



**Alaska
Conservation
Foundation**

PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska Native Fund Launched to Support Rural Protection

Alaska Conservation Foundation launches new program to advance Alaska Native priorities for protecting lands, waters and way of life

A new fund aimed at supporting Alaska Native organizations has been formed by the Alaska Conservation Foundation (ACF). The fund, designed by an Alaska Native Steering Committee, will provide a new vehicle for Alaska Tribes and other Alaska Native non-profits to protect the land, waters and wildlife integral to their way of life.

“The Alaska Native Fund is the result of conversations with Alaska Native leaders who told us of the relentless environmental pressures they face in their communities,” said Polly Carr, program officer for Alaska Conservation Foundation. “Our rural villages and Alaska Native nonprofits have solutions for these issues, and it’s an honor to help these organizations uphold and protect their local economies and ways of life.”

While Alaska Native non-profit organizations are eligible for other grant making programs at ACF, the Alaska Native Fund is the only one guided by an Alaska Native Steering Committee. The committee, with representatives across Alaska, has developed the grant guidelines and will make funding recommendations each year.

“I believe this project will help Alaska Native organizations and leaders address real-life concerns and issues,” said Vera Metcalf, Steering Committee member and Executive Director of the Eskimo Walrus Commission in Nome. “There is very limited Indigenous funding available for this kind of work. The Fund acknowledges the political realities and stresses that affect Alaska Natives, as well as the strength and innovation that stems from our relationship with our surroundings.”

The Fund will support the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge to promote food security and sustainable economies, connect the importance of environmental health, and address the impacts of climate change. In addition to grantmaking, the Fund will support a 2012 *Gathering* of Alaska Native non-profit organizations and foundations, to build understanding and leverage additional support for Alaska Native projects.

“This fund will provide Tribes and other nonprofit Alaska Native organizations support to make their conservation plans a reality,” said Orville Huntington, Steering Committee member from Huslia, and Tanana Chiefs Conference Wildlife and Parks Director.

“Our organization understands that a prosperous, healthy Alaska relies upon our diverse cultures and the ways of life that sustain us all,” said ACF Board Chair Nancy Lord. “We expect the Alaska Native Fund to have a significant impact on conservation and the lives of rural Alaskans.”

MORE INFORMATION ON THE ALASKA NATIVE FUND:

- Alaska Native Fund Steering Committee members include: Orville Huntington (Huslia), Vera Metcalf (Nome), Cherilyn Holter (Hydaburg), Kim Williams (Dillingham), and Jonella Larson (St. Lawrence Island and Anchorage)
- \$100,000 to be granted in the inaugural round
- Alaska Native individuals and nonprofit organizations may apply for funding
- Letters of Inquiry will be due July 25, 2011. Full proposals will be invited September 1, 2011, and grant decisions made by December 2011
- Grant range will be \$10,000-\$20,000 for Organizations, up to \$10,000 for Individuals
- Complete information and details found at <http://alaskaconservation.org/grant-opportunities/alaska-native-fund/>

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