New Book Examines Old Community

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

A recent grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts has helped boost the progress of a new book being compiled by the Alutiiq Museum about the excavation of the old village of Karluk, which was done 30 years ago: Amy Steffian is the Deputy Director of the Alutiiq Museum and is heading up the project.

“The site was the source of a tremendous collection – 26,000 objects of late prehistoric Alutiiq heritage.”

She says the Karluk One archeology site yielded so many artifacts, it prompted the creation of the Alutiiq Museum and Archeological Repository.

“It’s sort of the foundation of our exhibits and many of our outreach – what work was done, where does the site fit into Alutiiq history, what’s in the site, what does it tell us?”

She said the site was continually occupied from about the year 800 into the 1980s, with generations of homes built one atop another.

“The site is sort of a plate of pancakes – a stack of houses that start right on the beach and go up, oh, I’d say three meters. And then they eventually collapse one house and build another one on top of it.”

The project started with a $50,000 grant and recently received another $10,000. Steffian thinks the total cost will be around $100,000. The book is being done in partnership with the University of Alaska Press and will include hundreds of photographs as well as essays from a couple dozen people who have worked with the collection over the past 30 years. Steffian says they plan to have the manuscript finished in September and the book should be ready for printing in fall 2014.