



Dialogue Process Materials
Invitation
Alaska Commission on Rural
Governance & Empowerment
A CALL TO RECONVENE

12:00pm – 6:00pm on Friday, December 6th 9:30am – 4:00pm on Saturday,
December 7th Alaska Native Heritage Center

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Brad Angasan
Nancy Cecile
Barnes John
Binkley
Arnold Brower,
Jr. Niles Cesar*
Christopher
Cooke Roy
Ewan
Victor Fischer
Steve Ginnis
Chuck Greene
Weaver Ivanoff
Marlene
Johnson Willie
Kasayulie
Robert Keith
Rosemarie
Maher * Byron
Mallott
Will Mayo
Gene
Peltola
Margaret
Roberts
Gilda
Shellikoff *
Lee Stephan
Arliss
Sturgulewski
Esther
Wunnicke *
*Deceased
COMMISSION STAFF
Mike Irwin
Veronica Slajer

“This journey... is fueled by hope and faith in good and responsive government, by an understanding and respect of Alaska society, and by the innate aspirations and vision of rural peoples themselves.”

- Final Commission Report to the Governor (June 1999)

Fifteen years have passed since the state of Alaska’s formation of the original 22-member Commission on Rural Governance and Empowerment. Co-chaired by Robert Keith of Elim and Byron Mallott of Juneau, the Commission worked over the course of a year to research and formulate recommendations about the state government’s official policy toward federally recognized tribes in Alaska and to examine how state, local and regional governance occurs in Alaska. Providing a compelling reason to gather, the final report’s recommendations could be re-published today and still be on point. Clearly, rural governance and empowerment is unfinished business in Alaska.

As rural, local and state governments confront mounting fiscal and policy challenges, there has never been a better time to reconvene and revitalize the Commission’s work.

To examine and address the state’s current system of governance, the Rural Governance Commission and invited friends will gather for an intensive inter-generational work session beginning with a group lunch on Friday, December 6th and continuing all day on Saturday, December 7th at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage.

This special two-day gathering will be **hosted by the First Alaskans Institute**, a statewide Native nonprofit organization known for its role as a catalyst and convener of critical conversations within the community. The institute will use its indigenous hosting approach to engage all participants in a retrospective space to capture lessons learned since the original Commission convened and inspire meaningful discourse on strategizing a collective vision to further advance this critical work.

This invitation is for you to join us as an engaged advocate for these issues in our community; as such, it is non-transferrable.

Your perspective, ideas and experience will be an important part of guiding this work through Alaska’s current and future landscape. Our goal will be to empower Alaskans to achieve equity through a strategy based on respect and collective responsibility. Please RSVP by Monday, December 2nd to info@ruralgov.org. For additional information, please contact Mara Kimmel at (907) 350-0786. We hope to see you there!

Agenda



Rural Governance & Empowerment Gathering December 6 - 7, 2013 Alaska Native Heritage Center

Friday, December 6th

12:00pm LUNCH

Opening Circle

Welcome

Agreements

RGC Context

Commissioner Circles

Reflections

Closing Circle

Gallery Walk

RECEPTION

Saturday, December 7th

9:00am

BREAKFAST

Opening Circle

Welcome

Agreements

Affinity Strategizing LUNCH

Affinity Strategizing (cont.)

Collective Visioning

Call to Action

Closing Circle

Suggested Pre-Reading:

- Rural Governance Commission Final Report to the Governor
 - http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/RGC/RGC_Final_6_99.pdf
- Indian Law & Order Commission - Alaska Chapter
 - http://www.aisc.ucla.edu/iloc/report/files/Chapter_2_Alaska.pdf
- Alaska Native Policy Center Fast Facts: *Compiled Data on the Alaska Native Population, Alaska Native Population and the 2010 Census*
 - <http://www.firstalaskans.org/index.cfm?section=Alaska-Native-Policy-Center&page=Fast-Facts>

