Wood ‘N ‘Ice”

Presentation to the Alaska – Yukon Wood Energy Conference

Fairbanks, Alaska April 16, 2019
Bringing our People, our local resources, and our natural environment together for:

- **Economic Development**

- **Affordable Energy Alternatives**

- **Affordable Housing Alternatives**

- **Cheaper Transportation**
This Presentation is Dedicated to the Memory of:
Richard “Dick” Nash
Legendary Middle Kuskokwim Trail & Ice Road Pioneer
John “Coffee” Smith
This bend in the River is named after him. This bend likes to give us a hard time during break up, freeze up, and winter snow storms.
Oscar Samuelson, Jr.

We have lost two of our young employees to suicide during the off season. We strongly believe that employment - something to do, something to get up in the morning for is a key part of suicide prevention.

We continue to strive to provide year round employment for our People through the combination of Ice & Wood.
This Presentation Brought To You By:

“Mad Max” – our 52 year old plow truck,
the Middle Kuskokwim Road
Warriors,
the NVN-KLG Timber & Trail Crew,
And the Napaimute Traditional Council!

L-R: President Devron Hellings, Vice President Marcie Sherer, Member Audrey Leary, Member Rachelle Rohde, Secretary Shelly Leary
With additional sponsorship from:
Best pizza on the Kuskokwim!
Murphy’s Law, Inc. – “If anything can go wrong – it will”

Our trailer cracked. We left it sitting on the ice road for a couple of weeks below Aniak until we had time to repair it.
G.I. Joe's W.W. II Surplus!
Grey, Black, Green, & Brown Carhartt Jackets!
Also Wood’s Logging & Industrial Supply,
Longview, Washington
And Maqista’s Hot Houses – “Hottest Steambaths on the Kuskokwim!”
Our Region - The Lower & Middle Kuskokwim:
Over 15,000 People connected by over 250 miles of ice road and winter trails - a region badly in need of economic development, affordable energy, affordable housing, and cheaper transportation.

These ice roads and winter trails are our highways – our only highways - and they need to be treated as such with stable funding for annual establishment & maintenance.
They connect villages from Nunapitchuk to...
...Napaímute & beyond
Our People:

Chuathbaluk
Aniak
Napaimute
Kalskag
Easy Question: What color does BSAR use to mark open water?

Nicolai Napoka continues the Tuluksak tradition of keeping travelers safe in their area

Walter Morgan, Ken Morgan, Stiffa Kameroff
Ice Road Chief In-Training: Nickolai Savage
Our Local Resources - Wood:

Economic Development
Affordable Energy Alternatives
Affordable Housing Alternatives

A product of the Native Village of Napaimute in cooperation with the Kuskokwim Corporation & the villages of Upper & Lower Kalskag
Napaimate’s Background in Working with Wood:
*Napaimute means: The People of the Trees*

Napaimute Enterprises is a tribally-owned subsidiary of The Native Village of Napaimute
Wood Gathering in the 1940’s: Napaimute’s leadership has always looked back to help us remember where we come from & to plan where we want to go in the future....

(photo used permission of Placid C. Joseph, Sr.)
In earlier times our wood resources were more heavily utilized not only for firewood but also for building homes, as fuel for steamboats and for locally produced lumber. There was even a sawmill at Bethel!
Log A.C. Store at Aniak

Steam powered sawmill

Log Post Office at Napaimute

Steamboat at McGrath with cordwood on deck
According to 2010 Census data, the median age is 26.2 years in the Bethel Census Area and 21.9 years in the Kusilvak Census Area, significantly younger than the statewide median age of 34 years. Over 50% of the People in our region are under the age of 25.
In Planning for our Community & Economic Development, Napaimute’s Leadership has long recognized that our wood resources will play a key role...
Our Wood Resources have always been a key part of Economic Development Planning for Napaimute. These pages from the Napaimute Community Plan (2004) support that recognition.

Timber Sales
The Tribe has obtained a timber permit to harvest trees on State land located near Napaimute. The timber is intended to be used for local Tribal building projects. In the future, timber could be sold for other purposes. The Tribe is also considering applying to the Kuskokwim Corporation for rights to harvest timber on Corporation lands.

Lodging
The Tribe has a rental unit for visitors. Opportunities exist to build additional rental units or a lodge to accommodate tourists.

The State granted the Tribe a timber-cutting permit at this site 3 1/4 miles from Napaimute.

...these pages from the Napaimute Community Plan (2004) support that recognition.
We have also been well aware of the historical demand for firewood in the Lower Kuskokwim River.
But we had no idea what the true demand was!
In further support of maximum use of our wood resources, all usable timber from community development projects is salvaged and stockpiled.

2005, Airport Site Before...

