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Employment

Seeking Qualified Applicants



NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION

In Nome:

Accounting: Accountant I/II/III \$36.65 + DOE;
Accounts Payable Technician I \$27.41 + DOE
Acute Care: Acute Care Technician \$34.25 + DOE
Administration: Administrative Specialist III – Ancillary \$30.02 + DOE
Audiology: Administrative Specialist I Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Behavioral Health: Administrative Specialist I Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Recovery Coach \$27.41 + DOE
Dental: Dental Assistant Trainee \$26.41 + DOE; Administrative Specialist I \$26.41 + DOE
Electronic Health Records: EHR Support Specialist \$34.25 + DOE; Population Health CMA \$34.25 + DOE
Emergency Department: Emergency Department Technician \$34.25 + DOE
Environmental Services: Environmental Service Worker I & Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Laundry Worker \$25.00 + DOE
Information Systems: Telehealth Coordinator \$39.20 +DOE
In-Home Support Program: Direct Care Attendant I \$25.00 + DOE
Laboratory: Medical Laboratory Technician \$41.90 + DOE; Informatics Specialist \$34.25 + DOE; Phlebotomist – Uncertified \$27.41 + DOE; Administrative Specialist II \$27.41 + DOE; Laboratory Driver \$27.41 + DOE
Materials Management: Patient Driver I Relief \$30.02 + DOE
Nutrition Services: Nutrition Services Dietetic Coordinator \$34.25 + DOE; Food Service Worker & Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Cook I/II/III \$30.02 + DOE
Office of Environmental Health: Environmental Coordinator \$41.90 + DOE; Environmental Health Specialist \$41.90 + DOE
Patient Financial Services: Health Information Technician \$26.41 + DOE; Patient Accounts Representative \$30.02 + DOE; Revenue Cycle Analyst \$41.90 + DOE
Patient Hostel: Patient Hostel Attendant & Relief \$25.00 + DOE
Plant Operations: Maintenance Technician & Relief \$31.73 + DOE; Fleet Maintenance Technician & Relief \$36.65 + DOE; Journeyman Plumber \$41.90 + DOE
Primary Care: Certified Medical Assistant \$34.25 + DOE; Case Manager Assistant \$26.41 + DOE; Assistant Care Coordinator – Unalakleet \$34.25 + DOE
Quayanna Care: Certified Nursing Assistant \$34.25 + DOE
Sanitation: Remote Maintenance Worker I Relief \$6.65 + DOE
Security: Security Officer Trainee & Relief \$25.00 + DOE
Social Services: Elder Advocate \$30.02 + DOE
Village Health Services (Nome Based): EHR Support Specialist \$31.73 + DOE
Village Facilities Management: Travel Fleet Maintenance Technician \$36.65 + DOE; Travel Maintenance Technician \$36.65 + DOE
WIC: WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Relief \$20.00

In Our Village Communities:

Brevig Mission: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Diomedes: Environmental Services Worker & Relief \$26.41 + DOE; EVS Maintenance Worker I \$31.73 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist \$26.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE
Elim: Direct Care Attendant Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.51 + DOE
Gambell: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Maintenance Worker Relief \$34.25 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Golovin: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Maintenance Worker Relief \$34.25 + DOE
Koyuk: Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Maintenance Worker Relief \$34.25 + DOE
St Michael: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Savoonga: Maintenance Worker Relief \$34.25 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE
Shaktoolik: Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Shishmaref: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Maintenance Worker Relief \$34.25 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Stebbins: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Direct Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Teller: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE
Unalakleet: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist \$26.41 + DOE
Wales: Village Based Counselor Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Maintenance Worker \$31.73 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant & Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.51 + DOE
White Mountain: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE

For more information or an up-to-date vacancy list, go to www.NortonSoundHealth.org or contact Human Resources at (907) 443-4573
NSHC is a drug-free workplace and will apply Alaska Native/American Indian preference for hire (under PL 93-638 and Veteran Preferences). NSHC will also initiate a criminal history/background check for all positions.