First Alaskans Institute

2014 RGC Reconvening Dialogue Agreements

- In every chair, a leader
- All ideas are valid, go below the surface
 - “And” not “or”
- Listen to understand, speak to be understood
 - Speak with care for others, listen deeply
- Our collective time / work
 - Value each other
- Safe space means-
 - non-attribution in writing or discussion
 - kindness
- Our value of humor
- Care for each other and self
- Be present and engaged
 - You are responsible for your experience here
- Removest Thou “Hats”
- Differences illuminate, divisiveness suffocates
- Rigorous curiosity + critique to enhance
 - Seek common ground
- You are an expert
 - Your experience is your truth
- Concerns? Speak with a Host

Collective Action Ideas

Please note these are a collection of thoughtful ideas and actions derived through a dialogue process of diverse and committed participants to achieve an end goal of Native and rural empowerment. Imagine what Alaska would look like if even half of these ideas came to pass. As presented, these ideas are not prioritized, they are not formal recommendations of this convening, and not all the participants may have agreed with one another on the best strategy to achieve the outcome. It is the hope of the hosts that these ideas are shared to inform the continuing dialogue, help inspire others, track the progress of autonomous organizations or individuals, coalesce the voices of the people who seek an empowered rural Alaska, catalyze further action, provide more cohesive movement-making on this issue, or set a bar for success:

- **Legal**
 - Amend or delete ANCSA section 4.
 - DOI mechanism/process for affirming Indian country in Alaska.
 - Ensure comprehensive recognition of aboriginal hunting and fishing rights.
 - Include Alaska in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
 - Move beyond “no Indian country.”
 - Amend title 29 to recognize tribal entities.
 - Adopt constitutional amendment to entrench Alaska Native subsistence rights.
 - Establish statewide community justice body:
 - Utilize traditional structures and systems for modern governance;
 - Codify traditional laws so outsiders will recognize those laws.
 - Expansion of tribal laws; assert jurisdiction and sovereign authority to protect our interests, e.g. coastal areas.
 - Develop tribal education departments and codes (comprehensive content)
 - Use co-managed systems to increase the “doing” in a Native led and Native knowledge based way.
 - Accommodate and guarantee inter-generations rights, especially in relation to descendants.
- **Economic**
 - Make financial resources available directly to tribes.
 - Look at gaming as a source of revenue.
 - Employment within federal agencies.
 - Sales and use tax as revenue sources.
- **Cultural Empowerment**
 - Create university partnerships to promote and implement training and educational programs in tribal governance and tribal justice.
 - Revitalize cultural practices – such as dance, song...
 - Fund language efforts.
 - Recognize Alaska Native languages as official languages.
 - Educational system that works for everyone.
 - Healing from historic (and contemporary) trauma (especially our Elders full of sadness and anger).
 - Getting Alaska Native history incorporated into Alaska history.
 - Historic preservation through recording – writing our own books, posting YouTube videos, etc.

- Inventory what is going on and share best practices, find out what's already done, and build capacity for information sharing.
- Create a tool box.
- **Political**
 - Indigenize organizations and governmental entities.
 - Elect Native people.
 - Create new congress of Alaska tribes (like NCAI).
 - Identify and work with our allies in state government.
 - Revisit Millennium Accord principles and initiate discussions on state-tribal relations and ensure promulgation, codification, and entrenched outcome:
 - Initiate dialogue to establish tribal-state relations, including possible adoption of agreement in principle recognizing status and authority of tribes in all areas, including tribal justice, policing, management, etc.
 - State apology to people.
 - State and boroughs to recognize tribes.
 - Review best practices and success stories in areas of institutional collaboration and cooperation (e.g. NWAB and tribes).
 - Establish statewide tribal organizations.
 - Increase capacity and development to all other rights including economic well-being.
 - Creation of an Arctic and coastal/maritime commission with majority tribal membership.
 - Lack of LIOs in communities and difficulties in communicating with state governments.