

Alaska Native Transition Skills

Stewardship and Harvest from the Land

Rain Van Den Berg, Chuck Miller, and Margie Esquiro
UAA Center for Human Development
2021 (Updated 2025)

Developed for Southeast Alaska school districts as a demonstration project to show how traditional skills can be supported and integrated into transition planning for youth with IEPs. These materials are meant to be adapted and used throughout Alaska.

These materials were created through the Developmental Disabilities Act partnership of the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education and the Center for Human Development, with funding from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

Land Acknowledgment: The authors would like to acknowledge that this curriculum was created on the unceded territories of the Sheek’á Kwáan on Lingít Aaní, also known as Sitka, Alaska. We acknowledge that Lingít (Tlingit) peoples have been stewards of the land on which we work and reside since time immemorial, and we are grateful for that stewardship and incredible care. We also acknowledge the adjacent ancestral homes of the Xaadas (Haida) and Ts’msyen (Tsimshian) throughout what is also known as Southeast Alaska.

About the Authors

Chuck Miller is the Cultural and Community Liaison for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. He is a Tlingit culture bearer and storyteller that was born and raised in Sheet ka (Sitka) Alaska. His Tlingit name is Daanax.ils eik and he is of the L uknax.adi (Raven/Coho Clan) and caretaker of Kayaash Ka Hit (Mother Coho Clan House) of Sitka. He grew up learning the traditional ways of the Tlingit people through the Sitka Native Education Program and from his maternal Grandparents, along with many other well respected Tlingit elders from the many nearby Southeast Communities. He continues to work with the Sitka Native Education Program as a Cultural Instructor from students ranging from Pre-School to High School. Chuck also shares his traditional knowledge with other community entities located in his hometown, such as the Sitka School District, Sitka Sound Science Center, Sitka Conservation Society and -H programs. Chuck continues to seek traditional knowledge from his elders and gives credit to his teachings from the late Kaal.atk (Charlie oseph Sr.), who was one of the main elders who preserved the Tlingit ways of life, with the Sitka Native Education Program. *Note: Since this was created, Chuck Miller passed away. He was a treasured member of our community in Sitka and is truly missed.*

Rain Van Den Berg is an education and training consultant with a background in education, health education, project management, and facilitation. She has a BA in Secondary Education, and a Master's of Public Health in Community Health Education. Recent projects include the Kotzebue units of the Traditional Transition Skills curriculum with co-author rances Gage last year and a Student Handbook and Teacher Resources Guide for Transition for use in both rural and urban Alaskan communities for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Margie Esquiro is a retired elementary school teacher in Sitka, AK. Over the last 0 years she has worked with the Sitka Native Education Program, the Sitka School District's Cultural Program, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Education Department, and Wooch.een Preschool in developing culturally appropriate curriculum, activities, and parent education.

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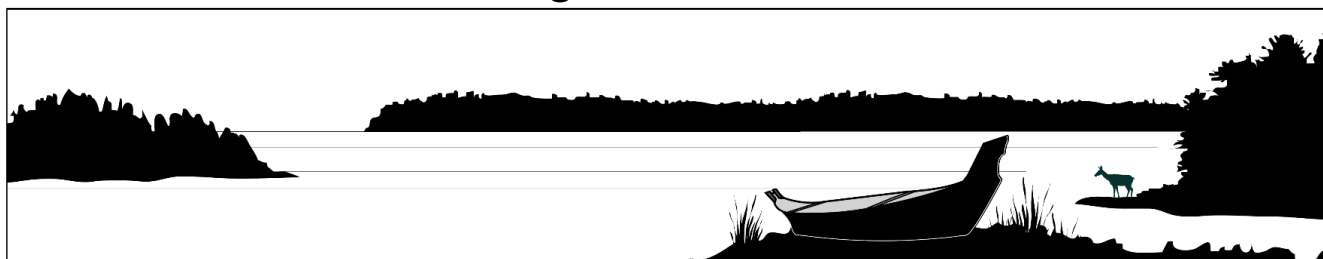
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- Sealaska Heritage Institute: Kristy Dillingham, Education Director for permission to include Sealaska Heritage Institute curriculum to use as references and teacher resources for this project.
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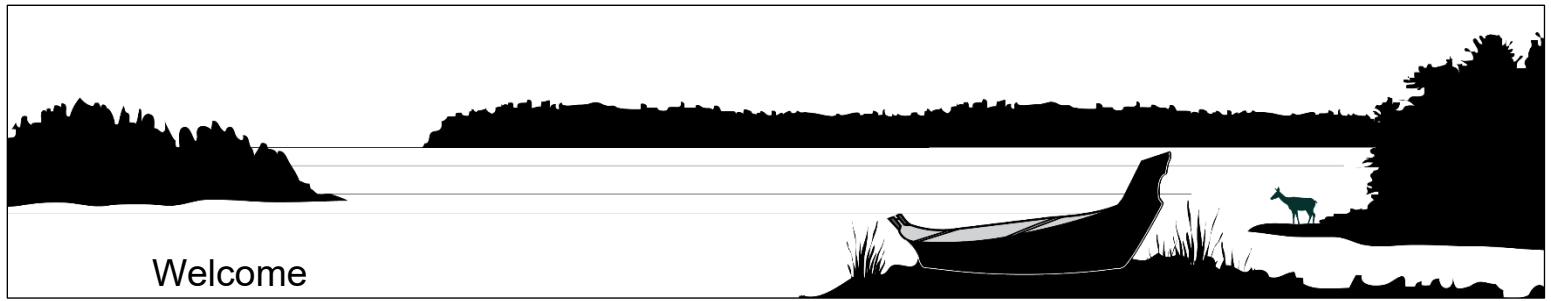
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Note about the Header Image



This image represents the land, sea, and animals of Southeast Alaska and acknowledges the original Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples with the presence of a canoe. The image was created by Rain Van Den Berg for use in this curriculum.



Welcome

Southeast Alaska is a rich landscape of ocean and lands teeming with life in which the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples have thrived for thousands of years. Our ancestors cared for the land as the land cared for them. The land continues to provide for us today. Teaching young people to be stewards of the land, as our ancestors were, is a crucial part of sustaining our resources. Harvesting together in ways that respect the land are important skills that young people need to know so they can provide for themselves, their families, Elders, and community. This unit builds these skills in four areas: values, stewardship and harvest, safety when harvesting on the land, and harvesting berries.

The learning begins with a lesson on Southeast Alaska Traditional Tribal Values. The values given to us by our ancestors are core to who we are and how we relate to each other, the land, and the broader community. Our values act as an internal compass that guides our actions and decisions. They are at the center, and so that is where we begin.

Next, we explore the idea of stewardship, along with how to harvest from the land while being a good steward. The land provides a rich diversity of plants and animals to sustain us. These lessons focus on what can be harvested in each season.

The third section is focused on safety when harvesting on the land. We talk about going “out onto the land” instead of “into the wilderness” because it is natural to be out harvesting from the land. The land is to be respected; it is not an adversary. In a challenging situation, the land offers many kinds of assistance. Being prepared, and knowing what to do if something unexpected happens, can be an important part of respecting the land and returning safely.

In the last section, we focus on harvesting berries as an example of one of the many foods the land provides. We learn about how to harvest and use these gifts with respect. This includes identification, picking using Alaska Native protocols, preparing, preserving, and sharing.

We hope these are helpful tools to use with your students to teach skills that connect them to the land, to their communities, and to their culture.

Gunalchéesh (Thank you),

Chuck Miller, Rain Van Den Berg, and Margie Esquiro

2021



Introduction

The purpose of this curriculum project is to improve the quality of life, connection to local community, and increase work related skills for teens and young adults with disabilities who live in rural Alaska. It is meant to provide guidance in how traditional values and knowledge can be incorporated into Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for youth who experience disabilities as part of their required transition goals. The skills are meant to create options for youth with disabilities to engage in their communities and culture as they transition to adults. Though each chapter of this project ties to the cultural values and topics of a specific region of Alaska, the skills can be used and adapted more broadly.

In the Dillingham project, we focused on basic skills to engage youth in the subsistence fishery. It was written for youth with IEPs who have a higher level of functional needs. The curriculum wove in Yup'ik values, but the content can be used in many places around Alaska where fishing and life near cold water are part of daily life. In the Kotzebue project, we focused on self-employment and financial literacy skills for those who would want to create work experiences and have more independence managing resources. We also introduced Iñupiaq sewing as a way to explore an important art form and connect to cultural knowledge.

This chapter of the project is focused on Stewardship and Harvest on the Land in Southeast Alaska. It is written to be adapted to a variety of learners. The examples and learning stories reflect life in the Southeast region, but can easily be adapted with parallel examples in other regions of Alaska. The berries unit contains much that is relevant to other regions, as every Alaska region harvests berries.

Alaska Cultural Standards: Each lesson is tied to the Alaskan Cultural Standards developed by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. A summary document of these standards is included in the appendix.

There are two units in this curriculum: *Stewardship and Harvesting from the Land* and an *Introduction to Southeast Alaska Native Carving Skills*.

Each lesson has these components:

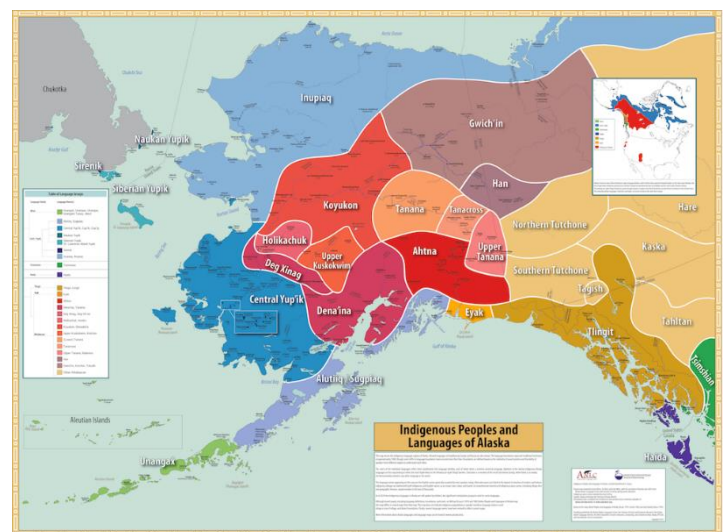
- Overview
- Link to Alaska Cultural Standards
- Link to Southeast Tribal values
- Learning objectives
- Materials including commercial resources (websites, videos, books)
- Vocabulary used in the lesson

- Activities (with adaptation ideas for different abilities)
- Learning stories
- Evaluation
- Resources
- Student handout(s)
- Instructor handout(s)/teaching tools

Social Skill development: There are many opportunities through the lessons to intentionally practice social skills that will support developing skills of empathy, reciprocity, independence, and confidence. Practice how to speak respectfully to an Elder or culture bearer who comes as a guest, and practice helping each other during the activities. These are core skills to being part of a community, and will serve the student well in their adult years. [These skills relate to the Alaska Content Standards: Skills for a Healthy Life.](#)

Southeast Tribal values: Each lesson is tied to [Southeast Tribal values](#). Suggestions are made of which values to highlight, along with discussion points. These values are the foundation for learning the skills presented. The values can be discussed as they relate to the learning stories, how guest speakers model the values, or how the values motivate the learning of these skills. Incorporation of this aspect can help make connections to tribal values and traditions, and build more meaningful ties to their culture as the students move to adulthood. The values listed are those used by the school districts and tribal organizations of Southeast Alaska, from “Our Way of Life”: Developed, adapted and approved at 200 Elders forum on Traditional Values. Appendix 2 is the Southeast Tribal Values in Tlingit from <http://www.goldbeltheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Tlingit-Values-Translated.pdf>.

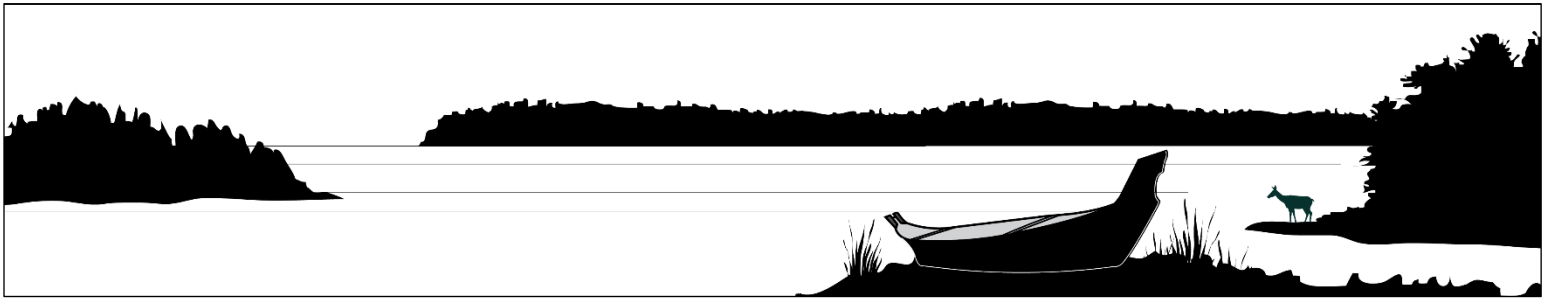
Traditional Lands of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples. You can better understand the traditional Native lands of Alaska through study of the Alaska Native Languages map. Here you can see the traditional lands of the Tlingit in brown, Haida in dark purple, and Tsimshian peoples in green. This map is a good way to understand the inherent diversity of people, cultures, languages, and traditions within the Indigenous peoples of Alaska. Visit this interactive version of the map online: <http://www.alaskool.org/language/languagemap/index.html>



Goal Setting : Goal setting and problem solving are key skills for young adults as they navigate transition. The steps of setting a goal, knowing the actions you will take to achieve it, and reflection on reaching the target are key to effective goal setting. Knowing how to set achievable goals is an important way to build self-efficacy, confidence, and independence. The structure of the lessons reinforces goal setting skills by being transparent to the students about the learning objectives and how the learning objectives will be met. Every lesson also contains a brief reflection on what they learned in the lesson, and if the learning objectives were met. The lessons always start by asking what the students already know so that the content can be tailored to build on the individual experience level of the students.

Learning Stories: Indigenous ways of teaching and learning depend on stories passed down from the Elders to the next generations. Bringing in culture bearers, Elders, and other kinds of experts can bring the content to life and make it more memorable. Having the students share stories can be important for connecting content to their personal experiences. You can find excellent guidance for how to invite an Elder or culture bearer in the classroom in the introduction to the *Predicting Weather* curriculum on page (accessed 1/22): <http://ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/Units/PredictingWeather/PredictingWeather.pdf>

Note to readers: At the time of publication, “Tlingit” is the spelling being most widely used to refer to one of the groups of indigenous people in Southeast Alaska and the name of their language. In the Tlingit language itself, the correct spelling is “Lingít,” where the “L” is referred to by linguists, as a voiceless “L.” It is pronounced with the tip of your tongue pushed up behind your top front teeth and blowing air straight out on both sides of your tongue. Both *Tlingit* and *Lingít* mean the same thing.



Stewardship and Harvesting from the Land

This unit introduces Southeast Traditional Tribal Values, Stewardship and the Seasons of Harvest, Safety while Harvesting on the Land, and Harvesting Berries.

Lesson	Related Handouts
Southeast Alaska Native Tribal Values	Southeast Alaska Tribal Values Handout
	Alaska Native Values Activity and Teacher Resource
Stewardship and Seasons of Harvest	
Stewardship and Respect for the Land	Stewards of the Land Handout
Seasons of Harvest	Living by the Seasons Student Activity Handout
	Harvest Time at the Beach Handout
	Living by the Seasons Handout
	Living by the Seasons Poster
	Harvest Time at the Beach Poster
	Interview with Herman Davis r Teacher Resource
Safety when Harvesting on the Land	
Make a Plan Before You Go	What would you do?
What is in Your Back Pack?	
Seven Steps of Survival	The Seven Steps to Survive Student Handout
Shelters and Signals	
Respect for Bears	Bear Aware Student Handout
Harvesting Berries	
Harvesting Berries in Southeast Alaska	
Preparing and Sharing the Berries of Southeast Alaska	Berry Recipes



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Living Our Values

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the values handed down from the ancestors of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples, and what it means to have values and live by them.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A2, A , A , B2, B , B , C1, C , D1, D5, D , E1, E2, E , E

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- Respect for Self, Elders and Others
- Respect for Nature and Property
- Patience
- Pride in family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity
- Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit
- Humor
- Hold Each Other Up
- Listen Well and with Respect
- Speak with Care
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea
- Reverence for Our Creator
- Live in Peace and Harmony
- Be Strong and Have Courage

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Define what a “value” is.
- Explain why the traditional tribal values are important to the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples.
- Give an example of what “living a value” looks like.
- Give an example of how your values can help you choose how to respond or act.

Materials

- *Southeast Alaska Native Values* student handout
- Teacher resource: *Southeast Alaska Native Values Compass Activity and Discussion Guide*

Vocabulary

Value	Standards and beliefs that you live by.
Traditional	The holistic, practical, and common knowledge that has been gathered over thousands of years of observation and interaction with the land; it is passed on from generation to generation through practice, oral stories, dance, and art.
Respect	A positive feeling or action shown toward someone or something that is seen as important. It is also showing care and concern for their needs or feelings.

Honor To hold something or someone in high regard and to act respectfully.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to learn more about the values of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples of Southeast Alaska. Values are the standards and ideas that guide how you are and what you do in the world. They are like a compass that you carry inside of you, that help you know how to be and act in your life. To learn about this, we will do an activity and share ideas. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to: define what a value is; explain why traditional tribal values are important to the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples; give an example of what it means to "live a value;" and give an example of how values can help you make decisions on what to do or how to act."
- **Before finding out what students already know, ask the following questions:**
 - What is a value? (*A rule or guide for what you think is important.*)
 - What are some examples of cultural values important to the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples? (*Use any from the poster...*)
 - Why are values important? (*They are guides on how to live as our Elders and Ancestors would want us to live to be healthy and strong.*)
- **Introduce the Traditional Tribal Values and read through the poster.** Briefly talk about each one, and a little bit about what it means. If you are in a class with Tlingit students, or in an area where the Tlingit language is spoken, you can use the Tlingit version of the poster.
- **Values Activity :**
 - Give each student a copy of the compass handout. Before the activity, cut out the action and decision point cards, and give each student a set. (If appropriate, you can let the students cut out their own cards, to simplify prep.)
 - Students can work in pairs or individually. An action or decision card is drawn, and set in the middle of the compass. The student then thinks about which values are connected to that action or which values would help them decide what to do in that situation. There are no wrong answers. The purpose of the activity is to help make the ideas a little more concrete, give practice with application, and to help them connect more meaning to the specific values.
 - Depending on the students, this could also be printed as a large poster, with bigger cards, and then done as a whole group.
 - The discussion guide gives suggested prompts in case the students need more modeling to engage with the activity.

Learning stories

- Invite a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to participate in the values activity, and share how cultural values are important.

Evaluation

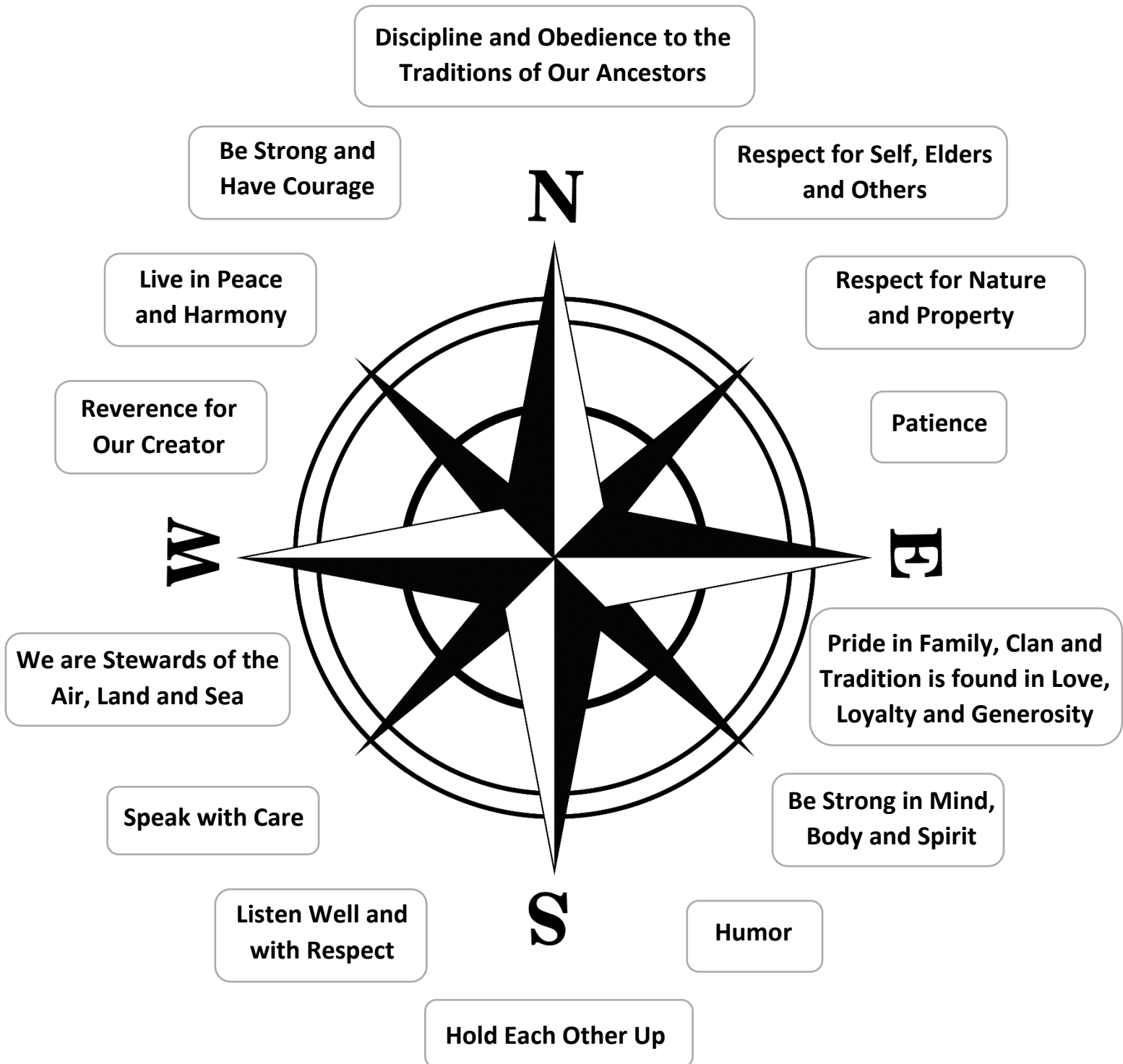
At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What is a “value?”
- Why are values important?
- What is an example of how our values are lived (how they show) in our actions?
- What is an example of how our values help us choose how to act or what to do in our lives?