Classifieds

WANTED – Mark Knapp at The Cutting Edge in Fairbanks is buying legal ancient walrus ivory, musk ox horn, mammoth ivory and teeth.
Very good prices. 907-452-7477. Knapp's Cutting Edge 1971 Fox Ave Fairbanks AK 99701. knappscuttingedge@gmail.com

Local young man with a backhoe looking to work!
*Ask about Sanding Services for icy drive-ways
*Need a project done? Lets talk.
907-434-0845

•Employment

JOB OPENINGS

NMS is actively hiring for several positions at NPS to support its Facilities & Custodial Departments. Each position makes a significant difference and plays a vital role to maintain NPS facilities. Seeking full time Building Maintenance Technicians and Custodians! Competitive starting pay and health benefits available. Each position requires some knowledge and experience. Hiring immediately.

Come work with us! Apply today: careers.nmsusa.com/jobs to get started.

Have any questions? Contact Aaron, NANA Recruiter: (907) 265-4173.



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Newly Listed!

Maintenance/Laborer Assistant (On Call) Complete general labor tasks, snow removal and light repairs and improvements at Kawerak offices as assigned by the Maintenance Director.

Still Available

HR Director

Foster Care Recruiter

Senior VP of Infrastructure

Tribal Coordinator (Wales, Elim)

Yup'ik, St Lawrence Island Yupik, or Inupiaq Language Mentor (3 separate positions in any Head Start location)

Maintenance/Laborer Assistant (On Call, Teller)

Child Care Provider

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Teacher, Nome

Client Advocate

Tribal Family Coordinator (Wales)

Substitute (Any Head Start Location)

Program Specialist, Head Start (Nome)

Village Public Safety Officer (Diomedes, Elim, Gambell, Koyuk, Shaktoolik, St.Michael, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales)

Potential \$2500 sign on bonus!

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ADVANCING THE CAPACITY OF OUR PEOPLE AND TRIBES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE REGION

Seawall

Nome Police Department
Weekly press releases
Activities reported between
1/13/2025 – 1/19/2025

During this period there were 156 calls for service received at the Nome Police Communications Center; 41 (26%) of these calls involved alcohol.
The Nome Police Department dispatched 24 ambulance calls to NSHC. The Nome Volunteer Fire Department responded to 1 call during this period.
NPD responded to 4 calls reporting intoxicated persons needing assistance. One person remained at the hospital for medical evaluation/treatment.

Arrests
A total of 5 arrests were made
with 5 (100 %) alcohol related

Monday, January 13, 2024
Charge: Disorderly Conduct. Name: Aida Cheemuk. Location: W. D St.

Wednesday, January 15, 2024
Charge: Three counts Probation Violation. Name: Jennene Nashoanak. Location: E. N St.
Charges: Three counts assault in the fourth degree; two counts Assault in the presence of a child; three counts Criminal Mischief in the fifth degree; Disorderly Conduct and two counts Violating Conditions of Release. Name: Evelyn Iya. Location: W. Kings Pl.
Charges: Three counts Assault in the fourth degree; Disorderly Conduct; Probation Violation. Name: Paul Tomalonis. Location: Nathan Barron Alley.

Thursday, January 16, 2025
Charge: Criminal trespass in the second degree. Name: Jason Canady. Location: Front St.

Traffic
No stops were made during this reporting period. NPD responded to 1 report of a Motor Vehicle accident during this reporting period.

This is a record of activity. The issuance of citations or the act of arrest does not assign guilt to any identified party. Officers refer all cases to the DA for action.



RECRUITMENT BULLETIN

Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority is recruiting for the following positions:

- Executive Assistant
- Housing Occupancy Specialist
- Receptionist

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY:
Application and full job description can be downloaded from the website www.bsrha.org, picked up at the BSRHA Office: 1008 East Front Street, Nome, Alaska, or by emailing HR@bsrha.org. Applications may be turned in, mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to BSRHA.

Trooper Beat

Nome
Trespass: On 01/07/2025 at approximately 12:22 p.m., Alaska State Troopers received a report of a trespass at a local residence 6 miles outside the city limits of Nome. The trespass is reported to have occurred prior to 12/26/2024. The investigation is ongoing.

