



# About Beringia Days

Beringia Days is a public forum sponsored by the U.S. National Park Service's Shared Beringian Heritage Program and intended to highlight the activities and projects in the Beringia region of the United States and Russia. The conference brings together the Native peoples of Alaska and Chukotka, as well as Russian and American scholars, researchers, environmentalists and representatives of government and non-governmental organizations. The conference attracts a wide variety of people working in or interested in the Beringia region and provides a venue to explore opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.

## History of the Shared Beringian Heritage Program

In the first part of the 20th century, the significance of the Bering Land Bridge in the Bering Strait region and the concept of Beringia were widely recognized by the world's scientific community. Despite interest in sharing scientific research and connecting cultures divided by the strait, chilly relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R. in the 1970s–1980s prevented cooperation in the region.

Then, in 1984–1985 Walter Orr Roberts, statesman and American pioneer in the area of atmospheric and environmental sciences, proposed establishment of a U.S.–U.S.S.R. “research park” in the Bering Strait region as a means to improve relations between the two nations. In 1986, a working group formed to address the conservation and management of the region's natural and cultural heritage. In 1989, an American and Soviet planning team presented the concept for an international park during a tour of Native villages in Northwest Alaska and the Chukotka Peninsula in Russia. The National Park Service designed and submitted a proposal for a unique research program called the Shared Beringian Heritage Program in 1990. The proposal was funded in 1991 and began a four-year initiative to bring Russian and American scientists, resource managers and Native people together in a long-term, integrated study of traditional lifeways, biogeography and landscape history on the Seward and Chukotka Peninsulas.

Since the mid-1990s, those involved have made consistent efforts to seek greater local and regional participation in the program's research, cultural and educational activities. The program put special emphasis on staying in contact

with the Native constituents through village meetings, the Beringian Notes newsletter and the program's Internet website that launched in 1999.

The Shared Beringian Heritage Program began issuing a call for proposals, seeking scientific research projects or local, community-based educational, cultural, or conservation projects that fulfill some or all of the goals of the program. Proposals must emphasize the importance of meaningful Native and Russian components, significant interest and relevancy to the inhabitants of the Beringia region both in the United States and in the Russia.

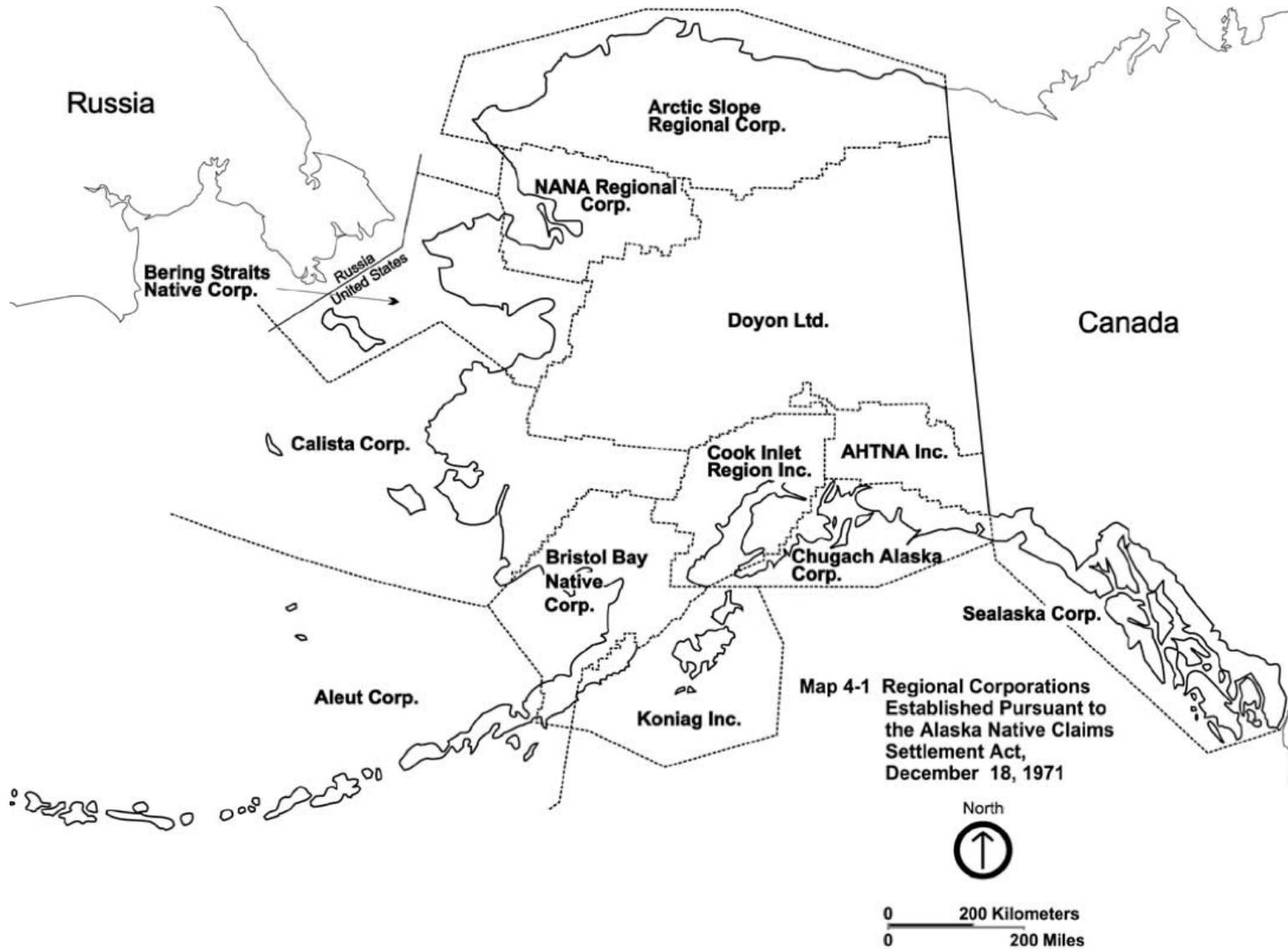
To ensure that the results of the new approach would be visible and would be reported to the public and to generate more community interest in Beringia research and issues, the National Park Service instituted the Beringia Days International Conference in 1997. Beringia Days has become a true bridge-building forum, free and open to the public.

The development of closer relations between the National Park Service and Chukotka Autonomous Region Administration resulted in the 2002 agreement with the Chukotka Governor Roman Abramovich to hold the Beringia Days Conference in Anadyr'. In 2003 the Chukotka Administration hosted the Beringia Days for the first time in Anadyr' in conjunction with the Native Folk Festival Ergav. Since then the location of the conference has been alternating between Alaska and Chukotka.

## Maps of the Beringia Region

The maps provided show three different views, each highlighting a different aspect of the Beringia region. The first map is an illustration of the lands covered by the different Native corporations designated by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The second map shows the four parks included in the National Park Service's Western Arctic National Parklands. The territory covered by these parks is vast and diverse and is an important part of the Beringia region. The third map is an overview of the lands that are included in the central Beringia region. This map shows that Beringia truly is an international region – spanning borders, crossing continents and uniting people on both sides of the Bering Strait.

# Alaska Native Regional Corporations



## Western Arctic National Parklands



## Central Beringia Region