Additional Resources

- Values videos from Sealaska Heritage Site: <https://www.sealaskaheritage.org/about>
 - **Haa Aaní: Our Land: Honoring & Utilizing our Land** (Haida: Íitl’ Tlagáa; Tsimshian: Na Laxyuubm): Our ancestors, who have lived in this land for more than 10,000 years, taught us that everything has a Spirit. When we utilize our resources, we must acknowledge the Spirits of the Land, Sea and Air and tell them the benefits that their use will bring to our People. Our ancestors protected the ownership of our land for their children and grandchildren just as we must do for future generations. Watch a video short on Haa Aaní produced by students in SHI’s Voice on the Land Program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e277rS6U14o>
 - **Haa Latseení: Our Strength: Strength of Body, Mind, and Spirit** (Haida: Íitl’ Dagwiigáay; Tsimshian: Na Gatlleedm): The “Way of the Warriors” path is to achieve physical and inner strength. Above all, young men and women are taught to protect and to care for their families and clans. They are taught to seek truth and knowledge and to adapt to changing times while maintaining the integrity of our ancient values. Watch a video short on Haa Latseení produced by students in SHI’s Voice on the Land Program: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgiDt_7v1i8
 - **Haa Shuká: Past, Present, and Future Generations: Honoring our Ancestors and Future Generations** (Haida: Íitl’ Kuníisii; Tsimshian: Na Łagigyetgm): We maintain strong bonds with our ancestors whom we honor through our lives and in our ceremonies. We also have responsibilities to our future generations, and we must ensure that we protect our land and culture for our children and grandchildren and those who will follow them. Watch a video short on Haa Shuká produced by students in SHI’s Voice on the Land Program: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3_alY5CnMM
 - **Wooch Yáx: Balance: Social and Spiritual Balance** (Haida: Gu dlúu; Tsimshian: Ama Mackshm): Wooch Yáx must be maintained to ensure social and spiritual harmony lest ill will goes wandering and causes harm. Wooch Yáx governs interrelationships between Eagle and Raven clans and interrelationships between the Tlingit and others, including tribes, nations and institutions. Wooch Yáx includes Kaa yaa awuné or Respect for Others and Át yaa awuné or Respect for All Things. Wooch Yáx requires that our People and our organizations conduct business with Yán gaa doonéekw or “Dignity,” realizing that everything has its rightful place and that all action and business must be done with integrity. *The link to this video is no longer available as of June, 2025.*

Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian (Southeast Alaska) Values Compass

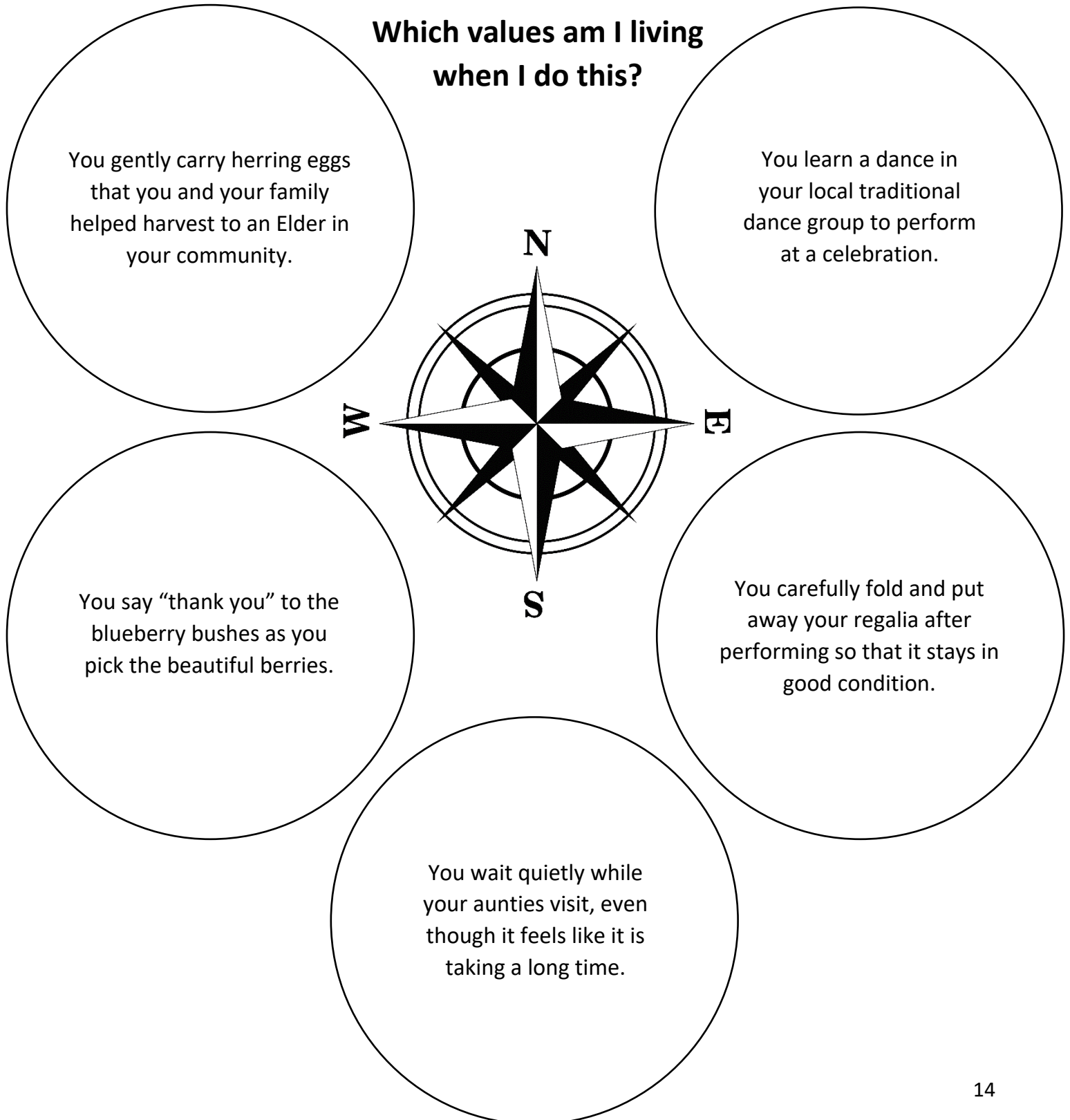


Southeast Traditional Tribal Values developed, adapted and approved at 2004 Elders forum on Traditional Values

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Southeast Alaska Values Compass Activity: Cut out these circles containing actions a person could take. You can place them in the center of the Values Compass (Student Handout) and then decide which values are connected to that action. There is no wrong answer!

**Which values am I living
when I do this?**



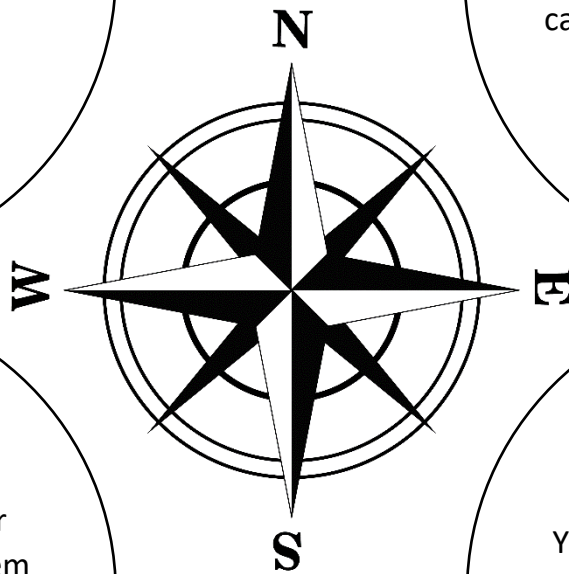
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Southeast Alaska Values Compass Activity: Cut out these circles containing actions a person could take. You can place them in the center of the Values Compass (Student Handout) and then decide which values are connected to that action. There is no wrong answer!

**Which values am I
living when I do this?**

You help carry heavy bins of
firewood and stack it in the shed
at your neighbor's house.

You enjoy being on the land as
you hike to a favorite place you
can look out to see the ocean.



You joke around with your
brother or sister to help them
feel better when you see they
are a little sad.

You listen as an Elder shares a
story, and think about what the
story means.

You choose your words carefully
so as not to hurt your friend's
feelings when telling them you
cannot go with them on a trip.

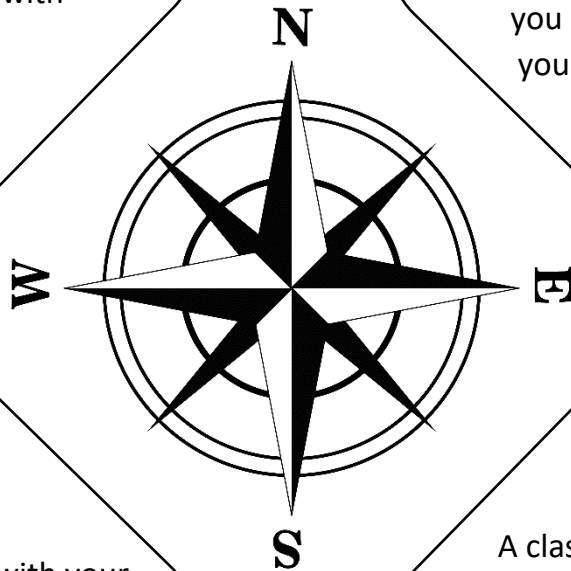
This page is intentionally left blank for printing the compass activity handouts.

Southeast Alaska Values Compass Activity: Cut out these shapes containing decisions a person could use values to make. You can place them in the center of the Values Compass (Student Handout) and then decide which values are connected to that decision. There is no wrong answer!

**Which values help me
decide what to do?**

Your auntie asks for your help moving boxes. You were planning on playing video games with a friend.

You are picking berries and it is getting late. You are using your berry picker faster to try to get as many berries as you can before you have to leave. You notice your speed is breaking more branches.



You are harvesting berries with your family, when you realize you no longer hear them. You call out, and no one answers.

A classmate has asked you to share your answers on homework so they can get it done faster. You don't feel this is right.

Your friend is angry and upset, and they show this by yelling and throwing things.

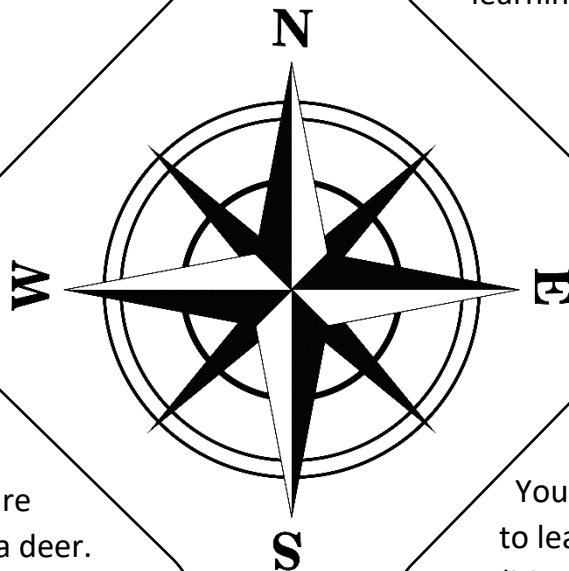
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Southeast Alaska Values Compass Activity: Cut out these shapes containing decisions a person could use values to make. You can place them in the center of the Values Compass (Student Handout) and then decide which values are connected to that decision. There is no wrong answer!

**Which values help me
decide what to do?**

At school, a classmate makes fun
of your friend in a way that hurts
their feelings.

Your friend wants you to skip
your traditional dance practice,
but you are looking forward to
learning and practicing with your
dance group.



Your uncle and you are
hunting, and he wounds a deer.
It is early afternoon, and a long way to
walk home, and it has started to rain.
Do you track it, even if it means
getting home late?

You watch your grandfather
to learn how to carve. He uses
traditional tools and ways he learned
from his uncle. You are carving a mask
and think of a way to get it done
faster, that is not how
you were taught.

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Southeast Alaska Native Values Activity Discussion

Students place each of the **action cards** in the center of their compass and ask themselves, “Which values am I living when I do this?” The goal is for students to engage with the values and make connections. There are no wrong answers. The discussion suggestions show ways a teacher can model the connections, if needed.

Action	Possible Values that Connect	Discussion Suggestions
You gently carry herring eggs that you and your family helped harvest to an Elder in your community.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Nature and Property Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Hold Each Other Up We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea Reverence for Our Creator Live in Peace and Harmony Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You show your respect for nature and the traditions of harvest and sharing in the wealth of the harvest by helping with the herring. You show respect for nature and property by being careful with the herring branches. You show generosity and love through your actions, which reflects well on your family and clan.</i>
You learn a dance in your local traditional dance group to perform at a celebration.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Patience Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Listen Well and with Respect Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You learn the dance and connect to the ways of your Ancestors. You are strong as you practice and memorize the movements. You listen and watch your teachers with respect. You do your best to show strength of spirit and respect.</i>
You say “thank you” to the blueberry bushes as you pick the beautiful berries.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Respect for Nature and Property We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea Reverence for Our Creator	<i>We are grateful for the land and the plants and animals that sustain us. We take care of them so they will provide for us in the future. Saying thank you as you pick shows respect and is what our Ancestors did.</i>
You carefully fold and put away your regalia after performing so that it stays in good condition.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Respect for Nature and Property	<i>You show respect to tradition and the ways of the Ancestors through how you care for your regalia. Your regalia represents your connection to your family and clan. You treat it with respect.</i>

(Continues)

Action	Possible Values that Connect	Discussion Suggestions
You wait quietly while your aunts visit, even though it feels like it is taking a long time.	Respect for Self, Elders and Others Patience Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Listen Well and with Respect Live in Peace and Harmony	<i>You show respect and generosity by waiting patiently for your aunts to finish visiting. It is one way to show love. It promotes peace and harmony.</i>
You help carry heavy bins of firewood and stack it in the shed at your neighbor's house.	Respect for Self, Elders and Others Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Hold Each Other Up Live in Peace and Harmony	<i>You use the strength of your body to support family and community. You show respect for your family as you are generous with helping a neighbor. You promote peace and harmony in your community when you help others.</i>
You enjoy being on the land as you hike to a favorite place you can look out to see the ocean.	Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea Reverence for Our Creator	<i>You keep your body in shape and your mind and spirit healthy when you spend time on the land. Connecting with the land and the beauty around you connects you to the land and to your ancestors.</i>
You joke around with your brother or sister to help them feel better when you see they are a little sad.	Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Humor Hold Each Other Up Listen Well and with Respect Speak with Care Live in Peace and Harmony	<i>Using humor to cheer someone up shows your love and caring for them. It promotes peace and harmony. It shows you respect them.</i>
You listen as an Elder shares a story, and think about what the story means.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Patience Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Humor Listen Well and with Respect	<i>Traditional stories are how our Ancestors passed down knowledge about how to live and be. The lessons aren't always obvious, so it helps to take time to reflect. By connecting to these stories, we honor our Elders and the wisdom they share.</i>
You choose your words carefully so as not to hurt your friend's feelings when telling them you cannot go with them on a trip.	Respect for Self, Elders and Others Hold Each Other Up Speak with Care Live in Peace and Harmony Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You show respect to your friend by considering their feelings and choosing your words carefully. You can let them know you do care for them, but you will have to go with them another time.</i>

Students place each of the **decision cards** in the center of their compass and ask themselves, “Which values help me decide what to do?” The goal is for students to engage with the values and make connections. There are no wrong answers. The discussion suggestions show ways a teacher can model the connections, if needed.

Decision	Possible Values that Connect	Discussion Suggestions
Your auntie asks for your help moving boxes. You were planning on playing video games with a friend.	Respect for Self, Elders and Others Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Hold Each Other Up Listen Well and with Respect Live in Peace and Harmony	<i>You want to help your auntie as it is important to help family members and to be generous with them. You want to keep peace with your friend. Maybe you can help your auntie first, then go spend time with your friend. They will understand.</i>
You are picking berries and it is getting late. You are using your berry picker faster to try to get as many berries as you can before you have to leave. You notice your speed is breaking more branches.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Respect for Nature and Property Patience Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea Reverence for Our Creator	<i>In our tradition, we take care of the plants that provide for us. We show respect through our actions. We can slow down, and only pick the number of berries we can doing it the right and respectful way. We are stewards of the land, and need to show that respect and reverence for our Creator.</i>
You are harvesting berries with your family, when you realize you no longer hear them. You call out, and no one answers.	Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Humor We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea Reverence for Our Creator Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You can be strong and have courage. You can feel connected to the land and know you are safe. You can use humor with yourself to calm down and avoid panic. You can use your strength of mind, body, and spirit to decide the best thing to do next.</i>
A classmate has asked you to share your answers on homework so they can get it done faster. You don't feel this is right.	Respect for Self, Elders and Others Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Speak with Care Live in Peace and Harmony Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>If you share, are you respecting yourself or respecting what the Elders would want you to do? If you say no, and stand up for what you feel is right, you are being strong and having courage. You can choose your words carefully to maintain peace and harmony.</i>
Your friend is angry and upset, and they show this by yelling and throwing things.	Respect for Nature and Property Humor Hold Each Other Up Speak with Care Live in Peace and Harmony Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You can choose how you respond. You can have courage to be with your friend when they are upset. You can show that you care for them, and work to restore harmony through your words, humor, and by being with them.</i>
Decision	Possible Values that Connect	Discussion Suggestions

At school, a classmate makes fun of your friend in a way that hurts their feelings.	Respect for Self, Elders and Others Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Humor Hold Each Other Up Speak with Care Live in Peace and Harmony Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You think before you respond. You are loyal to your friend, and want to do the right thing. You can show your friend you care, and show them support. You choose carefully how you respond to your classmate, as you want to maintain peace and harmony. You can choose how you act, even if others are not showing respect.</i>
Your friend wants you to skip your traditional dance practice, but you are looking forward to learning and practicing with your dance group.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Speak with Care Live in Peace and Harmony Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You enjoy the dance group, and feel connected to the group and what you are learning. Your dancing connects you to the Ancestors and pride in your family and clan. If that is more important than what your friend wants, you can use your words carefully and explain that you do not want to miss it, and you can do something with them another time.</i>
Your uncle and you are hunting, and he wounds a deer. It is early afternoon, and a long way to walk home, and it has started to rain. Do you track it, even if it means getting home late?	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Respect for Nature and Property Patience Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Hold Each Other Up Listen Well and with Respect We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea Reverence for Our Creator Be Strong and Have Courage	<i>You know it is important to follow the deer so it is not wasted. It will take strength, courage, working together, patience, and listening to your uncle to find and bring home the deer. It is the way of our Ancestors.</i>
You watch your grandfather carve using traditional tools, just as he learned from his uncle. While carving your own mask, you think of a faster way—but it's not the way you were taught.	Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors Respect for Self, Elders and Others Patience Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit Listen Well and with Respect Live in Peace and Harmony	<i>The ways of the Ancestors were developed over thousands of years, and are done for a reason. It is more important to have a good result, and to listen and put in the time needed. It shows respect to your grandfather, Elders, and your family when you are disciplined and follow the ways he has taught you.</i>



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Stewardship: Respect for the Land, Air and Sea

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about stewardship and the relationship the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples had with the land that provided for them.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, D5, E1, E2, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Define what stewardship means
- Discuss why stewardship is important
- Describe three specific ways we show respect for and take care of the land
- Describe how respect for the air, land, and sea was important for the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples

Materials

- *Stewards of the Land* student handout

Vocabulary

Steward	The person who cares for something they are responsible for.
Stewardship	Taking care of something that has been given to you to be responsible for.
Respect	A positive feeling or action shown toward someone or something that is seen as important. It is also showing care and concern for their needs or feelings.
Honor	To hold something or someone in high regard and to act respectfully.
Utilize	To make good use of something.
Resources	Materials that satisfy our needs and wants. Resources can be renewable (it comes back, like blueberries), or non-renewable (once it is used, it is gone).