...and After, 2007

100% tribally constructed airfield

Salvaging & Stockpiling Timber
Napaimute’s Early Attempts at Meeting the Demand for Firewood in the Lower Kuskokwim
In 2008, with the key components of a successful firewood business in place, Napaimute forms the first organized firewood business on the Kuskokwim River:
Firewood Packages Now Available for 2010 Fall Delivery!
Cut, Split, & Palletized – Spruce & Birch
For more information or to place an order call: (907)222-5058/222-6084 or 543-2016 (message)
email: napaimute@gci.net

Brrr – It’s getting cold!
Don’t forget to order your firewood from Napaimute Enterprises.

A product of Napaimute Enterprises, LLC (a tribally-owned business):
The Next Step for Napaimute’s Firewood Business: Was to Invest in Specialized Timber Harvesting Equipment

Our dilemma now is we can’t harvest enough wood efficiently (cheaper, faster, and safer.)

A Big Step: signing our life away at the bank
2012 Napaimute Timber Harvest – a 1,000 cord contract with CVRF - the largest single timber harvest ever conducted on the Kuskokwim River:

Harvester Training in Washington
What did we learn from this high volume timber harvest at Napaímute?

• The expenses of operating from Napaímute are too high to sustain this opportunity for the Middle Kuskokwim over the long term

• No permanent population to draw from for employees. Must bring employees in from neighbor villages and provide food, housing, and transportation - a very big expense

• No regular air service. When ever we need parts, supplies, etc. have to go to Aníak by boat or snow machine

• Distance from the Lower River & Coast Market is too far. Transportation is too high
What Did We Need to Do to Keep this Opportunity for the Middle Kuskokwim People Alive?

• Move Closer to the Market (move down river)

• Move Closer to a Full-time Community (where employees can go home at night and we can get fuel/supplies easier)

Kalskag!
Exploring All Options:

We worked with State and BLM Foresters to see what other areas are available for timber harvest closer to Kalskag and the Lower River Market.

There is no BLM land available that is close to the River.

There are two small parcels of State land near Kalskag, but they don’t have much timber on them.

The only available land that can be used to develop a sustainable Middle Kuskokwim Timber Industry is Kuskokwim Corporation Land.
TIMBER SALE AGREEMENT

by and between
The Kuskokwim Corporation
and
Napaimute Enterprises LLC

This Timber Sale Agreement (herein, this “Agreement”), is made as of the 20th day of November 2012 (the “Effective Date”), between The Kuskokwim Corporation, an Alaska corporation (“Seller”), and Napaimute Enterprises LLC, an Alaska limited liability company (“Purchaser”) (collectively “the Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Seller owns certain merchantable timber located on property near Lower Kalskag, Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Purchaser is engaged in the business of acquiring timber, for harvesting, and marketing logs, firewood and related products; and

WHEREAS, Seller desires to sell and Purchaser desires to harvest and purchase such timber, subject to the terms and conditions hereof.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, Seller and Purchaser agree as follows:

1. Definitions. For purposes of this Agreement, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

“Cultural Resources” means archaeological, historical or cultural sites and resources.

“Effective Date” is defined in the initial paragraph of this Agreement.

“Environmental Contamination” means contamination or pollution resulting from the Release of a Hazardous Substance.

“Hazardous Substances” means any hazardous substances or materials (as defined in Alaska Statutes 46.03.826 and 46.08.900 and in 42 U.S.C.A. § 9601-9657 (CERCLA) and in 40 C.F.R. part 302, as such statutes and regulations may be amended from time to time).
Napaimute brings new industry, reforestation to the TKC Region

From the salmon running up our rivers, the moose foraging in our lands and the berries bursting from the tundra, people in the Middle Kuskokwim have long recognized the value of our natural resources. Our land is rich with resources and there are many opportunities to utilize these gifts if we exercise balance. With this spirit of understanding, the Native Village of Napaimute (NVN) discovered the benefit of wood resources to the development of economic opportunities for the Middle Kuskokwim and has used this resource to bring industry and reforestation to the area.

This economic opportunity started at a small sawmill and has since evolved into a timber harvesting project that has brought jobs, industry and affordable housing to our region. It has also led to a first of its kind reforestation program, a partnership between NVN, TKC and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), that will allow the seeds of the original forest to be harvested and used to plant new trees on TKC land. At the forefront of every decision on this project is the belief that the region's resources are meant to be managed to benefit The Kuskokwim Corporation (TKC) Shareholders while also protecting the environment.

When you look around the village of Napaimute, nearly all of the tribal buildings and homes have been built with the assistance of a small sawmill owned by the tribe. It is also used annually to fill small lumber orders in a weak attempt to meet the demand for locally produced lumber. This was the beginning of the project. For more than a decade, we focused on this most basic use of our Middle Kuskokwim wood...
This is the new timber harvest site 70 miles downstream that we moved to in 2013:

Containing between 7,000 & 8,000 harvestable cords of firewood
February 2013: we move our timber harvest operation 70 miles down the River from Napaimute to below Kalskag. A journey that took 5 days.
Convoy
Joey moves the 50,000 pound harvester to the site and...
We get back to working with wood!

