

## Camps Keep Alutiiq Culture Alive In Native Youth

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Mary Donaldson/KMXT

The first Dig Afognak Camp for the summer is coming up this week. As Mary Donaldson reports, the camps play an important part in keeping the Alutiiq culture alive.

Dig Afognak first began in 1993 as part of an effort to regain local Alutiiq culture. The first of several camps taking place during summer is the leadership academy, which is now in its second year. Other camps offered will teach the Native youth traditional ways of hunting, gathering, history and preservation of their culture.

Rachel Kane is the Native Village of Afognak program manager for Dig Afognak, and says teens can gain a lot from the leadership academy.

(Kane :24s "in a way that they are having fun with it too.")

Kane says the creation of the leadership academy came out of a need to keep teens engaged after they become too old to participate in the youth camps.

Julie Knagin, a Kodiak elder who worked with teens in the leadership academy last year, says that she feels the leadership camps are vital to prepare today's Native youth to take over in the future.

(Knagin 1 :36s "be there and take over.")

She also says from her perspective, she feels these camps are important for Native youth of all ages to participate in.

(Knagin 2 :15s "and the leadership")

The Dig Afognak Camps began as an activity to help preserve archeological sites in the Kodiak Archipeligo. It began as an effort to preserve these sites following the Exxon-Valdez oil spill in 1989. Kane says information was being lost at these sites as the clean up took place.

The leadership academy begins tomorrow (Thursday) and is open to kids ages 13 to 17. Registration is 25-dollars for Native Village of Afognak members, and 45-dollars for non-members.

"m Mary Donaldson.

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HOST TAG:

For more information on this camp and any of the upcoming Dig Afognak camps, contact the Native Village of Afognak at 486-6357.