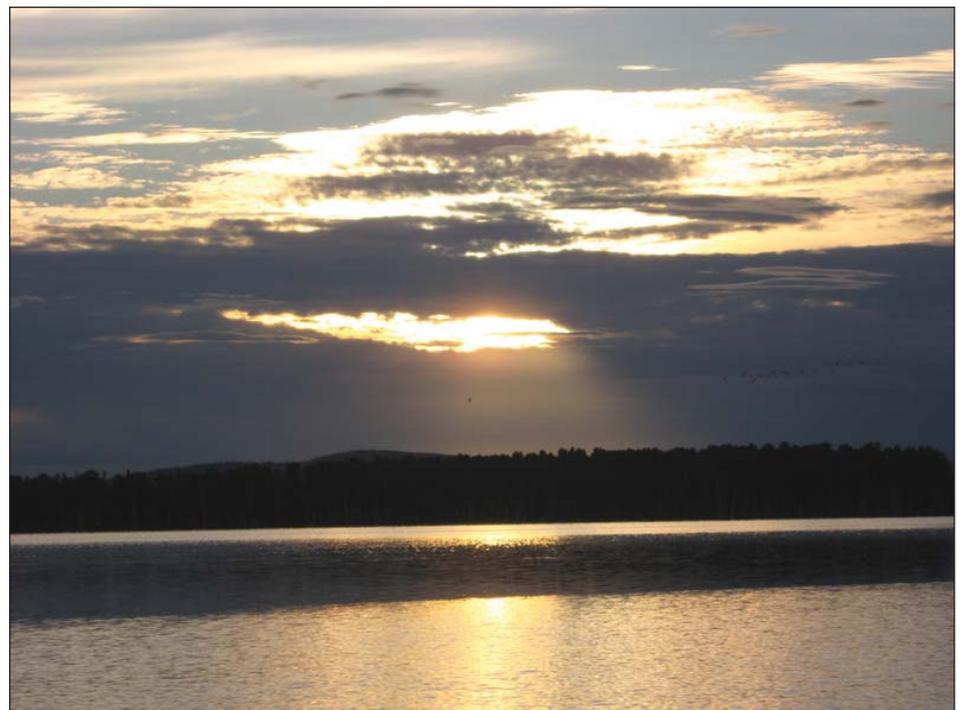
anomalies. The work will include research into Army records. The USFWS also plans to train and involve the tribe in data and sample collection. The participation of local people is important due to their expertise in local area resources and will also improve acceptance of the findings by the community.

The tone of the meeting was cordial and much information was exchanged. The Healy Lake Traditional Council stated that they would like to be involved in the project. As final products they would like a written report and other outreach materials with the methods, results, and conclusions of the surveys, data collected,

and procedures to be followed if contamination is found. They would also like a meeting with the Tribe to explain the results, and to know how to explain the findings to future generations. Their hope is that this project may provide background for the Tribe to proceed with additional projects.



Healy Lake Village



# Archaeological Field Trip for Upper Tanana Tribes

On June 26, 2007, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska (USAG Alaska) staff met with representatives of several Upper Tanana tribes in Delta Junction for a field trip to an archaeological excavation site on the Eddy Drop Zone of the Donnelly Training Area. USAG Alaska staff included Lisa Graham, Gary Larsen, Carrie McEnteer, Aaron Robertson, Amanda Shearer and Meg Thornton. Tribal representatives from Eagle, Healy Lake and Tetlin attended the trip.

The purpose of the field trip was to visit an archaeological excavation site that is being impacted by the construction of the Battle Area Complex (BAX), a training range which is planned to open for training in November 2008. USAG Alaska has agreed to excavate 5% of the archaeological site in a Memorandum of Agreement with Alaska's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Due to the important information being recovered at this site, USAG Alaska is hoping to excavate as much as 10% of the site area. During a discussion on this topic with Upper Tanana tribes in May 2006, it was requested that a minimum of three site visits be provided for tribal representatives: one before excavation, which occurred on June 22, 2006; one during excavation; and, one after excavation. The June 26, 2007, trip was the second site visit.

Aaron Robertson, the Donnelly Training Area archaeologist, conducted a tour of the site and provided information on the process of the excavation and artifacts that have been found. The archeological site (Site XMH-00874) is located on a high point 200 meters to the north of Banjo Lake. The site was identified during a 2002



Aaron Robertson points out a tool located in the wall of one of the excavation pits.

survey for the BAX project. Stone artifacts recovered from below the surface during the excavation thus far include projectile points and flakes where tools were sharpened. Bone fragments of snowshoe hares, moose and/or caribou and possibly sheep have also been found at the site. No human skeletal remains have been found.