Bruce Waskey on the firewood processor
Well Established Experience with Middle Kuskokwim Wood and Getting it to the Lower River Market: 
Napaimute’s Wood is sold throughout the region.

Wood for Tuntutuliak, Kasigluk, Kipnuk, Newtok & Toksook Bay

Wood enroute to Kipnuk & Kwigillingok
Quyana Mark for supplying us coastal people with woods Gob bless Napaimute and God bless you people

Thanks we like helping People - we would of had more but Napaskiak been eating most of our wood this winter!

I'm thankful for what I'm getting it no good to have no woods for steam

Kasigluk
Firewood, firewood, always firewood! – I wish we could do something else with our wood.
2017
Coming Full Circle:

Through ICDBG Economic Development funding we are now expanding our firewood business into a commercial sawmill operation that will work to produce affordable lumber and housing packages in conjunction with providing additional employment opportunities for the region.

Thanks to HUD and the ICDBG program for this support!
Housing
Lack of affordable housing in the Y-K region remains an ongoing challenge for regional residents and employers. One of the barriers to meeting demand for housing is the high cost of construction: houses in the region are expensive to build, averaging $420,000 per unit; about $150,000 of this cost goes toward logistics and freight. In addition, there is minimal private sector investment in housing due to a combination of high construction costs, low wages, and limited access to land and financing.

Timber
The Y-K region has limited forestry resources throughout the area, including white and black spruce and areas of birch. The timber industry, while currently modest in size, has potential to expand to reduce heating and building costs in the Y-K region. The Native Village of Napaimute operates a successful, growing timber harvest near Kalskag; they are purchasing a sawmill and hope to increase firewood sales and produce lumber for home construction, and are also working on a reforestation effort to support long-term sustainability of the resources.

AVCP Regional Housing Authority only receives enough funding to build 15 houses in the region per year. Over 3,000 units are needed.

“It will take us 200 years to meet the housing needs in our region”

Mark Charlie, President/CEO AVCP-RHA
In his address to the 2018 AVCP Convention
The Long Road to Completion: Saw Mill Update
Spring 2018:

working on the log infeed system
Getting the outfeed properly aligned and leveled
Starting to look like a saw mill

Test cuts
New catwalk from freshly milled lumber

Re-engineered saw dust conveyor

Sawdust falls into loader bucket for removal
Mill building goes up
New saw mill operator being trained by the former owner
Completed sawmill funded through the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG)
Council President Devron Hellings addresses the harvest site crew in front of the new office then…. Moose’s Tooth Pizza for lunch!
2019 NVN SAWMILL LUMBER & CABIN PRICES
January 20, 2019

An example of what can be built with one of our cabin packages – this is for the wood only

Now Taking Orders for the 2019 Building Season!

Napaimute Enterprises, LLC

Serving the Region with Middle Kuskokwim Wood Products:

Firewood, Lumber, & Cabin Packages

A page from our web site:

www.napaimute.org
Putting Back What We Take:
The 2018 NVN Reforestation Project
Over 3,000 White Spruce Seedlings Planted by Hand – Hard Tedious Work!

That’s never been done before in our region
2018 Equipment Upgrade: A new used skidder purchased through a conventional bank loan to support the overall wood operation.
Our Natural Environment

Ice:

Our Tradition: marking the beginning of Upriver Ice Road Route 1 with a spruce tree
“Working together so others may live”

10:25 AM, December 21, 2016 – the shortest day of the year – temperature minus 10 – Middle Kuskokwim Tribal Transportation Safety crew installs ice road markers in the growing light.
Moving our newly acquired sawmill 40 miles from Chuathbaluk to the Kalskag Timber Harvest Site

Moving firewood to the Lower River

The Ice Gives Us Economic Development Opportunities & Cheaper Transportation
Mile Post 110 along Upriver Route 2 – between Kalskag & Aniak
Near Nulluq Hill
WARNING

TRAIL CONDITIONS CHANGE TRAVEL AT YOUR OWN RISK

TO REPORT TRAIL CONDITIONS CALL 545-2877

KLG
NVN Tribal Transportation Program has invested in Ice Penetrating Radar with the goal of developing a smart phone application that can be used by anyone to check on current ice road conditions. This technology is already being used extensively in Canada and on Alaska’s North Slope. Real time ice thickness measurements.
21 Day Grader Maintenance & Operation Training for our employees – including a 5 day Kuskokwim Ice Road Component
Warmer winters in recent years have shortened the ice road season while at the same time extended the summer shipping season.

2019 saw:

• A late freeze up
• Mild temperatures all winter
• 40% thinner Kuskokwim River ice
• The warmest February and March ever recorded for our region
• April 12 - the earliest break up ever recorded for Bethel
The Next Step for Us & The Final Piece of the Puzzle: ownership and operation of a small freight vessel similar to the one in this picture.
Thank you for coming!