- Sustainable** Managing something in a balanced way so that it lasts and can continue to be used. Natural resources are managed so that they will continue to support life.
- Subsistence** The native practice of harvesting, preserving, and sharing natural resources to feed, clothe, and house their communities.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to start to learn about stewardship and the relationship the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples of Southeast Alaska had with the air, land, and sea. To learn about this, we will share ideas, and look at a video. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to explain what stewardship means, and why it is important; you will be able to give examples of what respect for the land looks like; and you will be able to describe how respect for the air, land, and sea was important for the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - What does it mean to be a good steward? What is stewardship? (*Taking care of something.*)
 - What are some examples of stewardship of the air, land, and sea? (*Picking up trash, expressing gratitude when harvesting from the land, not taking more than you will use when harvesting, taking care of the plants and animals, not polluting the air and water...*)
 - Why was taking care of the land important to the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples? (*The people relied on the land and what it provided for survival: shelter, food, and heat.*)
 - How did the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples see the animals, plants, and trees? (*Everything had spirit. People were one community among communities of animals and trees. When an animal, tree, or plant was harvested, it was done with respect and gratitude.*)
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors (*Traditions of respect and the care for the land that gives us what we need.*)
 - We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea (*We are connected to the land and rely on the land to live and thrive. These ways continue to keep the land healthy for us and our children and grandchildren. This value helps us make sure the things we need (fish, trees, water, clean air) will be here for us for a long time.*)
 - Reverence for Our Creator (*Feeling connected to the land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being.*)
- Watch the video [Subsistence in Southeast Alaska: The Tongass National Forest Service's Fisheries Resource Monitoring](#) (12:00) and discuss. This video by the Sitka Conservation Society shares the core values of honoring and using the land with respect.

Suggested questions:

- How did the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples live and survive in Southeast Alaska for over 10,000 years? (*They took care of the land, they didn't take more than they needed for living.*)
- What are natural resources? (*Things in nature that people use for living and making what they need.*)
- What subsistence foods did they talk about in the film? (*Salmon, berries, kelp, herring eggs, beach asparagus*)
- What is the link between the National Forest and resource monitoring? Why is this kind of monitoring important for the health of subsistence resources and the health of the forests?
- Points of discussion for this lesson:
 - Respect: What does respect for the land and water look like?
 - The people relied on the land and trees to survive, people's connectedness to the land is what sustained them.
 - We are part of the land and sea, not separate. We do not exist without them. We take care of the land and the land takes care of us. Examples: When you care for a blueberry plant, it will produce again for you next year. When you take fish responsibly and don't waste it, you are showing respect and are more likely to have fish the next year.
 - Reflect on what our relationship to the land means now, and why it is important.
- Wisdom from an Elder: Discuss the *Stewards of the Land* handout, and what Tlingit Elder Herman Davis, Jr. shared about how we show respect for the land.

Learning stories

- Ask the students to share about their favorite places outside and how they help take care of those places.
- Tell a story with the student input about a youth going onto the land and what they did there to explore, enjoy, and respect the land. Picture what they can see and experience when they go out into the land. If you can get a copy of *Lingít Aanée* by Patricia Partnow, Illustrated by Jeanette Bailey from the library or interlibrary loan, it would go well with this activity.
- Invite a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to share a story or explain how the cultural values of respect for the air, land, and sea were important to the peoples of Southeast Alaska, and what it looked like.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What does “stewardship” mean?
- Why is stewardship important?
- What are (at least) three specific ways we show respect for and take care of the land?
- How was respect for the air, land, and sea important for the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples?

Additional Resources

- **Haa Aaní: Our Land: Honoring & Utilizing our Land** (Haida: Íitl’ Tlagáa; Tsimshian: Na Laxyuubm): Our Ancestors, who have lived in this land for more than 10,000 years, taught us that everything has a Spirit. When we utilize our resources, we must acknowledge the Spirits of the Land, Sea and Air and tell them the benefits that their use will bring to our People. Our ancestors protected the ownership of our land for their children and grandchildren just as we must do for future generations. Watch a video short on Haa Aaní produced by students in SHI’s Voice on the Land Program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e277rS6U14o>
 - Suggested discussion question: What is sustainable harvesting? (*Not taking more than the land can replace and sustain. Examples: if you go to pick berries, you don’t pick all of the berries, but you leave some to act as seeds so there will be berries next year. If you are harvesting an animal, you make sure you don’t take too many so those animals will be there the next year to hunt.*)
- *The Last American Rainforest* (1997) by Shelley Gill and Shannon Cartwright. This is a children’s book, but it shares some good information about the Tongass National Forest.
- *Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee, Our Food Is Our Tlingit Way of Life Excerpts From Oral Interviews* Richard G. Newton and Madonna L. Moss (2009). This contains many excellent quotes from Elders on the importance of subsistence to sustaining life and cultural values. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x005111967&seq=1>
- *Lingít Aanée* by Patricia Partnow, Illustrated by Jeanette Bailey (1980?) from the library or interlibrary loan. Beautiful book with wood block print illustrations about going onto the land in Southeast Alaska.

Stewards of the Land

Herman Davis, Jr., L'éiwtu Éesh, Respected Elder and clan leader of the L'uknax.ádi (Coho Salmon Clan) and his nephew Chuck Miller, Daanax.ils'eik, share what it means to show respect for the land.

All people need to remember to have respect for the land: we call it Haa Aaní (Our Land). The land provided everything we needed.

Show respect for the land by doing these things:

- Only take what you need, and leave the rest
- Clean up after yourself and don't pollute
- Always share your food with others, sharing the food you get from the land and sea is important.



Your turn:

What do you and your family enjoy harvesting and sharing from the land?

How do you show respect for the land, when you go to harvest?

Why is it important to take care of the land, air, and sea?

Photo credit: Detail from photo of Elders at the Sitka Conference in 2012, from Sharing Our Knowledge website.
<https://www.kcaw.org/2017/10/13/tlingit-tribes-clans-gather-sitka-biennial-conference/>



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Seasons of Harvest

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the seasons of harvest the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples practiced to sustain their communities. The idea of seasons and what is harvested at certain times of the yearly cycle are explored. This lesson could be organized over 1–3 sessions.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, D5, E1, E2, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- List the months of the year that go with each season.
- Discuss how the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples thought about the seasons.
- Identify plants and animals people harvest in Southeast Alaska in a brainstorming activity.
- List the plants and animals harvested in each season on a student handout.

Materials

- A way to project the *Living by the Seasons* and *Harvest Time at the Beach* posters.
- Student handouts: *Living by the Seasons* and *Harvest Time at the Beach*
- Teacher Resource: Interview with Tlingit Elder Herman Davis, Jr.

Vocabulary

Preserve	To dry, smoke, can fresh foods so they can last longer and be eaten during times that fresh foods are not available for harvest.
Resources	Materials that satisfy our needs and wants. Resources can be renewable (it comes back, like blueberries), or non-renewable (once it is used, it is gone). Some resources do return, but they take a long time to come back. A forest cut down for lumber may take 40 years or longer to regrow.

Season	A time of year marked by certain weather and sunlight patterns and the harvest of plants and animals from the land. Seasons can be divided into four -month long seasons (spring, summer, fall and winter) or traditionally as winter and summer as the two main seasons, with small transition seasons of spring and fall in between.
Subsistence	The native practice of harvesting, preserving, and sharing natural resources to feed, clothe, and house their communities.
Sustainable	Managing something in a balanced way so that it lasts and can continue to be used. Natural resources are managed so that they will continue to support life.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to start to learn about the seasons of harvest that were important to the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples of Southeast Alaska. To learn about this, we will share ideas, brainstorm, and complete an activity. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to: List the months of the year that go with each season; Describe how the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples thought about the seasons; and Identify plants and animals people harvest in Southeast Alaska in each season on a student handout."
- **Before finding out what students already know, ask the following questions:**
 - What is a season? What are examples of seasons? (*Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter.*)
 - How do you know what season it is? (*By the weather: winter is cold, summer is warmer...Certain seasons go with certain months...*)
 - Do you know how the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples thought about the seasons? (*They had four seasons, but they were not 3 months each. Winter and summer were the main seasons, with spring and summer being very short seasons. Months were named by what was harvested at that time, or what was important to the people at that time.*)
 - Why is it important to know the best time to harvest foods and plants that are important to harvest? (*If you get the food at the best time, it will be the best quality, you will be able to get more of what you need, and it may not be available any other time. Examples: the people had to wait to get the salmon when they came into the streams, and the berries once they were ripe on the bushes.*)
 - What food does your family harvest from the land? What time of year do you get those foods? (*If students have experience gathering from the land, spend some time hearing from them. Build on their experiences.*)
 - What does it mean to preserve food? (*To prepare it in a way that it can last and be eaten later when that food is no longer available to harvest. Food had to be preserved to feed the people through the long winter when there wasn't very many kinds of plants and animals to be harvested for food.*)

- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors (*Traditions of respect and the care for the land that gives us what we need.*)
 - We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea (*We are connected to the land and rely on the land to live and thrive. These ways continue to keep the land healthy for us and our children and grandchildren. This value helps us make sure the things we need (fish, trees, water, clean air) will be here for us for a long time.*)
 - Reverence for Our Creator (*Feeling connected to the land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being. Appreciating the gifts of this rich land that continues to provide for us.*)

- **Traditional Seasons:**

In the past, the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples thought of the seasons a little differently than we do now. Rather than 4 seasons that were 3 months each, they had winter (Tlingit: *tak*) and summer (Tlingit: *kootan*), with a short spring (Tlingit: *tak eta*, which means “after winter”) and a short fall (Tlingit: *yass*, which translates to “change to winter”) (*The Tlingit Indians*, page 424). Winter was a time for ceremonies and storytelling. The people lived by what they had gathered and preserved as most food sources are not available for harvest during the winter months. Summer was the time to gather and preserve food for the following winter. Spring and Fall were not a specific range of time, but the brief transitions between the season of gathering and the longer cold season.

Months were based on the cycle of the moon. The year was divided into 12 or 13 months. The year began in or around July. Some months had several ways they were referred to, based on what was happening with the plants and animals at that time. Here are some examples of the names of the months: July was the salmon moon; August was referred to as “berries on the mountain”, “Hair” referring to when animals shed their hair, “woman” as the female animals were ready to conceive; September was “child or little moon”, referring to the weaning of young, and less abundant food; October was “big moon” referring to animals being in prime condition for harvest, wild birds being abundant, and the returning to winter villages with the summer stock of food; November was “digging or scratching moon” referring to bears digging and preparing to den. For the complete list of months, refer to *The Tlingit Indians*, page 425.

- **Living by the Seasons Activity:**

- Ask the students to brainstorm all of the foods that can be harvested and used by the people of Southeast Alaska.
- Share the posters *Living by the Seasons* and *Harvest Time at the Beach* see if they included those plants and animals in the brainstorm.
- Discuss what season each plant or animal is harvested, and have the students write them into their handout in the appropriate section.
- If you can, take the students outside and explore the beach to see if you can find any of the foods on the handout.

- **atchin a e:** Match a selection of the main plants and animals that are harvested to the season/month they are harvested. This can be on a worksheet, or pictures placed under columns showing the months/seasons.
- **hat A a e**
 - This is a guessing game where players use “yes” or “no” questions to guess the identity of an animal or plant. Questions are based upon the traits and characteristics of an animal or plant everyone will be able to identify after the harvest by the seasons brainstorm activity. This game works well with any size group. The game can take as little as 10–15 minutes. Pick some of the better known plants and animals to use in the game. You can use pictures of animals or plants, or names of plants and animals written on notecards or sticky notes.
 - Everyone receives a sticky note or note card with the name of an animal or plant. The name is placed on either the person’s forehead or upper back with a piece of tape. Players circulate and ask “yes” or “no” questions until everyone has identified the name on their own sticky note or card. Encourage players to move throughout the room, mingling and asking each other questions. Once a player guesses their character’s identity correctly, they can continue to play answering the questions other players ask, or you can decide they need to wait in an area away from the other players.
 - Adaptation: each player can take a turn in front of the group with their card facing out, and the individual can ask the group questions. This version may take a little longer to play.
 - It helps if the teacher has a card ready for themselves and models asking questions. Or lists ideas for questions in front of the class. Examples of questions:
 - Am I an animal? (land animal? ocean animal, fish? bird?)
 - Do I have legs? (fins? wings? antlers?)
 - Am I a plant?
 - Do I live on the land? (in the forest? in the water, at the beach?)
 - Do you eat my berries? (roots? whole plant?)
 - What season am I harvested?

Learning stories

- Ask the students to share about their favorite foods that their families harvest. When and where are they harvested? How are they preserved for later use? Ask the students to share how they participate in the harvest or food preservation, if applicable.
- **isdo fro culture earer aa w an awn ackson Tsaa weidi a H t aach. adi adi iller hale Clan ellow Cedar House** (from interview with Margie Esquiro, / /21). Read Kaaxw an’s words to the students, and discuss: *“In my own personal life I always found peace out the road, or picking berries, or harvesting some medicine, or learning about more medicines, and baking, making things to give away. There are so many things you can make!*

Our parents, grandparents were taken away to boarding schools and we are just being reintroduced to avenues of wellness and healing, putting things back into balance.

Well, my grandmas did take us out when we were small, growing up; my Aunties did take us out when we were small, growing up; my mom, I was her shadow, she was a master harvester. It was just part of us growing up, living the seasons. The excitement of herring eggs, and grouse, they spearheaded spring, that was just spring for us, we were living the seasons. Spring was for harvesting bark for weaving, then harvesting red kelp, to black seaweed, then the berries started popping out.

We had and still have our own trading partners over in Sitka. I trade them for seaweed whenever they send the eggs over.

I am still a student of the land that I live on and it's just an honor and a privilege, not just gaining the knowledge from my mom but from elders in the community, from other people who answer questions. It's a never ending journey of learning. I don't think, I will ever know enough. I've been blessed to come from a family (despite the hardships of my parents and grandparents of being separated from their families). They ingrained in us the importance and getting your western education and come back to share what you learned and encourage others.

Of all people we (Tlingit people) know what is out there because we live it and when I harvest berries or medicine it is really important how I prepare myself. It is remembering what I learned through life and making myself ready, to expect the unexpected but prepare...

Mentally, I just feel like I vibrate out of my skin out there. There is an energy when I am out in the muskeg. They are special, they are old and anything that grows in the muskeg is rich. You can feel it, they have a certain smell, there is a richness to the air... I grew up in the forest with my parents. I am really heartened to see more and more younger people starting to be more and more curious about harvesting in the forest. And it's really nice to share what I do in the forest with them. You never know the impact of taking a child into the forest and whatever they would pick they would bring home to their parents! I know that it's the healthiest food that you can have!"

Questions for discussion: What does Dawn mean when she says she is "still a student of the land?" What kinds of things does Dawn harvest from the land? What does she enjoy about harvesting from the land? How does she feel when she is on the land?

- Read the interview (or sections of it) with Elder Herman Davis, Jr. and discuss with the students all of the things that Herman remembered harvesting as he grew up. What foods have the students tried? What would they like to try?
- Invite a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to share a story or explain how seasons of harvest were important to the peoples of Southeast Alaska or how certain plants/animals were traditionally harvested or preserved.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What are the months of the year that go with each season?
- How did the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples think about seasons?
- What are some important plants and animals that people harvest in Southeast Alaska?
- What seasons are the most important for harvesting and preserving food?

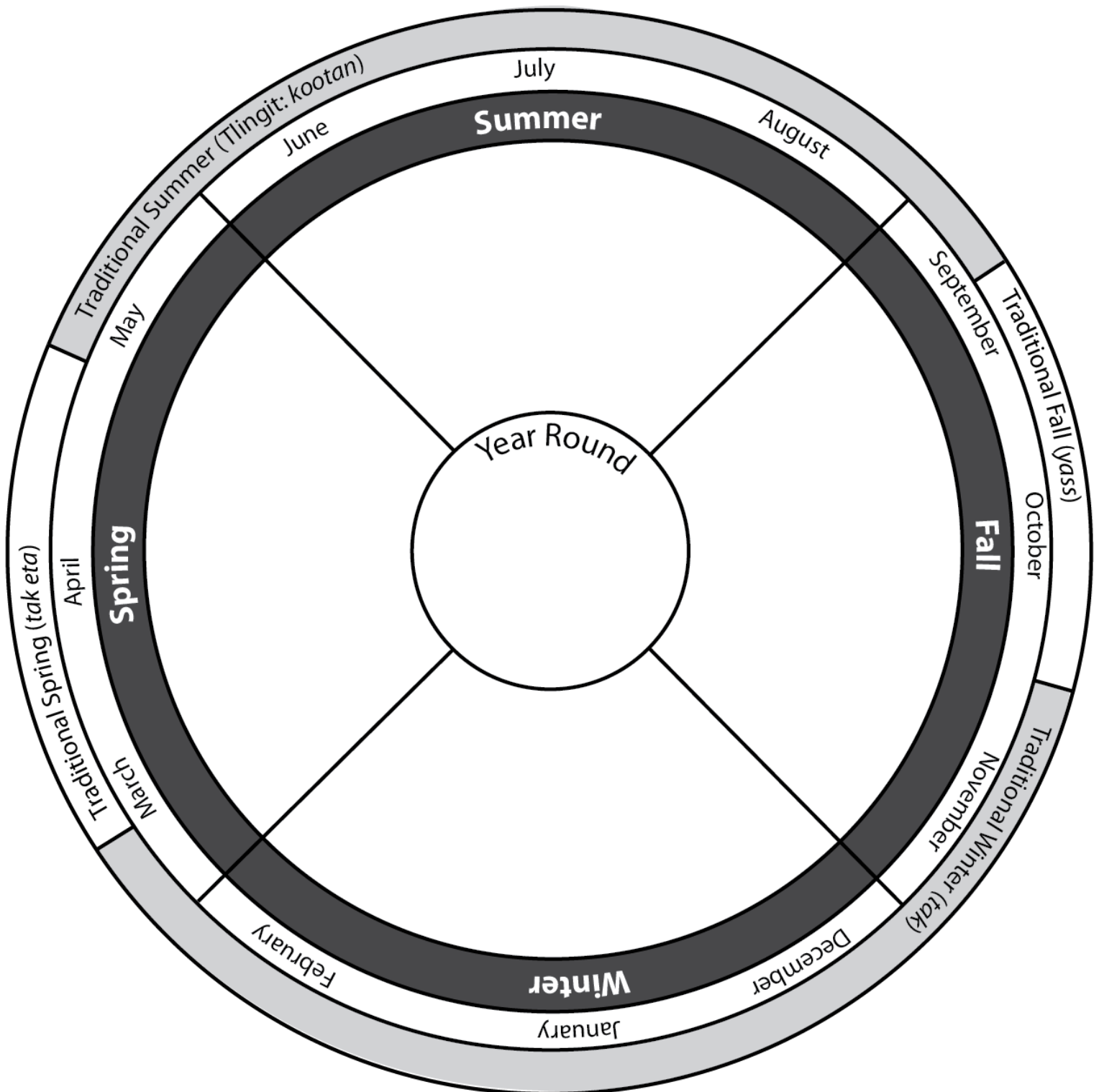
Additional Resources

- [***Subsistence in Southeast Alaska: The Tongass National Forest Service's Fisheries Resource Monitoring*** \(12:00\)](#) and discuss. This video by the Sitka Conservation Society shares the core values of honoring and using the land with respect.
- ***Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide*** by SEARHC: Excellent resource with quality pictures and instructions on when to harvest important foods. <https://searhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Southeast-Alaska-Traditional-Foods-Guide.pdf>
- ***Dawn Jackson – Wild Foods 2019 (13:11)***: This video is a keynote talk given by Kaaxwáan, Dawn Jackson. After her introduction, she shares a video of her grandfather speaking in 1971 (difficult to hear). At minute 6:24 she begins speaking about her love of harvest and a project to monitor and protect the land. She speaks of how practicing traditional ways of harvesting food is a crucial part of healing for indigenous peoples. <https://vimeo.com/377126150>
- ***Traditional Foods Resource Guide***. Recipes and nutrition information for many traditional animals and plants eaten around Alaska. Focus on the Alaska specific cards: <http://keepitsacred.itcmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Traditional-Foods-Resource-Guide.pdf>
- ***The Tlingit Indians*** by George Thornton Emmons (1991) is a comprehensive and respected collection of information about the Tlingit people and traditions.
- *Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee, Our Food Is Our Tlingit Way of Life Excerpts From Oral Interviews* Richard G. Newton and Madonna L. Moss (2009). This contains many excellent quotes from Elders on the importance of subsistence to sustaining life and cultural values. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x005111967&seq=1>

All links verified 8-2025

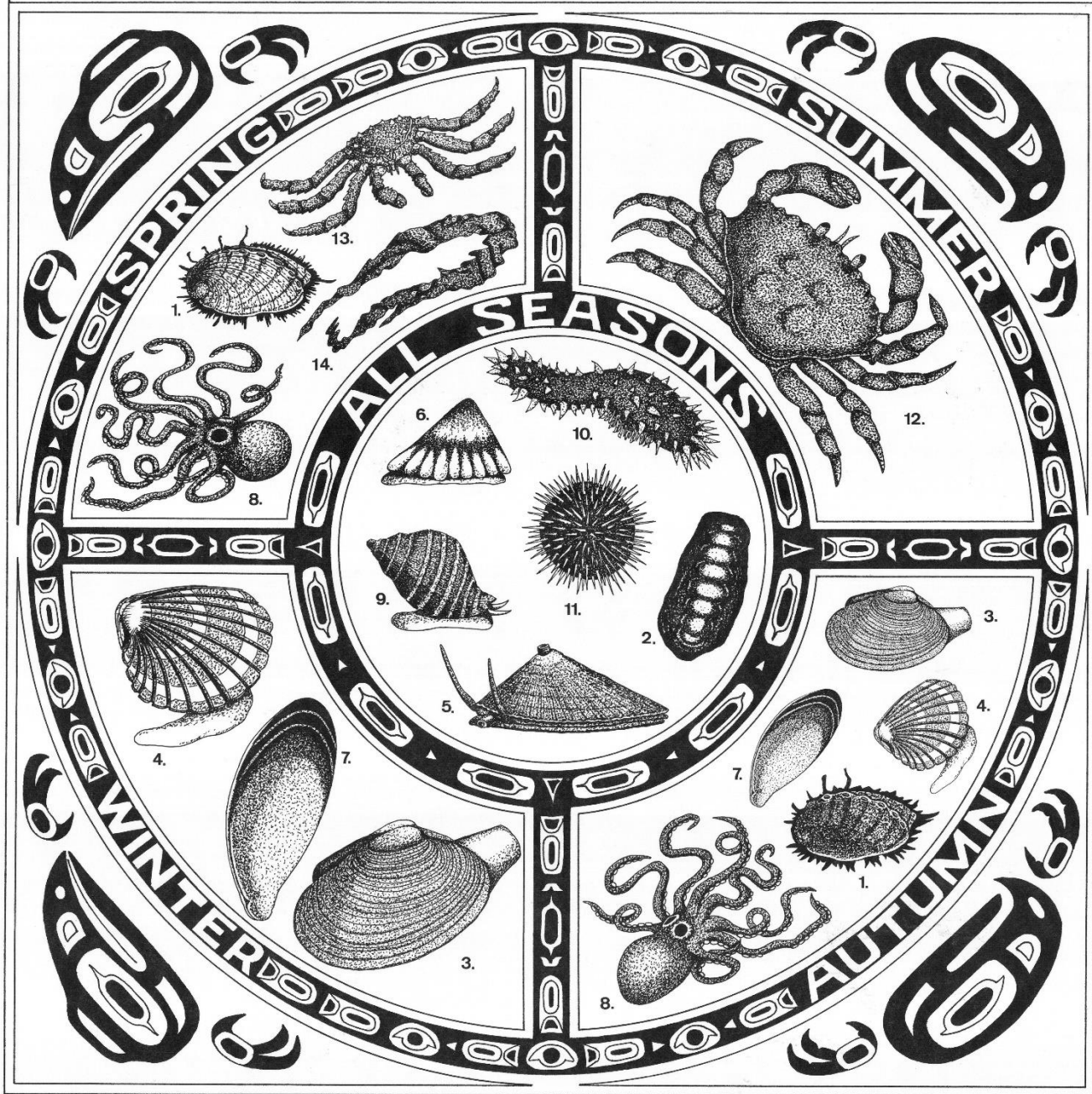
Note: *Living by the Seasons* and *Harvest Time at the Beach* posters were originally developed by the Juneau School District Indian Studies Program in the 1980s, and is reproduced and used in this curriculum with permission.