Nome
Suspicious Circumstances: On 01/08/2025 at approximately 12:08 p.m., AST received a report of an assault outside of Nome city limits. The investigation continues.

Koyuk
Burglary: On 01/09/2025 at approximately 1:09 p.m., AST received a report of a burglary in the village of Koyuk. Investigation resulted in the arrest of Steven Hoogendorn, 33, of Koyuk for Burglary 1 and Assault 4 - DV.

Norton Sound Region
Sex Offense: On 01/09/2025 at approximately 3:15 p.m., AST received a report of a possible sex offense in the Norton Sound Region. The investigation continues.

Brevig Mission
Assault - DV: On 01/11/2025 at approximately 12:58 p.m., AST received a report of an assault in the village of Brevig Mission. The investigation is ongoing.

Nome
Violate Conditions: On 01/15/2025 at approximately 11:27 a.m., AST received a report of a person violating their conditions of release in Nome. The investigation continues.

Shishmaref
Disturbance: On 01/15/2025 at approximately 11:27 a.m., AST received a report of a person violating their conditions of release in Nome. The investigation continues.

Norton Sound Region
Sexual Assault: On 01/16/2025 at approximately 1:54 p.m., AST received a report of an assault in the Norton Sound Region. The investigation continues.

Any charges reported in these press releases are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Legal

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT
AT NOME

IN THE MATTER OF THE

KATHERINE GLORIA SCOTT REVOCABLE TRUST dated January 6, 2005, as amended.

Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND OTHER
INTERESTED PARTIES

Notice is hereby given that Katherine G. Scott, Trustor of the Katherine Gloria Scott Revocable Trust dated January 6, 2005, as amended, (the "Trust"), died on August 12, 2024. Deborah P. Scott and McKenzie G. Hickerson are the Co-Trustees of the Trust.

Pursuant to AS 13.36.368(b)(3) and AS 13.16.450, all interested persons having an interest in the probate Estate or those having claims against Katherine G. Scott or the Trust or any other assets of the decedent are required to present their claims to the Co-Trustees, c/o Peter B. Brautigam, Manley Brautigam Bankston P.C., 1127 W. 7th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501 within four (4) months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will be forever barred.

Alaska Statute 13.06.050(26) states that:

(26) "interested person" includes heirs, devisees, children, spouses, creditors, beneficiaries, and other persons having property rights in or claims against a trust estate or the estate of a decedent, ward, or protected person; . . .

MANLEY BRAUTIGAM BANKSTON P.C.
Counsel for Deborah Scott and McKenzie Hickerson, Co-Trustees of the Katherine Scott Revocable Trust

By:
Peter B. Brautigam
Alaska Bar No. 8411100
peterb@mbb.law

1.9-16-23.2025

the Deed of Trust has been assigned to ALASKA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION and the record owner of the property is purported to be THE HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF RACHAEL L ANASHUGAK, SURVIVOR OF ROY A ANASHUGAK. Said Deed of Trust covers real property situated in said Recording District, described as follows: Lot 4, Block 12, BROWERVILLE ADDITION NO. 3, according to the plat filed August 8, 1983 as Plat No. 83-6; Records of the Barrow Recording District, Second Judicial District, State of Alaska. EXCEPTING THEREFROM THE SUBSURFACE ESTATE and all rights, privileges, immunities and appurtenances of what so ever nature accruing unto said estate pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 12-18-71 (85 Stat 688, 704; 43 U.S.C. 1601, 1613 (f) (1976) as reserved by the United States of America) Commonly referred to as: NHN BOXER STREET, BARROW, AK 99723 APN: R-001-371-07 A breach of the obligation which said Deed of Trust secures has occurred in that Installment of Principal and Interest plus impounds and/or advances which became due on 6/1/2024 plus late charges, and all subsequent installments of principal, interest, balloon payments, plus impounds and/or advances and late charges that become payable. By reason thereof, and under the terms of the Note and Deed of Trust, the Beneficiary has declared all sums so secured to be immediately due and payable, together with any trustee fees, attorney fees, costs and advances made to protect the security associated with this foreclosure. The sum owing on the obligation good through 12/5/2024 is \$40,612.81 as follows:

Unpaid Principal Balance: \$37,471.24
Interest: \$1,587.08
Late Charges: \$202.85
Beneficiary Advances: \$1,351.64
TOTAL REQUIRED TO PAYOFF: \$40,612.81

If the default has arisen by failure to make payments required by the trust deed, the default may be cured and the sale may be terminated if: 1. Payment of the sum in default, other than the principal that would not be due if default had not occurred, and attorney and other foreclosure fees and costs actually incurred by the beneficiary and trustee due to the default is made at any time before the sale date stated in this notice or to which the sale is postponed; and 2. If Notice of Default has been recorded two or more times previously under the same trust deed and the default has been cured the trustee does not elect to refuse payment and continue the sale. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to demand of the Beneficiary, the Trustee hereby elects to sell the above described real property to satisfy the obligation, together with all accrued interest and all costs and expenses, at public auction, for cash, to the highest and best bidder, at the 2nd Judicial District: Inside the main lobby of the Nome Courthouse located at 306 W 5th Avenue, Nome, AK 99762, on 3/18/2025, at 10:00 AM. Beneficiary will have the right to make an offset bid at sale without cash. Anyone having an objection to the sale on any grounds whatsoever will be afforded an opportunity to be heard as to those objections

if they bring a lawsuit to restrain the same. DATED: 12/5/2024 CLEAR RECON CORP 3333 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 225 San Diego, California 92108 Phone: 866-931-0036 By Alison Arrendale, Authorized Signatory for Trustee

1.2-9-16-23.2025

NOTICE OF SALE TO THE HEIRS OF RACHAEL L ANASHUGAK AND ROY A ANASHUGAK; The name of the persons who are known by the beneficiary or trustee to be the Heirs and devisees of the deceased person are as follows: MYRNA SARREN, BENJAMIN ANASHUGAK, VERONICA TOOYAK, and JOLENE ANASHUGAK Trustee, CLEAR RECON CORP, will sell realty for cash to the highest bidder at 2nd Judicial District: Inside the main lobby of the Nome Courthouse located at 306 W 5th Avenue, Nome, AK 99762, on 3/18/2025 at 10:00 AM with other sales that may be conducted. Proceeds will apply to the Deed of Trust naming ROY A ANASHUGAK AND RACHAEL L ANASHUGAK, HUSBAND AND WIFE, Trustor, recorded on 12/23/1998, as Instrument No. 002433, under BARROW 2nd District, Alaska, de-

scribing: Lot 4, Block 12, BROWERVILLE ADDITION NO. 3, according to the plat filed August 8, 1983 as Plat No. 83-6; Records of the Barrow Recording District, Second Judicial District, State of Alaska. EXCEPTING THEREFROM THE SUBSURFACE ESTATE and all rights, privileges, immunities and appurtenances of what so ever nature accruing unto said es-

tate pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 12-18-71 (85 Stat 688, 704; 43 U.S.C. 1601, 1613 (f) (1976) as reserved by the United States of America) A/K/A NHN BOXER STREET, BARROW, AK 99723. \$40,612.81 is due, plus interest, advances, etc. Clear Recon Corp (858) 750-7600 TS# 128837-AK

1.2-9-16-23.2025

Krier Inc, DBA Polar Bar and Restaurant located at 205 Front St. Nome Alaska is applying for a transfer of a liquor license AS 04.09 to Darwin properties LLC DBA Polar Bar/Restaurant. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and the Alcohol Beverage Control Board at 550 W. 7th Ave. Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

1.23-30, 2.6.2025



Request for Proposals:

For project #111

Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority (BSRHA) solicits proposals to design, procure, manufacture, deliver, set, and finish two triplex apartment buildings in Nome, Alaska, to turnkey completion. The buildings can be modular construction or structurally insulated panel construction. Full details of the project can be seen in the plans room or by emailing enoet@bsrha.org or jevan@bsrha.org.

Request for Proposals:

For Project #050

Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority (BSRHA) solicits proposals to design, procure, manufacture, deliver, set, and finish a modular triplex apartment building in Nome, Alaska, to turnkey completion. Full details of the project can be seen in the plans room or by emailing enoet@bsrha.org or jevan@bsrha.org.

