

Introduced Species on Kodiak = 'Trouble in Paradise'

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Travis Tennesen didn't have a typical childhood. His adolescent years were split between the lush orchards of Wisconsin and the mountainous terrain of Kodiak Island. Unlike most seasonal residents of Alaska's emerald isle, Tennesen and his family didn't flock to the archipelago during the bountiful summer months, but rather the cold, dark days of January. Tennesen's parents taught at the Chiniak School during the winter and spring, setting the framework for his traveling childhood.

But the "half-years" Tennesen spent in Kodiak did more than shape the memories of his youth; it laid the groundwork his pursuit of a doctorate degree. Tennesen received his Ph.D. in geography from the University of Wisconsin in Madison after completing a dissertation about wildlife and land management in Kodiak.

He joined KMXT's Talk of the Rock yesterday and said the motivation behind his work was to take his education of environmental management and history and make sense of the place he called home six months out of the year.

-- (Travis Tennesen 1 :38 "I was also quite surprised to learn...important or problematic.")

He said often times these animal introductions are the work of Fish and Wildlife Service or Alaska Department of Fish and Game and are done for various reasons.

-- (Travis Tennesen 2 :46 "Part of Colonialism has been...money from selling hunts.")

Tennesen said much of his dissertation focuses on the different visions that various entities associated with the Kodiak Archipelago have, and their fight for control over these natural and introduced resources. He said one thing that sets wildlife management in Alaska apart from the rest of the United States is Native Corporations.

-- (Travis Tennesen 3 :46 "It's an extra layer of complexity...these complicated layers.")

Tennessee's dissertation is titled, "Trouble in Paradise." He said that was the best interpretation he could take from his swath of research.

-- (Travis Tennessee 4 :40 "Looked at all these documents…accepting the situation.")

Tennessee gave presentations on his dissertation at the Kodiak College and at the Alaska Invasive Species Conference. He said he has also held round table discussions about his dissertation with various wildlife stakeholders here in Kodiak. You can learn more about his research by visiting his website at Travis Tennessee dot net. We also have a link on our website at KMXT dot org.

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