Living by the Seasons



HARVEST TIME AT THE BEACH

Collecting Alaskan Native Foods Between The Tides



MOLLUSKS

1. Abalone 2. Chiton 3. Clam
4. Cockle 5. Keyhole Limpet
6. Limpet 7. Mussel 8. Octopus
9. Whelk

ALGAE

14. Sea Weed



ECHINODERMS

10. Sea Cucumber
11. Urchin

CRUSTACEANS

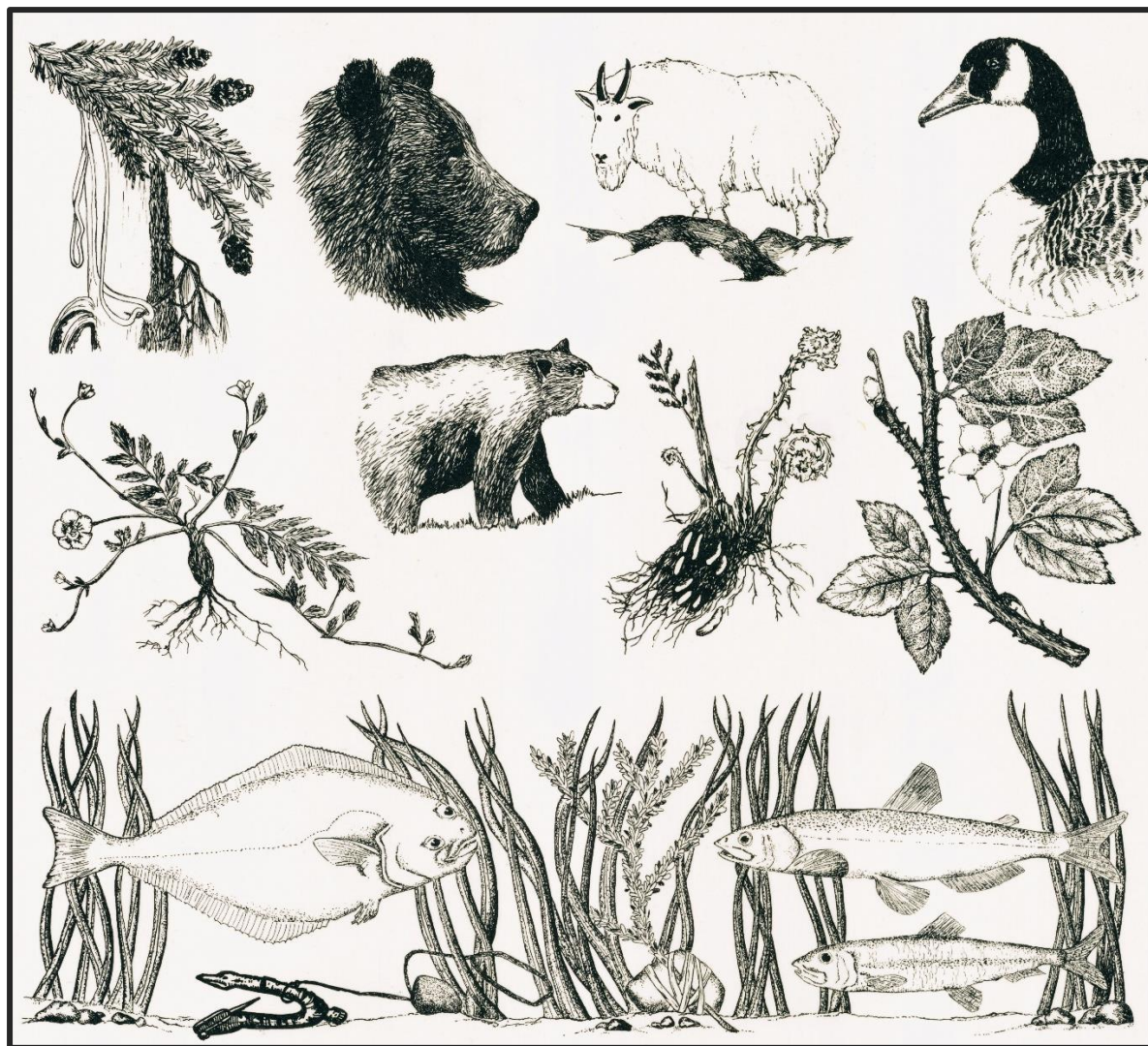
12. Dungeness Crab
13. King Crab



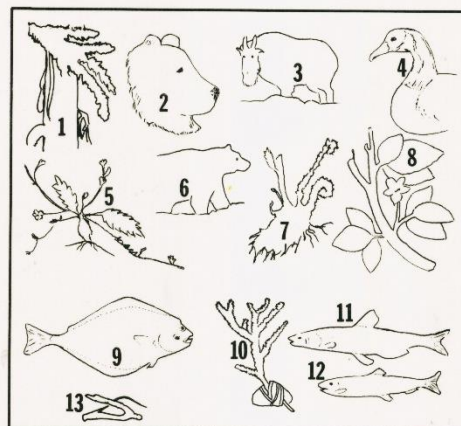
A. Westman

Alaska Native Transition Skills, Stewardship and Harvest from the Land, Van Den Berg / Miller / Esquiro, UAA Center for Human Development 2021 (Rev 2025) Images from *Living by the Seasons* originally developed by the Juneau School District Indian Studies Program in the 1980s, and is reproduced and used in this curriculum with permission.

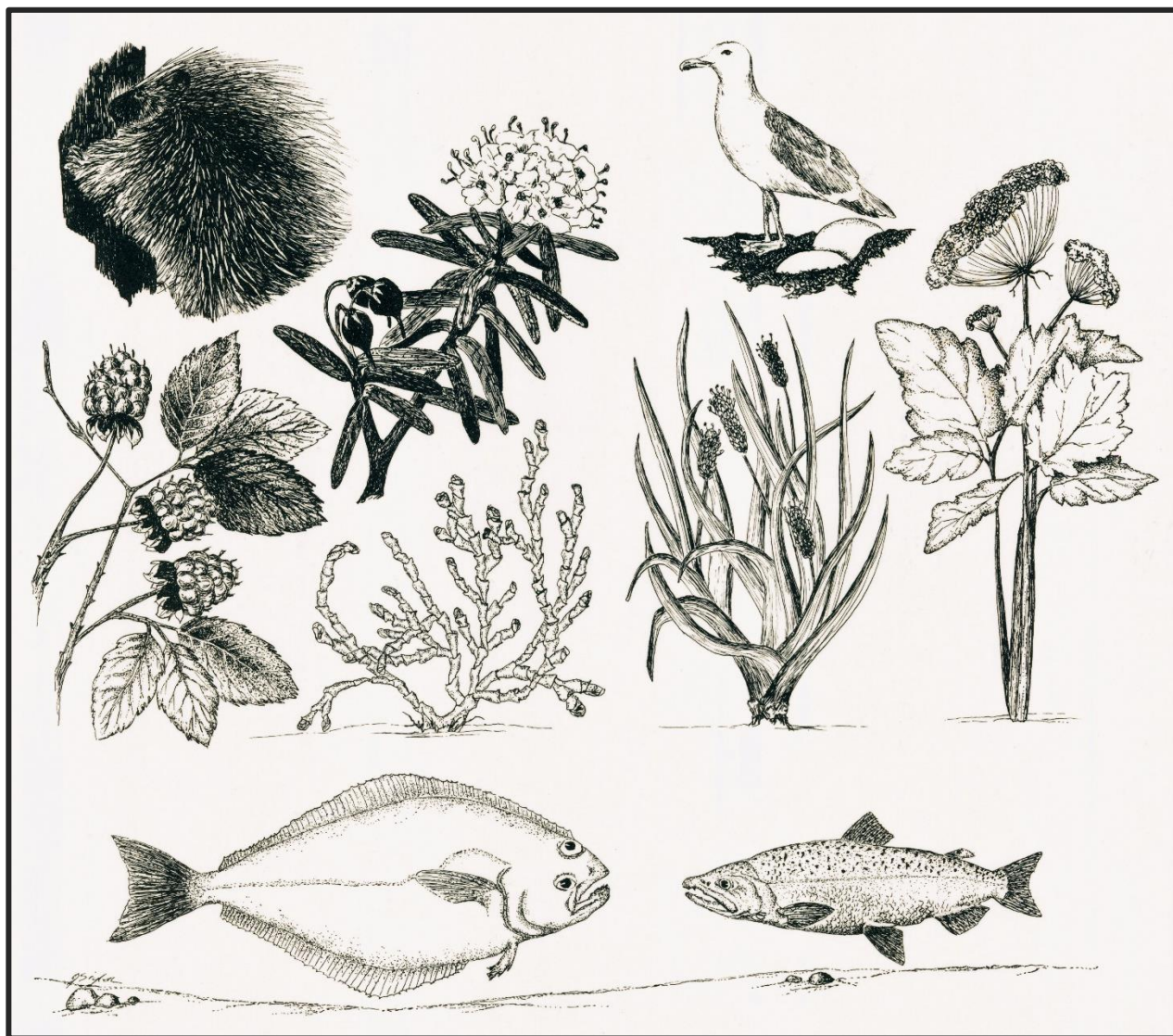
Living by the Seasons—Spring



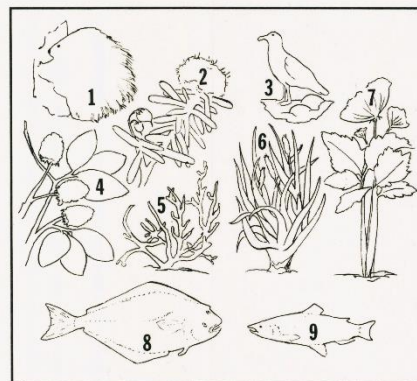
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Hemlock Bark (Cambium Layer) | sáx' |
| 2. Brown Bear | xóots |
| 3. Mountain Goat | tawéi |
| 4. Canada Goose | t'aawák |
| 5. Wild Sweet Potato (Silver Weed) | tseít |
| 6. Black Bear | s'eeek |
| 7. Spreading Wood Fern | k'wálx |
| 8. Salmonberry shoots | kax'át' |
| 9. Halibut | cháatl |
| 10. Herring Eggs | gáax'w |
| 11. Eulachon | saak |
| 12. Herring | yaaw |
| 13. Halibut Hook | náxw |



Living by the Seasons—Summer



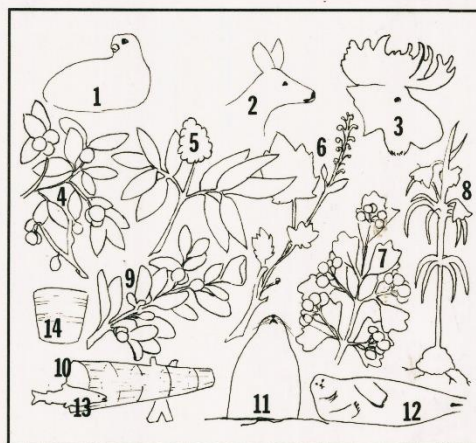
- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Porcupine | <u>x</u> alak'ách' |
| 2. Hudson Bay Tea | s'íkshaldéen |
| 3. Seagull Eggs | keidladi k'wát' |
| 4. Salmonberry | was'x'aan tléigu |
| 5. Beach Asparagus | taan x' adaadzaayi |
| 6. Goose Tongue | suktéitl' |
| 7. Wild Celery | yaana. eit |
| 8. Halibut | cháatl |
| 9. Salmon | <u>x</u> áat |



Living by the Seasons—Fall



- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Willow Ptarmigan | x'eis'awáa |
| 2. Sitka Black-Tailed Deer | guwakaan |
| 3. Moose | džisk'w |
| 4. Blueberry | kanat'a |
| 5. Elderberry | yéil' |
| 6. Currant | kadooheix.aa |
| 7. Highbush Cranberry | kexwéix |
| 8. Indian Rice | kóox |
| 9. Soapberry | xákwl'ee |
| 10. Fish Trap | sháal |
| 11. Sea Lion | taan |
| 12. Hair Seal | tsaa |
| 13. Salmon | xáat |
| 14. Spruce Root Basket | kák'w |



Interview with Herman Davis, Jr., *L'éiwtu Éesh*

Respected elder and clan leader of the *L'uknax.ádi* (Coho Salmon Clan) on September 10, 2021

by Margie Esquiro

Herman was born in 1933 at Todd Cannery in Peril Straits. He agreed to talk about his growing up around Sitka in the 1930's and 1940's. I asked him to tell me the kinds of things he did when he was younger around food gathering.

Yeah, gathering food – It all starts . . . it's seasonal, you know. It all starts with herring eggs in the Spring. We used to get all we could use, thick herring eggs. My dad would put trees in the water, just for one day. We would take them out and hang the branches so the eggs would dry right on there. It would take a few days. Then you could just peel them off and eat them dry. Or you would put them in water and the eggs would come off the branches and the needles would just float up. That was before refrigeration.



And there is seaweed that comes with the herring eggs, too. It's the winter seaweed, it's a black seaweed. We grind it and let it dry. It would take a long time to dry. We would go out to Kalinin Bay in Salisbury Sound and my dad would get up early for the low tide and grab a handful of seaweed off the rocks to measure it to tell if it was ready. And then we would gather it off the rocks. It would have more food value when it was a bit shorter.

We used to go to an island in Fish Bay. We had a garden on an island, near Haley Point. This was during WWII. We cut all the branches off one of the trees and then piled up to mark the garden, like a fence. So people would know that area had been taken. We grew carrots, turnips, rutabagas, and Lingit potatoes. One time when we came to harvest there was deer in our garden. Guess our fence wasn't high enough.

I would go halibut fishing with my grandfather close to our garden. He used an old style halibut hook and would catch big ones. When we would come back everybody would help cut strips of the halibut to dry. Oh, that was good! And then we picked gumboots and sea urchins off the rocks at that time of year. The sea urchin eggs are delicious! It's also the right time of year for abalone to pick off the rocks at low tide. There is also China Slippers, the big red ones, bigger than gumboots. During that time we used to gather sea ribbon seaweed, the reddish thick seaweed which is delicious. We used to dry it too.

Seagull eggs in May! Oh, yeah, we had to climb up cliffs, you almost had to be a spider to climb up the cliffs to get them. We had so many seagull eggs one time that we had to boil them all and then put them in a bucket of seal oil to keep them for a long time. We were still eating

them in July and August. We got them by Salisbury Sound, a little ways down from Point Amelia. You can also get them off Lasaria Island, and Biorka and Vitsari, but boy, that's a little dangerous with the wind picking up. When you are picking seagull eggs you have to jump off the boat really quick on the incoming tide.

Then there comes the berries – salmonberries first and then blueberries. Salmonberries are in July, blueberries in August and September. We used to jar them in the 40s and 50s. We would have to pick lots to have some to jar because we ate so many.

From July, and all of August, we fished, we seined for salmon out by Todd Cannery. My dad did a lot of overhauling on the boat, my grandfather's boat, the "O.K." After the cannery closed in the Fall we would leave there with sugar, rice, flour, coffee by the case, and salt (so we could mix a brine for the fish). We would go hunting in the Fall in Salisbury Sound and up by Pelican. We had a place, a camp, in Hoonah Sound, which was called S'ak Heeni (Bones River/Fick Cove). That's where we dried our fish and deer meat. There would be 4-5 other families there in the camp every year, the same families. Every family had their way of slicing the salmon to hang in a smokehouse to dry for a day or more. We used alder tree wood for smoking and drying the salmon. We cut the smaller trees along the shore. There were no chainsaws in those days, everything was harder. There used to be little mice that would come in the smokehouse, we would catch them in coffee cans with a little water in them! We didn't want them nibbling on our food!

Herman ended the interview with a wish to be able to talk to young people. He said, "The sooner we can catch kids and talk to them, the more respect they would have for the land and for the food we get off the land. They need to remember to:

- Have respect
- Only take what you need
- Always share your food with others, sharing the food you get from the land and sea is important.
- All our food was natural, nothing added."

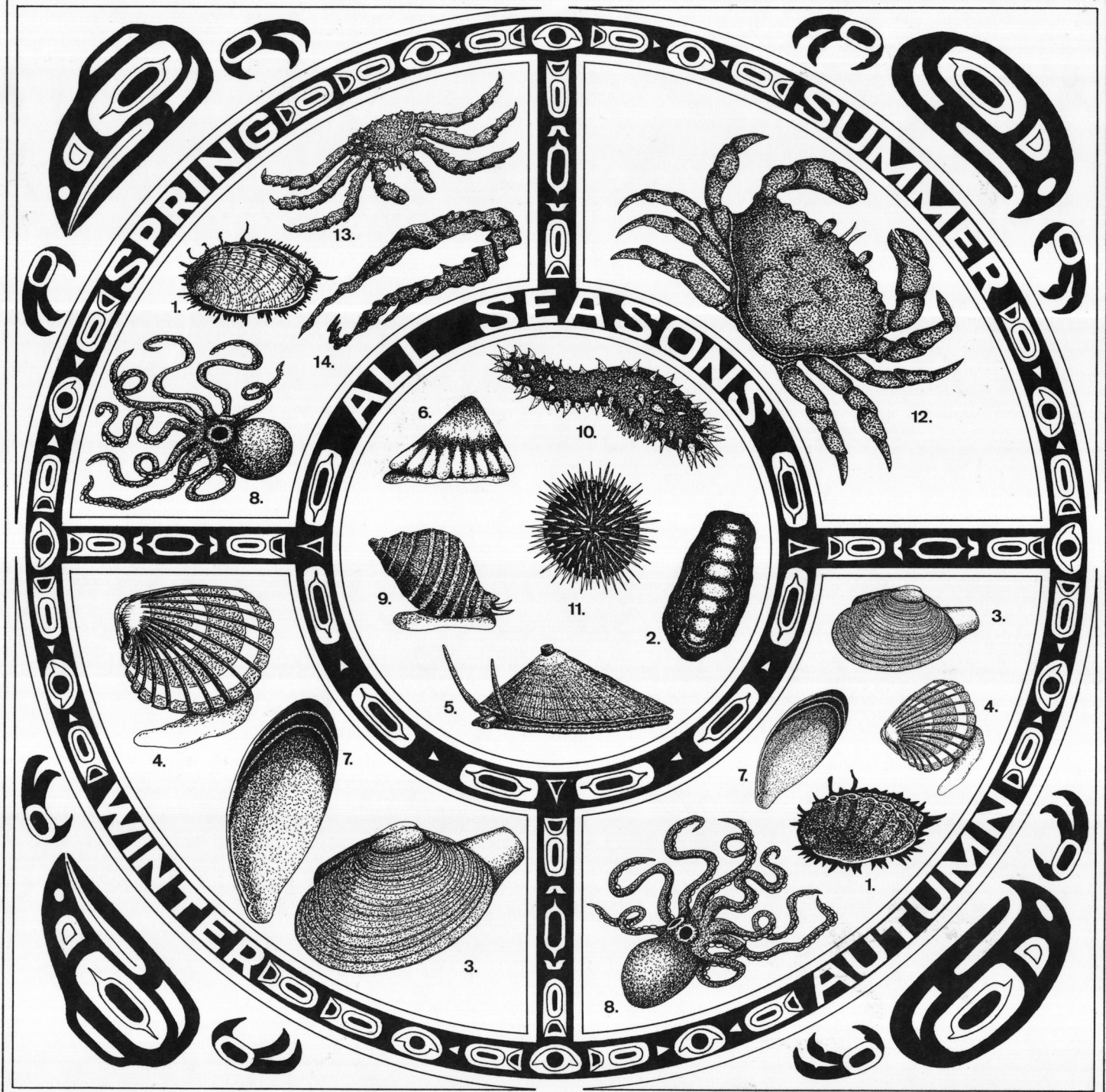
His nephew Chuck Miller, Daanax.ils'eik, added:

- We all take care of the land.
- We all show respect for the land.
- We call it Haa Aani (Our Land).
- We show respect for the land by cleaning up after ourselves, we don't pollute.
- We show respect for the land by only taking what we need, we leave the rest.