Court

Week ending 1/17/2025
Civil

Mary Ferguson v. David Ferguson; Spouses without Minor Children (and not pregnant) AGREE on all Issues to End Marriage

Wanda Iya v. Evelyn Iya; Domestic Violence: Short-Term

State of Alaska Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement Division Ex Rel, K, N J v. Jason W. Omedelina; Alaska PFD or Native Dividend - Request Order

State of Alaska Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement Division Ex Rel, A M O, A R O v. Jason W. Omedelina; Alaska PFD or Native Dividend - Request Order

Alice Amaktoolik v. Joshua Jemewouk; Domestic Violence: Short-Term ***This is a record of court filing activity. The civil filings of protective order petitions do not reflect that the court issued an order or made a judgment.***

Small Claims

No current claims on CourtView Website (start: 2NO-25-00001SC)

Criminal

State of Alaska v. Brandon Mike (12/4/91); 2UT-20-91CR Order to

Modify or Revoke Probation; ATN: 118148274; Violated conditions of probation; Probation modified as follows: Reject probation and all time imposed.

State of Alaska v. Brandon Mike (12/4/91); 2UT-21-106CR Order to Modify or Revoke Probation; ATN: 116100162; Violated conditions of probation; Probation modified as follows: Reject probation and all time imposed.

State of Alaska v. Billy Josh Jackson (7/17/96); 2NO-20-97CR Order to Modify or Revoke Probation; ATN: 116601579; Violated conditions of probation; Probation modified as follows: admit, return to probation; No further sanctions; All other terms and conditions of probation in the original order remain in effect.

State of Alaska v. Billy Jackson (7/17/96); 2NO-24-24CR CTN 001, 002: Assault 4 - Recklessly Injure; Offense Dates: 1/21/24; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; CTN 001: 270 days, 0 days suspended; Unsuspended 270 days shall be served immediately; Consecutive; CTN 002: 270 days, 0 days suspended; Unsuspended 270 days shall be served immediately; Consecutive; Surcharges due; Probation until (date not indicated); Comply with all direct court orders listed above by the deadlines stated; Obey all state, federal,

and local laws and ordinances; Other: follow probation conditions from 2NO-20-97CR.

State of Alaska v. Lionel Lamont Douglas (11/6/81); CTN 001: Assault 4; DV; Date of Violation: 2/11/24; Found and adjudged: Assault 4- Fear; DV; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; 60 days, 60 days suspended; Surcharge due; Probation until 1/13/26; Comply with all direct court orders listed above by the deadlines stated; Obey all state, federal, and local laws; Do not consume or possess alcohol; Do not enter a place where alcohol is the primary item for sale; Subject to warrantless arrest/must submit to a portable breath test when requested by law enforcement upon probable cause of an alcohol violation; Any driver's license or state ID is subject to cancellation under cited Alaska Statutes (AS); Any new license or state ID must list the cited AS alcohol buying restriction until the restriction expires.

State of Alaska v. Robert Russell (11/6/82); 2NO-21-400CR Judgment and Order of Commitment/Probation; CTN 001: Felony DUI - 2+ Priors; C Felony; Offense Date: 8/11/21; The following charges were dismissed: CTN 002, 003, 004, 005: Reckless Endangerment; Dismissal Reasons: 43a; Sentencing court date 9/24/24

with counsel, Rex L. Butler and the DA present; Count 001: 18 months, 14 months suspended; Unsuspended 4 months shall be served with a remand date of 1/6/25; Unsuspended term: 4 months; Credited for time already served in this case; Must report immediately by 4:30 p.m. on 1/6/25 to AMCC to remand/serve sentence; Fined: \$10,000.00 with \$0 suspended; Unsuspended \$10,000.00 shall be paid by immediately; Surcharges due; License Revocation, defendant's driver's license is permanently revoked and shall be immediately surrendered to the court; Submit DNA; Probation for 2 years under the following conditions: General Conditions and Special Conditions of Probation - DUI, set, as stated in the judgment; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated.

