

My Journey in Aialik Bay

The morning of July 23 my mom and I arrived in Aialik Bay, on the outer coast of the Kenai Peninsula for the Kenai Fjords Oral History and Archaeology Project. Once we were unpacked and situated we went straight to work.

My mom and I started out writing the notes for the people that were digging. After a couple of days we were ready to start digging. In the first hour that I dug I found some amazing things such as two beads which were brown and white, porpoise vertebra, Mica, which is a hard transparent mineral used for windows, and whole cockleshells. It was so amazing to find things that my ancestors once used and were left behind.



When people weren't digging or writing notes they would go and screen the dirt we dug up just to make sure we didn't miss anything. Screening wasn't always fun because there wasn't a guarantee that you would always find something.

For the meals we had two people at a time to cook either, breakfast (9a.m.), lunch (1 p.m.), or dinner (6 p.m.) for the crew. The eleven days that I was there I cooked eight times. When we had bad weather everybody ate in the weather port and when it was a beautiful day we would eat while enjoying the beautiful Alaska weather.

The fourth day that I was there Rita Eagle, Mark Luttrell and I went to collect ice from the glacier and water from a waterfall close to Verdant Cove. It was really cool because we had to go by really slow then pick up ice chunks that were floating in the water. Then when we got back to camp we had to pack the ice and water jugs up the beach and filter the water with a hand pump. That night Forest Kvasnikoff pumped 5 gallons of water which took him around an hour because he had the hard pump.

On July 29th we had 4 new people, Gale Parsons, Dan Anahonak, Stacy Hetrick, and Cora Moonin, arrive to help with the dig. The first day they started digging Stacy and Cora found some really amazing things. One was a perfectly formed arrow point flaked from dark grey slate, and the others were blue, yellow, and green beads.

A couple of days after Dan, Gale, Stacy, and Cora arrived there was a mom and a baby Humpback whale in the Cove so we went in groups to go whale watching. It was really cool to see them up close and personal. We sat on the Zodiac and the whales came

so close you could see the barnacles on their skin. When Tim had taken the last group out, I was there, he had paddled right up to a rock cliff because that's where they usually surfaced. It seemed that they could have come up right underneath us and flipped us over, but the current was strong and the Zodiac drifted enough so we were a safe distance away.

The archaeological dig wasn't all work; we had lots of fun as well. On Saturday's we worked only a half a day and on Sunday we had the full day off. On those days people would kayak, fish, swim, walk, site see, play games, or just sit around and talk. Those were the days!

The crew was amazing. We all got along like we had been friends for a long time. I will never forget a single day that I was there and if I get another chance to go out there then I will defiantly take that opportunity.

When I was there I learned a lot. I didn't just learn a lot about what archeologists do, but a lot about life. The time that I spent in Aialik Bay I felt like I was back in time with my ancestors. We had stoves and things like that but if we wanted something for cooking or a household supplies we couldn't just get in our cars and go to the store and get it, you had to travel to Seward. And when you wanted to go some where you had to walk, even though there wasn't really anywhere to go. If I ever had to choose where or the way I lived I would defiantly choose the way I lived for 11 days in Aialik Bay.

by student intern Katrina Dupree