Photo Credit: Emily Kwong/KCAW photo, 2014: <https://www.kcaw.org/2014/12/03/elder-of-the-year-busy/>
Herman Davis, Jr. joined the Marine Corps at the age of 23 and served from 1956 to 1960, working on jet planes.

HARVEST TIME AT THE BEACH

Collecting Alaskan Native Foods Between The Tides



MOLLUSKS

1. Abalone 2. Chiton 3. Clam
4. Cockle 5. Keyhole Limpet
6. Limpet 7. Mussel 8. Octopus
9. Whelk

ALGAE

14. Sea Weed



ECHINODERMS

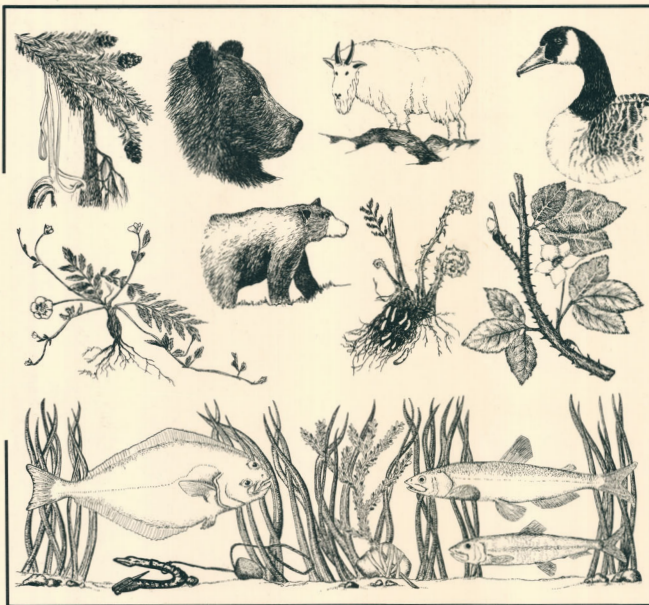
10. Sea Cucumber
11. Urchin

CRUSTACEANS

12. Dungeness Crab
13. King Crab

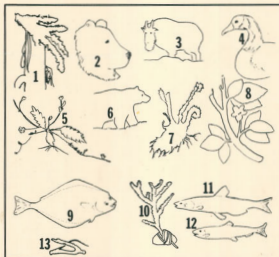


Living by the Seasons



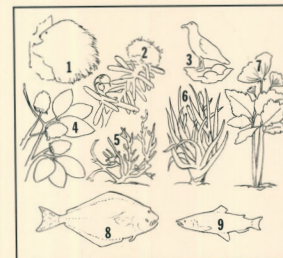
Spring

1. Hemlock Bark (Cambium Layer) sáx'
2. Brown Bear xóots
3. Mountain Goat tawéi
4. Canada Goose t'aawák
5. Wild Sweet Potato (Silver Weed) tséit
6. Black Bear s'eeek
7. Spreading Wood Fern k'wálx
8. Salmonberry shoots kax'át'
9. Halibut cháatl
10. Herring Eggs gáax'w
11. Eulachon saak
12. Herring yaaw
13. Halibut Hook náxw



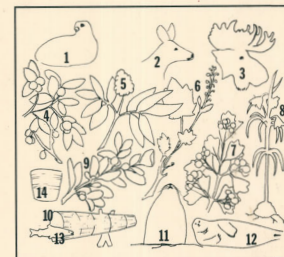
Summer

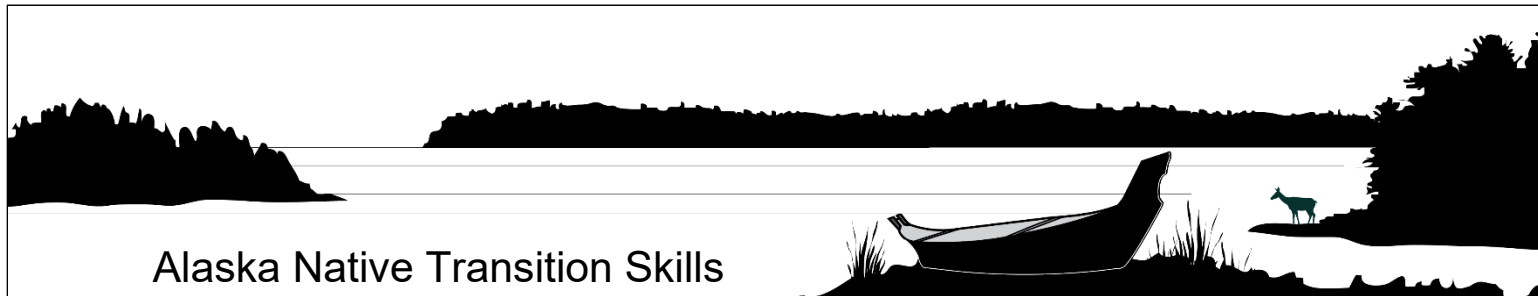
1. Porcupine xalak'ách'
2. Hudson Bay Tea s'ikshaldéen
3. Seagull Eggs keidladi k'wát'
4. Salmonberry was'x'aan tléigu
5. Beach Asparagus taan x' adaadzaayi
6. Goose Tongue suktéit'
7. Wild Celery yaana. eit
8. Halibut cháatl
9. Salmon xáat



Autumn

1. Willow Ptarmigan x'eis'awáa
2. Sitka Black-Tailed Deer guwakaan
3. Moose dzisk'w
4. Blueberry kanat'a
5. Elderberry yéil'
6. Currant kadooheix.aa
7. Highbush Cranberry kexwéix
8. Indian Rice kóox
9. Soapberry xákwl'ee
10. Fish Trap sháal
11. Sea Lion taan
12. Hair Seal tsaa
13. Salmon xáat
14. Spruce Root Basket kákw





Alaska Native Transition Skills

Safety on the Land: Make a Plan

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about safety on the Land and the importance of making a plan in case of bad weather or an emergency. Being prepared can make the difference between an enjoyable trip and a challenging trip. Note to teachers: be aware of how you talk about the land. Going out onto the Land to explore, hunt, fish, or collect berries is a natural thing to do. Rather than talking about going “out into the wilderness,” talk about going “out onto the Land.” The land is to be respected and appreciated: it is not an adversary. In an emergency, the land can offer many forms of assistance to the people facing a challenge.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A , A , B2, B , B , C1, C , D5, E1, E2, E

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea
- Respect for Self, Elders, and Others
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe why it is important to be prepared for subsistence activities on the Land.
- Give examples of what someone needs to be prepared for common subsistence activities at different times of the year in a learning activity.

Materials

- Student Handout: What would you do?

Vocabulary

Prepared	Ready to do or deal with something.
Respect	A positive feeling or action shown toward someone or something that is seen as important. It is also showing care and concern for
Steward	The person who cares for something they are responsible for.
Stewardship	Taking care of something that has been given to you to be responsible for.
Subsistence	The native practice of harvesting, preserving, and sharing natural resources to feed, clothe, and house their communities.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to start to learn about safety on the Land and taking care of yourself and your family when you go out to harvest and enjoy the Land. To learn about this, we will share ideas, and talk through some different situations to see what you would do. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to explain why it is important to be prepared before you go onto the Land, and give at least three examples of what being prepared looks like for different activities at different times of the year."
- **Be in finding out what students already know ask the following questions:**
 - What does it mean to be prepared? (*Ready for different things that might happen, Having what you need.*)
 - What are some examples of being prepared? (*Wearing a rain coat in the rain, having a life jacket on a boat, having a way to build a fire in case the boat breaks down and you have to wait, having extra food or clothes, having a tarp or other way to make a shelter...*)
 - Why is it important to be prepared when you go out to harvest from the Land? (*The weather can change or unexpected things can happen, and if you have what you need it isn't bad, but if you are unprepared it can be dangerous.*)
- **Connect the values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors (*Traditions of respect and the care for the Land that gives us what we need.*)
 - We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea (*We are connected to the Land and rely on the Land to live and thrive. These ways continue to keep the Land healthy for us and our children and grandchildren. This value helps us make sure the things we need (fish, trees, water, clean air) will be here for us for a long time.*)
 - Reverence for Our Creator (*Feeling connected to the Land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being. We enjoy being on the Land.*)
 - Respect for Self, Elders, and Others (*We take care of ourselves and others by being prepared to go and harvest and return safely.*)
- **Scenarios Activity :** Before you leave to go and harvest from the Land, it is important to think about what you will need for harvesting, what clothes you need with you for the weather that may happen, and what you will need if something unexpected happens (like a sprained ankle or the boat or vehicle breaking down.) Elders teach the importance of being prepared in your mind and ready to be creative and resourceful. As you talk through the scenarios and what someone should bring, discuss the point that if the person is prepared, an unexpected event is very manageable. If not prepared, it can be very uncomfortable or even life-threatening. Though we can't be prepared for everything that might happen, we can do a lot to ensure our trip is comfortable and enjoyable as we go out on the Land.

Talk through the scenarios on the handout, and brainstorm what is needed for that person to be safe and comfortable. Write what they need on the board or use pictures of the items as you brainstorm. When you are prepared, you show respect for yourself, your family, and the Land.

- **Some questions to ask yourself as you make a plan:** Think about the basics, food, water, clothing, and what you need to gather or harvest.
 - What am I going to be doing? What do I need to gather/harvest that (containers, bags, buckets, tools)?
 - What clothing do I need for the weather I expect? What clothing would I need if the weather changes (colder and wetter than I expected)?
 - What food do I need? How long do I expect to be out, and what if I am delayed in returning (bring enough food to cover both situations)?
 - How much water will I need to bring to drink? What if I am delayed? (Bring enough water to cover both situations, or bring a way to treat water if stream water is unsafe to drink untreated.)
 - What if it gets colder than I expect, or I get wet and cold? Do I have what I need to make a fire?

Learning stories

- Ask the students to share about what they do to get ready before fishing or hunting or food gathering.
- Invite a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to share a story or explain how they prepare before hunting or going out on the Land to harvest. Invite them to share how they were taught to show respect when they were on the Land to harvest.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- Why is it important to be prepared when you go onto the Land?
- What are some examples of what it means to be prepared for hunting and harvesting from the Land in Southeast Alaska?

Additional Resources

- ***Don't Go Into the Woods Unprepared!*** Blog entry that has good tips on preparedness and what should be in your back pack. <https://906adventureteam.com/dont-go-into-the-woods-unprepared/>
- ***How to prepare properly for a walk in the woods — and what to do if you get lost*** Canadian article with good tips. <https://www.cbc.ca/life/travel/how-to-prepare-properly-for-a-walk-in-the-woods-and-what-to-do-if-you-get-lost-1.5247137>

All links verified 8-2025

What could you do

Read each of these situations and talk about what you would do.

ishin (Summer):

- You and your cousin hiked up the river to fish from the shore. Your cousin slips on a rock and twists her ankle. You need to go and get help. What do you do before you leave her?
- You are hiking back from fishing upriver. You are carrying your catch. Suddenly you hear “huffing” and twigs snapping. What should you do?



err pickin (Summer/ all):

- You are berry picking with your friends and you get distracted and are soon separated from the group. You slip and fall down a ravine. What do you do?
- You and your family are out berry picking. You notice quite a bit of bear “sign” (fresh scat filled with berries) and some footprints on the trail up ahead. What do you do?

Huntin (all/early Winter):

- You are hunting with your older brother and the storm that wasn’t expected until later tonight has suddenly materialized. You did let the rest of your family know approximately where you were going hunting and when you would return but now you realize that you need to spend the night. What do you do?

**art of preparin to e on the land is to alwa s let so eone know where
ou plannin to o and how lon ou will e awa .**



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Safety on the Land: What is in your back pack?

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about safety on the Land and knowing what to bring with them depending on the weather and activities they are doing. Being prepared can make the difference between an enjoyable trip and a challenging trip. You can stay safe even when the unexpected happens if you have what you need with you.

Note to teachers: be aware of how you talk about the Land. Going out onto the Land to explore, hunt, fish, or collect berries is a natural thing to do. Rather than talking about going “out into the wilderness,” talk about going “out onto the Land.” The Land is to be respected and appreciated: it is not an adversary.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A , A , B2, B , B , C1, C , D5, E1, E2, E

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea
- Respect for Self, Elders, and Others
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Discuss the items that students should bring when going onto the land.
- Describe what the important items included in the back pack are used for.

Materials

- A back pack, with pictures of items or actual example items from the list of things to bring to use in the activity.

Vocabulary

Bear spray	A defense against an aggressive bear. It is a canister that dispenses a pepper spray to keep a bear from coming too close. Anyone carrying this to use needs to understand it has a short range, and should only be sprayed if a bear is very close. It is used in combination with other strategies to avoid a bear attack.
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Compass	A device that uses a magnetic needle to show which direction is north. It can be used in combination with a map to show you which way you need to go. If lost or turned around, it can help you get back on track.
First Aid Kit	A bag that contains bandages, pain medication, and other items that can be used to treat simple injuries like scrapes, sprains, and cuts.
Prepared	Ready to do or deal with something.
Signal	A way to relay information. Examples: using a mirror to make a flash of light to let a search helicopter know your location; waving arms to and pointing to tell someone in another area that a bear is approaching their location; using a fire to make smoke so that searchers can see your location.
Trekking poles	Walking sticks that can be adjusted to the height of the user. They provide balance on uneven ground, and reduce knee strain when hiking steep areas.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to talk about how to choose what you will bring with you when you go to harvest and enjoy being on the Land. To learn about this, we will share ideas, and talk through some different situations to see what you would do. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to describe important items you may want to bring in your back pack when you go on the Land, and what those items are used for, so you can be prepared for different activities at different times of the year."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - What does it mean to be prepared? (*Ready for different things that might happen, Having what you need.*)
 - What are some examples things you could take with you in your back pack for a day trip to enjoy being on the Land? (*Food, water, rain coat, first aid kit, map ...*)
 - Why is it important to be prepared when you go out to harvest from the Land? (*The weather can change or unexpected things can happen, and if you have what you need it isn't bad, but if you are unprepared it can be dangerous.*)
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors (*Traditions of respect and the care for the Land that gives us what we need.*)
 - We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea (*We are connected to the Land and rely on the Land to live and thrive. These ways continue to keep the Land healthy for us and our children and grandchildren. This value helps us make sure the things we need (fish, trees, water, clean air) will be here for us for a long time.*)
 - Reverence for Our Creator (*Feeling connected to the Land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being. We enjoy being on the Land.*)
 - Respect for Self, Elders, and Others (*We take care of ourselves and others by being prepared to go and harvest and return safely.*)

- **Back pack activity** : “Last time, we talked about things to think about before going onto the Land. Today we are going to look at what you might want to bring in your back pack for different kinds of activities.” Start by introducing the main things that someone should have in their back pack for safety. Ideally, have these items laid out on a table that the students can see and touch as you talk about them. If you cannot have the items, then use pictures of the items, laminated on cards.
 - **The Essentials** (These two lists adapted from the [Alaska Public Lands Information Center](#)):
 - Warm clothing: warm jacket, hat long pants
 - Extra food and water
 - Flashlight/headlamp
 - Matches fire starter
 - First aid repair kit
 - Whistle signal mirror
 - Map Compass
 - Bear spray
 - Rain jacket and pants
 - Pocket knife
 - Talk about additional items that they can bring depending on the situation, and why they may or may not choose to bring that item.
 - Sturdy footwear extra socks
 - Trekking poles
 - Watch
 - Smart phone
 - Trash bag
 - Tarp and/or space blanket
 - Sunglasses
 - Sunscreen
 - Marine radio
 - Head net/insect repellent
 - Gloves/mittens
 - Personal medications
 - Water purification tablets (if in an area where giardia is common)
 - Cord/rope
 - Gaiters
 - Extra batteries
 - GPS
 - Camera
 - Binoculars

- **Scenarios Activity:** For the activity, as a group or individually, tell the students an example harvesting activity, and have the students place the items from the table into the back pack that they should bring. This will start with those items people should always bring, and move to the situation specific items. **To make it more challenging, you can have extra items on the table that students may want to bring, but that are not as essential as the safety gear, so there are more choices to discern from.**

Scenarios to use for discussion:

- You are headed out to pick berries with your family, and it is expected to be a day without rain. You will just be gone for a half of a day. What do you bring in your back pack?
 - You are going hunting with your uncle, and will leave early morning and be gone all day. It is August, and may rain. You will be hiking up into the alpine. Your uncle will bring a rifle and what is needed to process a deer, if you are so fortunate to get one. You are bringing what you need for the day. What do you need to bring in your back pack?
 - You are going out deer hunting in November on your aunt's boat. You will be walking and hunting the beaches after a fresh snow. It is in the 30's, just above freezing. What do you need to have in your back pack to stay warm and comfortable for this trip?
 - You are out hiking with friends for the day and a storm that wasn't expected moves in. It has started to rain hard, and the temperature drops. It is hard to see because fog has set in all around you. It is hard to see how to hike back. What would you be glad to have in your back pack in this situation?
- **Survival Kit Activity:** This is from the 2019 units of the *Traditional Alaskan Transition Skills* curriculum. Go to https://sesa.org/resources/educational_resources/alaska-traditional-transition-skills/ and open the 2019 PDF. The survival skills lesson (page 33) and student handout on building a survival kit that fits in a small tin (page 38) is a great activity, and gives them a valuable addition for their back pack.

Learning stories

- Ask the students to share about what they take with them when fishing or hunting or food gathering.
- Invite a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to share a story or explain what they bring with them when hunting or going out on the Land to harvest.

Evaluation

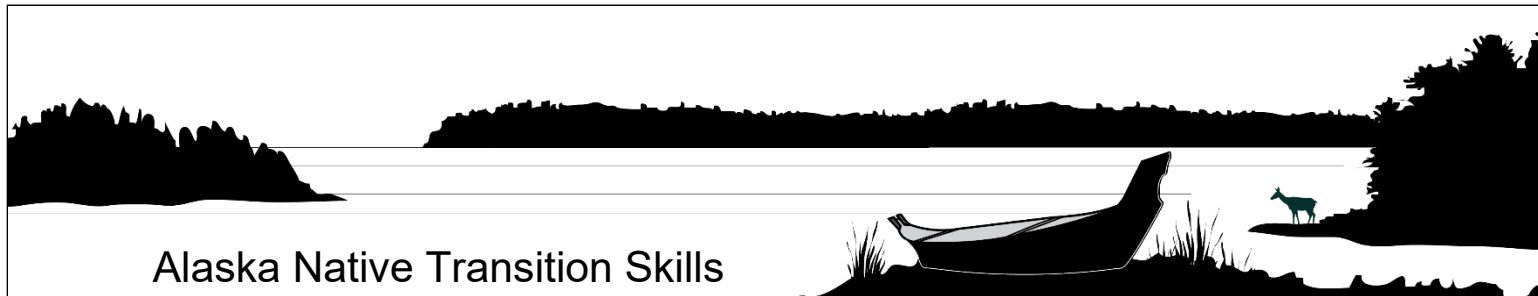
At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What items should you always have in your back pack when you go onto the Land?
- Why are those items important?

Additional Resources

- **Compass 101 (3:02):** Using a Compass: or interested students, here are some basic instructions on using a compass. If it is included in the back pack, they need some idea of how to use it for it to be useful
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_UlYsm_hc_t121s
- **A Unit on Predicting Weather:** This unit describes indigenous knowledge and approach to predicting weather and good conditions for subsistence activities. It is a topic that can be explored as part of being prepared. It is focused on Yup'ik words and examples, but can be adapted for other areas of Alaska.
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/units/PredictingWeather/PredictingWeather.pdf>
- **Wilderness Survival Kit:** Article with additional lists and survival skills info:
<https://www.wildernessawareness.org/articles/wilderness-survival-kit/>
- **Tips for a Safer Trip into the Parks:** This is a good basic reference from the Alaska Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/safety/comsense.htm>
- **Outdoor Gear Checklists:** A variety of useful lists to consider for different activities on the Land from the Alaska Public Lands Information Center.
<https://www.nps.gov/anch/planyourvisit/outdoor-gear-checklist.htm>

All links verified -2025



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Safety on the Land: Seven Steps

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about seven steps that can help them survive an emergency situation on the Land. It takes a combination of having the right things with you, knowing how to use them, and having a good attitude to get through a challenging situation on the Land.