State of Alaska v. Tammy Katchatag (9/21/86); Judgment; Import Alcohol -Dry Area - Small Amp; Date of Violation: 10/13/22; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; 3 days, 0 days suspended; Unsuspended 3 days shall be served via Electronic Monitoring or REMAND into custody by 3/13/25; Fine \$1,500 with \$0 suspended; Unsuspended \$1,500 shall be paid no later than 1/13/26; Forfeit alcohol seized; Police Training Surcharge due.

State of Alaska v. Devin Kakaruk (11/15/02); CTN 001: Assault 4; DV; Date of Violation: 1/6/25; Any appearance or performance bond is exonerated; CTNs Dismissed: 002; 30 days, 0 days suspended; Unsuspended 30 days shall be served with defendant remanded to AMCC immediately; Surcharges due.

State of Alaska v. Devin Kakaruk (11/15/02); 2NO-24-200CR Order to Modify or Revoke Probation; ATN: 118745658; Violated conditions of probation; Probation modified as follows: admit, return to probation; All other terms and conditions of probation in the original order remain in effect.

State of Alaska v. Gordon Coffey (6/4/62); Order to Modify or Revoke Probation; ATN: 110822382; Violated conditions of probation; Probation modified as follows: Return to probation; The following jail term must now be served: 303 (credited time served) days, not to exceed time served; All other terms and conditions of probation in the original order remain in effect.

State of Alaska v. Agnes Kunuk (9/9/86); Dismissal; Count 1: Criminal Trespass 2; Filed by the DAs Office 1/15/25.

THE NOME NUGGET

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Caribou herds in Arctic Alaska tundra areas are on opposite trends

By Yereth Rosen
Alaska Beacon

The Western Arctic Caribou Herd, once the biggest in Alaska, is faltering, having fallen from a high of 490,000 animals in 2003 to only 152,000 as of 2023. But to the east, the Porcupine Caribou Herd appears to be thriving, with an all-time high of 218,000 animals recorded at the last census. That makes it, rather than the Western Arctic herd, the state's largest.

Why are the herds following opposite trends? An answer, Alaska scientists say, is found in what is growing on the ground – and the way the warming climate has changed those plants.

Woody shrubs and even trees are spreading rapidly over Arctic regions of Northwest Alaska, the area where the Western Arctic herd ranges, said Roman Dial, a professor at Alaska Pacific University. But that plant transformation, which scientists refer to as “shrubification,” has been much slower on the eastern side of Arctic Alaska, the range for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, he said.

For caribou, growth of woody plants like alders and willows means problems. Caribou depend on tundra plants like lichen and mosses; the shrubs and trees taking over the terrain are reducing the availability of that food favored by the animals.

Dial has studied changes in Alaska plant growth for several years and has been traveling in the Brooks Range since he was a teenager in the 1970s.

Even though his recent years' work in Arctic Alaska has been focused on plants, he said encountering willows and other woody plants covering what used to be open tundra west of the Dalton Highway made him think right away of animals.

“A lot of caribou trails were getting overgrown and disappeared, and you'd find really old antlers that were in skulls that were kind of buried in the tundra, so caribou hadn't been there for a long time,” he said. “Right away it was, like: ‘Wow, caribou are changing their routes.’ And you could see it.”

The overgrown state of caribou trails that had been etched into tundra terrain over multiple years of migration was instructive, Dial said.

When he presented his studies during the December annual meeting of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, the advisory panel representing villagers and others dependent on the herd, Dial described what might be a caribou's view of the

plant takeover, and he used a brief video from the field to illustrate his point.

He does not like walking through willows that can be eight feet tall, “and I don't think caribou like going through willows either,” Dial told the working group. “If my antlers were all tender and velvet, I wouldn't want to go through a bunch of tall willows. And also, when you go through willows, there's bears in there.”

Changes in caribou habitat are linked to reduced Arctic sea ice, which itself is a direct result of accelerated climate warming in the Northern Hemisphere, Dial said.