The age of the site is not known at this time; however, stone tools found at the site are similar to those found at other sites in the area which date to 8,000 years ago. The site could be 8,000 years old or younger. Determining the age of the site is one of the goals of the excavation. The site was most likely a full fledged occupation with at least four activity areas found to date. The location would have made a good game observation area.

Materials that the stone tools are made of include obsidian and jasper, which are not found locally. The materials to make these tools were brought from over 100 miles from the site. Determining the source locations of these materials is another goal of the excavation.

Reports of all findings will be provided to the tribes. Artifacts recovered will be stored at the University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks and are available to viewing by the tribes upon request. USAG Alaska will consult with tribes to develop an educational aid for tribes and schools regarding findings at the site and the importance of the site to Interior Alaskan archaeology. The third site visit for tribes, to be accomplished after excavation, is tentatively scheduled for summer 2008.



Aaron Robertson (right) discusses work done on the archaeological excavation.

## 6th Quarterly Meeting with Upper Tanana Inter-Tribal Coalition

The 6th quarterly meeting between Upper Tanana tribes and the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska (USAG Alaska), was held in Dot Lake Village on July 23, 2007. The group shared lunch together and then held the meeting. Topics discussed at the meeting included:

- USAG Alaska's final Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) was signed by Colonel David Shutt in December 2006.
- Major General Stephen Layfield recently assumed command of the U.S. Army Alaska.
- Water sampling is being conducted on the Gerstle River Training Area (GRTA). The project is based on prior comments and concerns from Upper Tanana tribes.
- Fish and wildlife studies will also be conducted on GRTA due to past comments from Upper Tanana tribes regarding wildlife anomalies in the area. The project is funded by USAG Alaska and conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. One of the primary goals of the project is to work together with tribal councils, specifically at Healy Lake and Dot Lake.
- Draft plans for Sears Creek and Tok Terminal were discussed.
- USAG Alaska has funded a traditional cultural properties study of the Donnelly Dome Area in response to comments that it is a culturally significant area. The study includes oral history interviews with elders.
- An update of the archaeological excavation occurring on the Donnelly Training Area (Site XMH-00874) was provided. Tribal representatives were asked for assistance with an educational outreach plan based on the excavation, which is a product that will be created for use by tribal councils and communities. The toolkit will allow anyone to teach lesson plans to youth regarding the process of archaeology and technological changes through time.
- Overview of two upcoming Environmental Impact Statements (EISs):
  - » Aviation Task Force EIS: This project is to increase aviation (helicopters) at Fort Wainwright, Eielson, or Fort Richardson. There are no planned changes to the current military operations areas or flight corridors.
  - » Stationing of the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT): This is a Department of the Army action. The draft EIS was released on Friday, July 20, 2007, and analyzes the possibilities of stationing the 5th SBCT in Hawaii, Colorado, and Alaska. Public meetings will be held in Anchorage and Delta Junction in October. The comment period will run through October 30, 2007.
- The floor was opened for tribal representatives to discuss projects that are going on in the villages.



Meeting attendees review notes from the last quarterly meeting as they eat lunch.



Colonel David Shutt presents a plaque to Vice President Ray Dennis of Dot Lake (above) and Chief JoAnn Polston of Healy Lake (left) for co-hosting the meeting.

## Command Change for U.S. Army Alaska

Major General Stephen R. Layfield recently took command of the U.S. Army Alaska, replacing Major General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., who was promoted to lieutenant general and assigned to be commanding general, I Corps and Fort Lewis, Washington.

Major General Layfield was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1978. His military education includes the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College. He holds a master's degree in Administration from Central Michigan University.

His command experience includes Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and Commander of B Company, 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), at Fort Polk, Louisiana; Commander, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division, later redesignated 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, United States Army Europe and Seventh Army, Germany and OPERATION ABLE SENTRY, Macedonia

and OPERATION JOINT GUARD/ ENDEAVOR, Bosnia; and, Commander, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

His last assignment was as Deputy Commander, Security, International Security Assistance Force, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, Afghanistan.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with Two Oak Leaf Clusters), Meritorious Service Medal (with Two Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal (with Two Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Achievement Medal (with Two Oak Leaf Clusters), Expert Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge.

Major General Layfield was born in Maryland and is married.



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