Note to teachers: be aware of how you talk about the Land. Going out onto the Land to explore, hunt, fish, or collect berries is a natural thing to do. Rather than talking about going “out into the wilderness,” talk about going “out onto the Land.” The Land is to be respected and appreciated: it is not an adversary. In an emergency, the Land can offer many forms of assistance to the people facing a challenge.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, D5, E1, E2, E4, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- Respect for Self, Elders, and Others
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe the STOP approach to knowing when someone is in an emergency situation, including how to take an inventory and make a plan
- Describe the seven steps of survival used in an emergency situation.

Materials

- Student Handout: *The Seven Steps to Survive*
- Boy Lost on Gavan Hill news article
(https://sciencewithmckay.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/3/8/12386288/outdoor_survival_story.pdf)

Vocabulary

Insulation	Material that helps keep in heat. Thicker dry clothes and sleeping bags are examples of insulation.
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Inventory	Make a mental list of things you have with you, and in your environment. In an emergency, things you have might be used in different ways than normal (such as shoelaces could be used to tie branches together, if you didn't have rope.)
Prepared	Ready to do or deal with something.
STOP	Sit: Take a moment to take a deep breath. Unless you are in immediate danger, it is best to stay put. Think: Use your brain, don't panic. Think about what you have with you to help. Observe: Look around you to see what you have with you, and what you have in your environment that can help with your basic needs (shelter, food, water, signal). Plan: First treat any medical needs. Next, make sure you have shelter, and can stay warm. Next, find water. Figure out how you will signal people who come to look for you. Find food.
Survival	Living through an ordeal, accident, or challenge.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Being prepared is one important way to take care of yourself and your family and showing respect for the Land. Sometimes challenges happen that you don't expect, and there are things you can do to return home safely. Getting through an emergency situation on the Land takes a combination of supplies, skills, and attitude. To learn about these, we will share ideas, do practice activities, and talk through a learning story about a real boy who was separated from his brother while hunting and lost for 5 days. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to describe the seven steps to follow in an emergency, and how to use the *STOP* approach to know you are in a challenging or emergency situation."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - What are examples of unexpected challenges that could happen when out enjoying the Land? (*Fall, scrapes/sprains, lost, separated from family members, animal encounters, weather changes...*)
 - What is an example of an emergency that happens fast, and is a clear emergency? (*Someone falls out of the boat into cold water and all of their clothes are wet, someone trips and falls and breaks a leg or arm...*)
 - What is an example of an emergency that happens slowly and may be harder to recognize? (*Picking berries, someone gets separated from family and has lost track of where they are. While hunting, one person has the back pack with supplies, and is separated from another, and there is a sudden storm. The rain is heavier than expected and soaks through your raincoat and you are getting very cold...*)
 - Why is it important to have a good attitude in a challenging situation? (*You can think better and be more creative to face the challenges if you have a good attitude. If you panic or give up it can make a hard situation worse.*)

- How did the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples make fire when they went to harvest from the Land? *(The most common way to make a fire was by using a fire drill to create a spark. The sap from spruce trees was used as a resin to get fires started. (The Tlingit Indians by George Thornton Emmons page 159).*
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors *(Traditions of respect and the care for the Land that gives us what we need. Elders teach the importance of being prepared in your mind and ready to be creative and resourceful.)*
 - Reverence for Our Creator *(Feeling connected to the Land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being. We enjoy being on the Land. When we are in a challenging situation, the Land can help provide what we need to face the situation.)*
 - Respect for Self, Elders, and Others *(We take care of ourselves and others by being prepared to go and harvest and return safely.)*
- **Seven Steps to Survive:** In an emergency, there are seven important steps that will help you face the challenge and survive.
 1. Recognition: Admit you are in trouble, and that your life may be in danger.
 2. Inventory: Take stock of what you have on hand, and attend to any injuries the best you can.
 3. Shelter: Preserve body heat and plan how you will stay warm: Clothing/Shelter/Fire/Sleeping bag.
 4. Water: Find a safe source of water and/or a way to collect water.
 5. Signal: Help rescuers find you.
 6. Food: After you are safe and warm, food will help while you wait.
 7. Play: Stay positive and alert.

Step 1: Recognize you are in an emergency. Admit you are in trouble, and that your life may be in danger. Some emergencies are obvious such as someone falls into cold water and soaks their clothes (it would be important to quickly get them into warm dry clothes and warm them up so the situation doesn't get more serious). Sometimes, it is harder to recognize that you are in a bad situation. The sooner you can recognize it and do something, the better.

Step 2: Take an inventory. An inventory is thinking through your current challenge, and noticing what you have on hand that can help you face the challenge. What is the biggest threat? Is there an injury or risk that needs to be handled right away? Where are my supplies? My first aid kit? Am I safe in this location, or do I need to change something to be in a safer place?

- **Inventory Activity:** Have the students inventory everything in their desk or backpack, including what they are wearing. Brainstorm ways that what they have could be used in different ways. *A pencil could be a tool to poke a hole, or paper could be used to start a fire, or shoelaces could be removed and used as rope, or clothing could be torn to make a bandage.* Introduce the idea that even if you don't have the exact item you think you need, you may be able to use something else in a creative way to meet the same need.

Step : Shelter. One of the biggest threats to survival in an emergency, especially in Alaska, is hypothermia. Hypothermia is when the body is too cold. Making sure you have a way to stay warm or get warm is more important than water or food. If you have to wait for rescue, make sure you can stay warm.

Some ways to stay warm:

- Warm dry clothes, and a rain jacket or plastic bag to keep you dry.
- Build a fire: collect wood that can burn, use matches and firestarter from your back pack to build a fire. Sap from spruce trees can help get the fire going (this was a way our ancestors got a fire going). Choose dry wood and twigs. Even in the rain, there will be dry branches under big trees or under fallen trees. During the day put damp grass on a fire to create more smoke than heat to help signal rescuers.

Activity Extension for fire building: How did the peoples of Southeast Alaska make a fire without matches? Using only what the Land provided, they made a hand drill. To see how a hand drill works to start a fire, you can watch this video, *How to Make a Hand-Drill Fire* (:):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpluzW_sb_c. After watching that to get the basic concept, you can watch and try this one, which helps get at the idea of using things in different ways: *Hand drill fire using clothes pins* (1:21):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2_ht_Bt_-0

- Sleeping bag: If you don't have a sleeping bag with you, you can fill a garbage bag from your back pack with dry grass or leaves and get in that.
- Natural protection: Find a good tree or rock that help protect you from the wind and rain.
- Build a shelter: If it looks like you will need to stay put, you can create a shelter with branches or a tarp to help keep you warm and dry. *For more on this, see the lesson on signals and shelter.*

Step : Water. After being warm, being hydrated (having enough water) is the next most important thing. What will you drink after the water you have with you is gone? Try to find a stream or other water source. If it is raining, you can use your tarp to collect rainwater to drink, if you are not near a stream. People need between 2 quarts of water per day to stay hydrated. If you can, make water from pools, lakes, and streams safer by boiling it for 2 full minutes, or adding a chemical treatment (water purification tablets you carry in your supplies).

Step : Signals. When people come to look for you, make it easier for them to find you by using signals. There are different kinds of signals: active and passive. Active signals have to actively be done (using a signal mirror to make a flash, or throwing grass on a fire to make more smoke, or blowing a safety whistle) Passive signals are signals that work without you (Using rocks to spell out "HELP" in an open space, a red jacket hung high so it can flap in the wind and attract attention). You want your signals to stand out and get noticed. Think of ways to make your signal stand out. Example: When creating a word

signal with rocks, use dark stones on a lighter background (or light rocks on a dark background), use block letters as sharp angles stand out from the more flowy lines of nature. *For more examples of signals, see the lesson on signals and shelter.*

Step 6: Food. Food can help you keep up your strength and your spirits. Try to make any food you have with you last by eating only a little at a time. The Land may provide you plants and berries you can eat, but you have to know which ones are safe.

Step 7: Play. In this case, it means to keep yourself busy in ways that help you keep a positive outlook and stay alert. A positive outlook means looking for the positive in your situation, and doing all you can to stay healthy and survive your challenge. Playing games that keep your mind active and alert can help. Examples:

- If you are with another person, play games such as “I Spy” or “20 Questions.” [In “I Spy,” one person sees something from where they are sitting and says, “I spy with my little eye something that is...” then gives a clue. The other person makes a guess. The first person can continue to give clues until the person guesses it. In “20 Questions,” one person thinks of anything in the world, it doesn’t have to be where they are. The other person tries to guess what it is by asking questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no”, in 20 questions or less.]
- You could play a game where you toss a rock and try to get it to Land close to another rock or a tree.
- You could recite the multiplication table.
- *Brainstorm with the students other games they could play or things they could do to keep busy and alert while waiting for rescue.*
- **STOP can be an easy tool to remember (with less steps):**
 - **Sit:** Take a moment to take a deep breath. Unless you are in immediate danger, it is best to stay put.
 - **Think:** Use your brain, don’t panic. Think about what you have with you to help.
 - **Observe:** Look around you to see what you have with you, and what you have in your environment that can help with your basic needs (shelter, water, signal, food).
 - **Plan:** First treat any medical needs. Next, make sure you have shelter, and can stay warm. Next, find water. Figure out how you will signal people who come to look for you. Find food.
- **Survival Rules of Three and Survival Priorities**
(From <https://www.backcountrychronicles.com/wilderness-survival-rules-of-3/>)
“For real survival situations it is better to remember and prioritize by the four levels of the Survival Rules of 3:
 - You can survive for 3 Minutes without air (oxygen) or in icy water
 - You can survive for 3 Hours without shelter in a harsh environment (unless in icy water)
 - You can survive for 3 Days without water (if sheltered from a harsh environment)
 - You can survive for 3 Weeks without food (if you have water and shelter)

The main point of the Rules of 3 that **we have to concentrate on the most immediate problem first...** There is no need to think about food if the main threat to your survival is hypothermia because your clothes are wet. And make no mistake, if you are shivering and can't get dry and warm, you may not be able to function after three hours. If you are alone, you may have only about three hours to live."

- **Always let someone know where you are going, and when you plan to come back.** Whenever you go out onto the Land, make sure someone who is not with you knows where you are going, and when you plan to get back. If you are late in returning, this will be important for people that need to come look for you.

Learning stories

- Share the story of the boy who was lost on Gavan Hill, and discuss what he did right, and what could have been better. What could have helped him get found more quickly? What could have helped him survive more comfortably while he waited for rescue?
 - **What he did right:** He found berries and ate a good amount. He found a place near water with some shelter so he could stay hydrated and wait for rescue.
 - **What could have been better:** Jeffrey didn't have any back pack or supplies with him. Items that would have helped his situation: extra clothes, a plastic bag to make an emergency sleeping bag, food, a signal whistle, and a way to make a fire. Jeffrey left the area with berries and hiked further from town (uphill), and even crossed a major trail without recognizing it. Staying put closer to where he was separated may have helped him get found sooner.
- What stories have they heard about people who have been in an emergency on the Land? What helped them survive? What can they learn from these stories?
- Invite a local culture bearer to share a story or explain what they bring with them when hunting or going out on the Land to harvest.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:


- What are the seven steps of survival used in an emergency situation?
- How do you take an inventory and make a plan?
- What is the STOP approach to knowing when you are in an emergency situation?

Additional Resources

- **Video: Hug-a-Tree and Survive (12:06):** This video gives some basics for what to do if you are lost. It shows a scenario of a boy who gets lost on a camping trip. Though not culturally specific, it goes over survival basics using a story:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=275&v=uXy5AK9FkBk
- **Seven Steps Lesson Plan:**
http://www.sitkamaritime.org/uploads/7/2/9/0/7290231/seven_steps_survival.pdf

- *How Can I Survive a Night in the Alaskan Wilderness?*
<https://adventure.howstuffworks.com/survive-night-alaska.htm>
- *Kodiak Alutiiq Thematic Units K-5: Outdoor Survival:*
http://www.afognak.org/files/language_books/Thematic%20Units.pdf
- *The Survival Rule of Three to Stay Alive in the Wild:*
<https://www.backcountrychronicles.com/wilderness-survival-rules-of-3/>
- There are many small handbooks for basic first aid and survival skills. These books by REI are small, easy to read, and waterproof. For a student who is serious about learning these skills, a small book like these could be very useful.
 - [Pocket Guide to Outdoor Survival with Stan Bradshaw](#)
 - [Pocket Guide to Emergency First Aid with Betty Cordes](#)

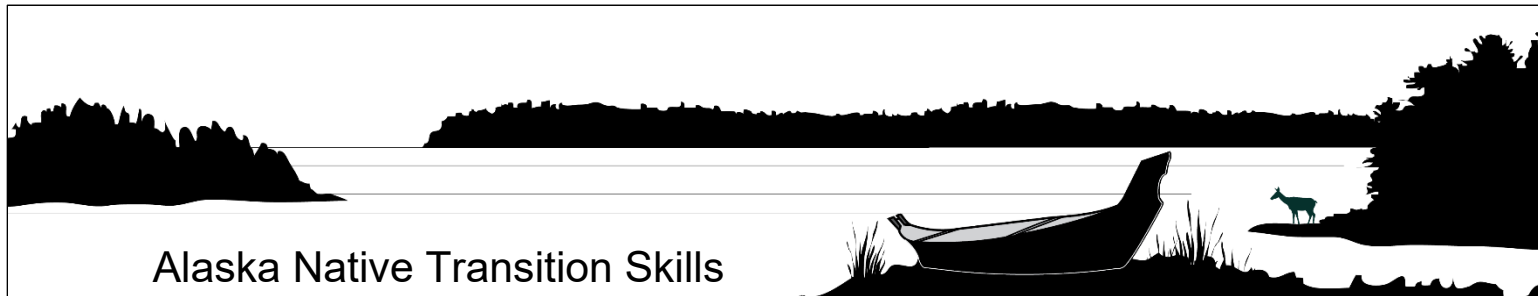
The Seven Steps to Survive

	1. Recognition: Admit you are in trouble, and that your life may be in danger.
	2. Inventory: Take stock of what you have on hand, and attend to any injuries the best you can.
	3. Shelter: Keep your body heat and plan how you will stay warm. Will you use warm clothes? A shelter? Fire? Sleeping bag?
	4. Water: Find a safe source of water or a way to collect water.
	5. Signal: Help rescuers find you.
	6. Food: After you are safe and warm, food will help while you wait.
	7. Play: Stay positive and alert. Keep your mind busy.

Once you recognize that you are in an emergency, use STOP!

S	Sit: Take a moment to take a deep breath. Unless you are in immediate danger, it is best to stay put.
T	Think: Use your brain, don't panic. Think about what you have with you to help.
O	Observe: Look around you to see what you have with you. What do you have around you that can help with your basic needs? (Shelter, Water, Signal, Food)
P	Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Treat any medical needs.○ Make sure you have shelter, and can stay warm.○ Find water.○ Figure out how you will signal people who come to look for you.○ Find food.





Alaska Native Transition Skills

Safety on the Land: Signals and Shelter

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn more about creating shelter and different ways to make a signal for people who are searching to find them. This lesson provides more detail for the shelter and signal steps from the seven steps lesson, and can be done over 2–3 sessions.

Note to teachers: be aware of how you talk about the Land. Going out onto the Land to explore, hunt, fish, or collect berries is a natural thing to do. Rather than talking about going “out into the wilderness,” talk about going “out onto the Land.” The Land is to be respected and appreciated: it is not an adversary. In an emergency, the Land can offer many forms of assistance to the people facing a challenge, especially with ways to shelter and signal.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, D5, E1, E2, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- Respect for Self, Elders, and Others
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe the importance of shelters and signaling in an emergency.
- Describe three kinds of shelters someone can make.
- Describe three ways to signal for help in an emergency.

Materials

- Share sample signaling devices such as signaling mirror, signaling whistle, and flare. Show how a simple shelter kit can be made with rope, a small tarp, and tent stakes.

Vocabulary

Hypothermia When the body gets too cool or cold and starts to shut down. Hypothermia can affect a person’s mind and ability to make good decisions.

Insulation Material that helps keep in heat. Thicker dry clothes and sleeping bags are examples of insulation.

Inventory	Make a mental list of things you have with you, and in your environment. In an emergency, things you have might be used in different ways than normal (such as shoelaces could be used to tie branches together, if you didn't have rope.)
Prepared	Ready to do or deal with something.
Signal	A way to relay information. Examples: using a mirror to make a flash of light to let a search helicopter know your location; waving arms to and pointing to tell someone in another area that a bear is approaching their location; using a fire to make smoke so that searchers can see your location.
Survival	Living through an ordeal, accident, or challenge.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "In the last lesson we talked about the seven steps to survival, and today we will learn more about shelters and signals. To learn about these, we will share ideas, watch videos, and do practice activities. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to describe the importance of shelters and signaling in an emergency; describe three kinds of shelters someone can make; and describe at least three ways to signal for help in an emergency."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - Why are shelters important if you face an unexpected challenge while out on the Land? *(It is important for survival to stay warm.)*
 - What are examples of someone using a signal to get help or rescue? *(Flashing the sunlight with a mirror to get the attention of a helicopter, using smoke from a fire to show your location, using rocks to spell out "HELP" so it can be seen by a helicopter...)*
 - What are some examples of shelter that you can have with you? *(Extra warm clothes, a tarp, space blanket, a trash bag...)*
 - What are some examples of shelter that the Land can help provide? *(A small cave or rock that shelters from the wind and rain, a log with an area underneath to stay warm and dry, trees to tie a tarp to as a temporary tent, boughs from a tree to build a shelter from the rain and snow...)*
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors *(Traditions of respect and the care for the Land that gives us what we need. Elders teach the importance of being prepared in your mind and ready to be creative and resourceful.)*
 - Reverence for Our Creator *(Feeling connected to the Land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being. We enjoy being on the Land. When we are in a challenging situation, the Land can help provide what we need to face the situation.)*
 - Respect for Self, Elders, and Others *(We take care of ourselves and others by being prepared to go and harvest and return safely.)*

- **Shelter:** One of the biggest threats to survival in an emergency, especially in Alaska, is hypothermia. Hypothermia is when the body is too cold. Making sure you have a way to stay warm or get warm is more important than water or food. If you have to wait for rescue, make sure you can stay warm. If someone with you is injured, or you are not sure where you are, you may need to shelter and wait for people to find you. Even in the summer, it is important to know how to create a shelter that will keep you warm and as dry as possible.
 - **Your first shelter is the clothes you are wearing.** Put on all the clothes you have with you (in layers), or change wet clothes for dry clothes if you can. Wet clothes increase your risk of hypothermia.
 - **Finding or building a shelter:** These questions may be helpful once you decide to find or build a shelter: *What is nature providing for you in the way of pre-existing shelter? What materials are readily available? What do you have in your pack? How much time do you have before the sun goes down or the storm arrives?*

Examples of natural places to shelter:

- Undercut embankment
- Uprooted tree
- Thicket
- Rock Outcropping
- Large Pine Tree
- Note: It is usually better to avoid staying in a cave, as it may have animals in it, or not be safe inside. Also, it may be harder for searchers to find you. (Source: <https://secretsofsurvival.com/how-to-build-a-shelter-in-the-wild/>)

There are many techniques for building a shelter. Some of the easiest and quickest use a tarp and length of rope, combined with natural sticks and branches. Consider bringing a small tarp, rope, and a couple of tent stakes in your emergency supplies to build a quick shelter.

- *Building a Survival Shelter* (6:22) This video shows a woman building a shelter with a rope, tarp, and debris. She does use a hatchet and a knife to build her shelter. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1FU_ncz48&t=5s
- *Primitive Survival Shelter Build with Bare Hands - No Tools Needed* (26:02): This video shows a man building a debris/branches shelter without tools (no hatchet). It is a little long, but you can skip forward as he works. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCT9K72ByUE>
- *Easy Survival Shelter (Stay Warm and Dry)* (7:28): This video is clear and easy to watch. The shelter is built using no tools. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cfx6l0rajOo>

- **Signals:** When people come to look for you, make it easier for them to find you by using signals. Whatever signal you choose, you want your signals to attract attention, and send a message of distress. Some signals are meant to get the attention of planes or helicopters in the air, and some are meant for searchers looking for you on foot. There are signals you can build and leave, and others you have to actively use.
 - **Examples of active signals:**
 - Blowing a safety whistle: This is usually better than calling out, as the sound travels well, and takes less energy to make a loud sound. If you are tired or horse from calling for help, your whistle can be used to let people know where you are.
 - Using a signal mirror to make a flash: If you see a low flying airplane or helicopter, a signal mirror can be seen well from the air to let them know your location.
 - Signal fire: throwing grass or green branches on a fire to make more smoke can help searchers know where you are.
 - Signaling smoke or flares: you would have to have these with you in case of emergency. The signaling smoke makes a colored smoke that is visible from the air. Flares make an intensely bright light.
 - Moving signals attract attention, so waving a bright fabric with your arms will stand out more than having it just lying on the ground.
 - **Examples of passive signals:**
 - Using natural materials to spell a word or make a shape: You can use rocks or branches to spell out “HELP” or “SOS” in an open space. Tip: Use block letters, instead of curved letters, as they stand out more. Use a material that contrasts with the ground you are on so that it stands out better. Make the letters BIG, each letter should be at least 18 feet x 3 feet.
 - You can also use branches or other natural materials to make a large shape such as a triangle or star shape. These stand out because they are not a natural shape.
 - A bright colored piece of clothing hung high so it can flap in the wind and attract attention of people hiking to find you.
 - **Using “threes” in your signal:** Three means distress when it comes to signals. Examples: Blow your whistle three times, pause, then do three quick blasts again. Flash a light three times, then pause, and do it again. Make three fires in a triangle or in a line. To do an SOS signal, do three quick, three slow, then three quick. Wait a bit, and repeat.
 - *How to Signal for Rescue* (5:54): This video goes over day and night signals: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8j5NC7Bqq4>
 - *How to Signal for Rescue when Lost in the Wild* (5:20): This video goes over signaling, and emphasizes the importance of making a plan and letting others know where you are going. Note: It uses the words “hell” and “ass,” so if that is a concern, use a different video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQmo1BAjBo8>

- **Hypothermia:** If you or someone with you gets too cold (called hypothermia), it is important to get them warmed up. Hypothermia can make it hard for the brain to work well and make good decisions. Recognize it is happening and take action. In Alaska, hypothermia can happen in any season. (Adapted from Alaska Department of Parks and Recreation information from additional resources).