Open water leads to more snowfall, he said, as there is more moisture sent into the atmosphere to fall as precipitation. More snowfall insulates the ground, keeping soil temperatures warmer through the winter, he explained. Warmer soil temperatures encourage plant growth and the spread of woody shrubs and trees. More woody plants on the ground make life harder for caribou, both by displacing their usual tundra food sources and by creating new obstacles to movement.

Open water does not affect Alaska's western and eastern Arctic tundra regions equally, and the results are seen on the ground, Dial said.

Sea ice retreat usually forms later and melts earlier in the Chukchi Sea, which lies off the northwestern coast, than in the Beaufort Sea, which lies off Alaska's northeastern coast. Utqiagvik – the nation's northernmost community – is the point where the two Arctic seas meet. Relatively warm Pacific Ocean water flows into the Chukchi through the Bering Strait, making ice there more seasonal, meaning it forms and melts earlier each year. In contrast, an ocean circulation system called the Beaufort Gyre sends old multiyear ice from north of Canada into the Beaufort, making the freeze there a little more resilient. While ice retreat has been significant over the past decades in both seas, the characteristics of the Chukchi make it particularly vulnerable, and it has lost both the thickness and extent of ice at a faster rate than almost any marginal sea in the Arctic, according to climate scientists.

Both the Western Arctic herd range and the Porcupine herd range have become warmer in summer and snowier in winter, according to records kept by the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

But the summer change has been more intense in the western range, particularly in coastal areas off Nome and Kotzebue, according to the data.

The work by Dial and his colleagues to track the changes involved an old-fashioned method: walking the ground.

The idea to do that was inspired by studies of shrub growth that is spreading up to higher elevations around Anchorage – and made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic, which shut down National Science Foundation-funded air travel in 2020, Dial said. Some of the Alaska Pacific University students who were working with him on studying vegetation were enlisted to go north to be part of the Brooks Range expeditions.

In 2020 and 2021, they walked hundreds of miles of the terrain, smartphones in hand, looking down and recording changes in the plants growing on either side of the Dalton Highway. “It kind of added a new dimension to hiking,” he said. A study published in June details the findings from their treks in 2020.

A separate but related study, published about a year ago, examined tree rings to show a correlation between growth and proximity to open Arctic water. The study, which Dial did with Patrick Sullivan of the University of Alaska Anchorage and other scientists, focuses on white spruce trees from 19 different sites along the Brooks Range. Those trees were small, ranging from ankle to chest height, indicating that they were recent arrivals, Dial said.

The on-the-groundwork by Dial, Sullivan and their colleagues adds to past research that tracked the northward spread of woody plants by more distant methods. A 2018 study by scientists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UAF and other organizations, for example, used 50 years' worth of aerial photographs to identify shrub and tree expansion into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska, where the Porcupine herd ranges. The study found that shrubs had spread into the refuge's tundra regions over the half-century period, but they had done so at a slower pace than in other Arctic Alaska tundra regions.

The growth of woody plants in Arctic tundra regions affects more than caribou.

In northwestern Alaska, where the growth has been most dramatic, it has attracted a proliferation of beavers, for example. And as beavers

colonize the landscape, they are transforming it with thousands of new dams that pool water that, in turn, speed thaw of permafrost and feed into the cycle of shrub expansion.

Broader climate change impacts
Climate change impacts on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd go beyond the spread of shrubs displacing tundra plants.

Warm winter conditions in 2005 produced two days of rain in the herd's winter range, creating a thick layer of ice that encased the tundra plants that the animals eat. A large die-off followed, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Wildland fires that are becoming more common as conditions warm can also affect caribou by destroying the slow-growing lichen and other tundra plants the animals eat. That has long been known to be an issue for caribou in more southern and boreal regions, such as Interior Alaska's Nelchina herd. Now wildfire has emerged as a threat to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd's habitat.

The Western Arctic herd's declines are part of a circumpolar trend.

Tundra caribou populations across the Arctic have declined by 65 percent over the last two to three decades, according to the 2024 Arctic Report Card released in December by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Alaska's Western Arctic Caribou Herd was one of those identified as having the most dramatic declines.

