ALEUT INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Unalaska from the top of Mt. Ballyhoo.
Photo: Thomas Doyle/Flickr.com

The Aleut International Association (AIA) is a not-for-profit corporation that represents the Indigenous peoples of Aleut descent in the United States and the Russian Federation.

AIA addresses environmental and cultural concerns of the extended Aleut family whose well-being has been connected to the rich resources of the Bering Sea for millennia. Its mission is to promote continuity of Aleut culture and protect the resources needed to sustain it.

AIA was created by the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) and the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Aleut District of the Kamchatka Region of the Russian Federation (ANSARKO). AIA is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of four Alaskan and four Russian Aleuts under the leadership of a president.

AIA was admitted as a Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council in 1998. As part of the Arctic Council framework, AIA collaborates with Arctic States, Working Groups and other Permanent Participants with regular contributions to Chairship work plans. AIA has a particular interest in the ocean, and the environmental and social changes occurring in the region.

In addition to its status as a Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council, AIA was granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 2004. AIA is an accredited Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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QUICK FACTS

Territory: Alaska (United States), Russian Federation, Pribilof Islands (United States) and Commander Islands (Russian Federation)

Indigenous Peoples: Russian and American Aleut (Unangan)

Indigenous Population: Approximately 15,000 Aleuts in the United States and 350 Aleuts in the Russian Federation

Languages: English, Russian, Unangam Tunuu (Eastern Dialect of the Aleut Language), Niigugim Tunuu (Atkan Dialect of the Aleut Language).

Established: 1998

Aleut Kids in King Cove search for Baidarkies.
Photo: Nadine Kochuten

Aleut girl fishes for halibut.
Photo: Nadine Kochuten

PROJECTS

COMMUNITY OBSERVATION NETWORK FOR ADAPTATION AND SECURITY (CONAS)

CONAS is a community-based monitoring network in the Bering Sea Region that collects critical knowledge from community experts to understand environmental changes impacting people who live in the Bering Sea region. This project is approved under the Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna (CAFF) working group in the Arctic Council.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN SMALL ARCTIC COMMUNITIES

Solid Waste Management in Small Arctic Communities is a project under the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) and Arctic Contaminants Action Plan (ACAP) Working Groups of the Arctic Council to study the best waste management practices used in remote Arctic communities, and to provide guidance for communities under 1500 people looking to improve their solid waste management practices.

COMMUNITY-BASED BLACK CARBON AND PUBLIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT

This is an ACAP project that works with various Arctic Indigenous communities to monitor black carbon concentrations to characterize local public health risks.

CIRCUMPOLAR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVER NETWORK (CLEO)

CLEO is a network of local observers that provide information and knowledge to understand environmental changes in their communities. CLEO increases awareness of vulnerabilities to the impacts of unusual changes in the environment through observations by local residents of the Arctic.

HUNTING, FISHING, AND GATHERING ARE KEY TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALEUT PEOPLE AND CULTURE

AIA RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY OCEANS AND CONTAMINANT-FREE LANDS SO ALEUT PEOPLE CAN CONTINUE THEIR TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES

AIA representatives at the 2021 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting.
Photo: Arctic Council Secretariat

AIA collaborates with governments, scientists, local and regional communities, and other Aleut entities to develop research, products and policies to improve the well-being of the Aleut people and the environment on which they depend.

AIA is one of six Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation in the Arctic. As such, AIA represents the environmental and cultural interests and concerns of the Aleut people to this important international forum. As part of the Arctic Council framework, AIA collaborates with Arctic States, Working Groups and other Permanent Participants.