To Prevent Hypothermia

- Dress in layers. The outer layer should be wind and water resistant, and inner layers should be fabrics that are "warm when wet" (wool or synthetics, but not cotton). A hat may be your most important layer in preventing heat loss. Take layers off if you begin to sweat and put them back on when you cool down.
- Stay well fueled. Snack on high carbohydrate foods and drink lots of water. Water helps your body turn calories into heat.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia. If someone in your party gets cold, take a break to give them more clothes and food. Hypothermia symptoms include: intense shivering, fatigue, stumbling or poor coordination, slurred speech, and not making good decisions or acting in an unusual way.

To Treat Hypothermia

- Shelter the person from the wind and weather. Remove any wet clothing and place the person in dry clothes or a sleeping bag. If necessary, put another warm person in the sleeping bag with them. If the person with hypothermia is alert, give them warm liquids and food. In the case of advanced hypothermia, handle very gently and get medical help immediately. Rough handling can cause a heart attack.
- **Learning Activity:** Invite a culture bearer with outdoor experience or someone from Fish and Game or the Forest Service to meet the students in an outdoor setting where they can practice building a shelter and making a sleeping bag from a trash bag and leaves/grass. They can also brainstorm signals that could be used in that setting and working together to do it. This activity offers good practice for cooperation and team problem solving skills. Bring at least one back pack with supplies to model the useful things you can have with you to make the situation easier. Model taking an inventory and brainstorm together what can be used to shelter and signal.

Learning stories

- Invite a local culture bearer to share a story or explain what they bring with them when hunting or going out on the Land to harvest.
- Invite someone from the Forest Service or Fish and Game to share ways to use things from the natural environment in a situation where you need to shelter and signal for help that are specific to your location.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- Why are shelters important in an emergency?
- What are three kinds of shelters someone could use to stay warm and dry?
- Why is it important to have a way to signal in an emergency?
- What are three ways to signal for help in an emergency?

Additional Resources

- **Hypothermia:** Information on recognizing and treating hypothermia:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/safety/hypother.htm>
- **Hypothermia videos:**
 - *What Hypothermia Does to Your Body and Brain* (3:28)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JAXbDTIiSk>
 - *Wilderness Medicine: Mild vs. Severe Hypothermia* (3:11)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShqicNewmzl>
- **How to Build a Survival Shelter, 11 Simple Designs:** Article goes over shelter basics, with mostly natural materials: <https://www.primalsurvivor.net/wilderness-survival-shelter-no-supplies/>
- **Hatchet by Gary Paulsen** is the story of a 13-year-old boy who survives a plane crash and is the only survivor in the Canadian wilderness with only his clothes and a hatchet his mother has given him. It is fictional, but shows an accurate response to a survival situation.
- **How Can I Survive a Night in the Alaskan Wilderness?**
<https://adventure.howstuffworks.com/survive-night-alaska.htm>
- **How to Build a Shelter in the Wild:** Article with ads, but good information and pictures:
<https://secretsofsurvival.com/how-to-build-a-shelter-in-the-wild/>
- **5 Survival Shelters Everyone Should Know** (17:45): A woman shows skills and shelters people who go on the Land should know: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzUpH0Zft5c>
- **Kodiak Alutiiq Thematic Units K-5: Outdoor Survival:**
http://www.afognak.org/files/language_books/Thematic%20Units.pdf
- **There are many small handbooks for basic first aid and survival skills.** These books by REI are small, easy to read, and waterproof. For a student who is serious about learning these skills, a small book like these could be very useful.
 - [Pocket Guide to Outdoor Survival with Stan Bradshaw](#)
 - [Pocket Guide to Emergency First Aid with Betty Cordes](#)



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Safety on the Land: Respect for Bears

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about how to show respect for bears and observe Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian protocols when on the Land in bear territory. In Southeast Alaska and many other areas of the Alaska, life with bears is part of life. Knowing ways to be aware and stay safe in bear country is also a way to show respect and avoid a negative encounter which is bad for the people and the bears.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, C4, D5, E1, E2, E4, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- Respect for Self, Elders, and Others
- Reverence for Our Creator

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe the importance of being “bear aware” while out on the Land.
- Describe Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian ways of showing respect to avoid negative encounters with bears.
- Describe the lessons in the Haida traditional story, “Haida Mother Bear”

Materials

- Student Handout: *Showing Respect by Being Bear Aware*

Vocabulary

Intention	A plan, aim, action or goal made by a person.
Territory	An area of Land that belongs to a certain group of people, or in this lesson, the Land that belongs to bears.
Traditional Ways	Knowledge that is passed down in stories and teachings through the generations from our ancestors.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "In most areas of Southeast Alaska, people share the Land with bears. We have two kinds of bears, brown and black, but many communities only have brown bears. The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples lived with bears and learned important ways to be safe when in bear territory. To learn about traditional ways to be safe around bears we will share ideas, listen to a traditional story, and look at a handout. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to describe the importance of being "bear aware" while out on the Land; describe Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian ways of showing respect to avoid negative encounters with bears, and describe the lessons in the Haida traditional story, "Mother Bear."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - What kinds of bears live near our community? (*Brown or black or both*)
 - What are some ways we stay safe when going out where bears can be? (*Make noise so we don't surprise them, pay attention and listen for them, carry bear spray...*)
 - What are traditional ways of showing respect and staying safe when in areas bears can be? (*Address the bears as you would an Elder ("Grandmother/Grandma" or "Grandfather, Grandma"), Talk about the reason you are there (picking berries) and that you mean no harm to them, Sing as you walk or pick berries so they know where you are, do not talk or think negatively about them...*)
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors (*Traditions of respect and the care for the Land that gives us what we need. Elders teach the importance of showing respect to bears when on their territory and to make sure they know where we are, and that we mean no harm. Positive thoughts and words toward the bears are important, to avoid a misunderstanding or negative encounter.*)
 - Reverence for Our Creator (*Feeling connected to the Land and animals around us gives us a strong feeling of well-being. We enjoy being on the Land. When we are in areas where there are bears, we recognize we are on their territory, and we show respect.*)
 - Respect for Self, Elders, and Others (*We take care of ourselves and others by being respectful and taking actions that allow us to go and harvest and return safely.*)
- **Our relationship with bears:** The peoples of Southeast Alaska have a long-standing relationship with bears. There are many stories where bears married humans or had children together, or were siblings. Anyone who has ever seen a bear skinned out will say it looks almost exactly as a human. It makes sense that the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples would think people and bears are closely related. The bears were thought of as a tribe with their own traditions and ways. When in the territory of the bears, those ways were respected, and the people acted in certain ways to avoid a negative interaction or misunderstanding with the "Bear People." In the Tlingit language, bears are called, "Xóots."

- **“Bear Aware”:** When out on the Land where bears can be, it is very important to follow some rules to stay safe and avoid a bad interaction with a bear. Traditionally, our ancestors have taught us additional ways to go and harvest from the Land without offending the bears or creating a bad feeling that could result in a bad interaction.
 - **Make noise:** Traditionally, we address bears with respect as we would an Elder by saying “Grandmother” or “Grandfather” (Leelk'w in Tlingit). We sing songs or speak a little louder so they know where we are. We tell them our intention or reason for being in their territory, and that we mean them no harm. Example: When starting into an area where bears may be, a person says loudly “Grandfather! We are coming to pick berries! We mean you no harm, and we will leave when we are done!” This is repeated now and then in case a bear has come into the area.
 - **Stay alert:** Listen for any sounds of bears coming into the area, and repeat your message so they know where you are, and what your intention is for being there. Be aware that you are in their territory, and show respect to them while on their Land.
 - **Stay positive:** Our ancestors believed it was important to only think and say positive things about bears while out in their territory, or you could be taken and made one of them (another way to think of this is as an attack or getting hurt by a bear). Do not speak or think of harm or negative things about bears while you are out.
 - **If you see a bear:** Remember that most bears do not want to attack you, they want to be left alone. If the bear *doesn't* see you, move quietly away from the area, and have your bear spray ready. If the bear *does* see you, put your arms up above your head and spread your legs apart to appear bigger. If you are with other people, stand close to the other people who are with you so that you look bigger. Stand your ground, and **do not** run. Speak in a low, calm voice, and explain why you are there, and that you wish them no harm. If the bear doesn't leave, move sideways slowly away from the bear and leave the area. If a bear feels threatened and tries to harm you, use bear spray when the bear is close to turn the bear away. Only if there is no other choice would a weapon be used to harm the bear in self-defense. *Learn more about selecting and using bear pepper spray in this [introductory video](#) and information.*

Student Handout: Look at the student handout with information about bear safety with the students. If students are unfamiliar with bear spray, watch the videos and talk through how it is used.

- Note: These guidelines are for hiking and gathering from the Land. When out hunting on the Land, it is not possible to make a lot of noise. Traditionally, the message is still spoken or thought to the bears, saying the reason the people are in the bear's territory, using respectful language. If someone cannot make noise, then it becomes even more important to stay alert.

Learning stories

- Listen to the following story, “Haida Mother Bear” and discuss the lessons in the story.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oDxO4iNBXU&t=149s>

Discussion questions:

- What did the girl do when she stepped in bear dung (poop)? *She made an angry laugh and complained about it. What should she have done? Sang.*
- What happened because she had offended the bears? *They took her back to be a wife to one of the bears, and she turned into a bear, and had sons that were half human and half bear.*
- What happened when the wife’s brothers came looking for her? *The bear husband knew he would be killed, but he taught his sons the right songs the hunters must sing that would honor the bear and keep the hunters from having bad luck.*
- What does this story show us about the way to behave around bears? *Be respectful in thinking and what you say, and make cheerful noises like singing so they know where you are and what you are doing there. If a hunter takes a bear, he or she must show respect by doing the right traditional things (such as singing certain songs) so they will have good luck, and not get bad luck from killing a bear. Even in hunting a bear, it can be done with respect.*

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What does it mean to be “bear aware” while out on the Land?
- How did our Ancestors (Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian) show respect to avoid negative encounters with bears?
- What does the Haida traditional story, “Haida Mother Bear” teach us about bears?

Additional Resources

- *The Essentials for Traveling in Alaska’s Bear Country* by Alaska Fish and Game:
<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.bearcountry&language=en>
- Bear Safety from the National Parks Service:
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/bears/safety.htm>
- Bear Safety from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Rec:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/safety/bears.htm>
- **Virtual Presentation: Wildlife Safety in Southeast Alaska** (60 minutes total, first 24 minutes are on bear safety) AK Dept. of Fish & Game.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2P4BXWepsZ8>

Thanks to Stephen Bethune (Unit 4 Area Management Biologist, ADF&G Wildlife Conservation) for reviewing this lesson.

Bear Aware

When we go to harvest on the land where bears live, it is important to show respect and follow these tips to avoid a bad situation with a bear.

Make noise: Traditionally, we address bears with respect as we would an Elder by saying “Grandmother” or “Grandfather.” (Lingit: Léelk'w!) We sing songs or talk to each other so bears know where we are. We tell them our intention or reason for being in their territory, and that we mean them no harm.

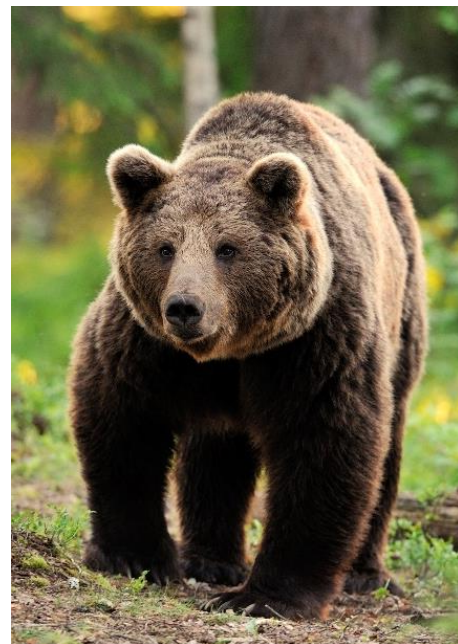
Example: When starting into an area where bears may be, a person says loudly: “Grandfather! We are coming to pick berries! We mean you no harm, and we will leave when we are done!” This is repeated now and then in case a bear has just come into the area.

Stay alert: Listen for any sounds of bears coming near you. Repeat your message so they know where you are. Be aware that you are in their territory, and show respect to them while on their land.

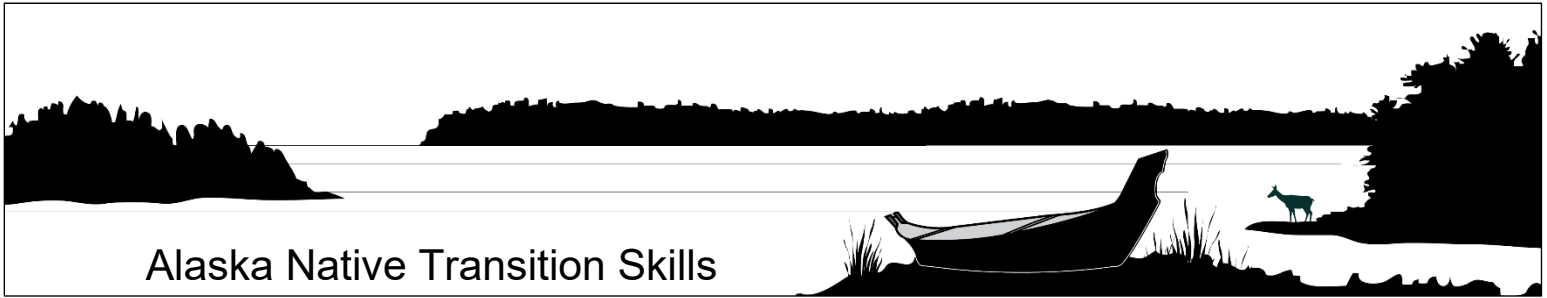
Stay positive: Our ancestors believed it was important to only think and say positive things about bears while out in their territory. They believed this helped to avoid a bad situation with a bear. It is another way we show respect.

If you see a bear:

- Remember that most bears do not want to attack you, they want to be left alone.
- If the bear **doesn't** see you, slowly leave the area.
- If the bear **sees you**, stand your ground. Do not run. Make yourself look bigger by raising your arms and/or standing close to the people with you.
- Speak in a low, calm voice, and explain why you are there, and that you wish them no harm.
- Slowly move sideways away from the bear, and leave the area.
- If a bear feels threatened and tries to harm you, use bear spray when the bear is close to turn the bear away. Only if there is no other choice would a weapon be used to harm a bear in self-defense.



Note: Bear photo is copyrighted, and purchased for use in this handout.



Alaska Native Transition Skills

Harvesting Berries from the Land

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the different kinds of berries in Southeast Alaska and when and how they are harvested. Students will learn how to identify the berries, and traditional protocols for harvesting with respect.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, D5, E1, E2, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- Respect for Nature and Property
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- List the main types of wild berries you can eat where you live.
- Describe the best time of year to harvest the main berries near where you live.
- Describe three ways you can show respect to the land when harvesting berries.

Materials

- *Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide* by SEARHC: <https://searhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Southeast-Alaska-Traditional-Foods-Guide.pdf>
- *Alaska Native Ways of Showing Respect When Picking Berries* Student Handout

Vocabulary

Berry	A small juicy fruit, without a large pit (seed) in the middle.
Leaf	The part of the plant that comes out from the stems, to collect the light to make energy for the plant.
Stem	The part of the plant that comes up from the ground and hold the leaves and fruit.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to learn about some of the berries found in Southeast Alaska, and how to harvest berries with respect. We will learn about this by looking at pictures, discussion, and sharing our stories. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to: List the main types of wild berries you can eat in our community; describe the best time of year to harvest the main berries in our community; and describe three ways you can show respect to the land when harvesting berries."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - What kinds of berries do we have in our forest? *(The main types of berries in Southeast are blueberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, thimbleberries, wild strawberries, wild raspberries, and high bush cranberries. Nagoon berries, grey currants, cloud berries, and soap berries are also found in some areas.)*
 - How do you identify a berry to be sure it is safe to eat? *(you look at the shape, color, leaf...)*
 - How do you show respect for the land while picking berries? *(Pick berries that are ripe and pick easily, take care not to damage the plant or remove a bunch of leaves or break the stem, thank the plants as you pick the berries, show respect by making an offering to the plants, don't pick all the berries on a bush or in an area.)*
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors: *Berries were the main kind of sweetener before sugar was introduced. Families took great care of their berry patches so that they would continue to produce. When we share this respect and attitude toward the berries and land, we continue the tradition of caring for an important resource.*
 - Respect for Nature and Property: *We take good care of the berry plants so they will be healthy and continue to provide for us. We are grateful to the plants that offer their gifts of sweetness each summer.*
 - We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea: *We continue the tradition of our ancestors and Elders by caring for the forests, air, land, and sea, which continue to sustain us.*
 - At every step of harvesting from the land, we share. We share in the picking, sorting, preserving, and enjoying of the berries. Doing these activities with family or community members brings people together and makes the work lighter. We live our values when we work together to harvest from the land and share in the wealth the land gives us.
- **Introduction:** Southeast Alaska has an abundance of berries that include: blueberry, high bush cranberry, red huckleberry, wild raspberry, salmonberry, wild strawberry, thimbleberry, soapberry, cloud berry, grey currant, and nagoon berries. Traditionally, the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples collected and preserved many berries to enjoy during the winter months. Traditionally, we go out to collect berries with family or community members, and then we all share in the preparation and enjoyment.

- **Identification:** When we go to pick berries or harvest any plants on the land, it is important to make sure we know for sure that a plant is safe to eat. With berries, there are a few things we look at to make sure. We look at the overall plant, the leaf, and the berry. It is important to go to harvest with someone who is very familiar with the plants you plan to collect, until you learn them for yourself. (Discuss the main parts of a berry bush while looking at real berry bushes or pictures of berries). Use the Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide by SEARHC: <https://searhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Southeast-Alaska-Traditional-Foods-Guide.pdf>
 - **Overall plant:** Is it the size of plant you are looking for? An alpine berry grows close to the ground, where a blueberry or huckleberry bush can be over 6 feet high. Is it growing in a location you expect?
 - **Leaf:** Look at the leaf shape and color. Does it match the plan you are looking for?
 - **Berry/fruit:** Look at the shape and size and color of the fruit/berry. Does it match what you are looking for?
- **Where and when to pick them** (From Sealaska Heritage *Berries* Curriculum, Teacher Resources, and the *Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide*). Fill in similar information for the berries most commonly harvested in your community.

Berry	When to pick	Where to find them
Salmonberry (Tlingit: Was'x'aan tléigu)	Early summer	Shrub that grows on moist, sunny slopes, lowland forest, and riverbanks
Huckleberry (Tlingit: Tleikatánk)	Mid to late summer	Grows in thickets, woods, and moist meadows
Blueberry (Tlingit: Kanat'á)	Late summer	Grows in thickets, woods and moist meadows.
High Bush Cranberry (Tlingit: Kaxwéix)	Late summer and fall	Grows in the woods or on rocky banks.
Thimbleberry (Tlingit: Ch'eex')	Late June and early July	Grows in disturbed areas along wooded hills and near streams.
Nagoon berry (Tlingit: Neigóon)	July to late August	Grows in damp meadows.

- **Share the Student Handout, *Alaska Native Ways of Showing Respect When Picking Berries***
When going berry picking, please keep the following in mind (summarized from the *Kayaani Commission Traditional Harvesting Guidelines*, from this article in the Sitka Local Foods Network Newsletter, 2014, <https://sitkalocalfoodsnetwork.org/2014/08/25/%E2%80%A2-its-time-to-get-outdoors-and-pick-some-berries/>):
 - **Be Courteous** — other families are picking berries too; never take more than you need. If you accidentally get too much, share it with someone that you know will use it.
 - **Be Safe** — be positive about your identification of edible plants. Check your field guide for details if you are unsure. And pick berries during daylight with friends; make plenty of noise to keep bears away.

- **Take Care of the Berries** — wash your berries with clean water before eating them and watch for rot, mildew, and insects. For best results: rinse berries, spread on a baking sheet to freeze, once frozen, slide off the tray and freeze in bags until ready to use.
- **Pick Clean Berries** — from off the major road systems and in areas where you know pesticides and other chemicals will not have reached the berry plants.
- **Take Care of the Plants** — make sure that there are plenty of other plants in the area (at least 10) to assure future abundance. Whenever possible, harvest so that the existing plant can reseed or recover after you are done. Treat the plants with respect. In Alaska Native cultures, it is traditional to thank the plant for its gift and give an offering. Each individual should show respect to the plant spirits in their own way.