“Warmer summer and fall temperatures, changes in winter snowfall, and an increasing human footprint collectively stress Arctic caribou, altering their distribution, movements, survival and productivity,” the report card said.

The Porcupine herd, in contrast, was cited in the Arctic Report Card as one of the major herds with a stable or increasing population, thus going against the dominant trend. The 218,000 total last counted was an increase from 197,000 in 2013. Because the last full census of the Porcupine herd was completed several years ago, in 2017, that population is classified as stable rather than increasing.

For the Western Arctic herd, changes go beyond its sliding population numbers. The herd has also a key metric measured by federal and state biologists who study the herd is the date when southward-moving caribou cross the Kobuk River, a waterway that flows west from the

Brooks Range into Kotzebue Sound. Over the decades, most collared caribou spend summers north of the river and winters south of it, though in five years since 2016, fewer than half of the collared animals went that far south in their fall migration, according to the data.

At the December meeting of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, National Park Service biologist Kyle Joly said the average river-crossing date in 2023 was notably late: Nov. 8. “It was the latest-ever average time that they crossed. I actually had to extend my graph here because the number didn't fit,” Joly told working group members.

Caribou that do cross have also shifted the location of where they do so, and where they spend the winter. There has been a notable lack of caribou on the Seward Peninsula in the western part of the traditional range, according to the data from collared animals. None were tracked into Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, Joly said.

On-the-ground observations match the data, he said. “Twenty-five years ago, Unalakleet was a great place to see caribou,” he said. Residents haven't seen caribou there for several years, he said.

While the Western Arctic and Porcupine herds are following opposite trends, both face challenges from industrial development or potential development.

The biggest development project envisioned for the Western Arctic herd's range is the Ambler Access Project, which would construct a road about 200 miles into the Brooks Range foothills to an isolated mining district. The Biden administration rejected a plan for road construction, but the project could be pushed forward by the incoming Trump administration.

Also in the area is the Red Dog mine, one of the world's largest zinc producers. The 52-mile road that connects the mine site to the Chukchi Sea port used to ship out processed ore has already been shown to hinder caribou movement for at least part of the herd. The mine operator, Teck Resources Ltd., just won federal approval for exploratory work at what would be an expansion into a different zinc deposit, which would include an extension of the mine's road.

There is also expanding oil development in the National Petroleum

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events or actions were going on and gave advice to his wife back at home.

He loved being outdoors, camping and subsisting throughout the year when he was able to and kept talking about getting things ready before he passed. Each year he brought his family and Ben and Shelton's families to several camping grounds and stayed several weeks until they had enough subsistence gathering. While younger, he was active in search and rescues during all seasons. One search lasted three to four days during our spring hunting season where the boat's compass went haywire being too close to the boat's antenna and they were taken off course heading further into the ocean.

He also served on the church council for a few years.

He survived colon cancer, multiple heart attacks and internal bleeding during his lifetime.

He loved his family, especially the grandchildren very much and always

made sure they were okay and taken care of. He enjoyed telling stories.

Dad is survived by his children Stanley & Kara (Harvey/Grace), Karen & David Olson (Mickey/Kris/Samuel/Kaylyn/Alkayu), Edward & Darla (Arnold-Makayla, Ellorie, Pierce, Kira, Silas/Phillip/Lance/Caroline), Archie (Pamela-Hunter, Remington/Tamaira-Rhonon, Elodie, Elaine/Nicholas/Katelyn/Oran), Ernest (Mamie-Jaysen/Derick), Lisa & Ken Stenek (Gabriel/Sarah/Timary-Ariya/Timothy-Tate/Norman/Caroline/Karmen); his sisters Elizabeth Nayokpuk, Elsie Naylor, brother John Okie, brother-in-law Shelton Kokeok, and numerous nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his wife Sarah Tocktoo, daughter Karen Kokeok, parents Andrew & Lucy, brothers Jesse, first Peter, Peter, first Frederick, Frederick; and sisters Ida Nayokpuk, Alene Weyiouanna, granddaughter Caroline Tocktoo, brother-in-laws Herbert Nayokpuk, Lawrence Nayokpuk, Norman Kokeok and Benjamin Kokeok.

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