



National Park Service Hosts Inaugural Youth Forum in Nome

The Shared Beringian Heritage Program Brings Rural and Urban Youth Together to Map out the Future of Beringia Projects

Nome, Alaska, September 9 & 10, 2011:

The National Park Service and the Shared Beringian Heritage Program hosted a Youth Forum during the Beringia Days 2011 international conference in Nome, Alaska. 8 young leaders, nominated by their village IRA's and sponsored by the Beringia Program, came from the communities of Gambell, Savoonga, Wales, Shishmaref, Unalakleet, Koyuk, Kiana and Kivalina to attend the inaugural Youth Forum in Nome. The forum was also attended by 20 students from NACTEC in Nome, 2 students from West High School in Anchorage, and several young leaders from Kotzebue. Youth from Chukotka, Russia, from the village of New Chaplino and members of the native dance group "Solnyshko," participated in the meeting with the help of a translator. The group came together to create and



develop potential projects that met the goals and objectives of the Beringia Program. The Shared Beringian Heritage Program and the National Park Service are committed to involving youth in the planning and implementation of programs and projects. The inclusion of young people is a goal that the National Park Service has made a nation-wide priority, and Alaska parks are dedicated to advancing this initiative through youth participation and outreach. To recognize the importance of the inaugural Youth Forum in targeting young Alaskans, National Park Service Deputy Director Peggy O'Dell and Alaska Regional Director Sue Masica gave opening remarks and spoke to the group about the significance of their participation. During the brainstorming sessions that followed, the youth were divided into four groups focusing specific subject areas. These included: Archeology, Cultural Preservation, Climate Change, and Subsistence. Youth collaborated with expert "mentors" and came up with ideas for future Beringia projects involving and directed by young people. The recommendations included several ideas for new Beringia projects that could be funded by the Shared Beringian Heritage Program or other sponsors of such programs. The Cultural Preservation group proposed maintaining and sustaining the Siberian Yupik language via a shared curriculum based on native dances, sports, handicrafts, and art common to indigenous people in Alaska and Chukotka; the Climate Change group suggested that students document changes to subsistence hunting calendars in Beringian villages as a result of climate change and post these results to a special website; the Archeology group wanted to conduct archeology workshops for students, scientists, and residents of Beringian communities to simultaneously learn from each other and improve relationships between these groups; and the Subsistence group recommended the development and distribution of an educational booklet and DVD on subsistence activities for school curriculums in rural areas, state-wide, and even nationally through social media and real-time learning. The

recommendations were then presented by the youth to the main conference audience during a special closing session. The National Park Service and the Shared Beringian Heritage Program are working to further develop these project ideas and to create partnerships with other organizations to fund and support these youth projects. The Youth Forum attendees have committed to working on these project ideas and making their proposals a reality.

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