- **Picking the Berries**

Berry Baskets (From Sealaska Heritage *Berries* Curriculum, Teacher Resources):

Traditional Ways	Contemporary Ways
Flat woven basket	Coffee can with string
Large woven basket – secured with skunk cabbage so the berries wouldn’t fall out	Large ice cream container
	Small buckets

- Traditionally, our ancestors used a big flat basket, put it underneath the berry bush, and then gently shook the branches over the basket. In this way, only the ripe berries would fall off, and the ones that were still ripening would stay on the bush. The plant was unharmed.
- Though that way is still an option, many people wear a plastic berry basket like a necklace, and pick berries with their fingers, being careful to leave the berries that are not yet ready. You can tell a berry is ready because it looks juicy and big, and the color is rich. Berries that are pale, or hard, are not yet ready to be picked. If it is picked or knocked off, it won’t ripen, and will be wasted.
- Some people use a berry picker, which was designed in the shape of a bear’s claw. The picker is scooped carefully through the leaves and the berries fall into the bottom. There are ways to use this well, and ways that do a lot of damage to the plants. The way you can tell you are using it well is that you won’t get a lot of leaves or berries that aren’t ready. Here is a video showing it in use. He gently pushes the leafy areas with berries toward the picker, but isn’t getting many leaves in the picker, and isn’t breaking branches. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fcUVUiZD5Y&t=28s> Using a berry picker well not only shows respect for the plant, it makes it much easier to clean the berries.



- **Sorting the Berries**

When you get home from picking berries, it is time to sort all of the leaves, pine needles, and unripe berries from your ripe berries. If you live in an area where there can be worms in the berries, some people soak them in a light salt solution (1–2 Tablespoons of salt per gallon of water), which draws the worms out. If you want to freeze the berries, first freeze them in a single layer on a cookie sheet, and then pour the frozen berries into Ziploc bags

or containers to put in the freezer. This freezes the berries separately so it is easy to use just as much as you need (instead of having a big lump that has to be thawed out to use). Just like with the picking, working together to sort the berries is more fun if everyone works together to get it done. Now, the berries are ready to be preserved and used.

Learning stories

- Read Vivian Prescott’s article from the Juneau Empire, “Highbush Cranberries and Traditional Values” and discuss. Some suggested questions: *How does Vivian let the bears know she is in the area? Why is it important for families to work together to harvest from the land? What vitamins are high in Alaska berries? What traditional values does she share are tied to harvesting berries?* <https://www.juneauempire.com/news/planet-alaska-highbush-cranberries-and-traditional-values/>
- Ask a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to share with the students about traditional ways to collect berries, and how their family preserved them and enjoyed them. Ask them to share about how people can harvest berries while showing gratitude and respect.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What are the main types of wild berries you can eat where you live?
- What is the best time of year to get these kinds of berries?
- What are three ways you can show respect to the land when harvesting berries?

Additional Resources

- **Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide by SEARHC:** Excellent resource with quality pictures and instructions on when to harvest important foods. <https://searhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Southeast-Alaska-Traditional-Foods-Guide.pdf>
- **Berries Unit from Sealaska Heritage Institute:** Though this is written for K–1 level, it has many good resources and information that could inform any lesson on berries.
 - Tlingit Language Version: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Tli_GK-1_Berries.pdf Teacher resources has a Bingo game and plant identification pictures, as well as Tlingit language lessons related to berries: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Tli_GK-1_Berries_TeacherResources.pdf
 - Haida Language Version: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Hai_GK-1_Berries.pdf Teacher Resources: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Hai_GK-1_Berries_TeacherResources.pdf
- **Collecting and Using Alaska Wild Berries** (19:13): Video about identifying, collecting, and preserving berries in Alaska. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZM6TOyTKCQ>

All links verified 8-2025

Alaska Native Ways of Showing Respect When Harvesting Berries

When going berry picking, please keep the following in mind:

- **Be Courteous** — other families are picking berries too; never take more than you need. If you accidentally get too much, share it with someone that you know will use it.
- **Be Safe** — be positive about your identification of edible plants. Check your field guide for details if you are unsure. And pick berries during daylight with friends; make plenty of noise to keep bears away.
- **Take Care of the Berries** — wash your berries with clean water before eating them and watch for rot, mildew, and insects. For best results: rinse berries, spread on a baking sheet to freeze, once frozen, slide off the tray and freeze in bags until ready to use.
- **Pick Clean Berries** — from off the major road systems and in areas where you know pesticides and other chemicals will not have reached the berry plants.
- **Take Care of the Plants** — make sure that there are plenty of other plants in the area (at least 10) to assure future abundance. Whenever possible, harvest so that the existing plant can reseed or recover after you are done. Treat the plants with respect. In Alaska Native cultures, it is traditional to thank the plant for its gift and give an offering. Each individual should show respect to the plant spirits in their own way.



Summarized from the *Kayaani Commission Traditional Harvesting Guidelines*, from this article in the Sitka Local Foods Network Newsletter, 2014, accessed at <https://sitkalocalfoodsnetwork.org/2014/08/25/%E2%80%A2-time-to-get-outdoors-and-pick-some-berries/>.



Berries: Preserving, Preparing, and Sharing

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about some of the ways that berries were traditionally preserved, and will have a chance to prepare and enjoy traditional fruit leather using berries from the harvest.

Alaska Cultural Standards

- A1, A4, A6, B2, B3, B4, C1, C3, D5, E1, E2, E8

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida Values

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors
- Respect for Nature and Property
- We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe ways to prepare and preserve berries for use throughout the year.
- Discuss how berries were prepared and enjoyed by the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples in the past.
- Discuss current ways people make foods to enjoy from berries.
- Prepare make fruit leather to enjoy with classmates and family members.

Materials

- *Berry Fruit Leather :: METLAKATLA :: Store Outside Your Door* (6:22): Video showing harvest of berries and preparation of fruit leather, a traditional Tsimshian recipe.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HdQ-uaTTvk>
- Frozen local berries to make the fruit leather recipe.
- Student handout: Berry Recipes

Vocabulary

Berry	A small juicy fruit, without a large pit (seed) in the middle.
Contemporary	Belonging to or happening in the present. A contemporary way is how we do something now, which may or may not be the same as it was done traditionally.
Dehydrate	To remove the water through a drying process. Foods that are dehydrated naturally will store and last much longer than fresh food. When ready to use, water is added back in.

Nutrition	Food needed for health and growth. Natural foods provide vitamins and minerals that the body needs to be healthy. Alaska wild berries are high in key nutrients that are very good for our bodies.
Preserve	To dry, smoke, can fresh foods so they can last longer and be eaten during times that fresh foods are not available for harvest.
Recipe	Instructions on how to make a food, including the things needed and the amounts of each to make the desired food.

Activities and Adaptations

- **Share the goal of today's lesson:** "Today we are going to learn about how to preserve and enjoy the berries found in Southeast Alaska. We will learn about this by discussing traditional ways berries were preserved and used, and talk about recipes people enjoy now. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to: describe ways to prepare and preserve berries for use throughout the year; discuss how berries were prepared and enjoyed by the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples in the past; discuss current recipes for enjoying berries; and make a traditional fruit leather to enjoy with classmates and family."
- **Begin by finding out what students already know by asking the following questions:**
 - What kinds of berries do we have in our forest? *(The main types of berries in Southeast are blueberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, thimbleberries, wild strawberries, wild raspberries, and high bush cranberries. Nagoon berries, grey currants, cloud berries, and soap berries are also found in some areas.)*
 - What are some foods you can make with berries? How does your family like to enjoy them? *(fresh, dried, jam, syrup, with salmon...)*
 - How do you show respect to our Ancestors and the Land when preparing and sharing the harvested berries? *(Use all that you picked so there are none wasted, share in the work of preparation and the joy of eating them with family, Elders, and community members: the wealth of foods from the Land should be shared.)*
- **Connect the Values of today's lesson with the objectives:**
 - Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors: *We take great care that the foods we have harvested from the Land are used well and not wasted. We share foods with our Elders, our families, and our community members. The wealth of foods from the Land should be shared.*
 - Respect for Nature and Property: *We show respect by preparing and preserving the foods from the Land so they can sustain us throughout the year. If we have taken more than we need, we share it with others to make sure nothing is wasted. We express our thanks to the Land as we preserve and enjoy the gifts the Land has provided.*
 - We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea: *We continue the tradition of our Ancestors and Elders by caring for the forests, air, Land, and sea, which continue to sustain us.*

- **Introduction:** Traditionally, berries were an important food source eaten fresh in the summer and fall, and preserved for use during the winter months. Berries were an important part of winter ceremonies where guests would be served heaping trays of berries collected in the summer and fall. Berries were preserved by drying them into cakes or mixing them with seal oil or other sources of oil or grease (such as the fat from the eyeballs of salmon*). All Alaska wild berries are very high in vitamins and antioxidants, and would have provided key nutrients for the people, especially in the winter when fresh foods were not available. (*See the recipe that Raven gave the Tlingit people (pg 43) *Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee, Our Food Is Our Tlingit Way of Life Excerpts From Oral Interviews* Richard G. Newton and Madonna L. Moss (2009). This contains many excellent quotes from Elders on the importance of subsistence to sustaining life and cultural values.
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x005111967&seq=1>)
- Berries can be enjoyed year-round by preserving them in forms that will last. Fresh berries do not stay fresh for very long, unless they are prepared and preserved to make them last. Before electricity and freezers, the peoples of Southeast Alaska used the following ways to make their berries last to be used to feed the community and share at winter ceremonies. You can discuss/contrast the contemporary ways we preserve and store them now:
 - **Berry Preserving** (From Sealaska Heritage *Berries* Curriculum, Teacher Resources, unless noted.):

Traditional Ways	Contemporary Ways
Dried	Freezing
Stored in seal or hooligan oil	Jarring
Dried into berry cakes: To make the cakes, they would smoke the berries, then boil and mash them and press them into cakes that were 10" x 1" thick. These were placed over slat frames, with wild celery leaves between layers, over a low burning fire or a stone-lined oven for 2 days. Then they were dried in the sun for a week or more, then stored in boxes for later use (<i>The Tlingit Indians</i> , page 151). Other tribes (like the Tsimshian) dried the berries into long 1" thick pieces that were then rolled carefully and hung in the rafters until needed (<i>Gathering What the Great Nature Provided</i> , page 51). Small pieces could be cut from the roll or cakes, and made a good portable food along with smoked salmon.	Dried
Berry Pudding: A combination of blueberries, gray currents, salmon eggs, and flour. Stored in wooden boxes or crocks.	Pies
	Muffins
	Pancakes

- **Storage** (From Sealaska Heritage *Berries* Curriculum, Teacher Resources):

Traditional Ways	Contemporary Ways
Square cedar bark basket. Made water tight with spruce pitch	Freeze
Coated in seal or hooligan oil and placed in bentwood boxes	Jar
	Dehydrate

- **Contemporary ways of preserving berries:**

- Freezing: Berries can be frozen on trays and then poured into zip lock bags to store. This is a great strategy, so you can focus on harvesting while the berries are ready to gather, and then in the winter months take time making the berries into other foods. Frozen berries can be used almost the same as fresh berries in recipes.
- Jarring: Jams, jellies, and syrups that are stored in sealed glass jars can keep on the shelf for several years. They also make sharing the preserved berries easy.
- Drying/dehydrate: Berries can be made into fruit leather (like a fruit roll-up) in a food dehydrator or an oven set on a very low temperature. Berries can be dried like raisins and enjoyed as a snack, in salads, in muffins, and more.

- **Contemporary ways of enjoying berries:**

- Berries are enjoyed in many ways including jams, jellies, and syrups. They can be made into smoothies, ice cream, popsicles, spritzers, and fruit roll-ups. They can be baked into muffins, cakes, and pancakes. They can be combined with salmon and other meats to bring a tart sweetness to the dish.

- **Activity—Making Fruit Leather**

Watch the video on making fruit leather with Tsimshian hosts talking about the harvest of the berries and how they make fruit leather

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HdQ-uaTTvk>). You can follow the basic recipe with any berries. These are made with berries and a little splash of lemon juice to preserve the color, but are naturally sweet.

1. Blend the berries in a blender or food processor, and add a little lemon juice.
2. Pour the blended berries onto a shallow pan lined with parchment paper.
3. Place in an oven on the lowest temperature it can do, for about 7–8 hours.
4. Cut the leather into strips to enjoy.

More Recipes: Other simple recipes to consider making and trying that are contemporary include smoothies, popsicles, gummies, and sorbet. These are ways to eat berries that really showcase the bright tart flavors berries bring. See the additional resources for more ideas on recipes.

Learning stories

- Ask a local Alaska Native leader, Elder, or culture bearer to share with the students about traditional ways to preserve and enjoy berries. Invite them to participate in making the fruit leather recipe with the class.
- Ask family members of students to make and bring in their favorite recipes using berries to share with the class. Discuss how the foods were made, and what berries were used.

Evaluation

At the end of the lesson, ask the students these questions:

- What are some ways to prepare and preserve berries for use throughout the year?
- How did the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples preserve berries to use through the winter months?
- What are some current ways people make food from berries?
- How did we make fruit leather from berries?

Additional Resources

- **Forest Fresh Alaska** Blog by Sitka Chefs Mary and Lucas Goddard. Recipes using berries include [salmonberry gummies](https://www.forestfreshalaska.com/) which is easy to follow, and more.
<https://www.forestfreshalaska.com/>
- **Berry Spritzer: Traditional Foods, Contemporary Chef Southcentral Alaska** (4:43): From the Store Outside Your Door series, this shows a contemporary recipe using berries harvested from the Land. Video begins with an Elder originally from Southeast Alaska sharing about harvest. Made with salmonberries.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NP5HrSeHh0g>
- **13 Alaska Wild Berry Recipes:** <https://www.adn.com/alaska-life/food-drink/2019/08/03/how-alaska-eats-13-alaska-wild-berry-recipes/>
- **Collecting and Using Alaska Wild Berries** (19:13): Video about identifying, collecting, and preserving berries in Alaska. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZM6TOyTKCQ>
- **Fruit Leather** (10:41) Step-by-step video of how to make fruit leather with Alaska berries. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6mHkYP8eH0>
- **Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide** by SEARHC: Excellent resource with quality pictures and instructions on when to harvest important foods, and tips for preserving and enjoying them. <https://searhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Southeast-Alaska-Traditional-Foods-Guide.pdf>
- **Berries Unit from Sealaska Heritage Institute:** Though this is written for K–1 level, it has many good resources and information that could inform any lesson on berries.
 - Tlingit Language Version: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Tli_GK-1_Berries.pdf Teacher resources has a Bingo game and plant identification pictures, as well as Tlingit language lessons related to berries: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Tli_GK-1_Berries_TeacherResources.pdf

- Berries Unit Haida Language Version: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Hai_GK-1_Berries.pdf Teacher Resources: https://sealaskaheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SHI_Edu_Hai_GK-1_Berries_TeacherResources.pdf
- ***Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee, Our Food Is Our Tlingit Way of Life*** Excerpts From Oral Interviews Richard G. Newton and Madonna L. Moss (2009). This contains many excellent quotes from Elders on the importance of subsistence to sustaining life and cultural values. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x005111967&seq=1>
- ***The Tlingit Indians* by George Thornton Emmons** (1991) is a comprehensive and respected collection of information about the Tlingit people and traditions. Section on traditional harvest and preservation on berries on page 151.
- ***Gathering What the Great Nature Provided by the People of 'Ksan*** (1980): This is a detailed wonderful book with illustrations and great detail on how the Gitksan (Tsimshian) people traditionally preserved food. Many of the ways described were similar to how the Tlingit and Haida also preserved food. The berry section starts on page 51.

Berry Recipes

Fruit Leather



Here are the directions for how to make the fruit leather from The Store Outside Your Door video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HdQ-uaTTvk>.

You can make fruit leather from any type of berries, but some will dry more brittle than others. In the video, the women show a mixture of blueberry, blue huckleberry, red huckleberries, and bunch berries. A small amount of bunch berries binds the fruit leather together nicely. If you don't have these, the huckleberries also work great, and will be flexible when dry.

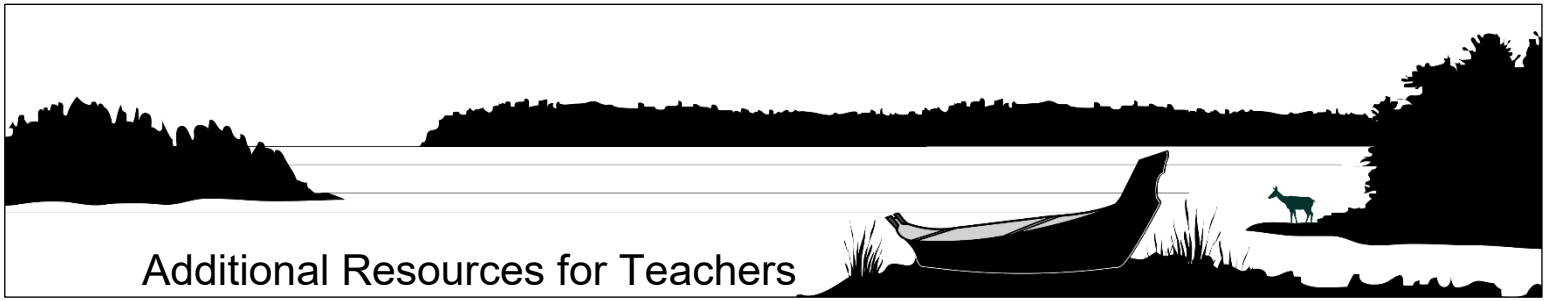
1. Gather the berries and remove all leaves and pine needles and stems.
2. Blend the berries together until smooth in a food processor or blender. If you want to keep a brighter color, you can add a little lemon juice as you blend it. (For 4–6 cups of berry mash, use ½–1 Tablespoon lemon juice.)
3. Pour onto parchment paper on in a shallow baking dish.
4. Place in an oven on the lowest temperature you can for about 7–8 hours.
5. After it cools, cut it into strips as shown.

Salmonberry Popsicles

Blend 2 full cups of salmonberries with 1 to 1-1/2 cups of orange juice to make 3 cups of liquid. You can also blend in a banana for extra sweetness. Pour into 6 popsicle molds and freeze. Simply refreshing!

Recipe and photo by Mary Goddard, used with permission.





Additional Resources for Teachers

These were resources we found as we developed the curriculum that may be helpful. These links were accessed 8-2025.

Tips for Non-Alaska Native Teachers who want to invite an Elder in to speak:

This is part of a unit on weather. See page 6:

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/units/PredictingWeather/PredictingWeather.pdf>

Alaska Native Knowledge Network: More curriculum and other resources related to Alaska Native ways of knowing. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/>

Sealaska Heritage Institute Curriculum: The Sealaska Heritage Institute has many wonderful educational resources with strong ties to Tlingit and Haida heritage languages. You can search for them in the downloadable documents library found at <https://sealaskaheritage.org/shi-educational-documents-library/>

Alaska Cultural Standards

A: Culturally-knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.	B: Culturally-knowledgeable students are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.	C: Culturally-knowledgeable students are able to actively participate in various cultural environments.	D: Culturally-knowledgeable students are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning.	E: Culturally-knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.
<p>A1: Assume responsibilities for their role in relation to the well-being of the cultural community and their lifelong obligations as a community member;</p> <p>A2: Recount their own genealogy and family history;</p> <p>A3: Acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history;</p> <p>A4: Practice their traditional responsibilities to the surrounding environment;</p>	<p>B1: Acquire insights from other cultures without diminishing the integrity of their own;</p> <p>B2: Make effective use of the knowledge, skills, and ways of knowing from their own cultural traditions to learn about the larger world in which they live;</p> <p>B3: Make appropriate choices regarding the long-term consequences of their actions; and</p> <p>B4: Identify appropriate forms of technology and anticipate the consequences of their</p>	<p>C1: Perform subsistence activities in ways that are appropriate to local cultural traditions;</p> <p>C2: Make constructive contributions to the governance of their community and the well-being of their family;</p> <p>C3: Attain a healthy lifestyle through which they are able to maintain their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual well-being; and</p> <p>C4: Enter into and function effectively in a</p>	<p>D1: Acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders;</p> <p>D2: Participate in and make constructive contributions to the learning activities associated with a traditional camp environment;</p> <p>D3: Interact with Elders in a loving and respectful way that demonstrates an appreciation of their role as culture-bearers</p>	<p>E1: Recognize and build upon the interrelationships that exist among the spiritual, natural, and human realms in the world around them, as reflected in their own cultural traditions and beliefs as well as those of others;</p> <p>E2: Understand the ecology and geography of the bioregion they inhabit;</p> <p>E3: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between world view and the way knowledge is formed and used;</p>

<p>A5: Reflect through their own actions the critical role that the local heritage language plays in fostering a sense of who they are and how they understand the world around them;</p> <p>A6: Live a life in accordance with the cultural values and traditions of the local community and integrate them into their everyday behavior.</p> <p>A7: Determine the place of their cultural community in the regional, state, national, and international political and economic systems.</p>	<p>use for improving the quality of life in the community.</p>	<p>variety of cultural settings.</p>	<p>and educators in the community;</p> <p>D4: Gather oral and written history information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance;</p> <p>D5: Identify and utilize appropriate sources of cultural knowledge to find solutions to everyday problems; and</p> <p>D6: Engage in a realistic self-assessment to identify strengths and needs and make appropriate decisions to enhance life skills.</p>	<p>E4: Determine how ideas and concepts from one knowledge system relate to those derived from other knowledge systems;</p> <p>E5: Recognize how and why cultures change over time;</p> <p>E6: Anticipate the changes that occur when different cultural systems come in contact with one another;</p> <p>E7: Determine how cultural values and beliefs influence the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>E8: Identify and appreciate who they are and their place in the world.</p>
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This handout was created from the Alaska Cultural Standards. Source: <https://kpbsd.org/departments.aspx?id=6834&transitionUi=1>